

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 44:1-5, ISRAEL'S SIN AND REDEMPTION, PART 2

These verses are another set of Scriptures that are definitely eschatological in nature. The things described here have never occurred in the history of the nation, at least not to complete fulfillment, but they will occur when the Messianic Kingdom is finally inaugurated which is an occasion still in the future. In the first five verses of this chapter, we are taught about God's love for His people whom He created and whom He appointed to His service, about the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the Israelites of the future of whom there will be many, and about the vast privilege of being a person descended from Israel their forefather.

Once again, the special relationship between Yahweh and Israel is prominent. Jacob, God's servant, was a nation specifically created and formed by God into a people and a nation. The servant is God's representative nation who was supposed to reveal Him to the world and glorify His name in the sight of the rest of the world's nations. Because Israel failed to be faithful to her assignment, the nation is under God's temporal divine discipline, but the nation will also one day be restored to the position she was created to fill. When that happens, the nation will finally be faithful to properly fulfill her divine duties.

As I mentioned in the previous lessons, I believe the Scriptures we have been studying in the last few lessons have been eschatological. The things they described did not happen in full when Israel was liberated from Babylon. For example, Constable wrote, "God would make His people the proof of His deity by delivering them from captivity in Babylon (43:14-21) and from their sins (44:1-5). The next pericope expands the focus of God's promise from physical to spiritual deliverance, and extends it from an approaching to a more distant fulfillment" [Thomas L. Constable, "Isaiah" in *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible, Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel*, 4:123]. If ancient Babylon is in view in chapter 43, it is as a type of the Babylon world system that is going to exist during the Tribulation. Only in the inauguration of the Messianic Kingdom will Babylon be completely vanquished, the geography of the planet will reflect the creation of the roadway in the wilderness, the praise of wildlife for Yahweh, water in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, and the fact that Israel will proclaim God's praise (Is. 43:17-21). Furthermore, when has Israel been delivered from their sins as a national entity? The nation rejected their sin bearer at His First Advent. As far as I can tell, the forgiveness of Israel's sins has yet to take place, although individual Israelites have always been saved by grace through faith. For these reasons, I believe Isaiah 44:1-5 is also eschatological.

In Isaiah 43:22-28, Israel's sinfulness was in view and so was the nation's judgment, yet God's forgiveness of the nation's sins was placed right in the middle of those verses. Furthermore, Isaiah will next suggest that the blessings Yahweh will pour out on Israel in the future will be incredibly amazing. The nation will be blessed in ways it has never been blessed before, even at the height of the blessings the nation enjoyed under the reign of King Solomon.

“Once again as in 43:25 but on a larger scale, the completely unmerited nature of God’s salvation is underlined. God has reminded the people that their sin has removed him from any obligation whatsoever to them; they cannot demand that he deliver. But that does not mean that God will not deliver; it means only that what he does is a free gift growing out of his own love” [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 164]. The national salvation revealed here has yet to take place. It will happen, but it will not happen until Matthew 23:39 is fulfilled when Israel’s leadership cries out to God for deliverance by proclaiming, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” which is a Messianic cry (cf. Ps. 118:26).

Isaiah 44:1 ¹“But now [עַתָּה] listen, O Jacob, My servant, And Israel, whom I have chosen:

“But now” (or “and now”) relates these verses concerning Israel’s blessing with the previous verses that concern Israel’s judgment, albeit with a promise of salvation right in the middle. Nevertheless, a promise for judgment is immediately followed by a promise for blessing. Now, עַתָּה, means now, at the present moment referring to a point of time simultaneous with the narration itself. Remember, there were no chapter and verse divisions at the time Isaiah wrote his book; therefore, the judgment of Isaiah 43:28—“I will pollute the princes of the sanctuary, and I will consign Jacob to the ban and Israel to revilement”—goes right into a promise of blessing for Jacob and Israel in the next verse, Isaiah 44:1. The same people who were promised to be placed under the ban and reviled were the very same people who are promised blessing. We have judgment contrasted with hope for blessing which should have given the readers of Isaiah some cause for joy.

