

## ABSTRACT

This work aims at examining the concept of the remnant in Old Testament Prophets with particular attention to prophet Isaiah. In it, efforts are made to trace the history of remnant and the importance of the idea to the religion of Israel. It is discovered that it was in the mind of God to work through few people to carry out his purpose for the world. The work considers the election and the consequent covenant which God made with Israel as basic background for the idea of remnant in the Old Testament Prophets. It is discovered that the remnant later retains the election of Israel. For remnant emerges when there seemed to be no hope for the survival of the nation Israel.

Efforts are made to trace the emergence of the idea of the remnant in the prophets. Israel failed God's covenant and therefore forfeited her election according to the prophets, but God in His chased-loving kindness would not destroy the nation. Thus the prophets who predict the end for erring Israel also hold out the hope of life, even if that is only for a "remnant". The socio-political and the theological crisis which gave rise to the idea of remnant in the prophets are carefully examined in the work. The contemporary view of the world around the nation Israel on the idea of the remnant is of importance to this work. Thus the national theology of Israel which holds that Israel belongs to God no matter the circumstance was forfeited by Israel's apostasy. Instead, God decides to use the righteous remnant in place of Israel in order to carry out his eternal and redemptive purpose for the world. The mission of Israel as 'the light to the nation' is thus fulfilled in the remnant of God.

Furthermore, the work tries to examine the theological interpretation of the remnant in Isaiah by looking at the work of God, in retaining a remnant to sustain the world. The work examines the themes like redemption, salvation, creation and eschatology in relation to Isaiah's theology of the remnant. The work also tries to examine the eschatological nature of the remnant in the light of the continuity of God's work in His creation. Although the saying 'the remnant shall return' connotes that the exile will return to their own land or to Jerusalem, the work submits that the name sheer-Jashub means mainly 'return to God'. It also asserts that the meaning of the name of the son of Isaiah (Isa.7:3) is that the remnant shall return to God. Thus the saying is applicable either to the returnees from exile or the people who remained in Israel after the deportation.

The work discusses the corporate and the individual view of the remnant. Here efforts are made to view how God can save by many or by few, it arrives at a point where it submits that whether God saved by few or many, the few or the many are the remnant of God. Hence it sees the idea of the remnant as God's ordination.

The line of the Prophets and especially Isaiah and his group of disciples confirm the view that the Old Testament remnant is not merely an idea, but is a historical fact. Thus the question of the identity and function of the person and work of the remnant is of importance to this work. Efforts are made to discover some characters as the remnant of God. Thus, for every generation of God's people there is a remnant to fulfil God's eternal purpose for the redemption of the world.

Finally, the work tries to apply the idea of the remnant to our contemporary world, with a view to discovering what the work has to offer to change our world and the individual for better. Particularly the work relates the idea of the remnant to the Church and asserts that the Church, particularly the Church in Nigeria is the remnant of our age.

## *CERTIFICATION*

I certify that this work was carried out by the Rev. Canon Samuel Olubayo Sowale in the Department of Religious Studies University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### The Reasons for this Study:

Many Biblical scholars have undertaken a lot of research on the subjects 'election' and 'covenant' but on the subject 'remnant' less attention has been paid. The reason for this may be due to the fact that the word has a very close meaning and relation with election and covenant. This may account for the reason why Old Testament scholars mention the word 'remnant' in passing. A few of them that attempt to write on the subject do so in journals and perhaps treating it in relation to election and covenant. I agree that the subject 'remnant' cannot be treated in isolation, but at the same time, the subject 'remnant' is so important that it should attract the attention of the Old Testament scholars for examination.

Interestingly the word "remnant" was popular among the Old Testament prophets. Thus I purpose to examine the subject 'remnant' with a view to discovering its importance to the Old Testament theology and prophets as the bridge retaining the election and the covenant. It is our desire to examine its relevance to the Israelites as a race and the present generation of people and in particular in Christians who by professions are referred to as the new Israel.

Moreover the fact that God, right from the beginning of creation undertook to always retain the people He had chosen by His election in spite of their apostasy calls for our attention and examination. The motive behind God's consistency with His chosen people attracts our attention. Besides God chooses to retain the world or the creation through the few righteous people; one wonders why God chooses to work through few people to retain election and covenant and not through many people.

