

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Remnant

(Jerry Fite)

Are you part of the remnant? The answer identifies you among the saved or the lost. The word “remnant” implies the part divided from the whole. The remnant is what is “left” as the whole is divided.

The remnant was an important matter concerning Israel. Isaiah looking beyond the conflicts with Assyria, points to the time of the rule of the Messiah prophesying, “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” (*Isaiah 10:21-22*)... As the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious. 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...” (*Isaiah 11:10-12*).

The remnant of Israel is addressed again by Paul in Romans 11. Paul declares God has not cast off Israel by limiting salvation in Christ and justification from sin by faith, instead of by works of the Law.

Paul points to Elijah, manifesting the “concept” of the remnant. Ironically, Elijah thought he was the only one “left” among Israel who was being faithful to God (*Romans 11:3*). In his depression, he was a “remnant of one,” whose life was still in jeopardy. God reminded Elijah that God had “reserved” or “left for Himself” seven thousand who had not bowed their knee to Baal (*Romans 11:4*).

Paul is looking beyond the illustration of Elijah and seven thousand faithful men to focus upon the more important remnant of God. “*Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace*” (*Romans 11:5*). God elected or chose to save people in Christ before the foundation of the world (*Ephesians 1:4*). Redemption from sin is through the blood of Christ (*Ephesians 1:7*). Jesus fulfilled the plan by freely dying on the cross.

Paul declares “*the remnant*” was according to the “*election of grace*,” not by works of the law (*Romans 11:5*). While many in Israel looked to the Law for justification, only the remnant would obtain justification through grace and obedience of faith in Christ. Paul equates this remnant with the elect by asking, “*What then?*”

Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded” (*Romans 11:7*). A division of Israel is recognized. There is the elect remnant in Israel who are obtaining justification through grace and there is the rest who are being disobedient.

The Jews rejecting Jesus were disobedient to God in not believing in Jesus as the Messiah and condemned Him to death on the cross. They were blinded with envy. Through their rejection of Jesus, they consequently opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles. But by God’s grace and mercy, Paul offers the encouraging words: “*even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy*” (*Romans 11:31*).

Paul, addressing his Gentile readers, declares that they “*...being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree*” (*Romans 11:17*). Notice, Paul combines the Gentile believers with the Jewish believers in the same root, thus comprising the “remnant according to the election of grace.” Are you part of the “few” who enter the narrow gate unto life? (*Matthew 7:14*)?