“The repetition of *Jacob* and *Israel* from 43:28 is also important for the sense of contrast. There Jacob is under the curse and Israel given up for reviling. That is well deserved, but it is not all that God has to say. Jacob/Israel, downcast and dejected, is called to lift up its head and listen to another word from God: *servant! chosen!* God has not given up on them; he still intends to use them for the purpose for which they were created” [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 164-165].

We know that God made promises to Israel by means of the unconditional covenants He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the Abrahamic Covenant and its three amplifying covenants, the Land, the Davidic, and the New Covenants—therefore; He cannot totally disown them or destroy them; He has promises to fulfill to them. That does not mean that His temporal discipline for disobedience and rebellion will not be imposed (Lv. 26, Dt. 28), but it does mean the nation and the people will not be completely destroyed by it.

The concept of Israel as Yahweh’s servant nation is repeated here, as is the fact that Israel was appointed to His service. Whether people like it or not, whether the Jews like it or not, they have a prominent role to play in God’s plan for history. They are a servant nation appointed to His service, and their destiny as such will one day be fulfilled. No one will be able to destroy them, and no one can take their place in God’s program.

The next verse is another statement that Yahweh specifically created Israel to be a people and a nation appointed to His service as His nation servant.

Isaiah 44:2 ²Thus says the LORD who made [עָשָׂה] you And formed [יָצַר] you from the womb, who will help [עָזַר] you, 'Do not fear [יִרָא], O Jacob My servant; And you Jeshurun [יִשְׂרָאֵל] whom I have chosen.

Yahweh "made" and "formed" Israel to be a nation from the womb. This is a very definitive statement proclaiming the fact that Israel is a nation created by God rather than a nation that was formed from a people group arising out of the natural course of human procreation.

Made, עָשָׂה, means to do, to make, to manufacture, to complete referring to performing an action with a distinct purpose, a moral obligation, or a goal in view. This word is used to refer to God as the Creator. Israel did not exist among the nations until God specifically made them into a nation using supernatural means to do so.

Formed, יָצַר, means to form, to fashion, or to create something.

The short explanation for the creation of Israel as Yahweh's servant nation is this: Sarai was barren (Gen. 11:30) and she was supernaturally caused to conceive Isaac (Gen. 18:9-15, 21:1-7). Rebekah was barren and she was supernaturally caused to conceive Jacob (Gen. 25:21). Jacob fathered twelve sons who formed the twelve tribes of Israel who were, at God's design, formed into a people group in Egypt, supernaturally delivered out of slavery in Egypt (Ex.), and safely taken into the Promised Land, Canaan, and planted there as God's servant nation (Joshua).

"[J]ust as [Isaiah] 43:26-28 traced the fact of sinfulness back to the *first father*, so now Isaiah traces the entail of divine creative oversight back to the *womb*" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 275-276].

"... Israel as a nation and all the individuals within it are, as the chosen servant of Jehovah, the direct formation of Jehovah Himself from the remotest point of their history" [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, volume 7, 7:432]. The remotest point of Israel's history begins with the individuals Abram and Sarai; it does not begin in Egypt.

"Even before Israel was born, God was forming her. Translated into history, this would refer to all the period before the actual constitution of Israel as a nation. It would include the time of bondage in Egypt and also the period of the patriarchs" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:166].

Some theologians believe that "made" and "formed" are references to the creation of the nation in Egypt only, which disregards the supernatural work of God to ensure the otherwise impossible conception of Isaac and Jacob without which the nation would not have been possible. "[T]he prophet reminds his audience that God formed this group of people as his own people from the very beginning (lit. 'from the womb') when they first came out of Egypt. It is as if God is saying, you are my flesh and blood, my children, and my family. These claims identify the special status of the people (created and formed by God)" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological*

Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66, 219]. This thought is not wrong so much as it is incomplete. This theologian marks the beginning of Israel from the Exodus, which is true as a people group was formed into a nation by God, but they began to be that distinct people group, supernaturally created, over 400 years before they were formed into the nation in Egypt. The nation began in a person named Abram who I believe is the forefather who sinned mentioned in Isaiah 43:27. In other words, we cannot separate the beginning of the nation in a man from the formation of the nation in Egypt. The man was supernaturally used to begin the people, and the people were formed into the nation in Egypt and supernaturally taken out of Egypt as that nation. One is necessarily a precursor to the other; without the precursor, the end result cannot come into being.

