

What is the Biblical remnant?

This is a word used to describe the elect; God's chosen people. It is first used in this sense in 2 Kg 19:30-31: 'And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and those who escape from Mount Zion. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.' Later Ezra could say, 'O LORD God of Israel, You *are* righteous, for we are left as a remnant, as *it is* this day.' (Ezra 9:15) Isa 1:9 says that the remnant is very small and Isaiah mentions the remnant many times in his oracles.

It is important to understand this in order to avoid many deceitful teachings about Israel. It was never in God's mind to save all of natural Israel. Paul quotes Isaiah explaining that, 'Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved. ... Unless the LORD of Sabaoth [Hosts] had left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom.' (Rm 9:27-29). God's people are not chosen by race but by individual election in eternity based upon God's good pleasure and nothing in man (Lk 12:32; Eph 1:5). The elect are then saved in time through the means of God-given faith (Eph 2:8). Thus, although Israel was originally a theocracy with many citizens, only a few were ever sons of the King (God).

In the beginning, only a portion were called, exemplified by Enoch, and at the time of the flood only one family of eight were saved from destruction. In the time of the patriarchs, only a few were saved; then God chose the smallest nation on Earth (Deut 7:7). Over and over God winnowed Israel to produce the elect. Isaac was chosen but Ishmael was not. Jacob was chosen but Esau was hated from birth. The bulk of Israel was rejected when the ten tribes were exiled, and God cut them off (Jer 7:15). [The Ten Tribes were the Northern Kingdom, or Samaria or Ephraim after the monarchy was divided.] The bulk of Judah was cut off in the Babylonian exile, leaving only a godly remnant (Jer 24). Out of the returning exiles only a small remnant remained waiting for the Messiah (e.g. Simeon and Anna). When Christ came he was rejected by the bulk of the religious community, leaving the remnant of the church.

God works through a remnant. He never chose all of Abraham's fleshly posterity, neither did he select all Israelites. God's purposes are with the elect alone, whom he has loved in Christ from eternity (Eph 1:4-5). In the modern church there are many with only a professing, superficial faith. Many, even miracle workers, will be rejected when Christ returns if they do not have true faith and bear good fruit (Matt 7:21-23). Thus the principle of the remnant continues today.

Scripture quotations are from The New King James Version

© Thomas Nelson 1982

Paul Fahy Copyright © 2015

Understanding Ministries

What is the Biblical remnant?

This is a word used to describe the elect; God's chosen people. It is first used in this sense in 2 Kg 19:30-31: 'And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and those who escape from Mount Zion. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.' Later Ezra could say, 'O LORD God of Israel, You *are* righteous, for we are left as a remnant, as *it is* this day.' (Ezra 9:15) Isa 1:9 says that the remnant is very small and Isaiah mentions the remnant many times in his oracles.

It is important to understand this in order to avoid many deceitful teachings about Israel. It was never in God's mind to save all of natural Israel. Paul quotes Isaiah explaining that, 'Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved. ... Unless the LORD of Sabaoth [Hosts] had left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom.' (Rm 9:27-29). God's people are not chosen by race but by individual election in eternity based upon God's good pleasure and nothing in man (Lk 12:32; Eph 1:5). The elect are then saved in time through the means of God-given faith (Eph 2:8). Thus, although Israel was originally a theocracy with many citizens, only a few were ever sons of the King (God).

In the beginning, only a portion were called, exemplified by Enoch, and at the time of the flood only one family of eight were saved from destruction. In the time of the patriarchs, only a few were saved; then God chose the smallest nation on Earth (Deut 7:7). Over and over God winnowed Israel to produce the elect. Isaac was chosen but Ishmael was not. Jacob was chosen but Esau was hated from birth. The bulk of Israel was rejected when the ten tribes were exiled, and God cut them off (Jer 7:15). [The Ten Tribes were the Northern Kingdom, or Samaria or Ephraim after the monarchy was divided.] The bulk of Judah was cut off in the Babylonian exile, leaving only a godly remnant (Jer 24). Out of the returning exiles only a small remnant remained waiting for the Messiah (e.g. Simeon and Anna). When Christ came he was rejected by the bulk of the religious community, leaving the remnant of the church.

God works through a remnant. He never chose all of Abraham's fleshly posterity, neither did he select all Israelites. God's purposes are with the elect alone, whom he has loved in Christ from eternity (Eph 1:4-5). In the modern church there are many with only a professing, superficial faith. Many, even miracle workers, will be rejected when Christ returns if they do not have true faith and bear good fruit (Matt 7:21-23). Thus the principle of the remnant continues today.

Scripture quotations are from The New King James Version

© Thomas Nelson 1982

Paul Fahy Copyright © 2015

Understanding Ministries