

A Brief Summary of What the Bible Teaches concerning the Remnant of Israel¹

Definition: The Remnant overall are that part of Israel the nation that exercise faith in Jehovah, the God of Israel. There are, in a sense, two Israels: Israel the nation, i.e. every ethnic Israelite, regardless of spiritual allegiance; and Israel the remnant, ethnically Israelite, but also exercising faith in Jehovah.

In the PAST: the remnant were those faithful Israelites who worshipped Jehovah up until the coming of Messiah. The concept appears first in 1Kings 19:18. The 7000 Israelites whose knees had not bowed to Baal were the remnant of Elijah's day. In Isaiah we learn (chs 7-8) that the point of division between those remnant and the non-remnant was Immanuel. He will be for the remnant a sanctuary, but for the non-remnant a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. Isaiah also named one of his sons "She'ar yeshuv", meaning "a remnant will return," which looks forward to the future salvation of a remnant, and the destruction of the non-remnant, of the nation.

In the PRESENT: the remnant is made up of those Jewish believers in Jesus. Peter (1Peter 2:4-10) affirms the truth of this with regard to Isaiah 8:14-15. Paul (Romans 9-11, esp. 11:5) carefully develops the theology of the remnant concept in the context of outlining the rationale for the present rejection of Jesus among the nation of Israel. Those Jews who believe in Jesus today are something of a paradox. As members of the body of Messiah, they are in Christ, the second Adam, "neither Jew nor Greek"; as Israelites "according to the flesh" they are the present-day remnant.

In the FUTURE: the remnant will include all Jews who come to faith during the tribulation period, and who are sustained by God during it. This includes the 144,000 (Rev 7). Most Jews however who do come to faith in Jesus at this time will do so only at the end of the tribulation. These are those who, "having escaped from the house of Jacob," will "lean upon the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 10:20-21). They are the "all Israel" who are saved in Romans 11:26. Ultimately, the remnant will no longer be a remnant, in that it comprise the entire nation, and the entire nation will be faithful to Jehovah.

¹ Source: The Remnant of Israel: Past, Present and Future. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Manuscript 191.