possibility that the Jacob-Israel addressed receives the mission of restoring the whole people ('the tribes of Jacob').

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1 The Formation of Isaiah 40-55 (BZAW 141; Berlin and New York, 1976).
2 A Farewell to the Servant Songs (Lund, 1983).
4 N. L. Tidwell, in his article ‘‘My Servant Jacob, Is. xlii 1: a suggestion’’, SVT 26 (1974), pp. 84-91, suggests, on metrical grounds, that the name was originally present in the Hebrew text. This is a tempting solution, but goes against the whole textual tradition.

THE RAINBOW AS THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT
IN GENESIS IX 11-13

The purpose of this short note is to investigate the significance of the rainbow as a sign of the covenant in Gen. ix 11-13.

‘‘I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.’’ God said, ‘‘This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.’’ (New Revised Standard Version)

The Hebrew word qeṣêt does double duty for both ‘‘war bow’’ and ‘‘rainbow’’. The majority of exeges understand the bow (qeṣêt) in the clouds to maintain its military connotations and thus to represent, in one way or another, God’s war bow. While Julius Wellhausen1 is usually credited with first suggesting this interpretation, its essential details actually go back much further. Some rabbinic commentators saw the rainbow in the sky as symbolizing a war bow turned upwards so that arrows would be shot away from, rather than towards, the earth.2 As such, the rainbow functions as

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a symbol of peace. Wellhausen suggested that the rainbow represents God's discarded war bow, thus signifying that his anger is abated. Variations on Wellhausen's thesis have dominated subsequent scholarship. Many have found corroborating evidence for this view in Enuma Elish, where Marduk's bow is hung among the stars after his defeat of Tiamat and her allies, and Gen. ix is taken to reflect this same tradition. Thus most exegetes see the significance of the rainbow as representing God's (undrawn) war bow set to one side after the defeat of his enemies, as a token of victory or peace and reconciliation. Recently, some have suggested that the bow is to be seen as drawn, signifying God's readiness to engage his enemies in battle.

While these views of the significance of the rainbow continue to have scholarly support, there have been some dissenting voices. A number of these scholars who reject or ignore the "war bow thesis" have pointed out, correctly in my view, that "since the Primeval history makes no other use of the tradition of Yahweh the warrior, it seems more likely that only the rainbow is denoted here". Furthermore, the alleged parallel in Enuma Elish, which is markedly dissimilar in both context and content, is hardly convincing. If there are any enemies subdued in the Flood narrative, it is wicked humanity, not (as the alleged parallel would have it) the Flood waters—which have been used by God to accomplish his ends, and are therefore his allies rather than his enemies. However, none as far as I know has investigated how the symbol of the rainbow fits its present context beyond the obvious observation that rainbows are associated with rain, or subjective assertions that the rainbow as an object of beauty demonstrates the dependability, mercy or grace of God.

I suggest that a plausible explanation for the use of the rainbow as a sign of the covenant, in this context, can be found not in the suggestions outlined above, but in the Genesis cosmology itself, set out in some detail in ch. 1. Gen. 6-8 recounts God's creation of the "firmament" (räqîa'), to act as a barrier between the "waters above" and the "waters below". There is scholarly consensus that the firmament was conceived to be a solid dome-like structure stretched over the earth, into which the heavenly bodies were set, and which supported and restrained the heavenly ocean. The Deluge initiated by God in vii 11ff., while not necessarily showing the disintegration of the firmament, certainly demonstrates that it