

The end time remnant

Introduction

I have written on the idea of a remnant many times in the past in various papers. Here I wish to focus upon what is going to happen at the end regarding the church. This also explains what is happening right now all around us.

The apostasy

The idea that there is some golden age for the church, either after a secret and open return of Christ in a millennium (as in Dispensationalism), or in a millennium after a shared tribulation (as in Historic Premillennialism) or in a global revival of the church (as in Postmillennialism and Charismaticism) – is nonsense. These have no Biblical pedigree.

The fact is openly stated – there will be an apostasy, a falling away, of the church and all that is considered as Christian at the end. I have explained this many times but 2 Thess 2:1-10 is quite unequivocal about it. There is no coming golden age, instead there is a falling away. Revelation explains (Rev 13:1-18), in symbolic terms, that mankind at the end universally worships Satan and thrives upon Babylon, with the exception of a faithful remnant in the church; believers are then persecuted by the world under the Devil.

Historic examples of a remnant

It is a Biblical principle that God saves a remnant out of a larger group of people. For example only a small proportion of the full number of Jews in Babylon chose to return to Jerusalem and face the hard slog of rebuilding the walls, the temple and the ruined city; especially with the provocation of local enemies. Thus a remnant returned to be directed by three prophets (Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi).

Those that remained in Babylon ceased to be the people of God in any form but fell into the idolatry of the Babylonians. It is here that the Pharisees, the enemies of Jesus, later developed the Babylonian Talmud which is now the chief authority for most modern Jews. It is also the foulest most blasphemous document on Earth treating Jesus far worse than Islamic scholars in their writings. Even Muhammad called Jesus the Word of God while Talmudic rabbis called him foul names.

But the idea of a remnant goes back much earlier. From the beginning there was a calling to some but only a remnant were faithful. Even amongst Isaac's children both Esau and Jacob should have inherited the kingdom but Esau sold his birthright and Jacob met with God and was changed into Israel. Esau was lost; Jacob was a remnant.

The principle of a remnant goes back into eternity when God predestined all mankind according to his will. He elected a portion of the human race to be saved and left the rest in their sins. The elect are the remnant of mankind.

Didactics

So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen. Matt 20:16

For many are called, but few are chosen. Matt 22:14

This is a clear statement of Jesus. The outward call of the Gospel is universal to all but only a select few (the elect) are chosen for the irresistible call of grace.

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Matt 7:13-14

Only few enter through the narrow gate and find eternal life in Christ. The vast majority of people (this includes many professing Christians) go through the broad gate that leads to destruction. Only a small remnant of humanity is saved in Christ.

Then one said to Him, 'Lord, are there few who are saved?' And He said to them, 'Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able'. Lk 13:23-24

Again Jesus affirms that many will not be able to enter the narrow gate, not even those who seek to. Only the elect remnant will be able.

Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' Matt 7:22-23

This emphasises that not all those who think that they are Christians will actually be saved. Many in church authority, including people that did supposed miracles, will be prevented from entering into the kingdom because they never had a proper relationship with Jesus; he never knew them. Only a remnant of the church will gain eternal life.

Throughout the OT there are many condemnations of prophets that spoke falsely and were not sent by God (Jer 14:14-16, 29:8-9, 21-23; Lam 2:14). It is a common feature in the OT that people in claimed positions of religious authority were actually false prophets. Church leadership is no guarantee of being in the remnant. This is also true of the priesthood; many priests led Israel into sin or were faithless towards God (1 Sam 2:11-12; Jer 2:7-8). This continued into the NT where the religious leaders were actually the enemies of their own messiah (Jn 8:54-55, 16:2-3).

'Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion,' says the LORD of hosts. 'Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; then I will turn My hand against the little ones. And it shall come to pass in all the land,' says the LORD, 'That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, "This is My people"; and each one will say, "The LORD is my God".' Zech 13:7-9

This appears to be a statement of divine principle. Two thirds fail but one third of the people are saved as the people of God.

This is a curious reversal since after the rebellion in heaven, there were two thirds of the angels that were elect but one third was swept away in Satan's revolt (Rev 12:3-4).

Remnant

There are many references to the word 'remnant' especially in the prophets who were brought in to correct the people in the word of God. Prophets are sent to deal with disobedience.

