

The Beauty of God's Remnant Patchwork

By David Lee Burris



Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!” declares the LORD Almighty. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones. In the whole land,” declares the LORD, “two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The LORD is our God’ ([Zechariah 13:7-9](#)).

Remnant Theology & The Pruning of Thee Church

There is a biblical precedent that God has frequently seen fit to thin His ranks, to prune and purify His people. Theologians call this “remnant theology.”

Remnant theology is seen in both the Old and New Testaments. During critical periods, many (if not most) followers of God fell away such that only a remnant remained to begin again. Here are just a few of the many examples that can be found in Scripture:

- **The tribes of Judah and Levi** - There were twelve tribes in Israel, but ten of them (the Ten Lost Tribes) were lost in the Assyrian conquest of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C. The prophets had warned the Northern Kingdom of its wickedness, but they refused to repent, and the foretold destruction came to pass. Those who did not die in the war were deported and assimilated into the peoples around them. Only a remnant, the tribes of Judah and Levi, survived in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
- **A remnant of Judah** – Judah also grew wicked and prophets warned of its destruction. The Babylonians then destroyed Judah, and Jerusalem with it, in 587 B.C. They deported the survivors to Babylon. Eighty years later, the Persians conquered the Babylonians and allowed the Jewish people to return to the Promised Land. Only a remnant went back, however; most chose to stay in the Diaspora, preferring Babylon to the land promised by God.
- **Gideon’s army** – Gideon had an army of 30,000 and faced the Midianite army of 60,000, yet God told him that his army was too large, and he should send home any soldiers who were afraid. So, Gideon told the soldiers that if they didn’t think they were up for this battle they could leave; 20,000 left. With Gideon’s army down to only 10,000, God said to him that his army was *still* too big and that he should observe the men as they drank from a nearby stream. Three hundred of them lapped up the water with their tongues like dogs! God told Gideon let all the others go home. Gideon won that day with those 300 men whom the Lord had chosen. God thinned His ranks and chose only a remnant as His true soldiers (cf/Judges 6 and 7).
- **Jesus and large crowds** – Some of Jesus’ most difficult sayings came when there was a large crowd present: He taught against divorce (Matt 5 and 19, Mark 10); He declared that no one could be His disciple unless he renounced the temporal, took up his cross, and followed Him (e.g., Luke 14); He taught on the memorial of his flesh and blood, causing many to leave and no longer walk in His company (Jn 6).
- **The narrow road to salvation** – Jesus lamented that the road to destruction is wide and many are on it, while the road to salvation is narrow and only a few find it (cf Mat 7:13-14). Yes, only a few, a remnant.

The

REMNANT

Past and Present

by
C. H. MACKINTOSH

IT is at once interesting, instructive and encouraging to trace through Scripture the history of what is called “The Remnant.” We may remark at the outset that the fact of there being a remnant proves the failure of the ostensible witness or professing body, whether Jewish or Christian. If all were faithful there would, of course, be no moral ground for a remnant, nothing to distinguish a few from the general body of professors. The remnant, at any time, will be found to consist of those who feel and own the common failure and ruin, and count on God, and cleave to His Word. These are the great characteristic marks of the remnant in every age. We have failed, but God is faithful, and His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting.

In the address to this assembly [Thyatira] we find a marked change, indicated by three plain facts—namely: first, a remnant is for the first time addressed: secondly, the Lord’s coming is for the first time introduced; and, thirdly, the hearing ear is no longer looked for in the assembly at large, but in the *overcomer*. Now these facts prove beyond all question that in Thyatira all hope of corporate restoration is abandoned. “I gave her space to repent, ... and she repented not.” The case is hopeless as regards the professing body. But here the remnant is singled out and cheered—not with the hope of a converted world or a restored Church, but with the bright and blessed hope of the Lord’s coming as the bright and morning star. “But unto you I say, the remnant in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine [διδαχὴν, the same root as διδάσκειν, what Jezebel was doing], and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have hold fast *till I come*.”

