

The Remnant

For as much space as the nation of Israel and its subjects take in the overall scheme of the Bible, it's astonishing that the broad scope of Christianity brushes them aside.

In the age of ultra political-correctness, the idea that God “chose” a people, or that there *are* any such “chosen people,” is heresy and anathema. This idea is so pervasive that it's common even in many churches and denominations.

The rejection of this truth comes partly from misunderstanding the nature of Israel's inception, and partly from misunderstanding their purpose.

They were not simply “chosen.” They were *created*. Without God's miraculous intervention in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—in the lives of their wives, who were barren—the twelve tribes never would have existed to begin with. And so when God tells Moses to tell Pharaoh,

Israel is my son, even my firstborn...
(Ex. 4:22)

...He meant it literally.

We'll consider the purpose of Israel later on.

In respect to theology, there are *biblical* doctrines, that is, things clearly spoken in, and which can be plainly deduced from, the Bible itself, and there are the doctrines of men. There are also doctrines of devils...and the point at which the doctrines of men and doctrines of devils overlap isn't always clear.

The wisdom of the world says, “I know God said His word is perfect and forever settled in heaven, but that's not what He meant.”

The wisdom of man says, “I know He says He'll preserve His word forever, but that's not what He meant.”

The devil no doubt takes great joy in man's faithlessness, because it makes his job all the more easy.

This is just an example, but the Word of God speaks plainly and is clear that the heavens and earth will pass away, but His word will not pass away. Yet the world says even now that the real

scriptures were lost and men make careers of trying to “rediscover” the original readings. How many times and in how many ways does He have to say something before we believe it?

This is a faith issue. It's not God's issue—He should only have to say something once for us to believe Him. Every word of God is pure, after all.

And so, we have things taught in the Bible that don't always accord with what man teaches, or what he holds as truth. One of these subjects is what is commonly referred to as *the remnant*.

The so-called “remnant” *is* a Biblical doctrine, and is actually a Biblical phrase. The fact that not many know about it is a shame to modern Christianity, because it is a failure on our part to teach it and demonstrate it from the scriptures clearly and succinctly to others.

The reason it goes largely unknown is maybe because its foundations are found back in the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or maybe because the prophecies dealing with this subject are buried in the Old Testament prophets.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines the word *remnant* as follows:

1. Residue; that which is left after the separation, removal or destruction of a part.
2. That which remains after a part is done, performed, told or passed.

The first definition is the sense which concerns our present topic.

When I say *remnant*, I mean the remnant of Israel. The idea of there being *two groups* within *one nation*, the nation of Israel, is found throughout the Bible. It is found in the Old Testament prophets, it's found in the gospels, it is seen in the historical account of the book of Acts, it's found in Paul's epistle to the Romans, it is the subject of the Hebrew epistles (the “general,” or “universal” epistles, which are not actually general in any sense), and it is found in the book of Revelation.

Let's consider a number of Old Testament prophecies which concern the remnant of Israel:

Isaiah 10:20-22

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.

For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

It will come to pass “in that day,” that the remnant of Israel shall no more again stay—that is, *to rely upon, to confide in or trust in*—they shall no more again stay upon their oppressor, he who

smote them, but upon the Lord in truth. I only want to draw out the idea here that whenever this happens, Israel will trust solely in the Lord, and that which is decreed will result in righteousness.

Isaiah 11:11,16

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea...

...And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

A remnant was only *once* recovered by God, after the time of the Babylonian captivity. The northern tribes never formally returned, that is, according to the terms of the Old Testament. Yet we see here another return.

Jeremiah 23:3-8

And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness.

Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

But, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

Jeremiah 30:7-11

Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him:

But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.

For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

This takes place *after* the resurrection, when David will reign in the Kingdom of God on earth with the Lord Himself.

Jeremiah 31:7-11

For thus saith the Lord; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.

Behold, I will bring them from the north in country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.

They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.

For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.

Ezekiel 20:33-38

As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you:

And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out.

And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God.

And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant:

And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord.

This gathering of the remnant evidently occurs at a point in time *after* God has poured out His fury, and the rebels will be purged out and not be allowed to enter the land of Israel.

Joel 2:32

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

Amos 5:15-18

Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

Therefore the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus; Wailing shall be in all streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing.

*And in all vineyards shall be wailing: for I will pass through thee, saith the Lord.
Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is
darkness, and not light.*

The Lord God will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph, that is, to the northern tribes, and God Himself (that is, Christ) will pass through the land during the Day of the Lord (immediately after the tribulation; see Matthew 24:29-30).

Micah 2:12-13

*I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put
them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make
great noise by reason of the multitude of men.*

*The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate,
and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of
them.*

Again, we see a gathering of the remnant, and the physical presence of the King Himself.

Micah 4:6-9

*In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out,
and her that I have afflicted;*

*And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the
Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.*

*And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come,
even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.*

After this gathering of the remnant of Israel, the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion *forever*. Now certainly everyone must admit that this has not occurred. Regardless of one's view of eschatology, this must still be future, unless we admit that the words don't mean what they say, in which case the study of God's word is in vain.

