



Explaining more about the Bible's use of the term "Remnant"

By Barbara L. Klika, MSW
Undershepherd

www.set-apart-ministries.org

For Wisconsin Christian Newspaper
Nov-Dec 2019

I followed up on the recent Barna poll information provided by last month's WCN article by Sam Rohrer on how much the Bible has been pushed out of American life. Barna's report showed that nearly half of American's have little to no interaction with the Word at all! The poll also indicated that only about 7% of those who are believers are regularly and consistently engaged in the Word and activities relating to faith. This is down from 9% the year before.

In the 80s and 90s, there were a slew of reports from various branches of Christianity about revivals supposed to be going on, yet the percentage of adults polled about being consistent in faith expressions during that era hovered right about 12%, with no major changes over the years. Remember though, that even this percentage was low among Believers, so if 12%, and now 7%, are serious about their faith expression that means that around 90% of Believers, often identified by their church affiliation, did NOT practice a lifestyle centered in the Word. Many polls over years continue to confirm that the majority of His people are basically Biblically illiterate.

Now we see a drastic change! Not only are we distressed to know how many within the churches really don't know the Word, the written foundation of our faith, we see that half of those we meet elsewhere may really have no understanding of the Word at all! Since this paper reaches both church and Unchurched people, I will try to begin at the beginning to answer some good questions that have been sent to me regarding our recent articles about God's Remnant people.

How can anyone comprehend what I am describing about the remnant of people that God has always maintained in faith, and has promised that He will still have a remnant when it is time for His Son to return, if they don't really know the beginning, the middle and the end, and basics of the whole Bible story and God's plan? How can they find any understanding if they don't know that God has declared that He not only knows the end, but He has known the end since the beginning and has laid it all out for us!

*Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done,
Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,' Isaiah 46:10 NKJV*

I will venture to say this: This dismal reporting of people's faith life being so poor seems like indication to me that the majority of the remnant is no longer to be found within these institutional churches being polled. Though I believe that there are still genuine believers remaining who do not yet understand what is happening, they are not being well fed in the Word. We are told of the apostate church, the fallen away ones, that must happen before His return.

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, ...
2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 KJV

When genuine faith and the presence of the Holy Spirit departs, there is only form left, not godliness. They have the name of "Christian" but no longer walk after Messiah and instead focus on tradition and programs and what some call "worshiptainment." But I know that there are thousands of people, not only in America, but around the world, who are living lives very much centered in the Word.

They are found feeling "alone" among people but closer to Messiah. They are found in independent assemblies, house churches and parachurch ministries. Barna Group research on the organizations that helped people deepen in faith showed surprising results that it was more often parachurch than church ministries that did so. As far as I know, the major polling organizations have not yet been commissioned to do a search to find and evaluate the others, so I suspect, that like those of us who are returning to Hebraic understanding, the rest of us fall between the cracks and are not counted.

So for those who are still genuine in their faith and search for truth, whether churched or unchurchd, I will offer this as one path to try to explain more fully.

Why look to Scriptures at all?

Due to the declining awareness and acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God, I suppose this question needs to be addressed before anything else can be accepted. It doesn't really matter how passionately and articulately one can speak from the Word if the hearer doesn't have ears to hear or belief that it even is relevant! I can say that most of those who have set out to prove that it is false have ended up in faith.

The scope of this article is too limited to go into depth here. The finding of the Qumran Scrolls has added great validity and confirmation that the Word of today is verified as accurate by these ancient documents. If any reader would like to know more about how the validity of the Scriptures has been proven archeologically, here is one place to begin:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQd-fdpg9mk> which lists 9 archeological confirmations of the Bible. There is MUCH more to search out here, but also note the importance of the consistency and cohesiveness of the entire Word, from Genesis to Revelation. Yes, I know some people claim there are errors, but when deeper study is made, it is generally confirmed that it is our lack of adequate information or understanding that brings the confusion rather than that the Scripture is inaccurate. I would also suggest that such a search as to the validity of the Word as being from God would be best undertaken with prayers for the Holy Spirit to enlighten one's understanding first.

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Cor. 2:14 NKJV

What makes me look to a Hebraic worldview in the interpretation of Scripture?

Having accepted that the Word is valid and from God, I will move on, though for some readers this may be a very big obstacle and one in need of much prayerful study before they reach this acceptance. Over the last thirty years of serious study, following 3 years of intensive training as a Bethel Series Bible Teacher, and twenty of those years of study from a Hebrew perspective, as well as the Hebrew language, I have come to understand that the full context of the full Word is crucial. This concept of context is repeated by most Bible teachers as equally crucial. Yet, too often the entire context of the Scriptures is not considered. We have put an overlay of our western worldview onto the Scriptures that clouds the full prophetic picture...or more accurately cuts it out of its original fabric.

The Foundation of the Whole Word, what we call the Old Testament (OT) was written in Hebrew, not English. Jesus is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, of the House of Israel, NOT the European "Jesus" picture we are familiar with. (I well remember the day I shook up a woman's peace at a Bible study in which I pointed out that Jesus's Mother's name was Miriam! She was a Hebrew girl, of the Tribe of Judah, not really our Anglicized "Mary." I didn't think that should have been so surprising, but to her, it was earth shaking!)