The Lord Himself promises to be their help; therefore, they are not to fear because with Him, they have nothing to fear.

Help, עָזַר, means to help, support, to come to the aid or to the help of referring to giving help or assistance or to be of service to. It has the sense of giving support or giving material or nonmaterial encouragement to a person. Throughout history, God has helped Israel in all these ways. He has supported His people by means of His presence; He has never left them nor forsaken them in terms of complete abandonment; if He had completely abandoned Israel, the people would have ceased to exist long ago. The fact that He has not forsaken them in total, does not mean that He has not forsaken them in terms of giving them over to the temporal discipline He promised them for their rebellion against Him.

Jeremiah 12:7 ⁷"I have forsaken My house, I have abandoned My inheritance; I have given the beloved of My soul Into the hand of her enemies.

The One who created Israel is the one who formed Israel into the nation; therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that He will ensure that which He has created endures to fulfill the purposes for which He created it. God's promises to Israel, made over and over in Isaiah and in some of the other prophetic books, to redeem and to restore them and fulfill His covenant promises to them, precludes any idea that He will completely abandon them. However, as noted, He will abandon them to the temporal disciplinary program that He established for them to undergo when they rebelled against Him. In the end, He will establish them as His people, His nation, and His servant nation in the Messianic Kingdom when He will be their God and they will be His people (Zech. 9:16).

Fear, יָרָא, means, in this context, to fear or to be afraid which has the sense of being afraid or scared of something or someone; to be frightened. Obviously, the Israelites have a lot to be afraid of in terms of the world's hatred of them as God's people. Satan has been trying to destroy them since God appointed Abram to His service, and He has used some very evil, destructive means to do so. That continues to this day. Israel, however, should know that they will eventually inherit the Messianic Kingdom. That should give them some degree of comfort. That is easy to say from the comfort and security of an American home, but it is not so easy to do in Israel when people are actively involved in trying to kill you and wipe your nation from the face of the earth. If the leadership of Israel would lead the people to faith in the Messiah, then Israel's trouble would be over, and they would have nothing to fear. That could happen today if they were willing. Since they are not

willing, they will experience fear during the progress of God's disciplinary program, but when that is over, they will finally fear no more. The Lord's words to them should indicate to them that no matter what they face now, they will not be completely destroyed before the nation's redemption occurs.

The concept of having no fear may also relate to spiritual issues. God did promise to wipe out and remember no more their sins (Is. 43:25), but Israel has not responded in faith to that promise either; the nation in general still consists of unbelievers. That too will finally be resolved when the Messiah returns to save all Israel, the believing remnant, and the Messianic Kingdom is inaugurated.

Jeshurun, יְשׁוּרוּן, is "a poetical and (at the same time apparently) a tender and loving appellation of the people of Israel. Interpreters are not determined as to its origin.... an allusion was made to the idea of rectitude, uprightness" [Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius, trans. Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, s.v. "יְשׁוּרוּן," *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*]. Keil and Delitzsch deny that the concept of "love" or a "lover" is in this word, rather "the real meaning is 'gentleman,' or one of gentlemanly or honourable [sic] mind" [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, 432].

"The name 'Jeshurun' יְשׁוּרוּן is also used in Deut 32:15; 33:5, 26. It comes from the root יָשַׁר [yāšār] 'to be upright'; so this implies that the nation will one day have a completely different moral character than it had in 43:22-28" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 219, n. 451].

"The name Jeshurun (v. 2) is synonymous with Israel and is derived from the root "yashur," 'to be upright.' It is therefore a title of honor and endearment. Jehovah sees His people not as they are, but as He intends them to become in the end—a righteous and upright people" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 355].

"The endearing name 'Jeshurun' means 'upright one.' Even though Israel had stumbled badly, she was still upright because God held her up. 'Jacob' (deceiver) may represent what Israel was in the past and 'Jeshurun' (upright) what she would be in the future" [Thomas L. Constable, "Isaiah" *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible, Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel*, 4:123].