The word 'remnant' has a strong trait in the salvation history. Throughout the Bible it is apparent that God saves through a few faithful people. For in God's mercy, He saves 'a remnant'. For instance, God saves Noah to whom He grants the grace of salvation. Thus in Noah God brings humanity safely through the judgment of deluge (Gen.6:9; 7:1b). In the story of the flood, Noah and his household were saved and they became the foundation of the generation that came after them. The few people in the Ark became the nucleus of the world of their own time. Noah won this privilege by his obedience to God's will. The question that comes to mind is why was it Noah among all the people who lived in his own age? Can the Almighty God not use many others for the same purpose? Why did God choose the few for His divine purpose? Can God not destroy the whole corrupt race and create another?

The Bible points to the fact that disobedience is looked upon as the original sin of Adam and Eve and the generation before the flood (Gen.3:17). It also points to the fact that God bestows salvation to the obedient servants. Throughout the scriptures the will of God is of primary importance to the chosen race. In this idea, moral and religious elements are involved. The people who obey God and whose moral and religious lives are in accordance with God's will are termed 'the remnant'. This is the reason Isaiah considers the 'remnant' of the old people as the basis for the new people of God. Isaiah was of the opinion that God would work His miracle through the founding fathers of faith and that the legacy they leave behind will be a solid foundation for the new people of God.

The generation that grew out of Noah's family, one would expect to remain 'the remnant of God'. For it took her origin from the obedient Noah. The question one will ask is, why does the generation degenerate again to the extent that in the time of Prophet Isaiah, a remnant was sought for? If a new people will spring up, how would this new people retain their newness by continually doing the will of God and by following the ways of God's commandments?

The mission of the nation Israel, according to the understanding of the Old Testament, is to be the light to the nations of the world, and that her law was destined for all people of the world and her God, was to be worshipped of all. The Old Testament also recognizes that not all who are of the nation Israel are worthy of this privilege. It therefore

declares that 'a remnant' will inherit the privilege and the task that were originally hers. This privilege and task will be shared with proselytes from the gentile nations. This became necessary because the nation Israel as it were cannot accomplish God's purpose. The purpose will be accomplished through the righteous remnant, for the kingdom of God is to be characterized by moral and physical perfection.

At the time when God was reluctant to give up Israel as His elected or chosen race, the idea of the righteous remnant surfaced. The reluctance of God is due to His faithfulness, especially to the promise He made when He made the covenant with Abraham (Gen.17). Throughout the Bible, there is a teaching which holds that for the sake of a small faithful and righteous minority, which is as the salt of the society, the whole community may be spared.<sup>1</sup> A good example of this is discovered in the episode of Sodom in Genesis 19. Thus a quotation runs:

A society that is rotten through and through may bring disaster upon itself, lest its corrupting influence spread more widely. But where there is hope of reform, the divine mercy persists, and even where there is no hope for the society as a whole, a 'remnant' may be spared, either for its own sake or for the sake of those who will come after.<sup>2</sup>

Frequently the righteous are involved in the disasters the unrighteous bring upon the community to which they belong. Righteous or unrighteous are members of a common society and are alike involved in her experience. The society could be narrowed down to a part, which could represent it and continue its existence and inheritance. This has been the experience of every generation of people throughout the world and it is our experience in our world today. Our concern in this study is to discover how the righteous can use their influence to make the whole community righteous.

Apart from discovering in the Prophets the developed doctrine of the remnant, this study will examine the view of Gressmann who said that the idea of the remnant belongs to the terminology of eschatology. Thus, to Gressmann the doctrine of the remnant is thought of as bringing about the sparing of the community.<sup>3</sup> The saying "a remnant shall return" as used in this work, has double understanding as regards God's willingness to spare His people. It connotes either a remnant will escape the coming disaster, which means the deportation to Babylon and all the suffering this entailed either at the initial stage or at their exile period, basing our submission on Isaiah's usage of the word 'remnant'; or that 'a remnant' will survive the impending calamity. In other words salvation will come through judgment. A small remnant that survives the catastrophe will return to God. In this work, the attention will be focused on this last connotation of the remnant, which in our view was the original intention of the prophets. Returning to God applies to all Israel, whether those deported to Babylon, and Egypt and those who were left in Israel at the period of deportation. Returning to God also applies to the righteous remnant of the future and our present generation.<sup>4</sup> Hence, the desire to discover the past, present and the future characteristics of the remnant and the importance of the doctrine to human existence. Like the kingdom of God in the New Testament which has the past, present and future aspects, the remnant's doctrine present a rich background for our understanding of the purpose of God in and for His creation.