From these passages we can see that in the prophetic fulfillment of events, only a remnant of Israel is saved and made to dwell safely in their land forever.

The doctrine of the remnant can be clearly discerned from Old Testament passages. They generally go overlooked by modern Christians, and so they aren't able to see their correlation with the events that transpire or are alluded to in the New Testament. It is generally assumed that with the gospels come the "New Testament," although Hebrews 9:16 says,

...where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

At the very least then, the New Testament cannot begin *until Christ dies*. His death however is only the provision *for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament*, that, *they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance* (Hebrews 9:15).

And so, although a provision was made for the forgiveness of Israel's sins committed under the Old Testament (since we know from Hebrews 10:4 that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins), if you diligently study the prophets, the New Covenant isn't *fulfilled* until Christ returns to the earth and saves the believing, faithful remnant.

Those *which are called* are the remnant of Israel, who believe in the Name of Jesus Christ, that He is the Son of God, the promised Messiah—the foundation of the church spoken of by Christ in Matthew 16. This is not the church which was a mystery kept secret since the world began (Rom. 16:25), in which there is no Jew nor Greek, and which resulted from Israel's fall, but a church such as there was in the wilderness (Acts 7:38), when God called Israel out of Egypt:

This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us... (Acts 7:38)

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.
(Hosea 11:1)

For a *church*, an *ekklesia*, is in fact a *called-out-assembly*, and there will be yet another called out of the midst of Babylon in the seventieth week prophesied in Daniel 9:

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her (Babylon's) fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.
(Rev. 18:3-4)

God here is calling out an assembly of His people from Babylon.

My people, go ye out of the midst of her (Babylon), and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord...

...Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still: remember the Lord afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind. (Jer. 51:45, 50)

These assemblies called out from Babylon are without doubt a part of the seven churches of Revelation. They are Hebrew churches of the remnant of Israel, who will be persecuted for Jesus's Namesake—that is, His identity as *the Christ*—even by their own families and brethren (Luke 21:16-17).

And so in a time when the false Christ will arise proclaiming himself to be God (2 Thess. 2:4), the issue and matter of faith will be: *did Christ already come in the flesh or not?*

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

(1 John 4:2-3)

1 John 2:18 identifies that the audience is living in the “last time,” just as Peter stands up in Acts 2 and attributes what was occurring on Pentecost to the prophet Joel, which speaks specifically about the last days. The last days, or more specifically, the last seven-year-period of the 490 year prophecy given in Daniel 9 until the coming of the Lord and His kingdom, had already commenced in the time of Christ’s death and resurrection, and was ongoing up through Pentecost and even until the stoning of Stephen. But it was then that this timeline was interrupted, and when the dispensation of grace began and the Body of Christ was instituted with the apostle Paul.

The salvific issue in the time prior to the dispensation of grace, in which we live, and the time to come when the dispensation of grace is over, when it is time for judgment to begin at the house of God (1 Peter 4:17), was, *and will be*,

Whom say ye that I am? (Matt. 16:15), because it is through faith in *who He is* that they inherit eternal life:

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (John 20:31).

Contrast this with the Body of Christ, who obtains eternal life—not only through who Christ is, but through His finished work of death, burial, and resurrection *in our place*, a work of grace done on our behalf. Of course, it is Christ’s shed blood that pays for the sins of men regardless of the age or the revelation given, whether it be Noah, Abraham, David, Peter or Paul. All of humanity is ultimately saved by the blood, though it is credited to certain individuals on the basis of their faith in what God had up to that point revealed. Here at the end of the ages, God has revealed the mystery of His will (Eph. 1:9), and through the apostle Paul, fulfilled the word of God (Col. 1:25), so that we understand *exactly* how a Holy and Just God could forgive sinful humanity.

Unlike the Body of Christ, which is a spiritual organism composed entirely of redeemed saints, the nation of Israel was in time past, is still, and will continue to be (until the return of Christ), composed of both those who have faith, and those who don’t. The nation itself possesses promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and which pertain also to their offspring. And yet, not all of their offspring will receive those promises, but will be cut off from the nation, due to unbelief.

What we see when Christ comes to His own is that His own largely didn’t receive Him:

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name...

(John 1:10-12)

In Isaiah chapter 8, we have the narrative of Christ's coming in the flesh:

Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion. (Isaiah 8:13-18)

Jesus was the stone of stumbling and rock of offense to Israel—His identity was the point of contention between the Hebrews.

This should bring clarity to what Jesus meant when He said,

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. (Matthew 10:34-36)

Isaiah 8 says,

Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples... (verse 16)

And,

Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion. (verse 18)

It is no coincidence then when this remnant prays in Acts 4,

And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. (verses 29-30).