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. 2 Kg 19:30-31

And now for a little while grace has been shown from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage. Ezra 9:8

O LORD God of Israel, You *are* righteous, for we are left as a remnant, as it is this day. Here we are before You, in our guilt, though no one can stand before You because of this! Ezra 9:15

Unless the LORD of hosts Had left to us a very small remnant, We would have become like Sodom, We would have been made like Gomorrah. Isa 1:9

And it shall come to pass in that day That the remnant of Israel, And such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, Will never again depend on him who defeated them, But will depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, To the Mighty God. For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, A remnant of them will return. Isa 10:20-22

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 who are left. Isa 11:11

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. Isa 37:31-32

I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. Jer 23:3

For thus says the LORD: "Sing with gladness for Jacob, And shout among the chief of the nations; Proclaim, give praise, and say, 'O LORD, save Your people, The remnant of Israel!' Jer 31:7

Then hear now the word of the LORD, O remnant of Judah! Jer 42:15

Yet behold, there shall be left in it a remnant who will be brought out. Ezek 14:22

And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls. Joel 2:32

I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold, Like a flock in the midst of their pasture. Mic 2:12

Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? Mic 7:18

The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness And speak no lies, Nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; For they shall feed their flocks and lie down, And no one shall make them afraid. Zeph 3:13

Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: 'Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved'. Rm 9:27

Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Rm 11:5

This is a mere sample of the references to the word 'remnant'.

Some people think that all Israel was saved because they were called out of Egypt by divine power. This is false. In fact the generation of Israelites that escaped Egypt into the wilderness were mostly judged by God and lost because of their rebellion. Only a few souls, like Joshua and Caleb, who were faithful survived.

Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' Heb 3:8-11

For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. Heb 4:2

Our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, saying to Aaron, 'Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets. Acts 7:38-42

The issue is faith. Many of those Israelites were called by God and offered the Gospel (just as now) but they had no faith; they were not elect, and so they perished not entering God's rest (grace in Christ). Salvation is always by faith and this faith is given by God to the elect alone.

So throughout the OT we see Hebrews falling away time after time. They proved to be a rebellious and stiff-necked people as God warned Moses (Exod 32:9, 33:3, 5; Deut 9:13). Eventually whole tribes were punished with dispersion and exile for disobeying God, particularly for spiritual adultery (idolatry). This happened to the Northern Kingdom in 721 BC and Judah in 586 BC.

In all these cases only a small remnant survived because they trusted in God's word. God is with the remnant, not the whole body

The situation today

The same principle applies today; God is with the remnant and not the whole outward church. Indeed, in some cases, I believe that the outward church, even evangelical examples, is 95% unbelievers just professing faith with no substance.

Now the reasons for this are many and I have explained these for many years. Essentially they all boil down to a lack of faith and dependence upon God's word and placing faith in men. Whether this is in a false Gospel, heretical doctrines, aberrant practices, excitement in meetings, charismatic personalities, or a host of other things. Most churchgoers trust men but not God. This is true in evangelical churches just as much as in non-evangelical churches.

In many cases congregants don't even take a Bible to church meetings anymore. They fail to be obedient in even basic disciplines, such as giving thanks for meals. They also sin without any conscience.

This is why so many godly people are unable to attend church at all – all the churches around them are apostate and they wish to keep their purity. This is painful as they long for fellowship, but obedience to God's word is superior to getting fellowship.

A local example

My area is typical. It was historically filled with churches and many non-conformist chapels. Sadly all these chapels are now luxury homes; near me is a converted Strict Baptist chapel that has a Masarati parked outside. Even some large church buildings are now warehouses, clubs and shops. There are still many churches, mostly meeting in schools or dedicated new buildings but these are as follows:

- Completely liberal historic denominations.
- Apostate or non-evangelical Anglican.
- Sectarian (e.g. Christadelphian).
- Radical Charismatic (e.g. Toronto Blessing influenced).
- Restoration Charismatic (under an apostle).
- Emerging Church (Postmodern).
- Cultic.
- Committed to supporting Israel (Dispensational, Messianic Christianity, Jewish Root).
- Committed to heretical doctrines and practices.
- Having women leaders.
- Dead as a doornail small Reformed churches with a small, ageing congregation that runs on legalistic human traditions.

I have tried to find the good in some of these and suffer in silence, but it was too much. I had to become a hypocrite to remain. I could not fellowship with openly unbiblical doctrines and practices. Like many others I am now unable to meet in a church but get my fellowship where I can. In addition I am now too sick to travel or attend most meetings anyway.

This is all part of the great falling away. The churches are being denuded of spirituality and become fleshly husks. Godliness is rare, even amongst church leaders. In fact, there are many non-Christians that are of better character than many Christians.

How did this corruption come about?

Corruption of becoming a member of the church

This is the corruption of the Gospel message.

Now I have explained this in detail for many years. There are many strands of corruption that I cannot detail in this paper. In short I will list the sort of problems that are manifest in the modern Gospel message.

