Sunday, May 17, 2020

Lesson: Isaiah 49:1-10, 22; Time of Action: between 700 and 695 B.C.; Place of Action: Jerusalem

Golden Text: “And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth” (Isaiah 49:6).

I. INTRODUCTION. It has always been God’s intention to provide the blessings of salvation to every nation. Jesus died for the sins of the whole world (see I John 2:2), and everyone who believes in Him is has eternal life and the guarantee of His love. The Holy Scriptures were given to Israel and it was through them that God brought Jesus Christ into the world (see Romans 9:4-5). Jesus was sent to bring light to the world so that all who believe will be saved. In this week’s lesson we will examine the great prophecy that the Messiah would be a light to the Gentiles.

II. THE LESSON BACKGROUND. Isaiah, whose name means “salvation of the LORD” was the greatest of the writing prophets. According to Isaiah 1:1, he carried on his ministry during the reigns of four kings in the southern
kingdom of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. He served as God’s messenger to Judah for about sixty years (from around 740 to 680 B.C.), roughly a hundred years before the other three major writing prophets — Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. During that time, Samaria (also known as the northern kingdom of Israel) was carried away by the Assyrians between 722 and 721 B.C. and Judah was invaded by Sennacherib of Assyria in 701 B.C. While the political scene in Judah was different from the one in the northern kingdom of Israel or Samaria, the sins of the people were distressingly similar: idol worship, the oppression and marginalization of the poor for personal gain, and business practices that fundamentally threatened God’s Law (see Isaiah 1:1-23). Isaiah’s calling was to serve as God’s messenger before the people of Judah and proclaim their sinful behavior. Later in his ministry, the prophet insisted that his prophecies be recorded for future generations: “Go now, write it on a tablet...that it may be an everlasting witness. For these are rebellious people, deceitful children, children unwilling to listen to the LORD’S instruction” (Isaiah 30:8-13). The people’s sinfulness was demonstrated by their disregard for God’s law and His covenant claims on them as His people. The prophecies against God’s sinful people could be summarized as follows: “If those whom God has called to be His own act as if they are not His people, then they will not be a people at all.” In chapter 39, more than 100 years before it happened, Isaiah predicted that Judah would be invaded and taken into captivity to Babylon. In chapter 40 Isaiah prophesied the coming and mission of John the Baptist (see Isaiah 40:3-5). In chapter 43, he prophesied the future redemption and restoration of Israel (see Isaiah 43:1-7), and
in Isaiah 45:1-4, the prophet predicted that Cyrus, the future king of Persia, would release a remnant of the captives to return to Israel. In chapter 48, Isaiah reminded Judah of God’s promises to His people as well as what He had already done for them. Our lesson comes from chapter 49:

III. THE MESSIAH: GOD’S SERVANT (Isaiah 49:1-4)

A. The Servant’s call (Isaiah 49:1-2).

1. (vs. 1). This verse says “Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.” The message in the previous chapter was directed to the house of Jacob which was another name for Israel (see Isaiah 48:1-2). But this message comes from the future Messiah Himself and He speaks as if He had already come. His message is directed to the “isles,” a reference to the Gentiles who are also called “the isles of the Gentiles” (see Genesis 10:5), and “ye people from far” or afar off. All Gentile nations are called to “listen;” to hear and pay close attention. The Servant or the Messiah began by saying “The LORD has called me from the womb.” The word “called” refers to a divine commission or appointment. God had commissioned or appointed the Messiah and set Him apart for His mission before He was born, while He was yet in His mother’s “womb” (see Matthew 1:18-21; Luke 1:30-33). This was also said of Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 1:5), and the Apostle Paul
declared that he was separated to the apostleship from his mother’s “womb” (see Galatians 1:15). Then the Servant-Messiah went on to say “from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.” In other words, God the Father named Him in the body of His mother. Through an angel, God called Him “…Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins” (see Matthew 1:21). The word “bowels” here means “body” and can also be translated as “womb.” By the divine counsels (Father, Son and Holy Ghost), before the foundation of the world (see I Peter 1:19-20), Jesus was called to be the Savior from His mother’s “womb.”

