

Isaiah 44-45 **I Have Called Thee By Thy Name**

Historical Context:

722 BC	Assyria Conquered Samaria/Israel/Ten Tribes
715 BC	Hezekiah – a Righteous King for Judah/Jerusalem
701 BC	Assyrian Sennacherib Conquered Philistia and Most of Judah, Threatens Jerusalem – The Lord Fights for Judah
609 BC	Babylon Conquered Assyria
587 BC	Babylon Conquered Jerusalem
539 BC	Medes/Persians Conquered Babylon
538/7 BC	Cyrus Allows Jews to Return to Jerusalem/Build Temple

Isaiah Prophesied *about* 740 B.C. – 692 B.C.

“When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.” Deut. 32:8-9

“But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy/my name; thou art mine.” Isa. 43:1

“What’s in a name?” Shakespeare queried (*Romeo and Juliet*). Our reading of the scriptures might lead us to answer Shakespeare with these words: “What’s in a name? According to the Lord, a great deal!”

The term “name” is used 1866 times in the scriptures. The Lord named many individuals before they were born. Often, their names indicated their role or mission, such as Adam, whose name means “man,” or “mankind,” and Eve, whose name means “mother of all living.” The use of one’s name by the Lord is significant, evidence of His foreknowledge and of His particular interest in the welfare and mission of each individual.

Joseph McConkie adds: “Personal names served as miniature biographies, descriptions of character, testimonies or expressions of praise to God, reminders of significant events, and divine warning. In short, Bible names served as memorials, symbols and prophecies” (*Gospel Symbolism*, 173).

The names of the two sons of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, mean respectively, “God hears,” and “Laughter.” Sarah laughed when she learned that she would bear a son well past her reproductive years (see Gen. 18:12-15), and “Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed” when God renewed that promise with him (see Gen. 17:17). It was during that renewal of the covenant that the Lord instructed: “Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac” (Gen. 17:19), thus reminding his parents forever of the joy and delight they felt in bringing forth their only son.

The Lord gave instructions for the naming of John (the Baptist), whose name means “Yahweh is gracious,” and for Isaiah’s sons, Maher-shalal-hash-baz: “To speed the spoil; he hasteneth the prey,” and Shear-Jashub: “The remnant shall return.”

The names of the twelve tribes of Israel also have meaning:

Reuben: Look, a son!	Gad: Good Fortune
Simeon: Hearing	Asher: Happy, Blessed
Levi: Joined and pledged	Issachar: A Reward
Judah: Praise	Zebulun: Honor Me; Exalted Abode
Dan: He has judged or vindicated	Joseph: To Add, To Gather
Naphtali: My Wrestling	Benjamin: Son of My Right Hand

Ephraim: Fruitful in the land of my affliction
Manasseh: God hath made me forget all my toil

Aaron, and the high priests who followed after him, wore a breastplate with the names of the tribes of Israel engraved over his heart, and the names were also engraved on stones that he wore over each shoulder (Ex. 28:9-12, 29). This is beautifully symbolic of the fact that our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, keeps our names in remembrance before Him, even as He has “graven [us] upon the palms of [His] hands” (Isa. 49:16).

Ezekiel and John foresaw the Millennial city of Jerusalem, with the names of the tribes of Israel engraved upon each of the gates (Ezek. 48:31-34; Rev. 21:12). In the same vision, Ezekiel saw a new name for the city of Jerusalem: “The Lord is there” (Ezek. 48:35).

The Lord, Himself, has many names, and names yet to be revealed (see Rev. 19:12). Some of His names include:

The Everlasting God (Gen. 21:33)
The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex. 3:15)
God Almighty, Jehovah (Ex. 6:3; Ps. 83:18)
Jealous (Ex. 34:14)
THE LORD THY GOD (Deut. 28:58)
The Lord of Hosts (2 Sam. 6:2)
Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6)
Thy Maker, Husband, Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel, The God of the whole earth, (Isa. 54:5)
The High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, (Isa. 57:15)
THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, (Jer. 23:6)
The BRANCH, (Zeph. 6:12)
Dreadful, (Mal. 1:14)
Sun of Righteousness, (Mal. 4:2)
The Good Shepherd, (John 10)
The Lamb, (Rev. 14:1)
Word of God, (Rev. 19:13)
KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, (Rev. 19:16)
Jesus Christ, the Son of God, (2 Ne. 25:9)
Endless, (D&C 19:10)
Almighty, Endless, (Moses 1:3)
Man of Holiness, Man of Counsel, (Moses 7:35)