In the Old Testament Scriptures and particularly in the prophets, it is discovered that the remnant idea has two stages, namely judgment and restoration. Judgment constitutes the essential phase of the day of God (Amos 5:18) which to Israel meant the day of peace when God will properly establish His Kingdom among His people. In the prophets' view this day will be changed to an evil day represented by darkness in Prophet Amos' prophecy. To Israel this day is the last day. This is the reason why people like Gressmann said that the doctrine of the remnant is essential to Israelite eschatology.<sup>5</sup> Thus another area in the doctrine which called for our examination is the fact that the present and the future are involved in this doctrine. The aspect of restoration in the remnant's doctrine rests on the fact that God does not take delight in the death of a sinner but that he should repent and be saved. God is interested in the remnant even though they may be few, for in them the world will continue her existence. The doctrine is of the view that the hope of the remnant is based on the saving grace of God. The grace of God in the doctrine of the remnant also calls for our attention. For instance the prophets gave to the remnant an interpretation based upon God's own grace and mercy. Where the prophets spoke of it, it appeared as the creation of the grace of God. Amos said; "It may be that the Lord of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph" (Amos 5:15). Isaiah said a similar thing in (Isaiah 1:9), "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". These two examples testify to the fact that the remnant's doctrine issued out of God's grace. The doctrine

recognized the fact that the impending disaster was unavoidable. However it saw the disaster as a period of refinement, which will bring to being a people of God's heart namely the righteous remnant of God. The work sees this grace as not totally free but depends upon the remnant's desire and struggle to do the will of God always. Thus the remnant will be saved not solely because of their innocence or sinlessness but for the grace of God. It also testifies to the fact that even though the salvation of the remnant was based on God's grace, the faithfulness of the remnant is a pre-requisite for the qualification to be a remnant of God. Consequently the words 'faithful remnant' is not pointing to the fact that they are sinless, but that they strive to obey God's command.

The necessity for the doctrine of the remnant came to being because the people of Israel rejected God and worshipped other gods. They forsook God's commandment and did their own will. In the prophets' view, the rejection of God by Israel would not put an end to God's eternal covenant with her. Even though many of them rejected God. God's purpose to save the creation was achieved through a few people. This few are the remnant of God. On Horeb, the idea of a 'godly remnant' of a faithful minority emerged. This faithful minority in the end counted far more than the ungodly. This vast minority emerged in the seven thousand of Elijah. This few people will always serve the Lord and live under God's sovereignty. By the same token, the returnees from the Babylonian exile preserved the continuity of Israel. 'It is familiar, says S.A. Cook, 'that a small bank may be the sole repositories of a tradition, the link between some earlier stage and the future.'<sup>6</sup>

It would be recalled that the fall of Jerusalem ended Israel's peculiar institutions, cults, traditions and beliefs. During the exile, the cult of Yahweh was perpetuated at various places in Palestine but there was no longer a nation to rally round it. Thousands of Israelites, by reason of distance, could not participate in it. The reason was that at this time, Israel was without a clear identity. Those who returned to Palestine from the exile therefore considered themselves 'the purified remnant' of Israel, whom God had redeemed from bondage and made heirs to the consummation of his promise.<sup>7</sup>

Another important area of our examination is the claim by the pre-exilic prophets that the righteous remnant would be those who would be restored after the deportation and destruction, that is, those who will survive both the deportation and the exile and consequently return home to Israel. This strengthened the view that the doctrine of the remnant arose among the exilic residue. As much as this is true, we submit that the doctrine was formally brought to the limelight during the exile, but the remnant doctrine has been proclaimed earlier in the creation of God. However, the exilic residue might see the exilic period as part of divine plan for His people, namely a plan to purge the existing Israelites of their apostasy and unfaithfulness. Thus the term "the remnant will return" might have been used to express the Israelites' regained confidence, that even though in exile, they were still within God's covenanted purpose and that they would be restored to Jerusalem.<sup>8</sup> This presupposed that the exilic residue applied the term to themselves. This is a vision of hope. Thus the thought of a surviving remnant, purified and restored remnant, therefore may be related to the prophets' teaching about Zion and to a lesser extent, the Davidic dynasty.

