

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

תָּקַרְבָּ אֶל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּחִירִי לְמַעַן
I have even called mine elect sake and Israel For Jacob my servant's

H4616 H5650 H3290 H3478 H972 H7121

לְךָ בְּשָׁמֶן אֶכְתָּב אֶל־אֶתְּנָא
I have surnamed thee though thou hast not known thee by thy name

H8034 H3655 H3808 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