"The epithet *righteous nation*, as we may render Jeshurun, was intended to remind Israel of its calling and involved the severest reproof of its apostasy" [Merrill F. Unger, s.v. "Jeshurun," *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 681].

Whatever Jeshurun means, it is definitely linked to and identified with Israel.

The promise of renewing the land, a promise previously made, and of spiritually blessing Israel at some point in the future are the next points made by the prophet.

Isaiah 44:3-4 ³For I will pour out [יִצְקָ] water on the thirsty *land* And streams on the dry ground; I will pour out [יִצְקָ] My Spirit on your offspring And My blessing [בְּרִכָּה] on your

descendants; ⁴And they will spring up [נִצְּצוּ] among the grass Like poplars by streams of water.'

Making the formerly dry and desert land come alive with water is not a new theme presented here. The climate and topographical changes that will come over the Middle East and the world during the Messianic Kingdom have already been revealed in the book of Isaiah. This is not a metaphor about the pouring out of the Spirit on Israel; it is a literal watering of Israel, and the earth, that will make the planet bloom and become incredibly productive in terms of agricultural output for the sustenance of the world's people.

In the same way that rain pours out on the ground, a temporal truth, God's Spirit will be poured out on the Israelites, a spiritual truth. Both concepts are present. Pour out, נִצְּק, means to pour, to pour out whether liquids or metals referring to causing to run out of a container (as of a liquid). Water is often used as a simile or as a metaphor for the Holy Spirit (cf. John 4:13-14). The verbs used are imperfect meaning incomplete action which points to an eschatological meaning for the timing of this situation. Another indication that this is eschatological is the fact that this outpouring will be on the descendants and the offspring of the people living during the time of Isaiah which is an indication of the future. Also, it is wise to remember, we are talking here about the national salvation of Israel and not the justification salvation of individual Jews before the nation's salvation occurs at the Second Coming of Messiah Jesus. The giving of the Spirit in this age has to do with the church and not with national Israel. Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit baptism in this dispensation right alongside Jews who come to faith.

"The Lord promised to pour out His Spirit on the Israelites in the future. This gift would have the same effect for the nation as pouring water on dry ground would have for the landscape. It would bring refreshment and new life, indeed, a whole new spiritual attitude. Blessing would come to the descendants of Isaiah's audience" [Thomas L. Constable, "Isaiah" in Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible, Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel, 4:123].

Once this blessing is poured out on Israel, the Messianic Kingdom will be beginning and then the nation will be the "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6) they were created to be. At that time, Israel will not only be blessed, but the nation will be a blessing to the world—just as they were meant to be from the beginning. "The primary sense of the passage is spiritual and speaks of the future regeneration of Israel which will bring blessing to all of mankind. Their turning to God, will attract others to Jehovah and to the people of Jehovah. In contrast to Israel's former state when they were delivered to the gentiles to be treated with contempt and as an object of blasphemings (Isa. 43:28), they will in the future become an honored people, with whom non-Jews will seek to identify themselves and also with their God" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 355]. During the Messianic Kingdom, Gentiles will want to go up to the mountain of the Lord to be taught His ways (Is. 2:3; Micah 4:2), and they will go to Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Booths and to worship King Jesus (Zech. 14:16).

Unger believes that the outpouring of the Spirit revealed here in Isaiah will start the Messianic Kingdom dispensation just as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of

Pentecost inaugurated the beginning of the dispensation of grace that started with the formation of the church. This argument has a lot of merit. This pouring out of the Spirit coincides with the Israelites' cry for the Messiah to return and save them. "Israel the people, like their land, will be transformed for Kingdom blessing by a great outpouring of God's Spirit inaugurating the millennial era like the effusion that ushered in the church age. Pentecost, in fact, was an illustration of what will happen to the converted nation of Israel, here called Jacob's offspring and descendants, at the commencement of the Millennium" [Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah" in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1263]. Martin also thinks this activity will coincide with the inauguration of the Messianic Kingdom [John A. Martin, "Isaiah" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 1098].

