

The Remnant Church

The Remnant

A Bible Study

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

The Remnant and Captivity

God planned to reach the nations of the world despite the apostasy of His people. A plan to reach the world through the faithfulness of His people would never have materialized. The Lord said "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man" (Jeremiah 17:5). His model of international evangelism harmonizes with this precept.

His method of reaching the world involved international dispersions. When his people became like the nations He would punish them by national captivity. He would scatter them among all nations.

A minority of the scattered ones would see in their lot God's chastisement. These would revive and reform their lives. God would show Himself mighty to bless this "remnant" and would gather them (without the others) back to their nation.

The various empires that ruled the known world — Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome — all became keenly aware of God's power on behalf of His faithful people. An obscure defeated nation testified, by its apostasy and its remnant's repentance, to the heathen world. Jehovah's power and forgiveness became internationally proverbial.

As one step in this process God promised to scatter His people among the heathen when they would fail to keep His commands. Leviticus 16:14-33; Deuteronomy 4:23-37; 28:15-64.

Scattering was appropriate. The first scattering afflicted the first Babel. Gen 11:9. When God's people would imitate the stubborn spirit and confused state of the Babel builders, they would be treated in the same way. In other words, when God's nation appeared like Babylon, it would be scattered by the descendants of the Babel builders.

These cycles of scattering and remnant gathering characterize the history of God's chosen nation. The last of the Biblical scattering episodes, the Babylonian captivity and Persian gathering, is the local setting for the larger portion of Old Testament eschatological (end-time) material.

The Spiritual Remnant and Spiritual Babylon

In other words, the Lord Jesus made use of the scattering and remnant gathering of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus to picture the history and end of the Christian age. In the New Testament the major players from this Old Testament period—Babylon, Persia, Jerusalem, Remnant—are all spiritualized into end-time metaphors. Revelation 18:10; 16:12; 3:12; 12:17.

They become illustrations that unlock much of the Old Testament information regarding the end of the world. These symbols often answer the troubling question "How did an end-time verse or prophecy end up in the context of an ancient conquest or disaster?"

The summary of the story line is this: God's special people are unfaithful to their trust and, largely, turn away from His Covenant of Ten Commandments. As a judgment, God uses Babylonian errors ("wine" in the type) to confuse and scatter their power. Then many even of God's faithful people are captive in Babylon (like "Daniel" in the type). They witness there to the leading men of the world.

Then, after a time, a small faithful remnant are called back to join God's structured people, Jerusalem in the type. They restore there the damage done by the earlier assaults of Babylon. Then wave after wave of growing remnant returns from their dispersion to thicken the ranks of God's people under the protection of the Kings of the East, symbols of the Godhead. Rev 16:12.

The Remnant and Prophets

God's spokesmen focus on the remnant. When his people are about to be taken captive, God sends prophets to tell them how to behave in Babylon. As the time approaches for their gathering from captivity, prophets arise to guide the formation of the remnant. They even assist them with their reconstruction. Jeremiah 25:1; 51:64; Ezra 5:2.

During these periods many messages are given to the prophets for the world and its various bodies of people.

But the world's messages are delivered rather to God's people than to their intended recipients. Implicit in the delivery is the obligation of God's forming remnant to be a carrier of those messages.

The nations were unwittingly dependant on porters among the remnant if they were to receive their heaven-sent instructions. Only occasionally, as in the case of Jonah, was the prophet himself the porter.

When the remnant appears in Revelation, following the 1260 years of scattering (Revelation 12:17; 12:14; Daniel 12:7), this pattern appears again. The Testimony of Jesus, the Spirit of Prophecy, aids the returning remnant.

False prophets also proliferated during the periods of God's special work. Jeremiah and Ezekiel opposed them during the captivity. Nehemiah met false prophets while forwarding the

reconstruction. Nehemiah 6:14.

In Revelation these false prophets find their parallel in the miracle-working power overtly supporting Babylon. Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10.

In short, God's work of regathering brings a resurgence of prophetic activity—both true and false.