2. (vs. 2). This verse says “And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me.” God had prepared and qualified Messiah for the service to which He was called. In doing so, the Messiah said that God “hath made my mouth like a sharp sword… and made me a polished shaft” or a bright arrow. These metaphors indicate that God furnished Messiah with everything He would need to fight God’s battles against the powers of darkness; to conquer Satan, and bring back to allegiance those who had revolted against God. This was done by His Word, that is the “two-edged sword” (see Hebrews 4:12) which comes out of His mouth (see Revelation 19:13-15). The Servant-Messiah goes on to say that “in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me... in his quiver hath he hid me.” The term “quiver” refers to the pouch that arrows were kept in by an archer. These phrases seem to allude to two things. First, concealment, or the LORD’s
hidden mysteries. For instance, the gospel of Jesus Christ and the fact that the Gentiles would be saved by it, were hidden in God from ages and generations (see Ephesians 3:4-6; Romans 16:25-26). Second, these phrases also seem to allude to the Messiah’s protection. Jesus Christ as a baby was sheltered and protected from the rage of Herod (see Matthew 2:13-19). But in a very real sense, the words “in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me... in his quiver hath he hid me” reveal the great care and protection that the Servant-Messiah received from His Father who had carefully prepared Him for His mission, keeping Him concealed and protected until just the right time (see Psalms 91:1). The Servant-Messiah was like a sharpened arrow ready for His appointed purpose.

B. The Servant’s faith (Isaiah 49:3-4)

1. (vs. 3). This verse says “And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” Some scholars see these words to be two clauses. They see the first clause “Thou art my servant” as referring to Christ, the Messiah who is God’s Servant (see Isaiah 42:1), and they interpret the second clause as “it is Israel in whom I will be glorified by thee.” Those scholars see this as referring to spiritual or saved Israel, who by Jesus Christ will glorify God. However, since the Servant-Messiah is the One prophetically speaking in this verse repeating what the Father said to Him, He refers to Himself as “Israel.” The Servant-Messiah can do that because He is foretold as the perfect representative of “Israel” (see Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:15). Therefore, it seems more likely that
both clauses “Thou art my servant, O Israel” and “in whom I will be glorified” are all God’s words about the Servant-Messiah. He is God’s Servant, and God would also “be glorified” through Him. This was confirmed when Jesus prayed that the Father would glorify His name and the Father replied that He had already glorified it and would continue to glorify it again (see John 12:28). This verse could also be translated as “And the Lord said to Me, “You are My Servant, Israel, In Whom I will show My glory” (Amplified Bible Translation).

