

The Remnant That Stands for God

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being part of the remnant that stands for God, and it provides lessons and warnings from the history of Israel and the church.

Duration: 1:01:50

Scripture: Numbers 13:30-31, Joshua 1:9, Matthew 6:24, Matthew 22:37, Romans 6:14, Romans 9:27, Revelation 13:16-17

Topics: "Faithfulness To God", "Overcoming Temptation"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being part of the remnant who trust in God and overcome challenges, drawing parallels from Old Testament stories like Gideon and the Israelites facing the Midianites. It highlights the need to prioritize God over worldly attractions, especially the love of money, as a potential 'mark of the beast' in our lives. The message urges believers to be part of the faithful remnant who trust in God's power to solve every problem and to live wholeheartedly for Him.

Transcript

Let's turn to Romans chapter 9. Here we read a quotation from the Old Testament. In Romans chapter 9 verse 27, where it says, 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.

For the Lord will execute his word on the earth thoroughly and quickly. Just as Isaiah foretold, unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity, we would have become like Sodom and would have resembled Gomorrah. You know that three quarters of the Bible is the Old Testament.

So the Old Covenant has been abolished with the coming of Christ and the day of Pentecost. Why do we need to read the Old Testament? We need to distinguish between the history described in the Old Testament and the Old Covenant or agreement. The Old Covenant that God made with man on Mount Sinai called the law has been abolished, not abolished for everybody.

It's not abolished for the people in the world. The people in the world still need to live by the Ten Commandments and by the laws of God. And all believers who do not have victory over sin must live obeying the Ten Commandments.

It's very clear in Romans 6, 14. Sin shall not have dominion over you because you're not under law but under grace. The mark of those who come under grace is that sin does not rule over them.

If sin is still ruling over you, my dear brother, sister, you better keep the Ten Commandments. Otherwise, you will descend to the level of so many Christians and preachers who disobey even the Ten Commandments, who commit adultery, tell lies in court, don't honor their father and mother, all those Ten Commandments. It's very important to understand that.

The law, you're not under the law, Galatians 5 says, when you walk on the Holy Spirit. If you're not walking in the Spirit, you have to be under the law. Otherwise, you'll be a backslider and you'll probably lose your salvation as well.

See, there are three categories of people in the world, those who are under no covenant at all and those who are under old covenant and those who are under the new covenant. And you've got to decide which of the three you're in. Those who are under the new covenant have come under grace and they overcome sin in their life.

Those who have not come to that place must live under the old covenant to protect them. The law is a schoolmaster to protect us until we have come to fullness of life in Christ. But many people reject that.

And so most people in the world live under no covenant at all, including a lot of Christians and believers. And that's why most believers that I have met, their life is below the standard of the Jews in the old covenant. Why is that? Should be higher.

It's not even up to their level because they have given up the old covenant and instead of coming into the new covenant, they have come under no covenant. But it's our privilege, if you take it seriously, to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to live in the new covenant. But then the Old Testament has been written and we are to study it to see how God dealt with Israel and how Israel behaved with God because that is exactly how Christians behave.

And the history of Israel in the Old Testament is a pretty accurate description of the history of the church in the last 2,000 years. Exactly how Israel started with great power in the days of Joshua.

That's how the church started in the days of the apostles. And just like Israel backslid, the church has backslidden many times in 2,000 years. Every now and then God would raise up a prophet in Israel like a Samuel or an Elijah.

For a short period they would be stirred usually by one man and turned back to God. And when that prophet died, there was nobody else to raise them up till another prophet rose up. It was very rarely.

I think only one case where immediately after Elijah went to heaven, Elisha took over where one prophet immediately succeeded another. That was the only instance in Israel's history. In the other cases always, it was once in a while a prophet would come.

So it's the same in the history of the church. Every now and then God raises up some man in some place. We see that in these 2,000 years and brings people back to a devotion to God.

People like John Wesley and different ones like that. And then when they die, that's the end of that. But what we see, another thing we see in the Old Testament was there are 2 movements of God's people described in the Old Testament.

We need to understand both of them. In fact, the major part of the Old Testament is basically describing 2 movements of the nation of Israel. One is from Egypt to the land of Canaan to occupy it and that whole history of how they wandered in unbelief.

And then the other is the movement from Babylon where they again went into captivity to Jerusalem, which is the latter part of the Old Testament. In our personal history also as Christians, there are these 2 things. First, where we are saved from the world, from Egypt as a picture of the world and Pharaoh as a picture of Satan, to Christ and how we wander over a period of time under the law, which is like the wandering in the wilderness, till we come into the New Covenant, which is pictured in the land of Canaan.

It's a very beautiful picture in the Old Testament. And the other is the movement from Babylon to Jerusalem. See, very often what happens, Israel was formed into a nation and then they backslid and they went into Babylon.