The Elect Remnant

The elect remnant correspond to the invisible church. Elijah couldn't perceive their existence and so felt all alone. Romans 11:3. They, rather than the visible church, are the ones that experience 2Ti 3:12. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

The woman of Revelation 12 is, in fact, the invisible church. She is clothed with the sun. She is dressed in pure white. Revelation 12:1-2. She is one woman, though she exists through the Jewish and Christian age.

The remnant is that "seed of the woman" that is at enmity with the "seed" of the serpent. That enmity is played out in the wrath of Revelation 12:17.

In a time of gathering, the elect and invisible remnant begins to approximate the visible church. During a time of scattering that approximation vanishes.

Where are we, as a Seventh-day Adventist denomination? Are a large portion of the remnant scattered? When will they be gathered? Are the world's Daniels in Babylon today? Will the world's Ezras and Nehemiahs be coming to Jerusalem soon? Will the wall be rebuilt in troublous times?

Much of the Old Testament story-information testifies that the answer to all these questions is yes. Then is it accurate to say that we, the Seventh-day Adventists, are the remnant church?

In one important sense, it is very accurate. We are the Jerusalem to which the remnant is being gathered slowly. The portion of the remnant that has been gathered already is in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. More precisely, the remnant that keep the commandments of God and that have the Testimony of Jesus have been gathered to form the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

And while we seem to be in a time of scattering, there will be another gathering. Like Daniel, we must be faithful until that time. And like him, may we live to see Babylon overthrown and the way of the Kings of the East prepared.

The Remnant in Type and Antitype

Three times scripture tells the first story of a remnant being blessed. Good King Hezekiah had led a

national revival in Judah. He burned idols and desecrated their shrines.

His father had bought peace with Assyria by using gold from the temple. Hezekiah, zealous for God's glory, rebelled against the Assyrians which had already carried the idolatrous neighbor kingdom of Israel captive. But Hezekiah expected God to favor the reforming nation of Judah.

Then Assyria took several of the fenced cities of Judah. The king wavered. Assyria had demanded submission guaranteed by a rich present. Hezekiah did like his father. The temple pillars that he had covered with silver, he stripped. This, with other precious metal, was forwarded to the waiting king.

But the God who had blessed Hezekiah's faithfulness neglected to bless his weakness. The gift failed to repel the invaders. The Assyrians besieged Jerusalem. The extremity seemed to bring Hezekiah back to his senses. Meanwhile, outside the city gate, the Assyrian general blasphemed the God of heaven.

Then Hezekiah appealed to the prophet Isaiah. He also spent personal time on his knees acknowledging the victory of Assyria over false Gods but claiming the victory of the only true God over the proud oppressor. God answered the personal praise and prayer session with prophecy:

The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee [the King of Assyria], and laughed thee to scorn . . . Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel. By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, "With the multitude of my chariots I am come up . . . with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places." . . . Hast thou not heard long ago how I have [given power to kings like you over other nations.] Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded . . . But I know . . . thy rage against me. Because thy rage against me . . . I will put my hook in thy nose . . . and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

Assyria and Babylon prefigure the great apostasy featured in the Bible's apocalypse. In this prophecy of Isaiah God's newly reformed nation of Judah is represented as speaking by its "virgin" daughter (See Jer 31:4 for a similar usage). This usage informs our understanding of Revelation 14 where the 144,000 are found to be virgins that are the "seed" of the woman (Revelation 12:17) that have despised the power of Babylon.

God's enemy blasphemes God by putting Him on a level with other deities and exalting himself above them all. By political power the enemy expects to overwhelm God's city. She does not realize that her national clout came through divine providence. Now she rages against the very God that put her on the throne. He will remove her power and repulse her campaign against the Holy People.

This was just the kind of prophecy Hezekiah longed for. But a practical problem loomed ahead. The Assyrians, even if they should leave as prophesied, had already reaped the harvest of the nation's fields for that year. God turned the prophecy towards meeting this disaster with a promise of supernatural blessing.

He would cause the ground to bring forth sufficient provisions in uncultivated areas to feed the nation. The next year, a Sabbatical year when sowing was forbidden, He would do the same. This provision would be a sign that God supported the rebellion of Judah from under the hand of Babylon.