Here then we have a deeply interesting view of the Christian remnant. It is not the Church restored, but a distinct company clear of Jezebel’s teaching and Satan’s depths, and going on to the end. It is of the utmost importance that the reader should be clear in reference to the fact that the last four churches run on synchronously to the end. It simplifies the whole subject immensely, and gives us a very definite, practical view of the Christian remnant. **There is no mention of a remnant until we get to Thyatira. Then all hope of corporate restoration is given up.**

But what of Sardis? Is this the Church restored? Nothing of the kind. “Thou hast *a name* that thou livest, and *art dead*.” This is not a restored or reformed Church, but *threatened* with Christ’s coming *as a thief*, instead of being cheered with “the bright and morning star.” In a word, it is Protestantism with “a name,” but the works “not perfect before God.” And what then? The Christian remnant, “*A few names* even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and *they* [He does not say *thou*] shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.” We have here a vivid and most striking contrast between dead, cold, nominal profession and a few true-hearted, earnest lovers of Christ—between form and power, death and life.

In the last two assemblies we have the contrast continued, enlarged, and enforced. Philadelphia gives us a most precious picture of a company of true Christians, humble, lowly, feeble, but true to Christ; holding fast His word, and not denying His name—Christ and His word treasured in the heart and confessed in the life—a living reality, not a lifeless form. The moral beauty of this is excellent. The very contemplation of it is refreshing and edifying indeed. In short, it is Christ reproduced by the Holy Ghost in a beloved remnant. There is no pretension to be anything, no assumption of great things. Christ is all: His word, His name, how precious! We seem to have gathered up and concentrated here the lovely moral traits of the various remnants that have come under our notice, brought out in full blow and yielding a fragrant perfume.

Now all this is most grateful to the heart of Christ. It is not a question of great service rendered, mighty works performed, anything striking or splendid in the eyes of men. No; it is something far more precious to the Lord, namely, the deep, calm, thorough appreciation of Himself and His precious word. This is far more to Him than the most showy services and costly sacrifices. What He looks for is a place in the heart. Without this all is worthless. But the very feeblest breathing of the heart’s affections after Himself is most precious. Let us harken to our adorable Lord as He pours out His loving heart to this dear Philadelphian company—this true Christian remnant. “These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept *My word*, and hast not denied *My name*. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan”—those who take their stand on the boasted ground of traditionary religion—“which *say* they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that *I have loved thee*”—precious, blessed fact, the basis and guarantee of all, for time and eternity!—“Because thou hast kept the word of *My patience* [not *My power*], I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (τοὺς κατοικοῦντας, those finding their home on the earth, in contrast to **those whose citizenship is in heaven**).

And now a word, in conclusion, as to Laodicea. Nothing can be more vivid or striking than the contrast between it and Philadelphia in every respect. We have here the last phase of the professing Christian body. It is just about to be spewed out as something insufferably nauseous to Christ. It is not a question of gross immorality. It may to man’s eye present a very respectable appearance; but to the heart of Christ its condition is most repulsive. It is characterized by lukewarmness and indifference. “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth.”

How awfully solemn to find the professing Church in such a condition! And to think how soon we pass from the attractions of Philadelphia—so grateful to the heart of Christ, so refreshing to His spirit—to the withering atmosphere of Laodicea, where there is not a single redeeming feature! We have heartless indifference as to Christ and His interests, combined with the most deplorable self-gratulation. “Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and *have need of nothing*; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”

How solemn is all this! People boasting of their riches, and of their having need of nothing, and Christ outside. They have lost the sense of divine righteousness, symbolized by “gold,” and practical human righteousness, as symbolized by “white raiment,” and yet full of themselves and their doings—the very reverse of the dear Philadelphian company. There, He reproves nothing; here, He commends nothing. There, Christ is all; here, He is actually outside, and the Church is all. In a word, it is perfectly appalling to contemplate. We are just at the close. We have got to the last solemn phase of the Church as God’s witness on the earth.

Yet even here, in the face of this most deplorable condition of things, the infinite grace and changeless love of the heart of Christ shine out in all their undimmed lustre. He is outside; this tells what the Church is. But He is knocking, calling, waiting: this tells what He is, eternal and universal homage to His name! “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” The gold, the white raiment and the eyesalve are offered. Love has various offices to discharge, various characters in which to clothe itself; but it is the same love still—“the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever,” even though it has to “rebuke and chasten.” Here His attitude and His action speak volumes, both as to the Church and as to Himself. “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: *if any man* hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to *him*, and will sup with him, and *he with Me*.”

