

# The Millennium Forecast

The Book of Isaiah

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Text

Isaiah 44:1-20

Topic

The LORD calls His chosen people "Jeshurun" for the first time since Moses was alive.

Title

**"God is a Name Changer"**

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## **Lamb Chop, Pumpkin, Nugget, Muffin, Snookums, Pookie, Chickadee**

*Brides* magazine is usually a rock-solid source but they biffed it this time. The names I read are on their 2023 list of "Sweet, Romantic, Quirky Names." The article in *Brides* says, "If you are in need of a little inspiration, we've got you covered. We rounded up the very best nicknames - from the totally timeless to the trendy and new school." *I say go full Seinfeld and call each other Schmoopie.*

## **The LORD reveals an endearing name He had given the nation.**

It jumps-out at us in verse two, "Fear not, O Jacob My servant; And you, **Jeshurun** [J-shu-ron], whom I have chosen."

The folks doing good Gospel work at [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org) write, "Jeshurun is a poetic reference to the nation of Israel. It is a term of endearment; the Greek Septuagint translates Jeshurun as 'beloved one,' using a form of the word agape. The name Jeshurun is used three times in the Book of Deuteronomy and once in Isaiah. In each case the name occurs in a poetic setting and refers to Israel, God's beloved people."

**If Moses died circa 1450BC, and Isaiah was prophesying circa 450BC, then the LORD hadn't used the name Jeshurun for about a thousand years.**

But here is the kicker. Jesus is going to give you a new name in the future.

I'll organize my comments around two questions: **#1 Are You Looking Forward To Being Renamed?**, and **#2 Are You "Living Forward" Like You'll Be Renamed?**

### **#1 - Are You Looking Forward To Being Renamed? (v1-8)**

If you are in Christ, a believer who has been saved by grace through faith, Jesus has an endearing name for you. In Revelation 2:17 Jesus said, "To him who overcomes... I will give him a white stone, and on the stone **a new name** written which no one knows except him who receives *it.*"

No longer will boys named Sue have to fight their way through life.

Isa 44:1 "Yet hear me now, O Jacob My servant, And Israel whom I have chosen.

What is the origin of the nation of Israel? For that matter, where did nations come from? In response to mankind's rebellion at the Tower of Babel the LORD confounded languages and "scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth." It resulted in 70 nations.

The LORD started a new nation through which His Garden of Eden promise to mankind of sending a Redeemer would be fulfilled. That "chosen" nation is Israel through the 12 sons of "Jacob."

Isa 44:2 Thus says the LORD who made you And formed you from the womb, *who* will help you: 'Fear not, O Jacob My servant; And you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.

Is it strange to think of a nation as being "formed from the womb"? Not really. We often say a nation was born, or the birth of a nation. The LORD was reminding them that they were His nation to carry out His plan.

"Jeshurun" means *righteous one*. Every man, woman, and child is born unrighteous. "There is none righteous, not one." How then can the LORD call the unrighteous, righteous?

God became a man. He added humanity to His deity. When Jesus, the God-man, died on the Cross and spectacularly rose from the dead, He conquered sin and death. As a result when you believe God He declares you righteous because of what Jesus did. Quoting Genesis 15:6 the apostle Paul said, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." (Romans 4:3).

In the MCU, Black Widow more than once mentions that she has "red" in her ledger that needs to be removed. She thinks good deeds will erase it.

- Believe God and sin is removed from your ledger.
- Believe God and righteousness is put in your ledger.

One of the results Jeshurun was promised is that the LORD would "give [them] a new heart, and... put a new spirit in [them]... take out [their] stony, stubborn heart and give [them] a tender, responsive heart" (Ezekiel 36:26 NLT).

The Jewish officials who rejected Jesus on behalf of the nation chose to keep their stony, stubborn heart. This was made clear by Stephen, the first martyr of the church. He said to those Jews about to stone him, "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so *do* you" (Acts 7:51).

After a few decades of continued outreach to His beloved Jeshurun, God pivoted. The apostle Paul quoted Isaiah to the Jews and declared God's interim plan, saying "Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!" (Acts 28:28).

This period of time, this *dispensation*, is **now**. It is the Church Age.