That's also happened. Now we are not talking about individuals, but a group of people come together in a revival and they start meeting together as a church and then they start backsliding. It's happened in every single denomination in the history of Christendom.

They come together with great power in the beginning, great zeal, great devotion. And over a period of time they backslide. It's happened in every group.

It's happened with us too. The backsliding starts and the standards go down. Then what did God do? He did not leave them in Babylon forever.

He brought out a remnant. Not all, but a few. And that's what we read of here in Romans 9 and verse 27 that even if the sons of Israel are a great number, it's only a remnant that's going to be saved.

Now what does that teach us? If all that is a history of the Christian church today, very few people came out of Babylon. Can you have born again people sitting in Babylonian Christianity? And remember Babylon is not any particular denomination. If it were some denomination, it would have been very easy to leave it and say I've left Babylon.

It's not. Babylon is a spirit. It's a spirit where people seek their own and not the kingdom of God first and His righteousness.

Those who seek something for themselves and not... They want heaven, but they want to live on earth seeking their own. And that's found in every church, people like that. That is Babylon.

So you can't come out of one church and say well I've left Babylon. So as I said the other day, Babylon is those who are motivated by the spirit of profit in Christianity. What can I gain by coming to God? There's a lot of that preaching today called the prosperity gospel.

You come to God and you get something earthly for yourself. Whereas the remnant pictured in the book of Revelation as Jerusalem is a completely different group. It's those who believe that following Jesus involves sacrifice, taking up the cross every day.

So these are two completely different groups. And it says here solely the remnant that's going to be saved. Only a remnant will come out.

And in the book of Revelation you read about that remnant which is Babylon. Let me show you Revelation 18 which tells us very clearly that born again Christians can live in Babylon. It says here, it's not God's will, but they are there.

Revelation 17 and 18 speak about this system, this religious system called Babylon which is a Christianity mixed up with the world. It's a Christianity that's a harlot. Harlot means engaged to Jesus Christ but fooling around with another man called the world.

Any Christian who is born again says thereby I'm engaged to Jesus Christ. My marriage is yet to come. But while she is waiting for the bridegroom to come, she's fooling around with another man called the world which is the honor of the world, the entertainment of the world, pursuing after earthly things and living for earthly things, but yet claiming to be engaged to Christ who is heavenly.

This is harlotry. This is the essence of harlotry, of prostitution, spiritual prostitution. And this is what Babylon is called a harlot where Christianity becomes a means of earthly gain and not something that lifts our mind to heaven.

And it says in Revelation 18 verse 2 Babylon the great is fallen. And therefore is a warning coming to God's people. Now verse 4 Come out of her my people.

Who is that spoken to? Not unbelievers. God's people sitting in a Babylonian system seeking their own, playing the harlot with the world. And God is giving a last call saying come out of her my people.

Otherwise you will also participate in her sins and you will receive her punishment. Can God's people receive the punishment of the world? Sure. If they don't respond to the call of God to come out.

So in the Old Testament we can learn something from the history of Israel leaving Babylon. You see, very few people left Babylon to go back to Jerusalem to build the temple again in the Old Testament. Why? Because life in Babylon was much more comfortable.

Jerusalem was a ruins. It's like moving out of Bangalore to some remote village in India where there's no running water and there's no electricity. You've got to go to the well and draw water.

And life is very primitive. There's not good schools and no good hospitals. Who would want to move there? In the Old Testament God said you can't build my temple anywhere you like.

I mean it's different in the church. But in the Old Testament the temple had to be built in Jerusalem. And God said that's the only place I'll manifest my presence.

So those who wanted to have God's presence, they had to move back to Jerusalem. And you read a few people. That's why the book of Ezra and Nehemiah is very interesting.

A few people came out and said we will go back. We will walk that long journey. They had to walk all that way, many, many miles.

I don't know how many months it took to reach there. And sometime after they reached there, I want to show you a verse in the book of Nehemiah which is very interesting. Sometime after they reached there, you see this has all got relevance to our situation today.

Otherwise I wouldn't be wasting my time talking about Israel's history. I'm not a history teacher. But we can learn from history.

And I'll tell you there is a saying in, it's a proverb in the English language. You've got to listen carefully to understand what it means. History teaches us that history teaches us nothing.

You got it? Complicated. History teaches us means that what we learn from history is that people never learned anything from history. That's what we learn.

That through the years, people never learned anything from their previous history. So history teaches us what? That history teaches us nothing. That means people never learned anything.

They read about it, they hear messages like this, but they never learned anything that this thing can happen to us. And if what has happened to Israel, we study the history of Israel and it happens to us, then it can be said about us that history taught us nothing. We never learned anything from it.