In the church of Sardis the remnant is spoken of as “a few names”; in Laodicea there is an “if” as to one; but even if there be a single hearing ear, if there be one to open the door, that one is assured of the high privilege, the immense favor, of supping with Christ—of having that precious one as Guest and Host. “I with him, and he with Me.” When the corporate witness has reached the very lowest point, individual faithfulness is rewarded with intimate fellowship with the heart of Christ. Such is the infinite and everlasting love of our beloved Saviour and Lord. Oh, who would not trust Him and praise Him and love Him and serve Him?¹

¹ Mackintosh, C. H. (n.d.). [*The Remnant: Past and Present*](#) (pp. 1–32). New York: Loizeaux Brothers.

MAKING DO WITH REMNANTS

Every department store used to have a remnant counter. They were visited solely by women—passionately intent, highly competitive women—all of them looking for a piece of cloth that could be made into some project and that held promise of being a bargain. Remnants were the leftovers from the bolts of cloth, and they were so big an element of business in a day when almost every woman was a bit of a seamstress or knew someone who was. Depending on the nature of the cloth, the remnants were anything from a scrap of six or eight inches and the width of the bolt to perhaps a yard and a half or two yards. But the people who shopped for bargains were connoisseurs. They could look at a bedraggled scrap and see a skirt, a scarf, a child's dress, or a quilt patch or two.

God had a penchant for remnants. Starting with the Old Testament prophets the word began to be all about *people*. That's when I began to feel that God liked the word, almost as if the divine had more interest in remnants than in the full bolt, so to speak.

The first remnant in our story isn't identified as such, but there's no mistaking him. A bargain sale had been going on for a generation or more, a situation in which human beings—these wonderful creatures, so full of potential, made in the image of God—had become so distorted that "every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). We humans are constantly offered some deal for which we pay our time, our money, our glands, and—eventually—our souls; and we decide how much we think we're worth. The ancient generation at this point in the biblical story was selling itself cheap, and it looked as if the whole bolt of cloth was gone; after all, the writer said that "*all* flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth" (6:12, italics added). It sounds as if the whole corpus had been sold out.

But there was a remnant, a man named Noah. He was "a righteous man, blameless in his generation," and he walked with God (6:9). He was all that was left—he and his three sons and their wives. God took delight in this remnant and through them saved the human race. This is a special fact about the divine remnant business, that God—like any good seamstress—finds special use for remnants: no matter how ordinary the remnant may look or how unpromising, they're the hope of the future. Always. Mind you, I believe in democracy and majority votes and all that sort of thing, but always pay attention to the minority because the odds are good that they will set life's sail for tomorrow.

What I've just said lets you know that this is a different sort of detective story. Usually we're looking for a villain, a perpetrator of evil. But in this matter of remnants the key figure wears the white hat. Well, sometimes at first glance you'll think it's a dunce's cap rather than a hero's hat, because the remnant type is almost always a contrarian, voting against the odds. An unknown New Testament writer tells us in the book of Hebrews that **you can recognize these people because they have faith**. These are people, he says, who are assured about "things hoped for," and who have "conviction about things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1), and if that outlook doesn't mark you for condescending smiles, nothing will.

If I had time, I'd tell you about more of these particular personalities—like Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Rahab—every one of them working against the odds so often that much of the time they were objects of scorn. A good many of them died for what they believed, and the one who tells their story says they were people "of whom the world was not worthy" (Hebrews 11:38), which is pretty strong praise. But they were the **remnant type, still doing their thing long after the culture of their times had sold out**.

And if it's not bad enough to be a leftover on life's bargain counter, the writer of Hebrews adds a further unnerving element. After telling the stories of all those remnant types the writer continues, "Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:39-40). This is the final indignity: the remnant often doesn't get to see the purpose for which it was chosen. But more of that later.

I want to call in two witnesses. They are specialists in remnanting, because they were prophets. That is, they had a special gift for looking at life and history, and seeing meaning that everyone else missed. That's the remnant mentality. They could look at throwaway stuff and see in it some beautiful prospect. If I may use a theological term, when they looked at remnants they set off on a **process of redemption**. Well, redemption was the bread-and-butter business of the prophets.

The Hebrew prophets were good at this sort of thing because they did most of their work on their nation's night shift. There never seemed to be much market for prophets when things were going well. They were called in when some enemy nation was arming against them or when moral decadence was at such an abysmal point that it couldn't go any lower. They had the instincts of a moral detective: they could look at a situation and see where it was leading. They would then issue a warning, but of course this kind of assignment didn't make them popular.