The New Testament (NT) source languages remains somewhat in contention, but scholars such as Professor David Flusser, of Hebrew University in Jerusalem, confirm that more than 90% of the context of the NT is Hebraic in thought content if not in language.

Very simply and briefly put, I choose to lay down my western eyes, and recognize the language, culture and people that our God chose to work through in order to restore the relationship between God and man which was broken by sin, as described in Genesis 3. He did this before the foundation of the world was laid.

*But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:
Who truly was foreordained before the foundation of the world,
but was manifest in these last times for you,*

1 Peter 1: 19-20 NKJV

According to this written Word, inspired by the God of creation through His chosen people, Moses is the writer of the first five books of the Bible, Genesis-Deuteronomy. These are the same Books that are called the "Torah" which is a Hebrew word, meaning "Righteous teachings," often inadequately translated as "Law." Through centuries, others were inspired to write as God led them: the prophets and the writings make up the remainder of what most call the Old Testament (OT).

There are many studies to verify the source and validity of the Scriptures so I won't even try to take on that whole task here. Suffice it to say that it is confirmed in the NT, which is the eye-witness reports of those who knew the Son of God when He was on the earth in flesh, when the only known Scripture was the OT, that:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

2 Timothy 3:16 KJV

The foundation of the Scriptures we acknowledge did not begin with the Book of John, or even the Book of Matthew, though traditional Christian teaching for many years has presented the story of Messiah starting there. **This is outside the context!** It all began with the Words familiar to about half of us:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

The story of Messiah begins before creation, as in-depth study of the Word, in the Hebrew language in which it was written confirms. For now, I will just confirm that with words from John. It is no accident that the Book of John begins with the same phrase in English:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. *John 1:1-5, 14 KJV*

We wouldn't have the NT reports if we didn't first have what we call the OT in place! We wouldn't have known to be watching for Messiah if we didn't have the prophecies of the OT, prominently among them Isaiah's words. Without the OT, we don't understand why Jesus is called the Lamb of God, or what in the world dying on the cross so long ago has to do with forgiveness of sin now!

So, we have been given bits of the Truth of Messiah's death and resurrection without knowing the full history and context when we look through our western worldview eyes. It is not enough to just know the definition of few Hebrew words and then present yourself as effectively considering the Hebrew context. (I tried that, too, for a season!)

In truth, the Whole Word tells Messiah's story and it is best understood in the fullness of that context.

Going back to Genesis, we see the Creation story and all too soon we see the story of how sin entered in. Genesis 3 is where the story of Adam and Eve falling to the subtle deceit of the evil one is told. We know that the full relationship of mankind with our God was broken by the entrance of sin.

*Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save;
Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.
But your iniquities have separated you from your God;
And your sins have hidden His face from you,
So that He will not hear. Isaiah 59:1-2 NKJV*

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— Romans 5:12 ESV

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 1 Cor. 15:22 ESV

There is a foreshadowing and confirmation of the plan that would eventually restore the broken relationship between God and mankind: the one the Son agreed to carry out.

Why do I write that Jesus made a way BACK to the Father?

All of this history and context is why I wrote that Jesus made a way back to the Father...one cannot understand this if viewing only the NT.

Jesus birth, death and resurrection were not an accident or an afterthought. Jesus, the Son, also known as the Word, was God and IS God and was with God from the beginning. All creation was made, through the work of the Word/Jesus, as a setting for mankind with whom God desired to be in relationship, and eventually to bring the two together to become one. This isn't only an individual marriage picture, it is also the Father's plan for the Son to be brought together with the Bride, those people who choose Him and His ways. But sin entered in, already known to God that it would. He had a plan in place, already agreed to by the Son from before the foundation of the world was laid, to restore the broken relationship. He would come in the flesh, live a sinless life and provide atonement through His willingness to lay down His life...a concept that may take some time to explain for real understanding...and take it back up again in victory over sin, death and the devil! He finished His work here and returned to heaven to await the Father's timing to come back for His Bride.

But the whole story is not finished there. The opportunity to accept the forgiveness and the way back to the Father He made for us is there, but only some are willing to receive it. This is a part of His testing to find out who among us is really faithful and true to Him. An example of this concept:

for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. 1 Corinthians 11:19 ESV

Because they are a smaller portion of a larger group of mankind, or of Believers, they are often referred to as a remnant. Others remain in rebellion and insist they don't need God, or have made up their own ideas of a God that suits them. The entire Bible is the repetitive story of this struggle back and forth. At times people are willing to turn to Him and follow His ways-- a remnant--and at other times they are rebellious against His ways.

The historical pattern of His preservation of a remnant of people who still honor Him in the midst of the cycles of rebellion is evidence for the call to the remnant to come back to the Father's ways in these final days before Messiah returns.

The Spirit and the Bride say, Come!

No room to address the “path of righteousness” from Psalm 23, how it was that only those who received the Baptism of John had eyes to recognize Messiah, and why I refer to Yeshua/Jesus as a Personal Shepherd as well as Saviour....watch for it next time!

Respectful conversation about the concept of the remnant is always welcome at info@set-apart-ministries.org