### **Methodology, Sources and Scope of the Study:**

The concept of the remnant in the Old Testament Prophets is a theological issue. It depends much on the divine attributes of God in His dealing with the creation. The issue at stake was the election of Israel as God's people, which culminated in the covenant which God made with them. By Israel's apostasy and the disobedience to the commandments of God, the eternal election was at the verge of collapse. It is noted that God's character would not allow this to happen. The prophets understood this character of God and thus saw the purpose of God at election and the covenant being fulfilled not on the disobedient Israel but on the righteous remnant. The Prophets saw Israel as people ruled by God. The judges and kings were seen as servants of God and thus could only perform well when they surrendered to the will of God. Consequently God's sovereignty is paramount in the messages of the prophets. This was the issue at stake at election, and covenant. There God said:

... And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. And I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God' Gen.17:7&8.



The characteristic of God will not allow for the revocation of the above promise, even though the people of Israel denounced God and His covenant through their disobedience and apostasy. In as much as God will not compromise the worship of other gods beside Him, God sought to achieve His purpose of seeing Israel as His witnesses in the remnant. According to the prophets, the responsibility of making the election and the covenant to succeed does not lie on the nation Israel but solely on God, who was the initiator of them. Thus the concept of the remnant is a theological issue and the approach is mainly theological.

The search for the remnant as a theological issue started from God Himself. The original intention of God at creation is for humanity to have fellowship with Him. This fellowship could not be maintained because of humanity's disobedience. It is difficult however to restore disobedient humanity to a holy God. On account of this, there was need to search for people who yearn for purity to be so restored to God. Thus from creation the concept of the remnant seemed to be in the mind of God. Remnant therefore is the narrowing down of the community to discover the people of God's heart. We found Noah, Abraham, Lot, Joseph, Elijah and the seven thousand people, to mention a few as signs of the remnant of God. David was found to qualify as the remnant of God at the rejection of Saul. In 1 Samuel 13:14, we have:

But now your kingdom shall not continue; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart; and the Lord has appointed him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you. (1 Sam.13:14, cf Acts 13:22).

According to the quotation, the rejection of Saul was based on his refusal to keep the commandments of God. One would see that as the basis of God's rejection of his people Israel. God however also chooses people of His own heart to replace the rebellious people.

The approach is theological also because the concept of the remnant, concerns itself with the continuity of God's creation. The concept had been seen as a bridge joining the past to the present, and thus gave assurance for the future. For if not for the remnant, the rejection of Israel could have been total. One would have thought that it is not impossible for God to destroy the rebellious people, and create saintly people instead; but it is the will of God always to bring existence out of non-existence and to seek to fulfil His holy will through those who struggle to do this will. Thus the concept of the remnant presents God; as eternal, merciful, holy, long suffering as well as a God of justice. He punishes sinners but the death of the sinners is not His delight. The continued existence of the world is paramount in the characteristics of God. Our work discovers this in the righteous remnant. Thus the continuity of the nation Israel is the continuity of her election and the covenant and thus of the eternal promise of God. God is ready to save by many or by few but our work submits that theologically, God as sovereign God prefers to save by the few righteous remnants. The nature of God is discovered in His eternity and the concept of the remnant provides avenues for such nature of God.

Furthermore, the work also reflects a historical approach, namely looking at the place of the nation Israel in creation and tracing her relationship with god. It looks at the areas of her strength and weakness and how the concept of the remnant sustains her historicity. The work sees the historical Israel as a nation under trial. A nation God sustains through His Loving-Kindness in the remnant. The insistence that the prophets place upon the continuance of 'a remnant' proves that neither acts of disobedience nor judgment mean in their view the end of Israel's history or election. Tracing Israel's history, the work discovers the historical Israel as being alive to the worship of God and keeping His commandments when they were in exile. Thus the remnant is to return to relationship with God and also with humanity. The relationship has two dimensions – relationship of one person to God and of person to person. The remnant is supposed to be morally sound reflecting the image of God.

Our sources in this study are the books which devote some pages to the subject 'remnant'. Prominent among them is 'A Theological Word Book of the Bible' by Davies, G. Henton, which looked at the Biblical concept of the remnant focusing attention on the theological and eschatological aspects of our study. Also 'Theology of the Old Testament', by Edmond Jacob, which sees the remnant doctrine as the bridge joining the threat of punishment to the promise of restoration. There are also 'The Living World of the Old Testament'. The two books written by Anderson, B.W. which look at the 'remnant' as the sustenance of the election of Israel. 'Introduction to the Old Testament' by Robert H. Pfeiffer,

'Moses from Promise to Fulfillment and Old Testament Theology' written by G. Von Rad look at the remnant as people separated for the purpose of bringing the promises of God to fulfillment. The remnant are seen as righteous people who are so counted because of their readiness and willingness to be God's people in spite of the bitterness of the world. These and other books cited in our bibliography and notes are our sources. Some of the books have subjects which are cognates to our title.