And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves . . . and in the third year sow ye . . . and eat the fruits thereof. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this. . . . For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. 2 Ki 19; Is 37

Who are blessed in this oracle? The remnant have escaped from Assyrian captivity. They will prosper and be fruitful. Though the king's call for reform was laughed to scorn (verse 10) a few responded to the reform.

God ordained that the scattering of His people would be followed by gathering and conversion of a few. Hezekiah depended on the gathering promised and used the promise to encourage revival. 2 Chron 30:9. Moses had long before outlined the process.

And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. Deu 30:1-8

The prosperity of the remnant, under Hezekiah, hinged on their repentance and a revival of obedience to God. The Bible notes that participation in the sanctuary service was the mainspring of

that revival. 2 Chr 30.

The King, on his part, revived the sanctuary services. God, on His part, revived the hearts of the remnant as prophesied in the words "the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart . . . to love the Lord thy God will all thine heart, and with all thine soul, that thou mayest live."

Hezekiah's efforts to restore the temple were accomplished by the "remnant" under his grandson. 2 Chr 34:9. Further apostasy reversed the gathering back to a prophesied scattering of those that remained. 2 Ki 21:14-15. This prophecy was soon fulfilled. 2 Ki 25:11.

Israel was nearly annihilated as a national body. So general was the captivity under Assyria that Isaiah wrote:

Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Is 1:9

Besides the very few left behind, a "remnant" would return from captivity.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: Is 10:20-22

This "return" from captivity is salvation in the Septuagint and in Paul's use of this passage in the New Testament. There the entire process of captivity and remnant's return is spiritualized. Assyria becomes, with Babylon, a type of institutionalized error.

This false system captures "nations" by making them "drink" of her wine. Some escape. Men that are converted from the "error" of their ways are souls "saved" from death. James 4:21. They are the remnant elected by grace.

In other words, the "elect" remnant are those who have been "chosen" by God's foreknowledge for their submission to the Spirit's work of sanctification and for their belief in the truth. 2 Thes 2:13.

God has not "cast away His people." He "foreknew" a remnant chosen by His grace for their faith. Though unknown to each other, they are known to Him. From Elijah's day to ours this remnant exists. It was stronger in his day than he expected by a factor of 7000. It is, accordingly, stronger in ours. Rom 11:1-5

When a man is saved by faith he is part of the "remnant" that is to be gathered. He is part of the "Israel" that "obtained" the sought-for prize. Rom 11:6-7.

The remnant responds to Jesus

Beginning with these prophecies in Isaiah 1 and 10 the Bible's use of "remnant" enters into prophecies that are shown by New Testament writers to speak of the Christian age.

The Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 11-12 foretells the work of Jesus under the figures of a rod, a branch, and a root of Jesse. There Jesus is filled with the Spirit (11:2) and equipped to judge hearts (11:3). He executes the wicked with the breath of his mouth (11:4) while justifying the defenseless. He is clothed for war with righteousness and faithfulness (11:5).

He will reorder creation so that animals of prey become harmless vegetarians (11:6-8) in His "holy mountain." This is the result of "the earth" being "full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (11:9). In nine verses the entire period from Christ's baptism to the restoration of Eden-like scenes is captured.

"And in that day" – in the day when Jesus is anointed to begin His work – He became an "ensign" offering "glorious" "rest" to trusting "Gentiles" (11:10). This is the passage that Paul quotes as evidence that Christianity should embrace non-Jews. Romans 15:12.

And it is a passage that establishes the spiritual nature of the second gathering of the remnant. The "ensign" that Jesus becomes is a beacon for recovering the remnant that have been scattered to the great nations of the world. As the "outcasts" pour in from "the nations" in the four quarters of the earth, old rivalries within the church vanish with their causes.

And 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, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. Is 11:11-13.

God's people unite in a sweeping campaign that subjects their enemies (11:14). God blesses their efforts to such an extent that the Egyptian language becomes extinct (11:15). A supernatural highway is established for those leaving Assyrian captivity to join the "remnant." They will break forth in songs of deliverance that have become familiar to many already.