“The name ‘Jesus’ is an Anglicized form of the Greek name Yesous found in the New Testament, which represented the Hebrew name Yeshua. Yeshua, in turn, was a shortened form of the name Yehoshua (‘Joshua’ in English Bibles). ‘Yehoshua’ is a compound name consisting of two elements. (1) The prefix ‘Yeho’ is an abbreviation of the Tetragrammaton, God’s Four-Letter Name: Yod-He-Vav-He of YHVH. In the Hebrew Bible ‘Yeho’ is used at the beginning of certain proper names: Jehoshaphat, Jehoiachin, Jehonathan (the ‘J’ was pronounced as ‘Y’ in Medieval English). The suffix form of the Tetragrammaton is ‘yah’ (‘iah’ in Greek, as in Isaiah, Jeremiah,

Zechariah, or Hallelujah). (2) The second element is a form of the Hebrew verb *yasha* which means to deliver, save, or rescue. Thus, linguistically, the name Yehoshua/Yeshua/Jesus conveys the idea that God (YHVH) delivers (his people)” (<http://www.hebrew-streams.org/frontstuff/jesus-yeshua.html>). It can also be interpreted as “Through Yahweh is Salvation.”

The scriptures reveal the fact that there is a Book of Life, wherein the names of the righteous are written (see Num. 1:18; Isa. 66:22; Mal. 3:16; Luke 10:20; Philip. 4:3; Rev. 3:5, 13:8, 178:8; Mosiah 6:1; Alma 5:58; 3 Ne. 24:16; Moroni 6:4; D&C 76:68, 85:7, 88:2). Conversely, to have one’s “name blotted out” is a great condemnation (see Deut. 7:24, 9:14, 29:20; Ps. 9:5, 109:13; Isa. 14:22; Mosiah 5:11, 26:36; Alma 1:24, 5:57, 6:3; Moroni 6:7; D&C 20:83, 85:11).

In the latter context, of having one’s name “blotted out,” it is of note to recognize that one of the goals of wicked king Nimrod in building the Tower of Babel was to “make a name for [themselves]” (Gen. 11:4). This is in contrast to the Lord’s declaration that it was He, the Lord, who had “made [David] a great name” (2 Sam. 7:9).

The Lord provides names for sacred places, such as Bethel (Gen. 12:8, 2 Kings 2:20), Jehovah-Jireh (Gen. 22:14); Rehoboth (Gen. 26:22); Beersheba (Gen. 26:33); Peniel (Gen. 32:30); Gilgal (Josh. 5:9); Sinai (Ex. 19:11); Ebenezer (1 Sam. 7:12); Jerusalem (1 Kings 11:36); and Gethsemane (Mark 14:2).

There are also names for places of despair, or names of condemnation: Mariah (Ex. 17:7); Kibroth-hattaavah (Num. 11:34); Aholah, Aholibah (Ezek. 23:4); Jezebel (Hosea 1:4); Loruhamah (Hosea 1:6); Death and Hell (Rev. 6:8); Wormwood (Rev. 8:11); the name of blasphemy (Rev. 13:1, 17:3); the name of the Beast (Rev. 13:7, 14:11); MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH (Rev. 17:5); and Desolation (Alma 46:17).

The Lord “calleth the stars by their names” (Ps. 147:4; Isa. 40:26; Abr. :1-16; Moses 1:37), and therefore, knows all of the names of His children.

The Lord uses an individual’s name when calling them to discipleship, such as the callings of Samuel (1 Sam. 3:10), Moses (Moses 1:6), Saul/Paul (Acts 9:1-20), Mary (Martha’s sister; Luke 10:38-42), and Joseph Smith (JSH 1:33).

The Lord changes the name of an individual, or bestows a new name, to signify a deepening relationship of covenant status between that person and Himself. Examples include Abraham, whose name means “Father of many nations,” and Israel, whose name means “He perseveres with God”; or “Let God prevail.” In the latter case, it is of note that Israel’s former name, Jacob, means “Supplanter.” The Lord also changed Simon’s name to Peter, or *Cephas*, meaning “Seer, Stone or Rock” (see JST 1:42; also *Ensign*, “I Have a Question,” Jan. 1986).

Through Isaiah, the Lord promises to give a name unto His sons and daughters who enter into the temple that is “better than of sons and of daughters”; even “an everlasting name that shall not be cut off” (Isa. 56:5). In other verses, the Lord refers to giving “a new name” unto His covenant children at some future date (Isa. 62:2; Rev. 2:17; D&C 130:11).

