

A New Name

Verse 15 has a most striking statement: "And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen." The word here translated "chosen" is the same word which is translated "elect" in verses 9 and 22. It refers to those whom God has set apart to be redeemed through faith in His Son. They are told here that the name which has hitherto designated the people of God is to be to some extent a curse in the hands of His true people during the time between the tearing out of certain of the natural branches and the time when the natural branches will be grafted in again.

The latter part of the verse says that the Lord will call His servants by another name. How can we interpret this otherwise than as a prediction of the fact that during the present era those who are carrying on the testimony of God are called "Christians" from the Greek word for "Messiah." During the interval in which some of the natural branches have been grafted out, the name of the main olive tree is to be temporarily changed, even though its continuity remains. Its unity is not broken.

How could this verse be more reasonably interpreted than as a depiction of the fact that God is to turn His mercy away from Israel for the period between the first coming and the second coming of Christ! Although many from Israel are to be called into the church during this period, the focus of God's great blessing is to be upon those whom He calls from every nation and tongue and kindred to be followers of His great Servant. The very name "Israel" is, during this period, to be profaned by many who are among the true servants of God, who will be called by a different name. That wonderful name which meant so much during the period previous to the writing of Isaiah, and which will again mean so much in days yet to come, passes out of the center of God's blessing during this predicted period.

The phrase in the middle of verse 15 is rather peculiar: "The Lord GOD will slay thee." This does not, of course, mean entire destruction of the race, but it points to the fact that during the long interval God's rebellious nation must endure great suffering and persecution, including the slaughter of many people. The fulfillment began with Roman massacres and reached a climax in the conquest of Jerusalem by Titus, when untold thousands died a miserable death. All