And that has been the condition of God's people throughout these 2,000 years. That history teaches us, the history of the church teaches us that the history of Israel taught the church nothing. But if you want to learn, you can learn.

I want to learn that a few people came out of Babylon because they were concerned that the name of the Lord should be glorified in Jerusalem. They wanted to build a temple that had been destroyed. They wanted to exalt the name of the Lord and bring back the glory of God into that temple.

And a very small group of people were willing to reject and refuse the comforts they could have had in Babylon, the honor, the comfort, all that went back and built. And it's like that throughout history. Every now and then, God's people, those who sincerely seek the glory of God, come together and they want to build a church.

You see, that temple is a picture of the church, of God's people coming together. A church that glorifies the name of Christ. A church where people love God with all their hearts.

But they don't love money. They don't love the earthly things. They use money.

They don't love it. They don't take advantage of God and they don't take advantage of one another. But they're seeking the glory of God and they're willing to sacrifice.

So see Nehemiah in chapter 1. Nehemiah chapter 1 we read that Nehemiah inquired from the people who came back from Jerusalem. He asked some of them, how are things going on in Jerusalem? They said to me, Nehemiah 1.3, those, that remnant there is in pretty bad shape. They are in distress and reproach.

Conditions are appalling. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire. So we see here, that was the condition of God's people there.

Who would want to go and join that group? But if you look in the Old Testament, God has always done His work with a small group of people who are willing to take risks for Him. Who are willing to make sacrifices for Him. Who are different from the rest of the crowd who were religious.

That's always been God's way. He's always been with a minority. He's not been with the majority.

He has not been with that which is popular, but with that which is despised. Can we learn something from history? Do you think we will learn it today? Today there are so many believers, even in our churches, our churches, including this church, who are so impressed whenever they see a Christianity that appears popular and accepted, especially on television. Does the cap fit you? What does that teach us? That history teaches us nothing.

You see how it's being fulfilled right in our day. That means we have not learned anything from history. Who is God with? See way back in the Old Testament, let me just show you about the first man.

You know the church is waiting for the rapture of being taken up to heaven. I'll tell you about the first man who was taken up to heaven. And that's Genesis chapter 5. He's a picture of the church because he's the first person taken up to heaven.

And we read here about Enoch in Genesis chapter 5. And by the way, he was not a full-time worker. He was not a single man. Some people think only full-time workers can be spiritual and wholehearted.

Or only single people can be. Married people say, oh brother, you don't know what all problems I have with wife and children and all that. Well, I'll tell you something.

Enoch walked with God for 300 years, longer than any of us will ever live. We read here in Enoch verse 21, Ephesians 5, 21. Enoch lived 65 years and he became the father of Methuselah.

And Enoch walked with God for 300 years. What did he do in those 300 years? He was the father of many other sons and daughters. He had sons and he had daughters.

And he had walked with God. Can a man have sons and walk with God? Some people say boys are difficult. Well, Enoch walked with God.

Some people say it's not boys, it's girls are difficult. Enoch had daughters. He walked with God.

He was a man who earned his own living. He had children. And he brought up those children in a good way.

And he walked with God and one day it says, verse 24, God just took him up to heaven. This is how the church is supposed to be. Walking with God, walking with God in a world that has no interest in walking with God, having a family, children, not supported by anybody, doing one's own work, earning one's own living and one day, God takes us.

You want to be in that number? I want to be in that number. That's why Enoch is a great example for me. And I believe that we should walk with God in such a way that our children should want to know the secret.

Because it says here that Enoch had a son called Methuselah. And Methuselah had another son called Lamech. And Lamech had a son called Noah.

So, Methuselah's great, sorry, Enoch's great-grandson was Noah. And Methuselah was Enoch's son. And Noah lived for 600 years.

And he walked, he talked to his grandfather, Methuselah. And what do you think he asked Methuselah? He says, Grandpa, could you tell me how your father, Enoch, walked with God? I mean, he died before I was born. And I heard he walked with God and God one day took him.

Can you tell me, Grandpa, how did he do it? This little boy. And Methuselah would tell him about his father, Enoch. All that he knew.

Because Methuselah knew his father for 300 years. All those 300 years he must have seen. Can you imagine a son watching his father for 300 years.

A man who walked with God. What all impressions would be in the heart of that boy who grew up to be Methuselah. Who he would have had so much and so much to tell Noah.

And in Noah's heart grew a hunger to walk with God himself. And so it says here in Genesis chapter 6 and verse 9. One day Noah began to walk with God. It's wonderful.

You know, if you have a hunger, I don't believe that Noah would ever have walked with God if he didn't have a hunger to find out. How did Enoch do it in a wicked world? We know that Noah's world was very wicked. It was corrupt.