One’s deepening relationship with Deity is symbolized by progressive steps in giving and in receiving names. One goes from one’s given name (hopefully inspired by the Lord), to a new name received when entering into covenants, to receiving the Lord’s own name, much as the potter approves his finished work by placing his stamp upon it. The Lord bestows His name upon people and places. “In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee” He has promised (Ex. 20:24).

The Temple:

But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come (Deut. 12:5).

And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God, as the Lord spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name (1 Kings 5:5).

For thou knowest that we have done this work through great tribulation; and out of poverty we have given of our substance to build a house to thy name, that the Son of Man might have a place to manifest himself to his people (D&C 109:5).

The Church:

Ye shall call the church in my name (3 Ne. 27:7).

The Children of Israel:

And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them (Num. 6:27; Deut. 28:10; 1 Sam. 12:22; 1 Chr. 17:21; Isa. 43:7, 63:19; Dan. 9:19; Mosiah 26:18).

I will write upon Him the name of my God (Rev. 3:12; D&C 109:22; Abr. 1:18).

His name written in their foreheads (Rev. 14:1, 22:4; D&C 133:18).

Ye must take upon you the name of Christ, which is my name (3 Ne. 27:5; Mosiah 5:7, 26:24; Acts 4:12; 2 Ne. 31:13; Mosiah 1:11-12, 5:7-9; Ether 4:19; D&C 18:21).

To go forth “in the name of the Lord” is an honor and a sacred commission. This includes the Savior’s instruction to “Do it in my name” (3 Ne. 27:7), even as He did all that He did in the name of the Father (John 5:19-20, 43; 8:38; 17:6, 26).

It is the Lord’s desire “that [His] name may be declared throughout all the earth (Ex. 9:16; Deut. 32:3; Josh. 9:9; 1 Kings 8:42-43; Acts 1:8; Rom. 9:17). He will also work “For [His] name’s sake” (Isa. 48:9; Jer. 14:7; Ezek. 20:9, 44; 36:21-22; 43:7-8; Matt. 10:22; 24:9; Luke 21:17; Acts 5:41; 1 Pet. 4:14; D&C 98:13; 112:11). This means that He will move to defend His name, to bring glory to His name, and to keep covenant for His name’s sake.

We are strictly warned that we are “not [to] take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,” which includes speaking falsely in His name, or taking His name and not keeping covenant with Him (Ex. 20:7; Lev. 19:12; 22:32; 24:16; Deut. 5:11; 18:20; Isa. 52:5; Jer. 14:14; 29:9; 44:26; Amos 2:7; Matt. 24:5; 2 Tim. 2:19; James 2:7; Rev. 16:9; 2 Ne. 26:32; D&C 50:4; 63:61-62).

We know that because of the Atonement, Jesus’ name is “a name above all others,” and that there “is no other name” by which we achieve salvation:

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father (Philip. 2:9-11).

And moreover, I say unto you, that there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent (Mosiah 3:17).

And under this head ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives (Mosiah 5:8).

Behold, Jesus Christ is the name which is given of the Father, and there is none other name given whereby man can be saved (D&C 18:23).

With this context, we now turn to chapters 44-45 of Isaiah, where names play a significant role, beginning with verses 1-5:

Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:

Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb,
which will help thee;
Fear not, O Jacob, my servant;
and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.

For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground:
I will pour my spirit upon thy seed,
and my blessing upon thine offspring:

And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.

One shall say, I am the Lord's;
and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob;
and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord,
and surname himself by the name of Israel (Isa. 44:1-5).

Verse one begins with the birth name of the patriarch Jacob, and moves in sequence to the name given to Jacob as part of the covenant, Israel. The term Jesurun, or Jeshurun, is found in the book of Deuteronomy, and is meant to indicate "the upright one," or a goal for which all covenant members of Israel should seek to attain (see footnote Deut. 33:26a, also Deut. 32:15). It is the "upright one" in verse two, that the Lord has "chosen."

Those who honor their covenants with the Lord will partake of Living Waters, and their seed will spring up, also rooted in the Living Waters. It is only through the covenant that we have eternal increase, or eternal families.

Verse 5 describes various ways in which individuals come into the covenant family: 1) they will call themselves by the Lord's name, 2) they shall be adopted into Jacob's family - or they shall be natural inheritors of Israel and recognize that blood kinship, 3) another shall "subscribe" or write upon himself the name of the Lord, 4) and another will accept adoption into the family of Israel. In all of these cases, note the emphasis on the importance of the name(s).