Joel 2:28–32 ²⁸"It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. ²⁹"Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. ³⁰"I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. ³¹"The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ³²"And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

The Spirit outpoured and the blessing on the Israelite descendants refer to both spiritual and material blessing. Spiritual blessing will be poured out in response to faith, and material blessing will be poured out in response to obedience. Remember, material blessings were promised to Israel for their obedience to the Mosaic Covenant (Lv. 26; Dt. 28) and then on into the Messianic Kingdom after the Mosaic Covenant has been done away at the cross and replaced by Kingdom Law in whatever form that may take at the time. This is in contrast to the church which is primarily vested with spiritual blessings.

Ephesians 1:3 ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

This concept of earthly blessing for Israel and heavenly blessing for the church led the early dispensationalists to correctly recognize a sharp distinction between Israel and her earthly blessings and the church with her heavenly blessings [cf. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology: Ecclesiology; Eschatology*, vol. 4, 4:15-16]. "[T]he church is completely different and distinct from Israel, and the two should not be confused. In fact, the church is an entirely new creation that came into being on the Day of Pentecost after Christ's resurrection from the dead and will continue until it is taken to heaven at the Rapture return of the Lord. None of the curses or blessings pronounced upon Israel refer directly to the church." [Thomas S. McCall, "Israel and the Church: The Differences" in *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology: A Practical Guide to the People, Viewpoints, and History of Prophetic Studies*, gen. ed. Mal Couch, 194].

Blessing, בְּרָכָה, means blessing, an invocation for good which is intended to bring prosperity and life to the one being blessed. In the ancient world in which the covenant promises to Israel were framed, "nothing was more important than securing the blessing

of God in one's life or nation. All religious or superstitious peoples (in other words, virtually the entire ancient world, along with most of the world to this day) have actively sought the blessing of a specific deity or spirit, believing that this blessing will make them fertile, or prosper them, protect them, deliver them, heal them, preserve them, empower them, exalt them, favor them, or, possibly bring about all the above. The blessing is thought of as tangible, its effects perceivable and, at times, measurable. The more powerful the deity, the more important the blessing" [Willem A. VanGemeren, gen. ed., s.v. "ברכה," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 1:758].

Unlike the pagans who worship false gods who can do nothing to bless anyone, Yahweh can and will bestow blessings on Israel. All these things were promised to Israel for obedience, and they experienced them to some extent at times, but their rebellion against God prevented them from realizing the full extent of the Mosaic Covenant promises. Instead, they were subjected to the covenantal curses which is a situation continuing to this day. They will, however, experience them to the fullest extent possible in the Messianic Kingdom.

One sign of this divine blessing will be numerous Israelite descendants populating the land once these blessings are poured out on the nation. Numerous offspring was thought to be a sign of divine blessing. Spring up, צמח, means to sprout or sprout forth, to spring up, referring to putting forth and growing sprouts and shoots. "By streams of water" indicates a place that is very favorable for the growth of new shoots. The implication is that Israel will be a land of numerous people which is a fulfillment of the prophecy and the promises God made to Abraham to "multiply you [Abraham] exceedingly" (Gen. 17:2).

Genesis 15:5 ⁵And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

That promise to Abraham will be fulfilled when the King is reigning on the throne during the Messianic Kingdom.

Jeremiah 33:22 ²²As the host of heaven cannot be counted and the sand of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.'

Hosea 1:10–11 ¹⁰Yet the number of the sons of Israel Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered; And in the place Where it is said to them, "You are not My people," It will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God." ¹¹And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, And they will appoint for themselves one leader, And they will go up from the land, For great will be the day of Jezreel.

Once these conditions are brought about, Israel will be safely living in the entire covenanted extent of the land we know as Israel but much larger in land area, the Messiah King will be on His throne, and the Israelites will be wholeheartedly committed and faithful to Yahweh from that time forward. Some theologians think that Gentiles, or possibly both Jews and Gentiles, are the subject of this verse, but the context suggests

that the Israelites are the subject. The language does not preclude including Gentiles, but the context involves Jacob, God's servant (v. 1), and his descendants (vv. 3-4). Whichever it is, the people who are doing these things are impacted by the Holy Spirit's presence in and influence on their lives, and they will from that time forward be among God's people very openly and boldly proclaiming their faith to the world.