People were indulging in violence and sex. In fact, if you want to know what Noah's world was like, just read the newspapers today. Just look around the world and look at the cinemas and the movies and what comes on television and the pornography.

They were not printed stuff those days, but the same spirit in man. Because Jesus said the last days will be like the days of Noah. We can reverse that and say the days of Noah were like the last days.

So that's why I say that. If you want to know what Noah's days were like, it's exactly like the world in which we live. Exactly like the world in which our little children have to grow up.

And if you want to guide them, you better be like Enoch and Noah. Walk with God. It's only a small number.

One man. In Enoch's time, one man. What is Enoch's world like? Let's turn to the book of Jude.

You don't read that in Genesis. But in the book of Jude, you read about the world in Enoch's time. Genesis in chapter sorry, Jude.

Jude. There's only one chapter. Verse 14.

Jude. Verse 14. It says here.

It says about these men. It's talking about these men in verse 12 who are hidden reefs in your love peace when they peaced with you without fear, caring for themselves. It's talking about a whole lot of rebellious Christians who were found in those last days of the first century.

Carried doubly dead, uprooted wild waves of the sea. What all names he calls them, casting their own shame. Verse 13.

Like foam wandering stars for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever. It was about these men who were living in the first century that Enoch in his generation prophesied saying the Lord came with many thousands of his holy ones. That's his saints.

Talking about the rapture. Enoch prophesied about the second coming of Christ. Before Jesus had come the first time, there was Enoch who walked with God and God told him do you know that one day my son

will come to earth and then he will die and rise again and ascend to heaven and he'll come back a second time.

And Enoch preached about the second coming of Christ. The Lord will come with many thousands of his saints to execute judgment on all these people. To convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds.

Not only their deeds but all their all the things they've done in an ungodly way and also their ungodly speech which they have spoken. These are grumblers finding fault, following after their own lust. They speak arrogantly flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

Flattering people to gain an advantage. It's a sin classified along with murderers, grumblers and those who are accusers. Never be found in that category of people who flatter others in order to get an advantage for yourself.

So that was the type of generation in which Enoch lived, just like Noah's. Wicked people and he prophesied that when Enoch said that this is going to happen in the future, it's no use telling that to people if they were all good people then. No, they were just like that in Enoch's day.

And he was telling them, you know what's going to happen to you fellas? God's going to come down in judgment. And that's what Noah preached too. And in Noah's time, the remnant was a little more, it was eight people.

But there's a very small group. Always there was a remnant, a small group of people. Jesus said the last days will be like the days of Lot.

And in Lot's time also there was a remnant. The angel came into Sodom and pulled out four people from there. Lot, his wife and his two daughters.

Saved them, but the wife got lost because she was still hankering after the world. And the two of the daughters got lost in immorality. One man, Lot, who was also a bit of a compromiser, but he must have repented because the Bible calls him a righteous man who probably finally learned a lesson.

He went to Sodom to make money. But I think he learned a lesson. You know, sometimes we may not be like Abraham, faithful from the beginning.

We could be like Lot. That we went after money and the earthly things and we learned a lesson. Sometimes at a very high cost, losing your wife, your children becoming immoral.

Then you learn a lesson. Lot learned a lesson. The Bible says he became a righteous man.

So whichever way, I mean, the best way is to be like Abraham, but you don't learn it the hard way. But the second best is to learn it like Lot. But to learn it.

But there is a remnant. And throughout the history of Israel, you find there's a remnant like that. See, for example, in Numbers and chapter 13.

In Numbers chapter 13, we read of the time when Israelites came to the borders of the land of Canaan, which God had promised them, saying, go in and possess this land. This is the land I took you out of Egypt to possess. Just like when the Lord saves us from sin and brings us to the possibility of life in the new covenant, life in victory and to taste of heaven on earth and said, don't you want to go in and have a

heavenly life? And a lot of people turned back.

This is a story of that thing. You know, as they came to the borders of the promised land, Moses said, let's send 12 men to go into the land of Israel, one from each tribe. Numbers 13 verse 1. I'm going to send one man, a leader, not just an ordinary brother, a leader from each tribe, verse 2. And they went in and here are the names of those people listed in verse 4 onwards.

And they went into the land and looked at the country and it says here they came back, verse 25, after 40 days they examined the land. You see, this is why they were punished for 40 years. I want you to know that.

They went searching out the land of Canaan for 40 days and they found the fruit was wonderful, exactly like God had told them. He said they came back and reported, these 12 of them, verse 27. We went into the land and it certainly does flow with milk and honey.

God wasn't fooling us. This is a wonderful life. This is a really heavenly life.

It's possible. And it's true. But the people who live there are so strong.

They are fortified. The cities are fortified, very large. As you often heard me say, those giants are the picture of the sins in your life.