The Lord then proceeds to reveal some of His own names, each of them descriptive of His various characteristics:

Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel,
and his redeemer the Lord of hosts;
I am the first, and I am the last;
and beside me there is no God (Isa. 44:6).

The next verses address those who take the name of God in vain, or who give the name of God to false and foolish creations made by men's hands:

And who, as I, shall call,
and shall declare it,
and set it in order for me,
since I appointed the ancient people?
and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them.

Fear ye not, neither be afraid:
have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it?
ye are even my witnesses.
Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.

They that make a graven image are all of them vanity;
and their delectable things shall not profit;
and they are their own witnesses;
they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.

Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing?

Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed:
and the workmen, they are of men:
let them all be gathered together, let them stand up;
yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together.

The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals,
and fashioneth it with hammers,
and worketh it with the strength of his arms:
yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth:
he drinketh no water, and is faint.

The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line;
he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass,
and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man;
that it may remain in the house.

He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak,
which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest:
he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it.

Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself;
yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread;
yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it;
he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.

He burneth part thereof in the fire;
with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied:
yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire:

And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image:
he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith,
Deliver me; for thou art my god.

They have not known or understood:
for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see;
and their hearts, that they cannot understand.

And none considereth in his heart,
neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say,
I have burned part of it in the fire;
yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof;
I have roasted flesh, and eaten it:
and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination?
shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?

He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside,
that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say,
Is there not a lie in my right hand? (Isa. 44:7-20).

The Lord wonders that men are so blind and lacking in understanding that they can take a tree that has grown because of the seed, air and water provided by God, and use part of it to make a fire to keep themselves warm, part of it to heat and cook their meals, and then use the remainder to fashion a false image and worship it. They make the idol in the image of a man, and yet, the Lord reasons, the very man who makes it becomes faint with hunger and thirst, and needs restoration and nourishment that only the Lord can provide for him. This is the ultimate example of “taking the Lord’s name in vain,” as they call their creations “god.”

The Lord seeks to correct this stunted view by reminding His people Who He is, and who they are. In doing so, He uses their names in the call of discipleship and covenant, and reveals more of Himself through the use of names and titles:

Remember these, O Jacob and Israel;
for thou art my servant:
I have formed thee;
thou art my servant:
O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me (Isa. 44:21).

In the former verses, the foolish men had formed their gods with their hands, and in their own image, but here, God reminds His children that in fact HE has formed THEM (and in HIS image). He goes further to remind them that as covenant Israel, they are formed to serve Him. Those who seek after false gods often reverse this role, looking for their idols to serve them.

I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions,
and, as a cloud, thy sins:
return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it:
shout, ye lower parts of the earth:
break forth into singing, ye mountains,
O forest, and every tree therein:
for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob,
and glorified himself in Israel (Isa. 44:22-23).

Here, the Lord speaks as if the redemption has already occurred. He has given His word that it shall be so, and because His word is sure, all can rely upon it. Adam and Eve partook of the Atonement before the Savior actually performed it in mortality, as did Abraham, Sarah, and the other great and righteous mothers and fathers who preceded Jesus in mortality. In that same spirit, the Lord compares the sureness of His own word in bringing forth all creation, and in keeping His covenant promises through those who have the authority to speak in His name, to those who speak in “vain,” using His name to their own purposes:

Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb,
I am the Lord that maketh all things;
that stretcheth forth the heavens alone;
that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad;
that turneth wise men backward,
and maketh their knowledge foolish;

That confirmeth the word of his servant,
and performeth the counsel of his messengers;
that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited;
and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built,
and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

That saith to the deep, be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers (Isa. 44:24-27).

Even as the earth was formed, light was provided, and animals placed thereon at the word of the Lord, so His word, given in His name, through His servants, is accomplished throughout time. He “confirms the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers.” In that light, the Lord now introduces a future gentile king that He will use as a servant to perform His will. This future king, Cyrus, will believe and obey the will of the Lord because the Lord has called him by name more than 100 years prior to his birth:

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd,
and shall perform all my pleasure:
even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built;
and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

Thus said the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have holden,
to subdue nations before him;
and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates;
and the gates shall not be shut;

I will go before thee,
and make the crooked places straight:
I will break in pieces the gates of brass,
and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

And I will give thee the treasures of darkness,
and hidden riches of secret places,
that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name,
and the God of Israel.

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.

I am the Lord, and there is none else,
there is no God beside me:
I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west,
that there is none beside me.
I am the Lord, and there is none else.