Isaiah—he of the golden voice—got such an assignment early in his prophetic career. When he was still basking in the wonder of the divine vision of his call, the Lord said, "Go then, said he, and give a message to this people of mine." What kind of vision? "Though a tenth of their number remain, it is but empty show, **like leafage that needs pruning**; only a remnant of it will be left, the true stock of holiness" (Isaiah 6:13). I can't imagine telling a nation that only a tenth of them will be left, and that even that tenth will be "an empty show," but Isaiah was commissioned to deliver such a message.

His nation, Israel, had believed from the days when they escaped Egyptian slavery under the leadership of Moses that they had a unique mission under God. In a peculiar way they were to be the head of the nations of the earth. Not in military power or in land size, but in moral authority, the kind of authority that would make other nations turn to them for ethical leadership. Of course, they were human enough that they often projected this role of holy leadership into all the other elements of power that nations and individuals ordinarily seek. They had a brief period, under the reigns of King David and King Solomon, when they were a significant force in the politics of the ancient Middle East, which made them dream of continuing, growing power. And as I just said, it's natural to dream of the kind of power that this world tends to cherish, but it's very difficult to be content with something as ephemeral as moral and ethical influence. You can't quantify such influence the way you can measure armies, munitions, and industrial wealth.

So, Israel kept hoping they would become a power to be reckoned with. Instead, the prophet Isaiah—who tended to be a much more positive sort, unlike Jeremiah or Amos, for instance—announced that they might be diminished to a tenth of their present strength, and that even that tenth would be hardly more than a stump. Not to worry: **only a remnant will be left, but it will be quality**. It will be "the true stock of holiness." And since holiness— that is, **moral and ethical character—was God's purpose in calling out** this nation, this would mean that they were a true success.

This remnant theme was so dominant in Isaiah's mind that he named his son Shearjashub. There's probably a footnote in your Bible to tell you that the boy's name meant "a remnant shall return" (Isaiah 7:3). Every time Isaiah looked at his son, he was reminded of God's plan for his nation: they might go through desert places, where the future was palpably bleak, and they might seem to teeter on the edge of nonexistence, but God would accomplish the divine purpose with a remnant. **In God's hand, a remnant is enough.**

This was the mood that kept Isaiah and his kind believing in the future. "The surviving remnant of the house of Judah," he wrote, "shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward; for from Jerusalem a remnant shall go out, and from Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this" (Isaiah 37:31-32). I think Isaiah meant that the Lord's zeal for his people, Israel (Judah), and for the righteousness they were meant to represent was the guarantee that a remnant was sufficient to bring victory. But sometimes, as I've said, I have a feeling that God is simply prejudiced in favor of remnants.

Still, being a remnant is no guarantee of success. The issue is the quality and the potential of the remnant. In the prophet Jeremiah's time a delegation of people, led by the commanders of the army, came to the prophet to appeal their case as "this remnant. For there are only a few of us left out of many" (Jeremiah 42:2). Jeremiah told them what they ought to do ("O remnant of Judah, thus says the LORD of hosts" [42:15]). But when the delegation went counter to Jeremiah's counsel, they were told that their "remnant" that was so determined to go its own way, would "perish" (44:12). **The issue is the quality and purpose of the remnant, not its size.** "Look, Lord, I'm small so, of course, you're on my side"—to which God replies, "Small isn't the issue. Are you good small or bad small? I'm looking for a holy remnant."

Jesus came preaching about a Kingdom—the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of heaven. This is heady stuff, and it's no wonder that people hailed him as the one for whom their nation had been waiting and that even his closest companions, the disciples, anticipated positions in his empire. But Jesus coded the remnant philosophy into so much of his teaching about his kingdom. The Kingdom of God, he said, is like a farmer who sows seed broadcast, and most of it (three-quarters, it appears) produces nothing, but a small portion (a remnant?) is wonderfully effective. His Kingdom is like a grain of mustard seed, tiny and insignificant, but it becomes a tree. His Kingdom is like yeast in a homemaker's hand: it's like nothing, yet it controls three measures of flour (see Matthew 13). This is remnant talk—leftovers, things easily overlooked or discarded. But Jesus said that this is the stuff with which the Kingdom of God is built.