In addition to the books there are some articles in Journals and books which we use as major sources as well. Among them are "God's people and the Remnant" written by J.C. Campbell in the Scottish Journal of Theology. "The Root \_\_\_\_\_ and the Doctrine of the Remnant", by E.W. Heaton at the Journal of Theological Studies, "Called to be a covenant fellowship" by Philip A. Potter, in the Ecumenical Review. "The Hebrew conception of Corporate Personality. A Re-examination" by J.W. Rogerson in the Journal of Theological Studies. "The Ministry as Witness" by Njiya Timothy, in the International Review Mission. Also is "Social Science Concepts of Modernisation and Biblical History: The Development of Israelite Monarchy" by J.R. Rosenbloom in the Journal of the American Academy. These look at various aspects of the remnant life, basing their discussion on the righteousness of the remnant. This righteousness depends again on the grace of God. It will be noted that majority of the articles in the journals used are not based on our subject. We make use of related articles as cognates to our title.

Above all the sources is the Bible, which is our major source. There are references to the Bible in almost all sub-topics since the work is more of a pioneering work on the title, "the concept of the Remnant in the Old Testament prophets". The Bible provides the basic foundation to the subject of our study. It reveals God in action, trying to reach the world through "a remnant". The Bible in general and especially Isaiah, Jeremiah and Amos see the remnant as the residue of Israel, who will take the place of the historical Israel as the people of God. They can be conveniently referred to as the new Israel. The submission of this work is that the remnant does not apply only to the returnees from exile or the people left in Judah after the deportation but that whether those in Judah or in exile, they must be people who returned to God, by worshipping, serving and observing His commandments.

In addition to the above, the student had the opportunity of visiting Israel and the ruins of the Qumran, where the Jewish zealots, lived an ascetic life, through studying and keeping the scriptures and living a disciplined and holy life. They were waiting for a time when the children of the light will overpower the children of the darkness. John the Baptist was a disciple of this community. Jesus Christ was said to have associated with the community. The community kept the scrolls, the scriptures written on leather in caves when the Roman army was approaching their town in 63 A.D. these scrolls were discovered in the 4 caves in 1947 by some Bedouins. The scrolls are now kept in the museum in Jerusalem. The pictures in this work were taken by the student when he visited Israel between April 10 and 21, 1990. Some Jewish historians who were interviewed testified to the facts. It is noted that the remnant lives a righteous, pure and disciplined life as seen in the Qumran community.

The work looks generally at the development of the doctrine of the remnant in the Old Testament prophets but pays particular attention to prophet Isaiah as a case study. The work also focuses on Israel as a nation who was elected and chosen by God. The choice was purposeful. According to Isaiah 49:6, Israel was chosen in order for her to be light to the nations of the world. Israel is blessed in order for the whole world to get salvation through her. The work saw God as the initiator of the election, covenant and later the remnant to sustain the election and to provide a bridge between the past and the present and to serve as a base for the future. The remnant provides a base for the theology which claims the eternity of God; which when applied to Jesus Christ, the letter to the Hebrews 13:8 we read: 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today and for ever'.

Moreover the work, in an attempt to discover the remnant today, views it in the life of the Church, and especially the Church in Nigeria. It views it within the context of the remnant as discovered in the bible, especially in relation to our cultural heritage. The work gives suggestion for the consummation of the remnant at the end of days.

### **The Problems and Prospects:**

We must admit that there are a lot of problems in our bid to achieve our purpose of carrying out this research. In the first instance, there are few existing literatures that are devoted to our subject. We were able to lay our hands upon extracts from books and the cognate subjects to that of our research. Most books that treat our subject did so in connection with election and covenant. We made use of these books to a large extent. We resolves to depend mostly on

the Bible and the few materials at our disposal. Our search at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver Canada's library which had a big department for Religious Studies and other library like University of Ibadan main library, the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan Library, the SS Peter and Paul Major Seminary, Ibadan Library, the Dominican community Ibadan, the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary Library at Ogbomosho, Institute of Church and Society's Library in Ibadan and Immanuel College of Theology and Christian Education's Library in Ibadan as well as a host of other Biblical Private Libraries like The Rev. Canon F.O.O. Ogunbanjo's Library at Isonyin, Ijebu in Ogun State confirms our assertion.

