

Isaiah 45:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

Analysis

God explains why He uses Cyrus: 'For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect.' Cyrus is instrument, Israel is purpose. God surnamed Cyrus (gave him a title/designation) though Cyrus 'hast not known me.' The pagan conqueror unknowingly serves the God he doesn't worship - a profound statement of divine sovereignty.

Historical Context

Cyrus's famous Cylinder (discovered 1879) records his religious tolerance but shows no knowledge of Yahweh. He attributed his success to Marduk. Yet Isaiah reveals the true source of his power.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God work through people who don't know Him to accomplish His purposes?

2. What comfort comes from knowing God uses even unwitting instruments for His elect's sake?

Interlinear Text

לִּמְ עֶן	עַבְדִּי	יַעֲקֹב	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּחֵירָי	וְאֶקְרָא
H4616	my servant's	For Jacob	sake and Israel	mine elect	I have even called
	H5650	H3290	H3478	H972	H7121
לְךָ	בְּשֵׁם־ךָ	אֲכַנֶּךָ	וְלֹא	יָדַעְתָּנִי:	
H0	thee by thy name	I have surnamed	H3808	thee though thou hast not known	
	H8034	H3655		H3045	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 44:1 (References Israel): Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:

Acts 17:23 (Parallel theme): For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

Romans 11:7 (References Israel): What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded