

What About... a Remnant of Believers in the Church?

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A remnant is “a small remaining quantity of something” (“New Oxford American Dictionary”). The word occurs 84 times in the Bible. Here are a few examples:

- Genesis 45:7, *God sent me [Joseph] before you [the other sons of Jacob] to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.*
- Joshua 13:12, *all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei (he alone was left of the remnant of the Rephaim).*
- 2 Kings 19:30-31, *The surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem will go forth a remnant, and out of Mount Zion survivors.*
- Isaiah 28:5, *In that day the LORD of hosts will become a beautiful crown And a glorious diadem to the remnant of His people.*
- Jeremiah 23:3, *Then I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their pasture, and they will be fruitful and multiply.*

As you can see, a remnant is a small group that is left over, usually after a judgment or a purging of some kind. When it comes to Israel, it is a small group that God uses to preserve the nation.

There are only two New Testament uses of the word “remnant.” Both are in Romans and both refer to Israel.

- Romans 9:27, *Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, “Though the number of the sons of Israel be like the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved.”*
- Romans 11:5, *In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice.*

But what’s really fascinating about all this is that the word “remnant” is never used of the church. There is no remnant of the church that will be preserved, no remnant that will be saved, no remnant that will be raptured, gathered to Christ, return with Him or reign with Him. There is no remnant

that will dwell with Christ in the eternal city, the New Jerusalem.

What’s with that? Why is there never ever any mention of a remnant when it comes to the church? The answer is simple. But the implications are immense. The church has no believing remnant because the church **is** the believing remnant, of the world. Even the believing remnant of Israel, in this age, is part of the church. The church consists of all the believers of this age and all the believers of this age are the church. Biblically, there is no such thing as a church with unbelievers in it. If it has unbelievers in it, it is not the church.

Therefore, the church could not possibly be a nation, an organization, a building, a meeting, or an assembly. The church might create organizations, build buildings, have meetings and assemblies, but those things themselves are no longer the church, because all of those might contain unbelievers. If the church was meant to be some entity that included unbelievers, then we would expect a remnant of that church to be saved, raptured, rewarded, and given to reign with Christ and dwell with Him in the New Jerusalem. But it is **all** of the church that is saved, raptured, rewarded, and given to reign with Christ and dwell with Him in the New Jerusalem. The church is simply a plural word for believers.