This small group of believing Hebrews, the disciples of Christ's earthly ministry, are contrasted with those who stumbled at the stumbling stone—those who rejected Christ. This group, this remnant of believing Israel, was *prophesied*, much like many of the things done in Christ's ministry, as well as that of the twelve. This shows that what was occurring in the gospels and first seven chapters of Acts concerned the remnant of Israel and not the Body of Christ, for the Body of Christ was a mystery. The essence of prophecy is that something was *foretold*, whereas the mystery of Christ is explicitly said to have been *hid in God*.

*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;
And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ...* (Eph. 3:8-9)

What is generally not understood is that there is a progression that occurs from the gospel accounts to the end of the book of Acts, with the stoning of Stephen and the salvation of Paul being the pivotal event. Prior to Stephen's death, Israel still had standing with God as His holy nation. Ephesians 2:14 states that there existed a *middle wall of partition* between the Jew and the gentiles. This existed because in times past the nations—the gentiles—continually rejected the knowledge of God, and worshiped the creature rather than the Creator, and chose to defile themselves in the lusts of their flesh...

And God gave them up (Rom. 1:24).

...And God gave them up (Rom. 1:26).

...And God gave them over to a reprobate mind (Rom. 1:28).

Paul, in the book of Romans, as he is outlining the course of history which led to his eventual apostleship to the gentiles, makes the point three times by inspiration of the Holy Spirit that God gave up the gentiles. And so if God gave up the gentiles, then how is it he was sent expressly to the gentiles by Christ directly?

It is in Genesis 12 that God calls out *one man* from among all the peoples of the earth, and from him and his wife who were well past age created a nation for His own purpose.

It is in Romans 2:17 that Paul addresses the Jew directly, and he goes on to prove that one is not simply a Jew who is born one in the flesh, but that they must have the faith of their father Abraham, and be a Jew inwardly also, and by Romans 3 verse 9 Paul proves that both Jews and gentiles are all under sin.

What naturally would have followed Stephen's martyrdom according to prophecy was that Christ, who was seen standing in the heavens, would have taken the scroll with seven seals, and according to the timeline appointed by the Father began opening those seals in the last portion of the seventieth week, unleashing God's judgment on the world until finally Christ returned and made all of His enemies His footstool, having subdued all powers both in heaven and on earth, as it is written in psalm 110, verse 1,

Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Christ of necessity had to sit at the Father's right hand, and yet in Acts 7 we see Christ standing. Prophecy at this point is being fulfilled, and Christ is getting ready to approach the throne and take the seven-sealed book from the right hand of the Father (Rev. 5:7).

What happens instead of the ensuing and inevitable judgment of God is that the chief persecutor of the church, Paul, encounters Christ directly

As the apostle Paul says,

For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel...
(Romans 9:6)

Jesus warned His disciples,

They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.
(John 16:2)

The remnant of New Covenant Israel is a Biblical doctrine spoken of in prophecy. We must let the Bible build upon itself, define itself, and allow previous revelation lay the foundation for the subsequent scriptures.

Jesus says to His disciples in Matthew 10, verses 5 and 6, to go *not* in the way of the Gentiles or Samaritans, but rather to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; some 28 verses later in the same chapter Jesus says,

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. (Matt. 10:34-36)

The context here is *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. Jesus is making it known that He came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10), and to separate the true Israel, the wheat, from the Israel in flesh only, the chaff. He came to make a division.

And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. (Matt. 3:9)

Here Jesus alludes to the resurrection (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29)—the resurrection of *Israel*, not the resurrection of the Body of Christ which was a mystery (1 Corinthians 15:51-52), nor the resurrection of the damned at the great white throne judgment which comes later. Here Jesus is making it known that just because they were the seed of Abraham, who had the promises, that that alone wasn't sufficient to obtain those promises.

In prophecy, the Messiah only laid down His life for His *friends*. And,

Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. (John 15:14)

And Jesus commanded the young rich man,

...if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. (Matt. 19:17b)

This wasn't a test tailored specifically for this man to test his heart as some Christians teach. No, Jesus upheld and taught the Law of Moses and instructed His disciples also to follow the Law of Moses:

The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.
(Matt. 23:2-3)

Most of Christianity takes Christ's statement that He came "not to destroy the Law but to fulfill the Law" and mixes it with the teachings of Paul to the Body of Christ, that *through the Law we're dead to the Law* (Gal. 2:19). That's not what Christ is saying in Matthew 5:17. He specially says He hasn't come to destroy the Law. Jesus fulfilling the Law was necessary for Him to be judged righteous by God's standard, to demonstrate Himself as God, to be a sufficient propitiation for the sins committed under the Old Testament (Hebrews 9:15).

The entire point of Christ's ministry on the earth was to *confirm the promises made unto the fathers* (Rom. 15:8b). Paul in Romans 15:9 connects the fulfillment of those promises to God's end goal—that *the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy*. In the scheme of prophecy, the Gentiles receive blessing through *saved Israel*, the head of the nations, the light of the world.

The Israelites knew that salvation and an inheritance on the earth was promised to Abraham's offspring, through Isaac and through Jacob. Many of them however did not understand that they wouldn't inherit those promises solely on the merit of their lineage.