

Epiphany 2 / January 18, 2026

Isaiah 49:6

"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."

A Light to Bring Salvation to the Ends of the Earth

Epiphany is God's invitation to the nations to come to Him through faith in Jesus and baptism into His death and resurrection. Epiphany means to shine out, to shine around, to illuminate. To have an epiphany means to see something in light clearly, or to see things in a different light, that is differently; to see something in someone or some thing that you didn't see before. In terms of Jesus, it was to see the divine majesty hidden within the covering of His humanity. When Moses left the tent of meeting where he met with God, his face radiated the glory of Lord. The reflected brilliance from his face was so intense that he needed to cover his face with a veil to protect the eyes of the Israelites. The light didn't come from within Moses himself, it was absorbed into his flesh, but it certainly marked Moses out as a special person. It showed Moses had a unique relationship with the Lord to be called so closely into his presence. When Moses left the presence of the Lord, the children of Israel certainly saw him in a different light.

Jesus radiated divine glory from within His person as the eternally begotten Son of God, but Jesus kept His glory hidden behind the veil of His flesh. Three disciples, Peter, John and James glimpsed His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. Later in life, John saw Jesus again in glory, in a vision while a prisoner on the island of Patmos. When people saw Jesus, they didn't see the Son of God, they saw a carpenter, a teacher, a fishermen's friend, a Galilean like any other Galilean of His time. Jesus expressed His divine being through His words. Once in Jerusalem the chief priests sent officers to arrest Jesus. They returned empty handed. Their superiors asked, "*Why didn't you bring Him in?*" They replied, "*No one ever spoke like this man.*" Jesus' words controlled the forces of nature, commanded evil spirits, forgave human sin, made the ill and injured whole and restored the dead to life. Most importantly, Jesus' words opened peoples' eyes to see Him as the Son of God and opened their hearts to receive Him as their Saviour. We see Jesus through the light of His word as our God and Saviour. He is the light who brings salvation to the ends of the earth.

Our lesson from Isaiah is very important in terms of what God created Israel to be, who Jesus is, what He came to do and what He does for those who see and receive Him as their God and Saviour. God created Israel to be His servant to the nations, making Him and His salvation known to all peoples. God told Abraham that His offspring would be blessed and through His offspring all peoples would receive blessing. Abraham had many offspring, but the blessing would come through one offspring in particular, Issac, the son born to him and Sarah in their old age. He was the seed of the promise. He was born in a remarkable way to show God's power to keep His promise, to show that nothing is too hard for the Lord. If you ever think anything is too hard for the Lord, remember Issac, born to Sarah and Abraham in their old age. From Isaac came Jacob and from Jacob the twelve tribes named Israel after the new name God gave him.

Although Abraham had many children the offspring through whom the promise came was singular in its generation, until the twelve tribes came through Jacob. The Lord called the offspring of Jacob, 'Israel' and promised to make His name known through them in all the earth. The Lord made promises with particular people, not so they would keep the promise for themselves, but that through them His promises would reach out to the ends of the earth. At first God told Israel to keep themselves separate from the nations around them; not in the absolute sense, but in order to keep them from following their spiritual practices, which were darkness and not the light of the Lord. The Lord would refine and purify Israel so they would be light to the nations and make Him known as the only God and only Saviour of the world. Israel was His servant in general, but as our text from Isaiah shows from the large mass of Israel, one special servant would come. This one special servant would do two things. First, He would raise up the tribes of Israel that had fallen into idolatry. Second, He would be a light to the nations and bring His salvation to the ends of the earth. That one special servant is Jesus, 'a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel.'

Jesus is the one of whom the Lord spoke when He promised blessing to and through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jesus is the servant of whom the Lord spoke when He promised through Isaiah to gather the scattered tribes of Israel and bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Everything God created Israel to do, Jesus has done. Everything Israel failed to do, because of the weakness of their nature and the rebelliousness of sin, Jesus accomplished. Jesus began His service as did Israel, in the wilderness. In the wilderness Israel was to learn that they did not live by the bread of the earth, but by the power of the word of the Lord. Israel was tempted

in the wilderness and with each temptation Israel failed and fell. Israel failed and fell, because they would not trust the word of the Lord and doubted His power to save them. Jesus was in the wilderness where He denied Himself the creaturely comforts of food and drink. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness to doubt the power and promise of the word. But unlike Israel, Jesus overcame the temptation and passed the test. Jesus overcame temptation and passed the test, because He trusted the words of the Lord. He is the faithful seed of Israel and the true servant of the Lord for our salvation.

Jesus is the servant for our salvation, because He represented both the people of Israel in living in obedience to the law of the Lord, and all people, by sharing in our humanity; living a perfect life without sin. Jesus fulfilled the demands of two legal codes. The laws God commanded Israel to prove their obedience and the laws the Lord wrote on every human heart to express His holiness as our Creator. As the writer of Hebrews says *“He was tempted in every way as we are yet without sin.”* Jesus through His obedient life and sacrificial death, became the source of eternal salvation to all who come to Him and cling to Him in the obedience of faith. He calls us to Himself now! Jesus is the source of eternal salvation, because through His sinless life He earned salvation for all who come to Him in faith. Jesus is the source of eternal salvation, because through His innocent sacrificial death He paid the wages of sin which is death, which we earned through our sins and sinfulness. Jesus earned the salvation which He offers all to receive and gives as a free gift to all who receive Him in their hearts and believe in Him as their God and Saviour. He is the light who brings salvation to the ends of the earth.

Jesus is the servant of the Lord and the servant of all whom the Lord calls to Himself through faith in His name. Jesus serves us as the source of eternal salvation by His sinless life and sacrificial death. Jesus serves us by blessing us with His Holy Spirit to dwell within us, making our hearts His home and our bodies temples of His holiness. Jesus blesses us with the covering of His righteousness. The covering of His righteousness serves a twofold purpose. First, it covers our sinfulness so that rather than our sins, the Father sees Christ’s righteousness and sees us as children dearly loved. Secondly, the covering of His righteousness serves as a shield by which He deflects the flaming arrows of the devil who always seeks to lead us astray, even as he tempted Israel and Jesus in the wilderness. Jesus serves us by being our faithful and loving high priest. He calls us to Himself to receive mercy to help in time of need and grace to heal and raise us up when we fall and fail the test.

Jesus serves us that we may serve Him by making His name and salvation known in the lives of other people. The Father made Jesus the light for the nations that His salvation would reach to the ends of the earth. Jesus enlightens us with His salvation so that we in turn would enlighten others with the good news of peace with God through the forgiveness of His cross. God created Israel in the Old Testament to make His salvation known among the nations in the promise of the coming Saviour. God created the Christian church as the New Israel to make His salvation known among the nations in the Saviour who has come through birth in Bethlehem. We serve the Lord by proclaiming the name of Jesus through the words of our lips and the actions of our lives. We serve the Lord by making Jesus known as the Saviour of all people; speaking His word that through the working of the Holy Spirit, they too make believe and confess Him as their God and Saviour. God who has called us to Himself through faith in Jesus, bless us both to believe and to call others to Him, shining the light of Christ into their lives. He is the light of salvation to the ends of the earth. In Jesus' Name. Amen