Historic heresies

- Pelagianism.
- Semi-Pelagianism.
- Roman Catholic semi-Pelagianism.
- Universalism.
- Arminianism.
- Amyraldism.
- Lutheran universalism.
- Unitarianism.
- Wesleyanism. [Arminianism plus a number of other errors.]
- Mysticism. [E.g. Roman Catholic mystics, Quietism, Pietism, Quakerism, Shakers.]
- New Divinity.
- Fullerism.
- Deism.
- Cambridge Platonists.

- Enthusiasm. [Proto Charismaticism.]
- False prophetic movements. [E.g. the Cevenols.]

Modern Gospel issues

- Evolutionary theory.
- The Documentary Hypothesis.
- Liberalism.
- Modernism.
- New Evangelicalism.
- Neo-Orthodoxy.
- Modern forms of Pelagianism. [E.g. Finneyism.]
- Modern forms of Arminianism. [E.g. Free-willism, Campaign evangelism, Open Theism.]
- Modern forms of Amyraldism. [E.g. 4-point Calvinism, New Calvinism.]
- Dispensationalism.
- The Lordship Controversy.
- Emerging Church theology. [Afflicted by Postmodernism.]
- Modern mysticism. [E.g. Alpha Course, Toronto.]
- The Holiness Movement.
- Perfectionism.
- Pentecostalism. [Wesleyanism plus occultism.]
- Radical Pentecostalism. [E.g. Latter Rain movement, Manifest Sons of God movement, the Healing Movement.]
- Charismaticism. [Syncretism with occultism and mysticism.]
- Word of Faith.
- Cultism. [E.g. Christian Science, Unity, JWs, Mormons, Children of God, Christadelphians etc.]

In various ways these diverge from the true Gospel that must be founded upon the following principles:

- The absolute authority and inerrancy of the word of God.
- The absolute Lordship and Mediatorship of Christ.
- Sovereign grace; no human works.
- The doctrines of grace. [Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, the preservation of the saints.]
- The necessity for true conviction of sin.
- The necessity of true faith and repentance (conversion) evidenced by water baptism.
- Public confession of faith.
- Faith evidenced by good works.
- A propensity to worship.

Corruption from within church over time – allowed by leadership

The purpose of the Devil has been to pervert and corrupt the churches from within for decades. In some cases Elite bankers have given money to further this corruption; this is how certain movements were able to grow very quickly. Dispensationalism was deliberately funded by Jewish bankers in order to provide Christian support for the state of Israel for example. John Darby was on the East India Company central committee. General Booth and Bramwell Booth (Salvation Army) were members of Cecil Rhodes' inner circle (which is the root of many global Elite institutions today such as the Council on Foreign Relations). Many Charismatic movements were funded by the Elite. In fact, Elite characters have boasted about how they have successfully perverted the church, as I have explained in other papers.

We just have to look at the effects of movement after movement. For example, the Charismatic Movement was a Trojan Horse, a deliberate attempt to pervert Christianity with occult ideas and practices. This was most successfully accomplished in Word of Faith churches where even necrophilia is accepted. Other churches were perverted by liberalism, modernism, evolutionary theory, Postmodernism, Cultural Marxism, Marxism, witchcraft, eastern religious philosophy, support for Jewishness, certain occult practices, Theosophy, magic, New Ageism, shamanism, spiritualism, sacramentalism, and so on. In short, paganism entered the church by stealth. This was the wound that was surprisingly healed (Rev 13:3). Our Victorian forbears believed they had eradicated paganism in society. Now it is rife within the church.

When a church believes that you can be healed by staring at a gemstone – it is pagan. When it believes that a person is saved by falling over backwards and having a trance – it is pagan. When it believes that shouting loud and running round the room will dispel demons – it is pagan. When it encourages people to descend into primitive emotionalism (shouting, screaming, jumping, writhing etc.) - it is pagan. When it teaches that by imagining and visualising objects of desire then a person will get them – it is pagan. When it focuses on money – it is pagan. When it focuses on men's authority – it is pagan. When it allows a leader to throw people against the wall by a gesture – it is pagan. When the whole congregation is out of control writhing, screaming, shouting, jumping etc. – it is pagan. We could go on and on. All this is following the beast.

The people that refuse to have anything to do with this wickedness are the remnant today.

The church will become worse and worse until it is practically a form of Satanism. Eventually the established churches will welcome the persecution of genuine Christians. Churches will join the world to hound true believers.

A prime example of ecclesiastical disobedience

A hard, factual example of the apostasy of the churches across the whole world is their willing collusion in the Covid restrictions. Instead of standing up for the safety of individuals, especially children and the old who suffered most, they willingly complied.