Similarly, Jesus' entourage were very much the remnant type—some fishermen, a tax collector, a small-time revolutionary, and village women following a village carpenter. Yet, when the story comes to a climax, it's a scene where "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" stand before the throne to declare their loyalty.

How do you get from remnants—Israel, Judah, and the church; Noah, Abraham, martyrs, and prophets—to a multitude no one can number? How does this happen? Is it that God prefers remnants? Paul, who was a better-than-average detective, suggested as much. He said, "God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God" (1 Corinthians 1:28-29). But perhaps there's something more that Paul doesn't get into at this point. Perhaps it's that God sees potential where common wisdom does not.

Perhaps too God works with remnants because majorities have a way of deteriorating. Majorities easily become mobs, on the one hand, or complacent dullards on the other. Drunk with the power of their numbers, a majority can ride roughshod on the rights of others; or comfortable in their strength, they can become dull to the voice of God and the challenge of changing times. That's why you do well to listen to minority voices—in politics, in philosophy, in science, wherever—because often they've caught an insight that the poll-reading majority have missed.

It may be that you'd like to raise another question with me. Will heaven be a remnant, a very small crowd? Well, as I read the Scriptures, God is going to win big. The role of the remnant is not simply to survive but to reach, influence, and bring to potential the faltering rest. And God works with a remnant because it's better to have a few who have a purpose than a multitude who function uncertainly.

That brings it back to you and me. If we're one of God's people, does it mean that God found us on a remnant counter? Quite possibly. Indeed, from a theological point of view, I suspect that it's almost a certainty. If you don't like that classification, you're cutting yourself off from a pretty noble company, from people like Noah, Abraham, Sarah, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Paul, the women of Galilee, and the apostles.

Being a remnant is a precarious calling, and a humbling one, because you have to be willing to be used the way the Purchaser desires. But it's also very exciting because you never know how beautiful you may someday become. In truth, you may not know until eternity.²

² Kalas, J. E. (2010). [*Detective stories from the bible*](#). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUS REMNANT

Robert Jackson

Concerning the Old Testament, Paul declares, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). This is one of the key verses in God's Word, for it brings to our mind the value and the use of the Old Testament for the proper understanding of the New Testament. Many have robbed themselves by their neglect of a study in the Old Testament, and especially this is true in regard to the Minor Prophets. Those who use this portion the most have misunderstood and misused it in trying to find in it nearly everything in advance of what they will read in the newspapers tomorrow or in trying to justify the use of instruments of music in worship.

What then is the true message of these books? One will reply that the books contain prophecy in regard to the Messiah that was to come. This is true. However, it is a fact that the "remnant" also is a very important part of this great event.

In this study, we shall try before you all to focus upon the subject of "God's Righteous Remnant" in these books.

First, we need to establish the times of these men. Most scholars readily admit that although, in some cases, it is difficult to set their exact dates, the period of 845 BC to 432 BC seems to cover the time of their work. This period began during the latter time of the divided kingdom. Consequently, some of them dealt with the northern tribes, but part of them, with the southern tribe. Thus, some go before their captivity, and others go after their captivity as well.

As we examine the people of God during this time, they, clearly, were living in some very dark days so that, as we read, we begin even to wonder if there were any righteous people at all left. Thus, this time may be compared to the days of Elijah, for Elijah himself asserts that he "only" was "left" of God's prophets (1 Kings 19:10, 14).

This man, obviously, thought that he was alone, but there were at least seven thousand others who had not bowed to idolatry (19:18). This same thing was true in the days of the Minor Prophets. Seemingly, there were none standing for truth, yet we read about the remnant. Our hearts are enlightened to know that, even in the darkest days of Israel, there was the light of God's righteous remnant shining forth.

We will not go into every detail of what the prophets said on this subject; however, we will stress some of the things dealing with the remnant. In Hosea 14:4, 5, we find God's promise to restore the people of God. In this way, God's love is made known to the ones who will be true to Him. The love of God is spoken of as being "free." He would heal their backsliding, and His anger would turn aside. Thus, He would be like dew unto them.

Joel very early predicts, "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" (Joel 2:32). Thus, the call of God would sound forth. All would have the opportunity of heeding the call of God; however, only the remnant would listen to His call. Therefore, they would be delivered. The wonderful fact for us is that this call of God still sounds out in Romans 10:13. It is the amazing call of God!