Fortified through many years of yielding to them. And when we looked at them, he says, they said, we're not able to overcome them. But here's the remnant now.

Caleb and Joshua. Caleb silenced the people, verse 30, and said, we should go up. We will surely overcome.

See, that's the language of the remnant. What is the problem? With God's help, I can overcome it. What is the sin? With God's help, I shall surely overcome.

And the language of those who are not part of the remnant is, oh, no, no, no. We are not able. We are not able.

Verse 31, they are too strong. I want you to see these two statements. Two people saying, we shall surely overcome.

It's not because they looked at their muscles. They looked at God, and they looked at the giants, and the giants were so small. It's like today we look at God, and we look at our sins which have ruled us for so many years, or the problems that are weighing us down with anxiety and fear.

Oh, this problem is so big, and I am so small. That's the language of the unbelieving believers who claim to be born again, who claim to say God is their Father, but their God is so small. Where is your God? Here is my Father.

Put them under a microscope to see their God. And what about your problem? Oh, brother, my problem is so big, so big. This small God can't solve it.

That's the language of unbelieving believers. And the remnant, those who really believe, they don't have a... In a sense, we can say they have a different God. They've got the true God, the God of the Bible who

is almighty.

They can't even describe how big their God is. The whole universe cannot contain this God. And how big is your problem? So small.

Essentially, that is the difference. And I believe there are two categories of people sitting right in front of me today. Yes.

I'm not talking about people in some other group. You, today. All of us have problems.

Some of you who do not know everything about me may imagine I have no problems. If I tell you, you probably discover I have more than you. And I've had more than you.

But the difference is when I compare my problems with my God, they are so small. I mean, if I didn't look at God, my problem would be as big as the universe. Just like yours.

But you know how you can take a small, little creature, an ant, and put it under a microscope and it'll look like a, if it's a powerful enough microscope, it'll look like a dinosaur. And you can run away from it. This dinosaur is coming to my house.

Another fellow says, Hey, it's not a dinosaur, man. It's just an ant. But you've got these powerful goggles that look at the ant and say, Boy, that's not an ant.

That's a dinosaur. Tyrannosaurus. Rex.

That's the biggest of the dinosaurs. And the other fellow who doesn't have your goggles, he says, It's an ant, man. Can't you see for yourself? Take off those goggles.

And when you take it off, you say, Oh yeah, it's only an ant. Those are the two types of believers. Those who look at their problems through the magnifying glasses the devil has given them.

Problems in their own life. I don't care what problem it is. Is there a problem God cannot solve? Tell me.

Is there a giant in Canaan that God cannot slay if He tells you to go there? I don't want to go to some place where God hasn't told me to go. I'm not a person who's tempting God, jumping off the temple and say, Oh God, protect me. No.

I don't want to go where God doesn't want me to go. But I know the places where God does want me to go. I know He wants me to go and occupy every part of my body that is ruled by sin.

Whether my eyes or my tongue or hand, my mind, my passions, my heart. Any area in this body is supposed to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. Is there any part of the temple of the Holy Spirit which is supposed to be occupied, little corner by the devil? No.

I mean, men, all of you perhaps sitting here will acknowledge that your body is supposed to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. Tell me, which part of it does God say, Okay, the devil, you can occupy that little corner there. That's the condition.

I've heard of lot of denominations where after the founder dies, they've got this huge property and some guy is already living there and he's a rebel and he refuses to move out. And then they've got to go to court and goes on and on. That fellow says, I'm not going to move out.

I'm going to live here. I've lived here all along. And that's supposed to be church property.

And this guy who was an agent of the devil is sitting there. This is a perfect picture of many believers. They say their body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

It's not just one agent of the devil, but a number of agents of the devil living in little corners. And the sad thing is they're not even trying to evict the man. Do you know that you've got the court of heaven on your side? In this case, if you ask for an eviction, the court of heaven will rule in your favor and send the Holy Spirit, which is heaven's police force, to drive out those tenants who have occupied a property without permission.

Maybe there were legal tenants once upon a time, but the house has been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. It doesn't belong to them anymore. They have to be evicted.

The old tenants that ruled there for so long have all got to be evicted. Why do you allow some of them to live? You wouldn't do that if you had bought an earthly property. Because we love earthly property.

Oh, we would go to court against a tenant who stays in our earthly property. We would be disturbed. We would get the church to pray.

Brother, some tenant is living in my house. Can you pray that they'll get him out? But you never pray so seriously about other tenants who are occupying your life, your body, your mind. Is there a problem God cannot solve? Is there a tenant He cannot evict from your body or your mind? Does God want you to live with depression and discouragement and gloom and even sickness? God can solve every problem.

You got to trust Him. You got to come to Him in faith and say, Lord, You are on my side against the devil. That's faith.