And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt. And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and

thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee. Isaiah 11:16-12:6

In summary, the remnant people are the invisible church. They are the few members of the visible church that are "saved." Bible prophecies describe our time under the figure of a scattering and subsequent gathering.

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: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha. Ro 9:27-29.

The first connection of the remnant with a familiar passage regarding the signs and events of the end of time is found in Joel 2.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. 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 2:28-32.

The Scattering of the False Shepherds and Gathering around Jesus

If a timeline were to be labeled with the phases of the final scattering-gathering process, the gathering of the faithful would follow the scattering of the false shepherds that have themselves been scattering the flock. These are removed and replaced by faithful pastors prior to God's promised effort to gather the faithful.

This truth is revealed in the first passage to use the word "remnant" in a clearly apocalyptic setting, Jeremiah 23. There God promises to bring the scattered believers back into the true fold. With this is His promise to hire faithful shepherds and to remove hirelings. In its wording the promise is very similar to the thrice told prophecy to Hezekiah.

Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. Jer 23:1-3

The raising of true shepherds (v. 4) precedes the conclusion of the gathering. Then the wicked are destroyed and God is glorified for a gathering far more significant than the gathering of the Israelites from Egypt. (v. 5-8). Jesus leads this gathering as the Good Shepherd, breaking a way through obstacles that inhibit the sheep. Mic 2:10-12. The weak and suffering people will be formed by God into a "remnant" for Himself. To these our Lovely Lord will restore the "first dominion." The kingdom "under the whole heaven" is "given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Mic 4:7-8; Dan 7:27.

What is it that arouses true shepherds to take their positions? In the chapter that introduces the New Covenant, Jeremiah 31, we find the answer. The gathering movement begins with "watchmen" who respond to God's love. God's love is an ensign that gathers men.

The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee. Jer. 31:3

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. Joh 12:32

The aroused watchmen intercede with God saying "save thy people, the remnant." Jer. 31:7. The intercession is followed by God's action. He moves the scattered remnant to begin to assemble as a collection of weak souls that make a "great company." Jer 31:8.

In God's providence, that spiritual blessing of the patriarchs followed consecration rather than birth order. It passed from Abraham to Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Ephraim (Jer 31:9) without ever once following the proscribed pattern of first-born, bypassing Ishmael, Esau, Judah, and Manasseh. Any child could, if he would, be associated by faith with the Only Begotten Son of God and be spared accordingly.

And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Mal 3:17

God, like no other, pardons iniquity and passes by the remnant's transgression. He delights in mercy; he will "turn again" from retaining his anger. He "will subdue our iniquities" and cast away our sins. He will fulfill his ancient promises of truth and mercy to Jacob and Abraham. Mic 7:18-20. Then it is that their spiritual descendants inherit the land of promise.

Micah explains that the captivity would not be gathered until after the cross. The Messiah there became "the peace." Micah 5:2-5. "Then the remnant of his brethren shall return" to Israel from their scattered positions.

The preciousness of these promises (Mal. 3; Mic 7, 5) that God will spare us as his own son, that he pardons iniquity like no other, that he will subdue our iniquities, that Jesus will be our peace, does not excel that hidden promise in the phrase "his brethren." The gathered ones are claimed by Jesus as his family.

Though scattered in location they are gathered in spirit and are a victorious body. Mic 5:2-8. Especially will Jesus be a defense when the Babylonian power "treads" within our border. Mic. 5:6. The meaning of this passage must be related to 2 Thes 2:4; Dan 11:45; Eze 8.

Gathering to Build

When God undertook to gather his faithful from the Babylonian captivity, he gathered them by giving them a mission. They were to build up the walls and restore the worship services of the broken city of Jerusalem. Building up the waste places became an illustration of the work entrusted to God's people in the last-day gathering.

They are to "build the old waste places" and "shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Is 58:12. The restoration of the Sabbath is identified as one of the restoration projects to be undertaken. Is 58:13.

