

# THE REMNANT

By

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*“If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that shall be saved.” (Rom. 9:27)*

For over fifteen centuries the general view of the church was that the promises made to Israel as a nation were fulfilled in the coming of Christ and the establishment of His Church. No one in the Church has ever questioned the fact that God chose Israel for a specific purpose: to bring forth the Messiah and His victory over sin, death, and the world. However, Jewish concepts which prevailed when Christ was on earth have become the predominant convictions in the Church. This is the belief that the promises to the nation of Israel were not fulfilled and are being fulfilled today in the rise of the modern “Israeli” nation and that the Jews are going to have their long-awaited kingdom on earth which Jesus refused to give them, for which cause they killed Him.

Speaking of the Jews nationally, Jesus said: “The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43). To the scribes and Pharisees He said: “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. 23:38). Speaking of the Temple, which symbolized the power of national Israel, Jesus said it would be so destroyed that one stone would not be left upon another. Speaking of Jerusalem itself, Jesus said: “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24).

The judgment of God fell so heavily upon Jerusalem in 70 AD that the city was totally destroyed and over one million people were slaughtered. The horrors endured by her citizens in the siege of Titus in 70 AD are beyond imagination. The historian, Josephus, exhausted his vocabulary in describing it, and affirmed that nothing so terrible had ever happened in history nor could it ever be surpassed. Indeed, neither World War I nor World War II — even in the bombing of Hiroshima — comes even close to equaling the tribulation and suffering of Jerusalem in 70 AD when the judgment of God was fulfilled as promised by Jesus. The apostle Paul, speaking of the Jews nationally, said that “wrath is come upon them to the uttermost” (1Thess. 2:16). Not only are the Scriptures emphatic in affirming that national Israel was to come to an end, but in the writings of Jesus, Peter, and Paul there is no room whatsoever for a revival of a Jewish nation as a people of God.

Jesus said: “If ye believed Moses ye would believe Me” (John 5:46). In this He clearly states that had the Jews of His day been truly following the purpose of God as given through Moses, they would have received Him as their Messiah. Thus, there would have been a smooth and efficient transition into Christianity. All the sacrifices and ceremonial laws, which were types, symbols and figures used to express the meaning of Christ’s death and resurrection would have been laid aside with no regrets as one lays aside the picture of his beloved when the beloved comes into his presence. Instead, the Jews who

did receive Christ and thus accepted the promises made to Abraham were bitterly persecuted and ostracized by the other Jews. No wonder the apostle Paul spoke of “the Jews who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and drove out us and please not God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved; to fill up their sins always: but the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost” (1 Thess. 2:15-16).

Judaism as a legitimate religious system was abolished, not solely because the nation acted officially in rejecting the Messiah, but because its purpose was finished. As dispensationalists claim, the promises were given expressly to “the house of Israel and the house of Judah” (Jer.31:31-34). What they do not admit is that the promises have been fulfilled. The Christian Church in its origin was made up entirely of the descendants of Abraham. On the Day of Pentecost, the day on which the Church was founded, the Scripture says, “Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.” (Acts 2:5) It was to these Jews that the apostle Peter, to whom Jesus had promised “the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” said that the promise made to David concerning the setting up of his kingdom had been fulfilled in the fact that Jesus had been raised from the dead, had ascended to David’s throne and was at the right hand of God. He said: “Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ this Jesus Whom ye crucified” (Acts 2:36). Immediately following this, some three thousand Jews “received his word and were baptized.” Later Peter declared: “but the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, He thus fulfilled” (Acts 3:18). He added, “Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers saying unto Abraham, ‘and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ Unto you first God having raised up His servant sent him to bless you in turning every one of you away from your iniquities” (Acts 3:25-26). Thus Peter considered the covenant God made with Abraham to be fulfilled in Christ.

Paul wrote, “Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He said not, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many; but as of one, ‘And to thy seed,’ which is Christ.” (Gal. 3:16) The promise embraced all believers equally without regard to race, as Paul stated, “And if ye are Christ’s than are ye Abraham’s seed, heirs according to promise” (Gal. 3:29).