I form the light, and create darkness:
I make peace, and create evil:
I the Lord do all these things . . .

. . . I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways:
he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives,
not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts.

Thus saith the Lord, the labour of Egypt,
and the merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature,
shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine:
they shall come after thee;
in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee,
they shall make supplication unto thee,
saying, Surely God is in thee;
and there is none else, there is no God (Isa. 44:28-45:7, 13-14).

In 540 BC, Persian King Cyrus captured the city of Babylon without resistance. God had, indeed, “opened the gates” of the city to him. Cyrus is best known for his concern for human rights, and left a record of his beliefs in this regard in what is known as “The Cyrus Cylinder,” pictured below. In accordance with his views on human rights, Cyrus allowed all of the foreign citizens of Babylon that had been brought to that land as captives to return to their various homelands.

Scholars debate as to what prompted Cyrus to allow the Babylonian captives to go free. Some state that because he was a follower of Zoraster, he felt a kindred spirit to the Jews. Most scholars believe that the Isaiah verses referring to Cyrus were actually written after Cyrus' reign (this belief is not held by LDS scholarship as is presented in the *CES Old Testament Student Manual* and modern prophets).

What we do know is that the prophet Daniel was present in the royal court of Babylon, and had been highly regarded by the kings that preceded Cyrus. Daniel would most likely have the prophecies of Isaiah with him, as Isaiah prophesied prior to the Babylonian conquest that took Daniel prisoner. We know that Daniel cherished the writings of Jeremiah (see Dan. 9:2), who prophesied after Isaiah, and we know that Daniel “continued [in the court] of king Cyrus . . . and prospered [therein]” (Dan. 1:21, 6:28, 10:1). It seems highly likely that Daniel, in the position of a court counselor, would have brought the Isaiah prophecies to Cyrus' attention, and that, as the Lord had intended, Cyrus was struck by the fact that the Lord had named him, and given him instructions.

In the previous verses, the Lord refers to Cyrus as “my shepherd,” and as His “anointed.” The Parry brothers offer the following commentary on these verses:

In ancient days, Israel was in bondage to an earthly conqueror, but God called up a deliverer (Cyrus) to rescue his people. We also are in bondage, but our enslavement is to the powers of sin, tradition, and death. In his great power, God has sent us a deliverer in Jesus Christ. He has the power to liberate us from our bondage and to set us free spiritually, if we will but turn to him and hearken with honest hearts. But to receive his blessing, we must be willing to submit to him, even as the clay does to the potter.” (*Understanding Isaiah*, p. 377)

Cyrus was a type of Christ, the preeminent Anointed One who delivered us from our captivity of sin and death. The Lord prepared the way for Cyrus to conquer Babylon by opening doors and making rough places smooth. In the same way, the Lord will open doors and prepare the way for us to come to Zion. The result of the Lord’s power in all these cases (the sending forth of Cyrus, the coming of Christ, and the establishment of Zion) is that all the world may know that Jehovah is the true God, greater than all others.” (*Understanding Isaiah*, p. 385)

Joseph Smith stated:

That we may learn still further that God calls or elects particular men to perform particular works or on whom to confer special blessings, we read, Isaiah 45:4, ‘For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee Cyrus by thy name,’ to be a deliverer to my people Israel, and help to plant them on my holy mountain.” (HC 4:257).

The “sign” or proof that the Lord gave Cyrus was to call him by name. In addition, the Lord identified Himself by name to Cyrus, again underscoring the importance of a name. “I am the Lord, and there is none else,” God told Cyrus, and He also told him WHO He was performing this miracle for: Jacob/Israel. The uses of the names in these verses testify of the intimate knowledge the Lord has of each of His children, and of the fact that each of His children, as He has stated, has been called to serve Him, or to perform a particular mission.

Although Cyrus never became an official follower of the God of Israel, he did follow the instructions of the Lord, as recorded below:

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up (2 Chron. 36:22-23).

Not only did Cyrus allow the people to return to their homeland, but he also encouraged them to rebuild the temple, as the Lord had instructed through Isaiah. Surprisingly, Cyrus even emptied the Babylonian treasure house of the temple vessels and treasures that had been captured from Jerusalem, and contributed additional treasure and money for building the temple (see Ezra 1, 3:7). Unfortunately, the Jewish people did not have the same degree of commitment that Cyrus did; despite the fact that Cyrus and successive foreign kings sent continued help and funds, the temple was not completed for quite some time, due to difficulties in Jerusalem, and contention with the Samaritans.