In the story God promised the builders that, *as they had begun to build with strength*, He would change His relation to them from inciting differences to prospering their work and reputation. This would be no great difficulty for Him. Zec 8:4-15. The implications for us and for the resolution to our internal differences are profound.

The gathering to build the temple suffered a setback of discouragement. In the last day of the last feast of the Jewish year, the day that prefigured our arrival into heaven, a message came to the church that had gathered to help build the temple. Those that had returned were the "residue" of the people. The eldest of them had seen the splendor of Solomon's temple. Hag 2:2-9

It seemed to these that the work of God was regressing even while it was progressing. The ambitions of the current architects did not even equal the achievements of the past, much less enlarge on them.

God sent a message of comfort to these men. The temple under construction would receive the

Messiah. They were to build with confidence for "I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts."

The story of the rebuilding parallels the work of the church today, especially for those workers who realize the extent to which we have fallen as a people. These might be surprised at the up-beat message. And is the passage not an end-time passage? God promises to "shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land" prior to the coming of the Messiah and to fill the under-construction temple with "glory." While it was literally so in the temple they were literally building, the "shaking" in this passage reminds us of that in the very end in Hebrews 12.

The building up of Jerusalem could have given way to a tragic scattering. This did not happen in Ezra's day, but he did not presume that it could not happen.

Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldst not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping? Ezr 9:14.

The graciousness of God to the "remnant" is presented as iffy specifically to those that claim it as a certainty for their selves. This is the message to Adventist today, those "who desire the Day of the Lord." See Amos 5:10-20.

The Remnant Doubts the Prophet and Seeks Affinity with Egypt

Almost one eighth of the uses of "remnant" are found in the story of Gedaliah and Johanan. Jeremiah 39:9-44:28. The "remnant" was taken to Babylon by a general, except a "remnant" that was left in Judah under Gedaliah. The captive remnant included Daniel. The free remnant included Jeremiah.

In the story of these five chapters Johanan discovered a threat on Gedaliah's life and offered to privately execute the primary conspirator. Johanan felt that Gedaliah's murder would lead to a scattering of the remaining ones and perishing of "the remnant in Judah." Jer. 39:9; 40:11; 40:15.

Gedaliah refused Johanan's offer and was slain by the conspirator (Ishmael). Then Johanan went into action. His plan to save the remnant involved three steps, namely: 1. Win the allegiance of Jews now following the assassin Ishmael; 2. Win the support of the prophet Jeremiah; 3. Win the support of Egypt as an ally against Babylon.

The first point was successful. The second appeared pious. Johanan's group came to Jeremiah to request guidance and prayer. Jer. 41:16; 42:2. The remnant promised solemnly to do whatever God would show through Jeremiah. Jer. 42:3-6. Ten days later Jeremiah had a message.

God promised to build and plant the remnant right where they were—on condition that they would stay there, trust Him, and not fear the king of Babylon. God promised to give them mercy in the

king's sight and, in this way, to deliver them from him. But the prophecy also warned that seeking Egypt's friendship would be a lethal mistake.

The first step to Egypt would be a step of rebellion against God's counsel. They would die in Egypt. God's fierce anger would be poured out there. Jer. 42:7-17. As Jeremiah closed his plea against the proposed trip of the "remnant" God revealed to Jeremiah that the promise to "obey" whatever God would say was dishonest.

Thus failed the second of Johanan's points. When the prophet could not be influenced, Johanan leveled the charge of influence against the prophet. He ascribed the content of Jeremiah's message to Jeremiah's secretary, Baruch. He took "all the remnant of Judah that had returned "from all nations" and made plans to travel. Jer. 43:1-5.

The story, told in uncharacteristic detail in the scripture, seems uncannily parallel to our time. The church, situated between Babylonian error and Egyptian worldliness, has its Johannans. These are gifted men, professedly going for wisdom to the Spirit of Prophecy, but leveling a charge of influence against the testimonies that rebuke their ways. The fate of these and their followers is ominous in the type.

Their trip to Egypt represented the results of the shaking that is currently underway.