Regarding Israel we sometimes say something like, "God has set-aside His chosen people for a time." That is true, but it doesn't mean God is ignoring Israel. He is still 'God at work' with them:

- They are a witness to the centuries old prophecies that they would be regathered to their land, as a nation, in the Last Days.
- They are a witness to the centuries old prophecies that they will be regathered in unbelief, not believing that Jesus is their Messiah.
- They are a witness to the centuries old prophecies that they would be troublesome to all the nations of the world.

On a more intimate note, the Lord's work saving Gentiles is said to provoke Israel to jealousy. Paul explained, "But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles." (Romans 11:11).

Isa 44:3 For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring;  
Isa 44:4 They will spring up among the grass Like willows by the watercourses.'

The promise of God the Holy Spirit permanently indwelling the believer came upon the church in the second chapter of Acts. Jews who receive Jesus are born-again just like us and receive the Spirit. The nation will receive Jesus prior to His return to earth. All Israel that survives to the end will be saved.

The second half of Isaiah that started in chapter 40 is a 150-years-in-advance prophecy about Jerusalem being conquered by Babylon, and Jews removed there as captives. Isaiah sees way farther than that, to the Time of Jacob's Trouble (the Great Tribulation) and the return of Messiah to establish and reign on earth for a one-thousand year period called the Millennium.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum writes, "*The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon every Jew living at that point will lead to the national regeneration of Israel. Then God will restore His people to their land. This final restoration will occur after the tribulation.*"

There is a fun what we might call 'mash-up' in verses three & four:

- One minute Isaiah is describing the earth being transformed in the Millennium with abundant water such that grass & willows spring-up everywhere.
- The next minute Isaiah lets you know that it's a metaphor for individual believers having the Holy Spirit in abundance like a flood. And that there will be a population explosion (represented by the "grass" and "willows" springing up everywhere).

Isa 44:5 One will say, 'I am the LORD's'; Another will call *himself* by the name of Jacob; Another will write *with* his hand, 'The LORD's,' And name *himself* by the name of Israel.

These are all different ways of giving testimony, or what we call *witnessing*. The Millennium begins populated exclusively by mortal believers. Their children will need to be saved. Hence, witnessing.

Isa 44:6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I *am* the First and I *am* the Last; Besides Me *there is* no God.

The LORD promised a Redeemer the moment Adam & Eve rebelled and sinned in the Garden of Eden. A Redeemer Who *could* and *would* purchase the human race out of slavery to sin, Satan, and death. The Bible tells the story of the Redeemer and His work of redemption.

In the Revelation we are told 4x that Jesus is the first and last, the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. Coupled with what Scripture says here, we are confident Jesus is God.

Isa 44:7 And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him 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 these to them.

Isa 44:8 Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared *it*? You *are* My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed *there is* no other Rock; I know not *one*.' "

Redemption was the LORD's plan from the beginning. He set it in motion and it is following His "order." He "appointed" the Jews to be the instrument on earth of revealing His redemption, to "show" it. That which God "declared" to occur in the future did occur and will occur.

God it's so "God" that even when Israel fails to be His witness they are His witness:

- In the future they will be a witness that the Time of Jacob's Trouble has begun by signing a peace agreement with the world leader who will become known as the antichrist.
- In the future they will be a witness that Daniel's Last Days countdown is literal when they the build their Temple
- In the future they will be a witness that Satan has been cast down to earth and has only 1260 days left to terminate all Jews.
- In the future they will be a witness that God will keep every promise as He arranges to save them from the Devil's savagery.

**J**esus wrote seven letters to seven churches. In each He ended saying, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2:7, 11, 17 & 29; 3:6, 13 & 22. Even Laodicea!

The plural “churches” means that everything promised one church applied to each church both then and now.

It’s not uncommon for believers to get a new name:

- In the Old Testament, Abram was renamed Abraham, Sarai was renamed Sarah, and Jacob was renamed Israel.
- In the New Testament, Jesus told Simon that he would be called Peter.

Yes, the definitions of the names are important. Don’t overlook that they are terms of endearment. That intimate aspect takes precedence over whatever else the name change indicates. You & I are the Lord’s Snookums.