Verse 14, regarding the Egyptians and Ethiopians, was fulfilled when Egypt freely offered itself to the rule of Cyrus and his son, Cyrus' empire setting a new tone of conquest without prolonged warfare and bloodshed in these specific areas.

The verses that follow in chapter 45 make a play on names, wherein the Hebrew word used for salvation (Yeshua) is the same root for Yeshua, who is Jesus:

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness:
let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation,
and let righteousness spring up together;
I the Lord have created it (Isa. 45:8).

But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation:
ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end (Isa. 45:17).

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth:
for I am God, and there is none else.

I have sworn by myself,
the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return,
That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear (Isa. 45:22-23).

In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory (Isa. 45:25).

“The word is gone out of [His] mouth,” . . . and He is “the Word” (John 1:1-4). “Salvation” shall come forth, and He is Salvation. He has “sworn by [Himself],” meaning He has sworn by His name, and all shall be fulfilled as He has decreed. Even as we have seen in the pattern of Cyrus and his deliverance of the Lord’s chosen people, so we shall see the deliverance and gathering of Israel, as the Lord performs His great work. May we heed His call to the work, and our own personal mission, as He speaks our name in invitation. Let us follow Him and become like Him, as we come to know Him better, and deepen our covenant relationship with Him.

The Lord’s Names in Isaiah 44-45

- 44:6 The King of Israel
- 44:6 Redeemer
- 44:6 Lord of Hosts
- 44:6 The First, and the Last
- 44:24 Thy Redeemer
- 44:24 He that formed thee from the womb
- 44:24 The Creator
- 45:3 The God of Israel
- 45:11 The Lord
- 45:11 The Holy One of Israel
- 45:15 The Savior



Charter of the Rights of Nations
Inscribed on a clay cylinder in cuneiform
discovered in 1879 now in The British Museum, London.

The First Declaration of Human Rights by Cyrus II

At the time of the conquest of Babylon, Cyrus issued a decree on his aims and policy, later hailed as the first Charter of Human Rights. This document was part of the doctrine which Cyrus sought to put into practice with a view to bringing peace to mankind.

The following is a translation of the cuneiform script written on the original cylinder. Although sections of the cylinder have been destroyed through time, the principal message of Cyrus' Declaration is readily apparent. The cylinder is housed at the British Museum.

So Said Cyrus

"I am Cyrus, king of the world, great king, mighty king, king of Babylon, king of the land of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters, son of Cambyses, great king, king of Anshan, grandson of Cyrus, great king, king of Anshan, descendant of Teispes, great king, king of Anshan, progeny of an unending royal line, whose rule Bel and Nabu cherish, whose kingship they desire for their hearts' pleasures.

When I, well-disposed, entered Babylon, I established the seat of government in the royal palace amidst jubilation and rejoicing. Marduk, the great God, caused the big-hearted inhabitants of Babylon to...me. I sought daily to worship him. My numerous troops moved about undisturbed in the midst of Babylon.

I did not allow any to terrorize the land of Sumer and Akkad. I kept in view the needs of Babylon and all its sanctuaries to promote their well being. The citizens of Babylon... I lifted their unbecoming yoke. Their dilapidated dwellings I restored. I put an end to their misfortunes.

At my deeds Marduk, the great Lord, rejoiced, and to me, Cyrus, the king who worshipped, and to Cambyses, my son, the offspring of my loins, and to all my troops, he graciously gave his blessing, and in good spirit is before him we/glorified/exceedingly his high divinity.

All the kings who sat in the throne rooms, throughout the four quarters, from the Upper to the Lower Sea, those who dwelt in ... all the kings of the West Country who dwelt in tents, brought me their heavy tribute and kissed my feet in Babylon. From ... to the cities of Ashur and Susa, Agade, Eshnuna, the cities of Zamban, Meurnu, Der, as far as the region of the land of Gutium, the holy cities beyond the Tigris ***whose sanctuaries had been in ruins over a long period, the***

Gods whose abode is in the midst of them. I returned to the places and housed them in lasting abodes. I gathered together all their inhabitants and restored to them their dwellings. The Gods of Sumer and Akkad whom Nabonidus had, to the anger of the Lord of the Gods, brought into Babylon, I at the bidding of Marduk, the great Lord made to dwell in peace in their habitations, delightful abodes.

May all the gods whom I have placed within their sanctuaries address a daily prayer in my favour before Bel and Nabu, that my days may long, and may they say to Marduk my Lord, May Cyrus the King who reveres thee, and Cambyses his son ..."