The Shaking of the Remnant

The familiar and fateful sealing-slaughtering scene of Ezekiel 9, following the sealing, will be fearful for these church members. The prophet that saw the scene fell on his face and "cried, and said 'Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?'" Eze 9:8.

In the fascinating prophecy of Ezekiel 11-12 the prophet mourns the death of Pelatiah as an omen of the destruction, the "full end" of the remnant. Ezek. 11:13. This question, "Will you destroy all?" was asked again and answered later in the negative.

Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters: behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings: and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it. Eze 14:22

Few passages so clearly show that character determines destiny and that the remnant will be reduced to pure and faithful body by the bloody phase of the shaking, the phase in which "all the sinners of my people" who have a false assurance will be killed. The comfort in these passages is that the shaking will not remove even the "least grain" from the church. The shaking removes false Christians, not weak ones. Amos 9:9-13.

Armageddon

The closing of earth's history is pictured in scripture as an attack by "all nations" against God's people. God gathers them to plunder, polarize, and prostrate the church. Indignity and crime threaten the members. Many fall prey to the onslaught.

Half of the city "will go forth into captivity." They will surrender the truths that have set them apart and will be scattered into mystical Babylon. Yet "the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." Zech 14:2.

Finally, God fights "against" all the nations of the world as He did against Egypt in the past, with mighty plagues. Finally He will descend to level the mount of Olives for the reception of the HolyCity. Zech 14:3-4.

Isaiah 4:3 speaks of "he that remaineth in Jerusalem" after God's final judgments of several verses earlier. This remnant "shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem." The Book of Life now purged, probation now closed, the remnant now fully gathered, God renews His earlier provision of guidance to the church. This is represented by the familiar "a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense."

Those executed in the earlier judgments include two classes of women, those that ruled over the men and those that demonstrated pride in dress. While these sought an outward adorning, those spared are "beautiful and glorious", "excellent and comely" in the fruit of their lives. Is 4:2. Zion has been "purged" by the "spirit of judgement, and by the spirit of burning" as Christ in judgment refined his teaching priests. Is 4:4; Mal. 3:3.

"Therefore wait ye upon me, Saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." Zeph 3:7.

Babylon began at Babel and was scattered initially by confusion of languages. When God destroys the nations of the world, the last day Babylon, there will be no longer reason for a continuation of the curse on Babel. Then God will return to man a "pure language." All will serve Him "with one consent." Zeph 3:8-9.

Then harmony will prevail in serving God. God's men will no longer "be ashamed" for their past sins "against" Him. Their society will be purged of "haughty" persons, "them that rejoice" in pride of being God's church.

God will "leave" an "afflicted and poor," but trusting, body in His church. They will not "do iniquity"

nor "speak lies" but shall be a safe flock. "Sing" of this! With all your heart, since your "judgments" and enemies are banished! No more evil to see! God is with you! Fear not and get busy! God will "sing" and "rejoice" over your salvation! Zeph 3:8-20.

Summary

So many passages throw light on end-time events. When we understand the Biblical theme of scattering and regathering, Old Testament stories and passages come alive with meaning.

We should know what is written there. Since 1844 we have already been through at least one cycle of gathering and scattering. The evidence is that we need another gathering. Let us do our part to bring it about.

The Lord showed me that He had stretched out His hand the second time to recover the remnant of His people, and that efforts must be redoubled in this gathering time. In the scattering, Israel was smitten and torn, but now in the gathering time God will heal and bind up His people. In the scattering, efforts made to spread the truth had but little effect, accomplished but little or nothing; but in the gathering, when God has set His hand to gather His people, efforts to spread the truth will have their designed effect. All should be united and zealous in the work. I saw that it was wrong for any to refer to the scattering for examples to govern us now in the gathering; for if God should do no more for us now than He did then, Israel would never be gathered. . . . The view that the Lord "had stretched out His hand the second time to recover the remnant of His people," on page 74, refers only to the union and strength once existing among those looking for Christ, and to the fact that He had begun to unite and to raise up His people again. – EW p. 74, 86.

For more information, or to make comments, please email Eugene Prewitt at canvassing@canvassing.org. Be faithful. December 9, 2006

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