But you got to repent of all your sins. You got to repent of, identify your sins and say, Lord, this is my sin. I acknowledge it.

And give up the habit of justifying yourself. God hates those who justify themselves. Come to Him and acknowledge.

So, these people said, we are not able because they are too strong. I want you to remember these two phrases all your life. Numbers 13 verse 30 and 31.

Please write it perhaps if you want to do it on two pieces of paper. One is, we are not able because this is too strong. And the other paper, we shall surely overcome.

And keep those two papers in front of you and say, which am I going to choose every day? Which am I going to choose every day? We are not able because they are too strong for us. Or this problem is too big for us. The other, we shall surely overcome.

And you know how it is? The majority always spreads rumors like it says here. They spread rumors and a bad report. And 10 people went out among the 600,000 and say, hey, fellas, don't listen to these two guys.

It's all heresy they're talking. Can you imagine the very thing God said to them two years earlier when they left Egypt? I will take you into the land of Canaan. I will defeat these enemies.

These 10 people go around saying, no, no, no, no, no, no. We can't take all those words of God literally. That's not what it means.

The original Hebrew says this and like people say today, the original Greek says, I couldn't care less. And they fool people. They say, no, no, no, it can't.

We are like grasshoppers. We are like grasshoppers. The last verse, 33.

It's a language of unbelief. Oh, we are so small. We can't handle this.

And the congregation wept and said, oh, why did we ever leave Egypt? Why didn't we go back there? And it says here Moses and Aaron, verse 3, fell on their face and prayed. And Joshua and Caleb again, they said, the land is a good land. Verse 8 of the chapter 14, verse 8. If the Lord is pleased with us, He will bring us in.

He will bring us in. That's the language of belief. He will bring us into the land.

He will solve the problem. He will take care of these people who are hindering God's work. Don't rebel.

The Lord is with us. Verse 9, last part, don't be afraid. What wonderful words.

Take your time to read some of these. This short passage from Numbers 13, verse 30 onwards to Numbers 14 and verse 10. Very short passage.

And see the language of the remnant. Don't be afraid. The Lord is with us.

And what does the congregation do to these fellows who are proclaiming faith? Stone them. We should have thought they should stone the other 10 fellows. Isn't it? Who are the people who are called heretics today? The people who preach victory over sin? Or the people who say, no, no, no, we will always sin.

It's the people who preach victory over sin who are called heretics, false prophets. Everywhere. It's the same story repeated.

What is it? History teaches us that history teaches us nothing. That's why it's important to read the Old Testament. Say, Lord, it's the same story being repeated today in Christendom.

I want to make sure that I am not standing with those 10, but with the 2. Maybe only 2. It doesn't matter. They are standing on what God's Word says. They are proclaiming faith in God.

Turn to the book of Judges. In the book of Judges, we read of backslidden Israel in chapter 6. Defeated by the Midianites. And the children of the power of Midian, verse 2, prevailed against Israel.

Because they made strongholds there. And if Israel sowed anything, verse 3, the Midianites would come and destroy, verse 4, everything that Israel sowed and there was no pasture for their sheep or ox or donkey. And they would just thrash them left, right and center.

It says they came into the land to devastate it. And in that condition the sons of Israel cried to the Lord and the Lord sent them a prophet. God sees that his people are sick and tired of their defeated life, like Israel was.

They cry out. In Israel they cried out, God sent them Moses. Here they cried out, oh God we're sick and tired of this being oppressed by the enemy.

When God sees that you cry out like that and you're not allowing the enemy to run your life. When he sees that you're sick and tired of the devil making you anxious, fearful, depressed, discouraged. You don't accept bad moods anymore as a normal Christian life.

You say that's abnormal. You say that real Christian life is one of triumph and victory and peace and joy and love and goodness and humility. I don't care what worldly Christians say.

Then you cry out when your life is not like that. And you will say Lord, deliver us and the Lord will send you a prophet. Now whether you believe what the prophet says or not, that's another thing.

God would send prophets. Some of them would believe the prophet. Some of them would not believe the prophet.

And that's been the history in the case of the church too. God would raise up throughout history different prophets. Some would believe them.

Very few. That's a remnant. Most of them wouldn't believe.

They'd call him a heretic. You know that the John Wesley whom everybody appreciates today was called a heretic and a false prophet in his lifetime. It's been true of everyone.

So it's like that. And then we read that God selected a man called Gideon. And Gideon gathered together about 32,000 people to go to fight in Judges chapter 7, the next chapter.

God told Gideon, I want you to go and fight with this Midianites. I'll be with you and I'll overcome you. You know the Lord had already said to him, I am with you.

Judges 6.12. The Lord is with you. He said, okay. Let me go and fight against Midian.

