

# Romans 9:27 the Principle of the Remnant

by Ernest O'Neill

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*The principle of the remnant is God's destroying what is unreal in order to expose what is real, and it is a reminder that God is always working to purify and refine His people.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 16:2

**Topics:** "Commitment To God", "True Worship"

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## Description

Ernest O'Neill challenges the congregation to consider the depth of their commitment to God by illustrating the varying levels of sacrifice individuals are willing to make for a cause, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing God above all else in life. He delves into the 'principle of the remnant' found in Romans 9:27, highlighting God's pattern of exposing what is real by destroying the unreal within us. Drawing parallels with the history of Israel, O'Neill underscores the necessity for genuine love and devotion to God amidst external practices of worship.

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## Transcript

### INTRODUCTION

1. Now, this is just an illustration because you know God has shown us we should never ask for money but work hard and trust His Spirit to guide all of us what we should give and when, but let's suppose we are going to open up another station-say, in Australia-a restaurant and hotel where Australians can come and sense the peace and love of Jesus' Spirit in those of us who serve them there. If we needed \$200,000 as a downpayment, how many of you would give \$5, \$50, \$100, \$1,000, \$5,000? Now, how many of you would do without something to give the money: new car, vacation, new davenport? How many would sell their home? Now, how many would give up their job and their home and go themselves? For five years--for life?

2. Let me prophesy something-the number of hands going up would grow fewer and fewer as we come to the last question-perhaps 80% or 90% of us on the first question, how many on the last one? Why is this? Because the first questions can be answered by many of us without greatly changing the way we live but the last few questions necessitate more and more radical changes in our normal way of life, and we are forced to face the question: What do we think is most important in life? What do we live for? What would we die for? In other words, the real "you" is exposed-what you really are and what you have become is laid out in front of your eyes. You could say great numbers of us said "yes" to the first questions, but a much smaller number said "yes" to the last question-just a remnant of us-like a small piece of a large garment.

3. That's the "principle of the remnant" - it's found in the verse we're studying: Romans 9:27. It's a principle of Our Creator's dealings with us nationally and individually. Many of us want to know how God deals with us-this is one principle or pattern of the way He deals with us-even in our own individual lives. In Sunday School He asks us "do we love Him" and with our little hearts protected by the limitations of our backyard and our 50 cents pocket-money, we answer "yes". Then as teenagers in the Arabian Nights world of girls and guys and drive-in movies, the question seems more complicated. Then, as we struggle for status and security in our first jobs, we begin to understand the question. Then, as passions cool and the world's vanity becomes more obvious, the question exposes more and more what we really do love, and we see ourselves for what we are. The principle of the remnant is God's destroying what is unreal in order to expose what is real!

## ISRAEL

1. Why is it necessary? Because we are so utterly engrossed in ourselves and preoccupied with self-love that we don't understand the absoluteness of the love God wants us to give to Him, so we persist wilfully in misunderstanding what He means, and try to offer our partial love for the absolute love that He created us to give. At the same time we make the fatal mistake of regarding ourselves as children of His who honestly love Him; so God is repeatedly involved in destroying what is unreal to clarify what is real.

2. You remember the Israelites were prepared to respect and acknowledge God when they felt He would deliver them from slavery in Egypt but as soon as He allowed their physical circumstances to deteriorate it became clear that they didn't really love Him but were just using Him: Exodus 16:2-3. So God allowed them to wander 40 years in the wilderness until all of that generation had died and there came out of it a remnant who loved God whether he prospered their physical circumstances or not.

3. That remnant then settled the land of Canaan but gradually began to worship the counterfeit gods of the people who lived there along with God Himself so that God had to allow the Assyrians to invade and deport the best of the Israelites. This remnant God taught to love Him irrespective of their spiritual environment.

4. But as the years passed, those who remained more and more loved the laws and the temple and the sacrificial systems and attached increasing importance to the external practices of worship and less and less to the internal attitudes of the heart, so yet again God allowed the Babylonians to conquer His people and deport even greater numbers of them to Babylon, where the inner, spiritual worship of God in the heart began to grow strong again simply because public worship and sacrifices were prohibited.

5. This is why Paul says in Romans 9:27-because: Romans 9:6b.

## US

1. In other words, you can't make any sense of God's great promises for the Israelites if you regard everyone who is Jewish by blood relationship and family connections as true children of God because it is obvious that many Jews do not love or even believe in God. The only way you make sense of God's dealings with this special people is that within the large, physical number who call themselves His people, there is a small, invisible remnant who really do love Him and trust Him.

2. It's exactly the same with those of us here who believe that Jesus is the unique Son of Our Creator and that our old people-dependent, circumstance-dependent, thing-dependent selves were destroyed and

complete remade in Him on the Cross. It is obvious that thousands of us who believe these things are His children in name only, but are not part of that remnant or real body of Christ that God is forming inside the framework of Christendom.

3. Why do we say that? Well, never have so many people in America attended church or said they believed in God and Jesus as we do now, so that even the news media talk about the revival of evangelical Christianity BUT what has normally followed revivals of real Christianity in the past? Whether it's the revival under Wesley in the 18th century in England or the revival in 1859 in Ireland or the revival in the Hebrides of Scotland in the 1950's, the story is always the same-white gloves are presented to the magistrates and judges in the courts because there are no cases to try. The morality of the society is so affected by the Spirit of Jesus that the crime rate is cut to virtually nothing.

4. In our nation we are observing a strange phenomenon-the apparent resurgence of evangelical Christianity accompanied by a continuing rise in the crime rate. In other words, we are involved in a revival of religion-of certain worship habits and beliefs but not of Christianity-which is a life lived. But once again, God is dealing with us according to the same principle, and within this large, amorphous mass of people who claim to be His children, He is cutting out a remnant of those who really are.

## CONCLUSION

1. What is the distinguishing mark of the remnant today? The same as ever-the distinction between the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life-knowledge and life, belief and action-many believe in Jesus' death for them, a few take part in Jesus' death with Him.

2. When someone fails to do something for us the way we think they ought, many of us say we believe God will forgive us for our resentment because of Jesus' death and will give us love for them, but some of us-perhaps just a few-at that very moment accept that we ourselves were crucified with Jesus and deserve nothing from anyone, and as we accept His attitude of expecting nothing from anyone, we find His Spirit of love for the other person filling our hearts with that unmistakable mark of the children of God-perfect love!

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ernest-o'neill/romans-927-the-principle-of-the-remnant/>

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