2. (vs. 4). This verse says “Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.” In response to God’s words in the previous verse, the Servant-Messiah looks ahead to His first coming and issues what appears to be a complaint saying “I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain.” This points to the stubbornness of the Jews, to whom Jesus went in person preaching the gospel of the kingdom at His first coming. First, He complained that He “laboured in vain” or worked hard for nothing, because the Jews refused to hear and accept Him and His teachings. Second, He said “I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain.” In other words, He wore Himself out, using all His power, but nothing useful came of it. The rulers, and practically the whole nation rejected Him and His doctrine. Very few Jews became His disciples so we can understand why, being human, the Servant-Messiah would say, “I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought (nothing), and in
vain.” Jesus would preach so many sermons, perform so many miracles, but in His humanity it was all “in vain” or worthless because He didn’t see much success. Note: This was also Isaiah’s complaint, but it was no more than he was told to expect, (see Isaiah 6:8-12). A similar complaint tempted Jeremiah to decide that he wouldn’t labour for the LORD anymore (see Jeremiah 20:7-9). This is the same complaint of many faithful ministers who have given all of themselves and their strength laboring for the LORD. But, because they see no real results of their preaching, many ministers consider it all to be in vain and for nothing. But we must remain faithful and committed and not think that it’s a strange thing to be slighted when the Master Himself was also slighted. Although the nation of Israel as a whole would not repent as a result of Jesus’ ministry, He was confident that God the Father would see His “work” and reward Him for it (see Philippians 2:8-10). This is what the Servant-Messiah meant when He said “yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.” If Christ is faithful, and He was, His “judgment is with the LORD,” who will justify Him even though men condemn Him and refuse to give Him His “props” so to speak. Jesus’ reward for His work is with His God, who will make sure that He loses nothing and gains everything. As believers in Jesus Christ, we can have the same confidence that our labor for God is not in vain (see I Corinthians 15:57-58). Note: As faithful ministers, when we see little or no success of our work for Christ, there are a couple of things that we can be confident in. First, no matter what things look like to us, our labor for the LORD is a righteous cause that we are
pleading. We are with God and for God. We are on His side and workers together with Him (see II Corinthians 6:1). And remember, we may never know who has received our gospel message and who has not. That’s God’s business. The unbelief of men should give us no reason to doubt the truth of our doctrine (see Romans 3:3). Second, faithful ministers can be confident that God knows our work. We can appeal to Him concerning our sincerity knowing that He knows that it was not through any neglect on our part that our labour seems in vain. On a personal basis, speaking for myself, like the Messiah says here, “my judgment is with the LORD,” to determine whether or not I have labored for Him with all my soul and left the blood of those who refuse to listen on their own heads” (see Joshua 2:18-19). Finally, faithful ministers can be confident in the fact that even if our labor or work does not seem to be successful to us, the LORD will see to it that it is carried on to success, according to His purpose, in His own way and time.

IV. THE MESSIAH: A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES (Isaiah 49:5-8)

A. A message of hope (Isaiah 49:5-6).

1. (vs. 5). This verse says “And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be
not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.” The phrase “And now, saith the LORD” lets us know that God is about to reply to the Servant-Messiah’s complaint in the previous verse. God’s Servant-Messiah repeats what He said in verse 1 that “the LORD” had “formed me from the womb to be his servant.” God not only called Him early to His mission (see Isaiah 49:1), but He also began early to prepare Him for it. Likewise, those whom God designs to use as His servants He fashions and prepares them long before they or anyone else is aware of it. It is God who forms the spirit of man within him (see Zechariah 12:1). Christ was to be “his (God's) servant, to bring Jacob again to him;” a nation that had treacherously departed from God. The seed of “Jacob” also called Israel (see Genesis 32:28) must first be dealt with, and Jesus Christ, the Messiah, God’s Servant is the One God will use to bring them back to Him. Jesus and the Word of salvation that He preached were sent to the Jews first. Actually, Jesus came in person to the Jew only, “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (see Matthew 10:5-7; 15:23-25). The Servant also said “Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.” In other words, even if “Israel” does not respond positively to Jesus’ ministry, He would still receive glory and “strength” from God. It is true that only a few from the Jewish nation were converted by Jesus’ preaching and miracles, and many of them rejected Him, yet God honored Him, and made Jesus “glorious” at His baptism (see Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22), and in His transfiguration (See Matthew 17:1-2; Mark 9:2-3). God also spoke to Him from heaven, sent angels
to minister to Him, and made even His shameful death glorious; and even more glorious was His resurrection which was witnessed by many (see I Corinthians 15:1-8). In Jesus’ sufferings God was His “strength,” although He met with unimaginable discouragement from the people whom He had done so much for. And when He may have been discouraged, God sent an angel from heaven to strengthen Him (see Luke 22:41-43). Although faithful ministers may not see the fruit of our labors, we will still be accepted by God, and being accepted by Him, we will be truly glorious, for His favour is our honour (see Romans 8:17-18; II Corinthians 4:17; II Thessalonians 2:13-14; I Peter 1:7; II Peter 1:3).