In Amos 5:15–9:12, the remnant of Joseph would receive the grace of God. That is, God would be gracious to the ones who hate evil, love good, and establish justice. In other words, their living would be in harmony with the will of God. In chapter nine, verse 12, we take note of the fact that, under the Messiah, the doors would be open to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, even to all the ones who would call on His name.

Micah often speaks of the remnant. Note especially the following references: Micah 2:12; 4:7; 5:7, 8; 7:18. The Lord will put them together. This group of God's people would not be sitting around and looking sad but, rather, making a joyful noise to the Lord. They would indeed be grateful to God!

In chapter four, verse seven, we read something that sounds impossible. God would take a group of lame and sick people and would make them into a strong nation. It is amazing what God can do with people and their lives (John 4; 2 Cor. 6:16–18). Also, they are pictured as being as strong as a lion in 5:8. Then we come to one of the most powerful description of the remnant. God would pass over the transgression of these; He would pardon their iniquity. Just a glimpse of these verses make you realize there is no God like unto Jehovah.

Look now at Nahum's words in Nahum 1:7. The word "remnant" is not mentioned in this verse, but it certainly is implied. On the one hand, they are the ones who trust in God. And, on the other hand, God knows the very ones that do so. This fact that God knows the ones who trust Him should remain in our hearts and continue to comfort us. In this connection, Habakkuk also says that the few that remain true to God in that day realized that their strength came from God (Hab. 3:19). Therefore, they leaned on the powerful God.

Specifically, Zephaniah views the remnant as being brought out of captivity back to their homeland (Zeph. 2:7; 3:13). As a result of this, they would dedicate themselves wholly to the Lord. Then, as another result, they would have the courage to stand and fear no enemy.

Also, Haggai specifically identifies the remnant as the ones who give heed to the voice of God (Hag. 1:12, 14). Note how the word "obeyed" stands out, for it seems that many fail to see that men must obey. Their spirits were stirred up by Haggai so that they came and worked on the house of the Lord. Remember that all were not brought back, only the remnant.

Further, Zechariah makes a promise which seems too good to be true, for God promises that He will bring them back (Zech. 8:6, 12). They would prosper. They would inherit all the promises made by Him through Moses. They would be blessed by the Messiah. What a beautiful picture of the remnant in the last book! They are the jewels of God and have their names in His book of remembrance (Mal. 3:16, 17).

These are identified as the ones who feared the Lord and had fellowship one with another during those dark days. Further, the Lord heard their prayers. No, God did not forget the remnant!

It is not difficult to see the many blessings that God bestowed upon the remnant. Through the Christ that was to come, they would have fellowship with God. They are now identified as God's righteous remnant.

What determines the righteous remnant? It was not just being a member of the Israelite nation. It certainly was not by their perfection, for not one of them kept the law to perfection. But they obeyed the voice of the Lord, and, by the grace of God, they made up the righteous remnant.

Paul brings to light much about the remnant in the Roman letter. He expresses the fact of the remnant thus, "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved" (Rom. 9:27). Note, also that the words that the remnant shall be saved imply the great promise of the gospel. Further, Paul identifies this remnant as one according to God's grace, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Hence, they are God's elect—His called or chosen. We are called through the Gospel (2 Thess. 2:4). How many of us dare use the word election or grace? But it is still grace that calls or has chosen us in Christ (Eph. 1:6). When we read more from the pen of Paul, we see that faith is the means of access into the grace of God (Rom. 5:1–2; Rom. 3:21–22). In short, the remnant becomes members of the family of God by accepting the call of God, and they are saved by God's grace.

The fact that only a remnant is acceptable to God is a warning in all of this. Remember one could be in the nation of Israel and not be a part of the remnant. Also, the remnant are ready to admit that they are God's righteous remnant as a result of grace, not of their own perfection.

Specifically, the application is that one might be identified by himself and even by others as belonging to Christ, and yet not be in the faithful few. Indeed, the remnant will be serving the Lord with love and zeal, will be doing all to glorify God, and will be working to bring others into the fold of God. Yes, you can be one of God's elect by the amazing grace of God!³

³ Jackson, R. (1989). [God's Righteous Remnant](#). In M. Curry (Ed.), *Minor Prophets for Every Man* (pp. 201–204). Temple Terrace, FL: Florida College Bookstore.