When Jesus was preaching, there were those of Israelite origin who followed Him and obviously became a part of the original Church. Although they were but a little flock, He said to them: “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). The fact that only a few out of the fleshly descendants of Abraham received Jesus Christ does not negate the fulfillment of the promise but rather confirms it. For St. Paul wrote, “Isaiah cried concerning Israel, ‘if the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that shall be saved’” (Rom. 9:27).

About three and one half years after Pentecost, the apostle Peter — still using the “keys of the kingdom” — went to the household of Cornelius, and there the first Gentiles were given the privilege of being a part of the Church. The Church, therefore, is a fulfillment

of the promises to Israel, and according to the Old Testament Prophecies, all the nations continue to flow into it.

Some will say, “But what about Romans 11:26 which says, ‘so all Israel shall be saved’?” The apostle Paul explained that while fleshly Israelites rejected Christ and thus were cut off from the kingdom, there is the possibility of their being reinstated when they give up their unbelief and receive Christ. Paul compares the situation to an olive tree where natural branches were broken off and new branches, the Gentile believers, were grafted in. He then states, “Be not high-minded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches neither will He spare thee. Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell severity; but toward thee God’s goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou shall also be cut off. And they also if they continue not in their unbelief shall be grafted in for God is able to graft them in again” (Rom. 11:20-23). Note that if Hebrews are to be back into the root of the olive tree, they must be grafted in again. Their race gives them no inherent right to salvation. If they are to be restored to the family of God, it will be exactly as the Gentiles are brought into it, by being grafted into the olive tree. The apostle Peter, who were one of the “natural branches,” in speaking of the Gentiles said, “We believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the lord Jesus in like manner as they” (Acts 15:11); Paul writes “that a hardening in heart hath befallen Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in” (Rom.11:25). Which is simply to say that not all were hardened. Some accepted the Gospel right off; in fact, several thousand recognized that Christ was the promised Messiah and immediately took advantage of their opportunity to receive this promise and to enter into the new covenant—a covenant sealed with Christ’s blood (Mat. 26:28). However, most of them were hardened and thus were lost.

Still, the gospel “is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). Therefore, as Paul wrote, “if they continue not in their unbelief they shall be grafted in again.”

The “fullness of the Gentiles” will be when all the Gentiles who are ever going to receive Christ have done so. As regarding the delay in the destruction of ungodly men, Peter states that “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some count slackness but is longsuffering to you ward not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). When all have repented who are going to repent, than the destruction that is described in 2 Peter 3:7-13 will take place. The expression, “and so all Israel shall be saved,” taken without regard to the context and other scriptures, is taken by many to mean that all fleshly descendants of Jacob are to be saved. To thus interpret the verse to mean that God will save men and women on the basis of physical birth is to contradict what Paul writes throughout the epistle. It would also mean that those condemned by Christ as children of the devil (John 8:44) will be saved. Obviously it cannot mean this. In Rom.11:27 Paul quotes Isaiah’s prophecy, “This is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins.” This was the “new covenant” in Christ’s blood. Therefore all will be saved who receive this covenant. All Israel whose sins are taken away shall be saved.

All will be saved, of every tribe and tongue and nation when their sins are taken away. Even so, this will be only a remnant. Only a remnant of the world that existed at the time of Noah was saved from the Flood. Only a remnant of those who were in captivity in Babylon had faith to return to the land of Palestine and fulfill the prophecies concerning the return of Israel to their land. Only a remnant of them received Jesus Christ, and only a remnant of the Gentiles have ever turned to Him. This remnant is based not upon race, but upon grace. When the Messiah came, God's purpose for national Israel was accomplished, and His promises to them as a separate people were fulfilled. The modern "Israelis" have nothing in common with ancient Israel. Modern Israel has no priesthood and thus no mediator. They have no sacrificial system. They have no temple in which they might offer sacrifices in the Holy of Holies upon the Mercy Seat. Not only do they reject Christ, but they reject God; for Jesus clearly stated: "He that rejects Me rejects Him that sent Me" (Luke 10:16). Moreover, they can never have any other priest but Christ, who "became a high priest forever" (Heb. 6:20).

To the Christian Church the apostle Peter wrote, "But you are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's own possession" (1 Peter 2:9). And in Revelation 1:6, John says that Christ "made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father." **This is the seed of Abraham**, "*the remnant that shall be saved.*"

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