And he gathered 32,000 people to fight against Midian. And you know what the Lord said? Verse 2. The people who are with you are too many. Have you ever heard of a general telling an army, we've got too many soldiers here.

We can't go to battle with so many soldiers. God's ways are not man's ways. Completely different.

The people are too many. Because when you win, you fellows will say, ah, we went with 32,000. My own power has delivered me.

Verse 2. The trouble is you fellows will take the glory to yourself. And that's why I don't want you to do it that way. Now, go and call all of them and say, all those who are afraid, go home.

22,000 people left. 10,000 remained. You know, I thought of that verse once when we were down in one of the towns in South India where we were having public meetings.

And all the Pentecostal churches there had all the pastors got together and wrote out a big letter when they knew I was coming there for special meetings. Saying, the heretic and false prophet Zakfunen is coming here. We are all united to make sure that nobody should go to his meetings.

I didn't know about that till we went there for the meetings and we were having the meetings in this hall that we had hired. And there were people standing down the road distributing these leaflets to all the people who were coming to the meetings. So, already a number of people had come to the hall.

So I sent a message to them, if you give us some of those copies, we'll distribute it to everybody inside the hall as well. Who are already here who didn't get it. So that we can say to everybody, all those, this verse, all those who are afraid and trembling, please go home.

All those who are afraid of being called heretics, false prophets or some bad name, go home. Brother, we're in a battle here. We're not going for a picnic.

It's true. We're not afraid. God before us, who can be against us? Anyway, you know what the end of that story was? Two of the elders in that, in one of those Pentecostal churches joined our church finally over there.

And the hall was full. Nobody could stop. You see, you can't fight with God.

That is impossible. You can fight with man, but you can't fight with God. Just make sure not that God is on your side, but that you're on God's side.

I hope you see the difference. Don't stand here and say, oh God, come here. No.

Find out where God is and go there. That's what I mean. A lot of believers say, oh God, I'm here.

Please come. He won't come. Make sure you know where God is and go there.

And if you're sitting watching some dirty television program, you can't get God to come and sit there with you. You got to find where God is and go there. So make sure you are where God is.

And the Lord said to Gideon, after the thing was reduced to 10,000, God said, no. This is still too many. Verse 4. Still too many.

I will test them. Verse 4. You know how God produces a remnant out of his people? By testing them. You know why we are tested every day? So that God can decide who is part of the remnant.

So he says, the 10,000 people, that's too many, Gideon. You can't win with them. These half of them are compromisers.

And that's what the Lord says about many people who come to the church. They're all compromisers. They're all seeking their own.

Forget about them. They can come and sit and listen to your message. That's okay.

But I can't build a church with them. He says, let me test them. And that's why God allows us to be tested.

Children who are in school perhaps understand this, that sometimes the teacher will suddenly say, today is a surprise test. We thought this test was coming next month. Today is a surprise test.

And those who are prepared, pass it. Now I'll tell you something about God. You know what he says? After something is over, he says, that was a surprise test.

It's over. It's too late to do anything about it now. You know that situation you went through yesterday? That was a test.

I just wanted to know what you were going to do. And I already saw what you did. I already saw what you chose.

What decision you made. I already saw what you said in that situation. That was a test.

Now here you see the same thing. These people did not know that they were being tested. God said to Gideon, only I'm going to test them.

But don't tell them that I'm testing them. Bring them to the water. He said.

And I will test them at the water. The water is a picture of the world. You see that in Revelation 17 and 18.

The waters on which the harlot sits. That's the world. Bring them to all these worldly attractions.

Even Jesus was tempted of the glory of the world by the devil. Bring them to the attractions of the world. It's prosperity.

It's pleasure. It's power. It's position.

All these things. Let me test them to see how they react to the world's entertainment, to the world's pleasures, to the world's prosperity, wealth and position and honor and power and all those things. Let me just see.

And then, you know what happened? I don't have to go into the whole story. You can read it yourself. Out of 9,700 people, out of 10,000, 9,700 laid aside their arms, forgot all about the enemy, buried their head in the water and began to drink because they were thirsty.

The other 300 were also thirsty. They did not kneel down, verse 6, to drink. They just stood on their feet looking for the enemy and just lapped up water with their hands.

The others completely forgot about the enemy and knelt down beside the river, buried their heads in the water. It's a picture of two types of believers. We all need water.

We all need money to live in the world. We all need a certain amount of relaxation. We need jobs.

We need houses. But 9,700 will bury themselves in all these things. This is it.

That's all. Their life is in all these things. And the other 300 will use these things.

They need it. They're also thirsty. They use the world, but they don't get taken up with it.

Like it says in 1 Corinthians 7, those who use the world are not taken up with it. So, do you know that you were being tested the last few years? Did you know it? Ever since you became a believer, God was testing you through the various attractions that came your way. He's not a hard God.