Isaiah 44:5 ⁵"This one will say, 'I am the LORD's'; And that one will call on the name of Jacob; And another will write on his hand, 'Belonging to the LORD,' And will name Israel's name with honor.

Motyer suggests that the Israelites are the subject of the verse. "The reference here is not to Gentiles coming into membership of the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16) [which is completely incorrect anyway]—that would be totally against the context (contrast 45:22-25)—but to 'formal' Israelites becoming 'true, assured' Israelites. Three things combine to bring this about: sin finished (43:25), new life imparted (44:3-4) and personal response (44:5)" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 276].

At the end of chapter 43, the extent of Israel's dishonor was revealed. Jacob was consigned to the ban and Israel to defilement (Is. 43:28). Ezekiel also revealed the dishonor that would be evident during God's disciplinary *diaspora*.

Ezekiel 36:19–20 ¹⁹"Also I scattered them among the nations and they were dispersed throughout the lands. According to their ways and their deeds I judged them. ²⁰"When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD; yet they have come out of His land.'

Now, in this verse, a nation of honor is revealed, a nation that will be faithful to Yahweh and be the representative to the world the nation was created to be.

Psalms 87:5–6 ⁵But of Zion it shall be said, "This one and that one were born in her"; And the Most High Himself will establish her. ⁶The LORD will count when He registers the peoples, "This one was born there." Selah.

Israel was created to be the premier nation of the world, the head, and not the tail. Once these promises are fulfilled, then Israel will finally be the head nation she could have been all along if only she had been obedient to God's commands. This will come about because God's promised blessing will be completely fulfilled once all Israel turns to Him in faith.

Deuteronomy 28:13 ¹³"The LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe *them* carefully,

Some people believe "this one" is a reference to the servant Israel, others to Gentiles (which I have already said I do not believe to be according to the context concerning Jacob's offspring and descendants), and still others believe it refers to single individuals as they come to faith. "Given the contextual mention of the offspring of Israel in the near context, however, it seems best to identify *this one* as referring to future Israelites

collectively who will affirm their allegiance to the Lord. This collective group ultimately chooses to identify as the Lord's people and as part of the remnant of Israel" [Michael Rydelnik and James Spencer, "Isaiah" in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, 1070].

"This one" may refer to a collective group, but the group comes together one by one as individual Israelites place their faith in Messiah. "... [T]he author is clearly talking about individuals, persons who, of free choice and pure intent, consciously step forward to give themselves to the God of Israel, the God of the covenant. This will not be the act of an unthinking herd.... [T]his individual act will not be restricted to a handful but will be repeated over and over again" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 168].

Some people will write on their hand that they belong to Yahweh. "*Hand*: the organ of personal action. To write *on his hand* symbolizes the commitment of personal, active life to the Lord. If we translate 'with his hand' the meaning is the same: personal commitment" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 276]. Writing "to the Lord" on the hand is an acknowledgment that one is owned by the Lord.

To call on the name of Jacob is to make an identification with Jacob and with the God of Jacob. By word of mouth, one confesses that He belongs to God.

Under the Mosaic Law, tattoos were prohibited (Lv. 19:28). Presumably, this practice was banned because of its association with paganism; however, there will be no pagans entering the Messianic Kingdom, and the Mosaic Law has been done away in the sacrificial death of Messiah Jesus on the cross. Possibly this is a reference to writing on one's hand with something that is not indelible and therefore removable. In ancient times, people would write the name of esteemed people in their lives on their hand: a slave of his owner or the name of one's pagan deity. Whatever this means, it refers to the fact that people will write on their hand that they belong to Yahweh.

It will be a sign of honor to say that one identifies with the God of Israel. "[I]t may mean that a man will use the name Israel as a title of honor. To entitle oneself an Israelite will be to give oneself a title of honor, for the Israelite is the one who knows the Lord" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:169]. If this relates to the Israelites, which I think it does, then God's people have become an honored people which is quite a contrast to their status throughout the history of the *diaspora*.