2. (vs. 6). This verse says “And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” The Servant-Messiah continued to reveal what God the Father said to Him: “And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel.” I’m sure that many Jews who heard this prophecy from Isaiah thought that this was a strange thing to say. He had already prophesied the future Babylonian Captivity as well as their release to return to their homeland (see Isaiah 39:1-8; 43:1-7; 45:1-4; see also Ezra 1:1-4; II Chronicles 36:22). So, undoubtedly for them, returning from a captivity that had yet taken place and restored to their homeland was much more than “a light thing” or a small thing. What they didn’t realize was that God was talking about the future restoration
of “Israel” to the Promised Land that would last into eternity. In the eyes of God even that was “a light thing” because He had more in store for the Messiah to accomplish that would surpass what He had planned for “the tribes of Jacob” meaning the nation “Israel.” Then God also said to His Servant-Messiah “I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” Not only would Jesus fulfill His mission to restore future Israel to their own land, He would also fulfill the mission that the nation of Israel failed to accomplish—to be “a light to the Gentiles” as the LORD’S witnesses to them (see Isaiah 43:8-12). Of course, the word “Gentiles” means nations and particularly anyone who is not a Jew. That would include a lot more people than the remnant of saved Jews. Therefore, being “a light to the Gentiles” would be greater than redeeming and restoring the smaller nation of Israel. As the “light to the Gentiles,” Jesus Christ will be the Savior to all the peoples of the world. The phrase “that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth” means that God’s redemption and deliverance from sin will stretch to the farthest “end of the earth.” At a future time, many great and mighty nations by the gospel of Jesus Christ will be brought to the knowledge and worship of the only true God. The fact that Jesus Christ will be “a light to the Gentiles” should not be surprising to any believer since He is the very Word of God (see John 1:1) who said “I am the light of the world” (see John 8:12). Christ is given for “a light” to all those to whom He is given for salvation. It is in darkness that men perish. Christ enlightens men’s eyes, making them holy and happy. As members of the body of Christ, the church, we share with Jesus in bringing this verse,
Isaiah 49:6, to fulfillment as we spread the gospel to all nations (see Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 13:44-49).

B. A message of a successful mission (Isaiah 49:7-8).

1. (vs. 7). This verse says “Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.” Here, the Servant-Messiah tells us that God the Father is speaking and identifies Himself as “the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One.” As “the Redeemer of Israel” the people would be reminded of God’s deliverance of His people from Egypt, and as “his (Israel’s) Holy One,” the people would be reminded of the LORD’S “holy” presence at Mount Sinai (see Exodus 19:9-25). The Messiah said “Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth.” The pronoun “him” here refers to the Servant-Messiah whom God is speaking to. As God speaks to Him, He describes the Servant-Messiah first as “him whom man despiseth” (see Isaiah 53:3). To be “despised” by such a creature as man, who is himself called a worm (see Job 25:6) speaks of the lowest and most contemptible condition imaginable. Man, whom Jesus Christ came to save and to honor, “despised” Him, and His persecutors were also wretchedly ungrateful. God also describes His Servant-Messiah as “him whom the nation abhorreth.” The Jews
treated Him like He was the worst of men, and cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him” (see Luke 23:21; John 19:6). His cross was to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Gentiles it was foolishness (see I Corinthians 1:23). God also described the Servant as “a servant of rulers” meaning that He would be subject to kings, even though He is King of kings (see I Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; 19:16). Although wrongly, Pilate boasted of his power over Him (see John 19:10). But Jesus submitted to it for our salvation. Then God made a promise to His Servant-Messiah. He promised that “Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship.” In other words, “kings” will “see” Him and stand to honor Him, and “princes” or great leaders will bow down to Him. This will all happen “because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.” This means that God will keep these promises to His Servant-Messiah because He is “faithful” or can be trusted, and as “the Holy One of Israel” God chose Jesus for His mission. When God fulfills these promises it will be evidence that Christ had a commission which He finished (see John 19:30), and that God had chosen Him and would stand by the choice He had made.