## **#2 - Are You “Living Forward” Like You’ll Be Renamed? (v9-20)**

In the remaining verses the LORD takes idolatry head-on. In a previous study I reminded us that there is not one agreed upon definition of “idols” and “idolatry” among theologians. I like this as a biblical definition: “Idolatry refers to worshiping idols, images, or other ‘God-substitutes.’ ”

The description “idol worship” may not be helpful in identifying God-substitutes. Let’s use the red Ferrari 250 GTO I want as an example. If I owned it, I would not bow down to it, or offer it gifts, or sing to it & about it. I wouldn’t put money in the glove box as an offering of worship. But I wouldn’t be in the clear regarding potential idolatry.

When I was brand new to following Jesus I read *A Severe Mercy*. It is an autobiography by Sheldon Vanauken relating his relationship with his wife, their friendship with C.S. Lewis, conversion to Christianity, and a subsequent tragedy.

Sheldon’s wife, Jean, had a Schmoopie name: Davy. Sheldon & Davy didn’t want anything to become an idol. Sheldon recalled, “Over-valued possessions, we decided, were a burden.”

They bought a brand new car. So that it would not be over-valued he said, “When we got our first glossy new car, we *hit it severely with a hammer*” to dent it.

**To inspire you, the Ushers are in the parking lot right now with hammers, looking for newer vehicles. You’ll thank us later.**

We form idols that are not objects at all. In fact, the most prevalent idolatry is unseen except by God. It resides in your flesh, in your unredeemed natural body with its propensity to sin. In Colossians 3:5 the apostle Paul warned, "**covetousness... is idolatry.**"

One reason that coveting is idolatrous is that you are saying you cannot be satisfied unless you have the *person* or *possession* or *position* or *power* you covet. It is a declaration that Jesus is not enough for you. His love and grace are not sufficient for you.

One commentator wrote, "Covetousness is desiring something so much that you lose your contentment in the Lord."

Contentment is only to be found in seeking first the Kingdom of God, looking forward to life with Jesus in the eternal city whose builder and maker is the One who knows you by an endearing name you will receive when you see Him.

I'm going to use the MSG version to read the remaining verses. It's a little less complicated for a longer read.

Isa 44:9 All those who make no-god idols don't amount to a thing, and what they work so hard at making is nothing. Their little puppet-gods see nothing and know nothing - they're total embarrassments!

Isa 44:10 Who would bother making gods that can't do anything, that can't "god"?

Isa 44:11 Watch all the no-god worshipers hide their faces in shame. Watch the no-god makers slink off humiliated when their idols fail them. Get them out here in the open. Make them face God-reality.

Isa 44:12 The blacksmith makes his no-god, works it over in his forge, hammering it on his anvil - such hard work! He works away, fatigued with hunger and thirst.

Isa 44:13 The woodworker draws up plans for his no-god, traces it on a block of wood. He shapes it with chisels and planes into human shape - a beautiful woman, a handsome man, ready to be placed in a chapel.

Isa 44:14 He first cuts down a cedar, or maybe picks out a pine or oak, and lets it grow strong in the forest, nourished by the rain.

Isa 44:15 Then it can serve a double purpose: Part he uses as firewood for keeping warm and baking bread; from the other part he makes a god that he worships - carves it into a god shape and prays before it.

Isa 44:16 With half he makes a fire to warm himself and barbecue his supper. He eats his fill and sits back satisfied with his stomach full and his feet warmed by the fire: "Ah, this is the life."

Isa 44:17 And he still has half left for a god, made to his personal design - a handy, convenient no-god to worship whenever so inclined. Whenever the need strikes him he prays to it, "Save me. You're my god."

Isa 44:18 Pretty stupid, wouldn't you say? Don't they have eyes in their heads? Are their brains working at all?

Isa 44:19 Doesn't it occur to them to say, "Half of this tree I used for firewood: I baked bread, roasted meat, and enjoyed a good meal. And now I've used the rest to make an abominable no-god. Here I am praying to a stick of wood!"

Isa 44:20 This lover of emptiness, of nothing, is so out of touch with reality, so far gone, that he can't even look at what he's doing, can't even look at the no-god stick of wood in his hand and say, "This is crazy."

**B**elievers are encouraged to "live forward."

- Abraham "waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God" (Hebrews 11:10).
- The apostle Paul wrote, "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).
- "Seek first the Kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33).

Corrie ten Boom said, "Hold loosely to the things of this life, so that if God requires them of you, it will be easy to let them go."

I would never presume to hold a candle to her, but I'd suggest one change in her quote. "Hold loosely to the things of this life, so that [WHEN, not "if"] God requires them of you, it will be easy to let them go."