Astonishingly, they closed their churches down for months on end, when suffering people needed fellowship the most, and did it without a whimper. Certain Catholic pastors withstood this and went to prison (e.g. Artur Pawlovsky), putting evangelicals to shame. Their subsequent court trial proved their innocence because no government, under Common Law, has the right to stop people from worshipping. It is an ancient and inalienable right, secured by Common Law.

This was the biggest disgrace for the churches in history. Every church that closed should pack up and dissolve. Every leader involved in the closure should resign from church leadership forever. This is the most egregious sin the church has committed corporately in centuries. This shows the true nature of the outward church.

This could not have happened if the church had not been corrupted for the last 100 years bringing it to the sorry state that it is now in; utter capitulation to the world.

This proves that the remnant staying away from churches is the right thing to do. Churches are corrupted shells with no testimony. Their lampstand was removed years ago.

'And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?' Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. Lk 18:7-9

A symbolic illustration of end time apostasy

Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot *for* forty-two months. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire. When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.
Revelation 11:1-13

I cannot give a full exegesis of this passage here but can only draw attention to important points for my argument.

The context introduces us to the temple, the altar and those who worship God; we are clearly dealing with the church here. The court is the domain of superficial, professing Christianity and the treading down of the holy city is the corruption of worship and oppression of the church. [The 'holy city' is the church - Rev 21:2.] This is the apostasy and taking over of the church by false, pagan, occult elements. Within the holy city there is a pure testimony maintained in the temple and the altar areas - genuine Christian worship continues in the true core of the church.

Regarding the two witnesses, this is a picture of mature testimony. The number 'two' is the Biblical number of fulness of testimony.¹ Not only that but a prophet is a minister of testimony, he bears witness to what God has to say to men. The olive tree is a symbol of testimony, being a symbol of Israel in the OT and the church in the NT (Rm 11:17. 24). Lampstands are symbolic of testimony - light shining out. The church is likened to a lampstand and the church is God's testimony.² This points to a multiple testimony to God in the end times.

The two prophets or witnesses stand for the testimony of the true church speaking for God. They prophesy throughout the church age (one thousand two hundred and sixty days). They are olive trees full of the Holy Spirit and lampstands that give light (OT symbols of church testimony; see Zechariah for example).

¹ For certainty of testimony there needed to be at least two witnesses (Deut 17:6). It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true (Jn 8:17-18). The testimony of God's law was two tablets of stone (Deut 4:13). For effective witness to the Gospel, Jesus sent out 70 workers in pairs (Lk 10:1). God's revelation (testimony) is in two parts: the OT and NT. The second person of the Trinity is called 'the faithful witness' (Rev 1:5).

² The seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches (Rev 1:20).

The miracles refer to past miraculous events authenticating God's ministers. The fire and plagues refers to Moses (Exod 9:13-14; Num 10:35), stopping rain refers to Elijah (Jm 5:17). These are also the two prophets who stood with Jesus in his Transfiguration. Moses represents the testimony of the law, Elijah the testimony of the prophets. The church at the end must be a prophetic witness to God's word.

At the end the beast makes war against those proclaiming God's testimony. To the world they are all killed and their bodies lie in the streets. The world thinks that it has destroyed the church, the Christian testimony. So severe was the persecution. Sodom and Egypt represent the world. [Sodom is sexual sin and selfishness; Egypt is worldliness and greed,]

The resurrection of the saints refers to the end when Jesus returns. In the same hour there is an earthquake, that is, the end of the world.

Now the point I am making here is that there is an end time persecution of the church. No sound Bible scholar disputes that. There is also an apostasy in the church; the outer court of the temple is corrupted and is trodden down by pagans. Those who testify to the truth will be harassed by the world; those who capitulate to worldly ideas and lead a compromised life will be safe from persecution but will face God's judgment.

However, God secures a remnant of the faithful who will meet Christ in the air at the end (1 Thess 4:17). The church is not totally destroyed but is hidden, meeting in homes to avoid persecution. The final testimony of God is in the remnant, not in the outward church. The outward church is finished.

This was always the case when Israel sinned with the golden calf idolatry. The testimony was in the remnant. The true fighters for God in Gideon's army was the small remnant of 300 (Jdg 7:6). In the time of persecution necessitating Elijah's ministry, the testimony was in a remnant of 7000 (1 Kg 19:18). Before the Assyrian captivity the testimony was in the remnant. Before the Babylonian captivity the testimony was in the remnant. At the return of the exiles from Babylon the testimony was in the remnant. When the Messiah was crucified the testimony was in the remnant.

Conclusion

God has always worked with the remnant and not the whole body. He is the Saviour of the faithful, not those who just attend churches.

Today the remnant, the Lord's true people, need to find each other wherever possible. Ways must be found for these people to unite and encourage one another in faith to meet in homes. God give us grace to serve one another.

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