2. (vs. 8). This verse says “Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages.” Now God tells the Servant-Messiah that He will stand by Him throughout His mission. God said “In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I
helped thee.” The phrases “an acceptable time” and “in a day of salvation” are synonymous, meaning they both refer to the same time period of the gospel. Both phrases have a double fulfillment. First, they would be fulfilled when the gospel was preached at Jesus’ first advent. Second, and the ultimate fulfillment, will be during Christ’s thousand-year reign on earth—the millennium. God said that during that “acceptable time... have I heard thee.” That is, God will hear Christ who “in the days of his flesh, offered up strong cries, and was heard” (see Hebrews 5:7-8). Christ knew that the Father always “heard” Him (see John 11:42). God “heard” Him when He prayed for Himself (even though the cup would not pass from Him, yet He was enabled to drink it). God “heard” Him when He prayed for all who are His (see John 17:9-26). For sure, all our happiness results from the Son’s frequent intercessions for us, for God the Father always “heard” Him. This makes the period of the gospel “an acceptable time,” because when we trust the gospel we are accepted of God and saved. We are both reconciled to Him, because God hears the Redeemer when He intercedes for us (see Hebrews 7:25). God also said “and in a day of salvation have I helped thee.” This means that during Jesus’ ministry, God helped Him go through with His mission of salvation. Then God said “and I will preserve thee.” God would not allow any harm to come to Him until His mission was finished, and then He would raise Jesus giving Him victory over death. The Father was always with Him, and did not leave Him when His disciples did. Our LORD Jesus was attacked by the powers of darkness to keep Him from His mission (see Matthew 4:1-11), but God promises to “preserve” Him and enable Him to persevere even though
there was opposition on all sides. We can rejoice in the fact that since Jesus was “preserved” that means that Christianity and Christians are also “preserved.” In the last part of this verse God said to His Servant-Messiah, I will “give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages.” Jesus Christ will be the guarantee of the treaty or “covenant” of peace between God and man. Although all of God’s ancient “covenant” promises to Israel will be realized through the Messiah, the term “covenant” here most likely refers to the new “covenant” through which multitudes of people, both Jews and Gentiles will come to know God through Jesus Christ (see Matthew 26:27-28; Hebrews 8:6-13). Through this new “covenant,” the kingdom promises to Israel will be fulfilled and the destructions of a sin-cursed world will be removed. God also sent His Servant, the Messiah “to cause the desolate heritages to be inherited.” In the last stages of the Jewish nation, it was a country laid waste, but will again be replenished by those saved by the preaching of the gospel.

V. THE MESSIAH: A RESTORER OF ISRAEL (Isaiah 49:9-10, 22)

A. A joyous result for Israel (Isaiah 49:9-10).

1. (vs. 9). This verse says “That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their
pastures shall be in all high places.” Here God said that a major reason why Christ will establish the covenant was “That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.” The Servant-Messiah will free the souls of men from the bondage of sin and corruption and bring them into the glorious liberty of God’s children. He shall “say to the prisoners” who were bound under the power of Satan, “Go forth.” God’s pardoning mercy releases us from the curse of the law (see Galatians 3:13), and His renewing grace releases us from the dominion of sin (see Romans 6:14). It is the Servant-Messiah who says, “Go forth.” Therefore, it is the Son who makes us free, and then we are free indeed (see John 8:36). The Servant-Messiah will also say “to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.” When the Messiah brings people who were once “in darkness” of sin into His marvelous light (see I Peter 2:9), they are commanded to “Shew yourselves.” They are to be seen because they are now lights of the world (see Matthew 5:14). Once converted, Israel comes out of the “darkness” so that they can be seen as redeemed. God said “They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.” Using the analogy of sheep as He often does, God declares that redeemed Israel, like sheep who are well provided for, will “feed in the ways” meaning they shall eat along the roads they travel. In addition, like sheep, God said that “their pastures shall be in all high places” meaning that they will find food even on empty hills. At God’s pleasure, even highway ground will be good ground for the sheep of His “pastures” to feed in. “Their pastures” won’t only be in the valleys, but also “in all high places,” which are
normally dry and barren areas. Wherever God brings His people He will make sure that they will not lack anything that’s good for them (see Psalms 34:10).

