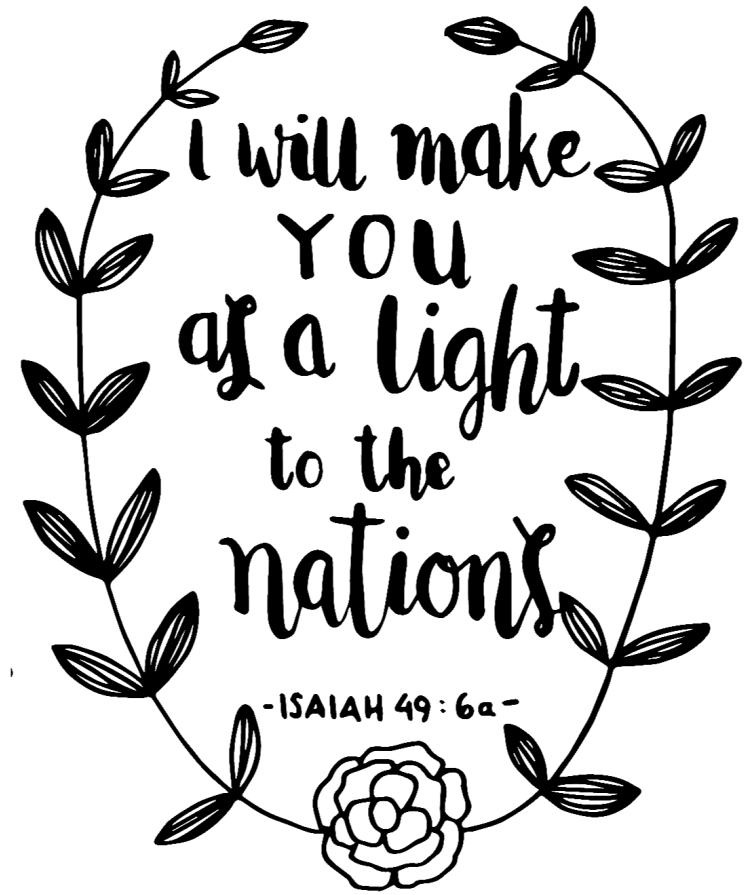


Questions for Reflection

1. We live in a public story. What do you find most challenging about God's plan to make his church a "display people" for the nations?
2. We live in a private story. That is, while the ways of the Lord may look like "wisdom, understanding, and laws" to the nations, we know they are really a result of the closeness of God to us. Look at quote #2. How do God's laws reflect the loving heart of a father?
3. We live in a shared story. We are called to "pass on" this story to the next generation. What about the story of redemption in your own life would you like to pass on?



Envy of the Nations

January 26, 2020 | Deuteronomy 4:1-14 | Pastor Roger Williams

If the church is to be a "come and join us" people who embody the coming kingdom of God in the midst of the world, of necessity their lives must exhibit a redemptive tension with and a challenge to the idolatrous cultures of the world, including Western culture...The early Christians understood themselves to be different from others in their culture, and lived together as an alternative community nourished by an alternative story.

-Michael Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 6-7

God has brought his people into a story for the sake of the nations.

Deuteronomy 4:1-14

¹ “And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. ² You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you. ³ Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal-peor, for the LORD your God destroyed from among you all the men who followed the Baal of Peor. ⁴ But you who held fast to the LORD your God are all alive today. ⁵ See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶ Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’

A public story

⁷ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? ⁸ And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

A private story

⁹ “Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children— ¹⁰ how on the day that you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, the LORD said to me, ‘Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.’ ¹¹ And you came near

and stood at the foot of the mountain, while the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, wrapped in darkness, cloud, and gloom. ¹² Then the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice. ¹³ And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone. ¹⁴ And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and rules, that you might do them in the land that you are going over to possess.

A shared story

-
1. The message of Israel’s corporate life was to be “this is where history is going— come and join us.”
-Michael Goheen, *Light to the Nations*, 51.
 2. Israel’s life is to be distinctive as it embodies God’s decrees and laws—the Torah given from the loving heart of a Father not to restrict his people’s lives but to lead them to the abundant life God intended for all humanity in creation—the life that he will restore in the new creation.
-Michael Goheen, *Light to the Nations*, 52.
 3. God converts the nations by working in the midst of His own People. His interventions and these alone make Israel the light of the world. The Church does the work of evangelization in the measure in which its Lord gives it life; when it lives by Him, its very existence is effective...The evangelization of the world is not primarily a matter of words or deeds: it is a matter of presence—the presence of the People of God in the midst of mankind and the presence of God in the midst of his People.
-Robert Martin-Achard, *A Light to the Nations*, 79
 4. Mission is not primarily about *going*. Nor is mission primarily about *doing* anything. Mission is about *being*. It is about being a distinctive kind of people, a countercultural...community among the nations.
- Vinoth Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission*, 171.