He doesn't say you shouldn't drink any water at all. No. He doesn't want you to be an ascetic living in the forests and the jungles.

No. But He sees who will keep My calling first. It's a remnant.

And with those 300, God overcame the enemy. So I just took a few examples like this in the Old Testament to show you. Dear brothers and sisters, we are living in a time like that.

God is doing a quick work now because time is approaching where we are nearing the end of time. The forces of the anti-Christ, anti-Christian forces are becoming powerful throughout the world. What should we do in such times? Lift up our heads for our redemption is drawing near.

People who have observed Christian work in India more than I have tell me that there's never been so much persecution of Christians in India as in this year, 2006. You don't experience it in Bangalore, but it's true in many other parts of India. If you read about what's happening in other parts of India, you know.

I read about it all the time because I want to know what's happening in my country. I want to be alert to the times in which we live. We are approaching the end.

Around the world, everything that you read in the newspaper, Zechariah says the armies will gather around Jerusalem. Book of Revelation says the armies will gather around the river Euphrates. Hundreds of thousands.

Only two places mentioned in the Bible in relation to the last days. Iraq and Jerusalem. Iraq is where the river Euphrates flows through.

It's very interesting to read the Bible and then read the newspaper. So, I'm excited. My wife and I were talking the other day about the mark of the beast.

We discuss things sometimes in Scripture together. She said something which really made me think. She said, do you think the mark of the beast is the love of money? So, let me think about that.

The more I thought about it, the more I realized that is a real possibility. Because it says the mark of the beast is in the right hand or in the forehead. And I said there are two places only where we deal with money.

One is our right hand and the other is in our mind. It's true. These are the only two places in our body.

We don't deal with our legs and all with money. It's hand and our mind. The mark of the beast is here or in your forehead, in your mind or in the hand.

And you can't buy and sell without it. It says in Revelation. It's true.

You can't buy and sell without money. And a lot of things which are not proper for a Christian to have, you bow down before that idol and buy and sell. There's a lot of sin in the world today in buying and selling.

A lot of unrighteousness, a lot of cheating, a lot of black money, money laundering. This is buying and selling in a way which are dishonoring to God. A lot of cheating of taxes and many, many things.

Do you have the mark of the beast in your hand or in your mind? Nobody knows it. Secret, hidden. Who can know it? Who can know what you're doing with your hand throughout the week? Who can know what you're thinking in your mind throughout the week? It's so easy to be here as a wonderful believer, praising the Lord, lifting up holy hands, the Bible says.

Holy? Holy? I wonder. Looks holy here because we think soap and water makes it holy. No, it doesn't.

Ask yourself if you have this mark of the beast. Don't wait for some 666. You read all types of news in the papers about some type of chip that they're going to implant into your hand and implant into your forehead to detect immediately.

I know you won't submit to all that, but the devil will fool you long before such things ever happen. If at all they happen, he says, I fooled these people. Ha ha.

They had the mark of the beast all along and they were waiting for some chip to be implanted into there. And it's already been implanted. Brothers, sisters, already implanted.

Just get it out. It's in your mind. The love of money.

The root of all evil, the Bible says. Not money. We need water.

We need to lap it up, but when you bury your head in it, then it's different. The remnant are those who have decided that they're going to live for God. They're going to love God with all their heart.

When you love God with all your heart, you don't have love for anything else there. Lord, I want to live for you. I believe that every problem can be solved.

The world says, money can solve every problem. And those who are the remnant say, God can solve every problem. Who's right? God is waiting to see a remnant of people who will stand up and demonstrate the truth that money is not the answer to everything.

Knowing influential people is not the answer to everything. It can solve a few problems. Major problems still remain.

Even though you have plenty of money and you know all the influential people, you have to know the most influential person in the universe, Jesus Christ, who's got all authority in heaven and earth. So let's be part of that remnant. That's wholehearted, radical.

He's going to be a very small number. And I want to say to you, I wish all of us would be there, but all of us are not going to be there. But there will be a small number, I believe, even in this church, who will be part of that remnant.

I'm not here to judge who that is. I don't know. Because I don't know what you think about in your mind.

I don't know what you do with your right hand. Only God knows, the devil knows, and you know. But you know.

And let's make sure that we are part of that remnant that's going to be true till the day Jesus returns. Shall we bow our heads for a moment before God? We respond to the word of God that we have heard. Say, Lord, I want to be wise.

I want to trust you. I don't want to dishonor you by unbelief, making these little problems I face bigger than you, Almighty God, who runs the universe. I want to express my trust in you right now.

I want to say with Joshua and Caleb, we shall surely overcome. The Lord is with us. And so we do not fear.

Heavenly Father, help us, each one, to be in that remnant, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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