2. (vs. 10). This verse says “They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.” The LORD God continued to say here that His people “shall not hunger nor thirst.” God’s people will be so well provided for that they will never be hungry or thirsty, for God will provide what they need even before their need for it arises. The LORD also said “neither shall the heat nor sun smite them.” They shall be sheltered and protected from everything, even from the “heat” of the “sun.” Of course, the phrase “he that hath mercy on them” refers to God Himself. In His mercy, God “shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.” This is another sheep analogy. Like a shepherd who cares for his sheep, God, who “hath mercy on them” when He brings Israel out of their captivity to sin, “shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them” just as He led their fathers in the wilderness by a pillar of cloud and fire. Those who are under God’s divine guidance, and follow it closely, will be provided for with divine comforts and satisfactions. The world leads its followers with broken cisterns (see Jeremiah 2:13) or brooks that fail in summer; but God leads those that are His by “springs of water” that will never run dry. God’s Servant-Messiah will restore Israel to their land. All captives will be brought home, and food and drink will be abundant so that no one hungers or thirsts.
B. A joyous result for Gentiles (Isaiah 49:22). Our final verse says “Thus saith the LORD God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.” Up to this point, the Servant-Messiah and God the Father have spoken through Isaiah concerning the salvation and restoration of Israel. Now in this verse Isaiah speaks directly to Israel telling them how “the Gentiles” will be called in to the LORD’S fold, for “The LORD God” said, “Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles,” to invite or call them to come to Him, after having for centuries stretched out His “hand” in vain to the Jews (see Isaiah 65:2-3). Of course, this invitation is given by God’s Spirit and grace, to compel the Gentiles (see Luke 14:22-23) and make them willing to come in. “The LORD” also said I will “set up my standard to the people.” The word “standard” here most likely refers to the preaching of the everlasting gospel (see Revelation 14:6), to which the “Gentiles” will come. When the Gentile nations accept the gospel message, God said that they will honor Israel, for “they shall bring thy (your) sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.” This appears to mean that the saved “Gentiles” will help the “sons” and “daughters” of Israel who live among them, to return to their own country. Both phrases, “in their arms” and “shall be carried upon their shoulders” indicate that “the Gentiles” will bring descendants of Israel who are scattered over the world back to their homeland with as much tenderness as a parent carrying a child that was weak and helpless. It is true that God can raise up friends for
returning Israelites, even among “Gentiles.” How wonderful it is to know that in the midst of God’s promises to the Jewish nation in the Old Testament, He also included “the Gentiles,” which includes you and me. **Note:** Since many prophecies can refer to one or more future circumstances, let’s remember that even though parts of Isaiah’s prophecy here can refer to Israel’s return from the Babylonian captivity, the ultimate fulfillment of it all will be during Christ’s millennial reign when saved Jews return to Israel from all parts of the earth where they have been dispersed over the centuries.

**VI. Conclusion.** Isaiah prophesied that God would make Jesus Christ a “light to the Gentiles.” This is a powerful illustration that Jesus used (see John 8:12). Isaiah paints a picture of the Gentiles sitting in darkness without the light of truth and without hope of salvation (see Isaiah 9:1-2). Isaiah repeatedly used the image of light as that which offers hope and salvation (see Isaiah 60:1). Jesus is the Light to all believers, and those who know Him have the privilege and opportunity to introduce others to the Light. God has set the church in the world to “shine as lights” (see Philippians 2:15). We are to be lights that lead others to **The Light**!
Sunday, May 17, 2020: “A Light for the Gentiles” Commentary (The UGP Curriculum)

Curriculum; The Bible Expositor and Illuminator***