It is however consoling to find that some journals as acknowledged in this work dedicated articles to the subject of our research, even though few. One nearly felt like abandoning this work for another subject for lack of enough materials, but thanks be to God for using my supervisor and senior lecturers in our department of Religious Studies University of Ibadan, Ibadan, who encouraged me to work on the subject, by using available materials and cognate subjects to our studies. The work is more of a pioneering study on the subject; the 'remnant' and it will be of immense benefit to generations after us. Apart from the fact that the subject addresses itself to the residue of a people or the survivors from the calamity or catastrophe that befell the people of Israel, the subject in all aspects reveals that the righteous remnant. Are difficult to come by. This may add to the difficulty in finding enough materials for the study.

It is our joy on the other hand that the subject of our research occupies a very important place in the theology of the Old Testament, and produces solution to our understanding of the New Testament theology as well. As we discover in the body of this work, the concept of the remnant in the Old Testament prophets provides answer for the continuation of the nation Israel. For when the election and covenant were at the verge of being forfeited, because of the disobedience and rebellion of the chosen people, the remnant that is the righteous few sustained the election. Thus it is on the basis of the remnant that Israel as a nation retains her name and position in the sight of God, through what in theology is called, the new Israel; that is, the people who do the will of God throughout the world today, otherwise known by the name, the Church; the nucleus of God's people.

We observe that without the subject 'the remnant' the Old Testament Theology is not complete; for the Torah, the Prophets and the writings all look forward to the day of the Lord, which to the prophets connotes two things, namely judgment and restoration, "for the day of Yahweh is also indeed especially the day of the coming of his kingdom".<sup>11</sup> Thus the New Testament which opens and closes with the subject, the kingdom of God in the world is indebted to our work in the Old Testament. The remnant of God provides basis for the subject, the kingdom of God. Thus we are sure that other scholars who will treat subjects like the remnant of God, the kingdom of God, election or covenant, eschatology or soteriology will find this work as a useful material.

### **Features of the Study:**

The first chapter of this work is the introductory chapter. The second chapter starts by looking at the word 'remnant', and its etymology in the Old Testament. It makes plain the declaration of terms by looking at the Hebrew words which mean the same thing but submits that the usage of the word \_\_\_\_\_ will be adopted for our study. For the word \_\_\_\_\_ summed-up all other meanings discovered in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.<sup>12</sup> Here it was discovered that it is the will of God to leave a remnant in order to carry out God's purposes in creation. Thus a 'remnant' is always there to fulfil the command which was meant for the whole race, community or the society in the first instance. We focus attention on the choice of the subject as the title of our research by pointing out that our work is more of a pioneering study. The whole exercise is in order to discover how vital life is in God's economy of salvation. The remnant is that course which God took to preserve the race.

The work discusses the importance of the remnant to the historical Israel and also to the Religion of Israel. Here the remnant provides the continuation for the existence of Israel. This aspect gives prominence to Noah, Abraham and David as remnant of their time. The remnant provides the future outlook of Israel. The nation Israel was religiously theocentric. Even when they were led by prophets, judges, and kings, these were only God's instruments of governing His people. The work submits that the remnant's doctrine is all out against the worship of images of things on earth and sea or in heaven, beside God. Thus the remnant calls for a return to worship God alone and not other gods.

Moreover the study sees Election as a background for the concept of the remnant in the Old Testament. In the actual fact God's election of Israel and the subsequent covenant with her gave birth to our subject of study. God

promised at the election and covenant with Israel to be her everlasting God. In order to retain the promise of God, the word remnant as the nucleus of God's people became prominent in the lips of the prophets. Thus the concept of the remnant actually sustains the election of Israel. Hence we discover that Israel's elective choice rests not on Israel's boasting, that is, 'in its empirical achievement or covenant keeping or in Israel's elitist awareness of its exclusive status before God, but solely in God's faithfulness to His promises.<sup>13</sup>

The Third Chapter discusses the Prophets and the Remnant. It points out that the search for the remnant became necessary when the nation's apostasy and rebellions nullified them as really God's chosen people. Thus in the prophets, the idea of the remnant implies judgment and hope. Although the remnant concept was evident in the encounter of Prophet Elijah with the prophets of Baal, the work discovered that it was at the eve of the people of Judah's deportation to Babylon that the word remnant became prominent among the prophets – some of whom are, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos to mention a few. The prophets also considered the concept of the remnant necessary because the people of Israel had rejected the sovereignty of God. To the prophets, Yahweh was the ruler of Israel. To reject Yahweh was to run the risk of Israel's rejection and collapse as a nation. It is the beginning of a socio-political disaster. In order to salvage this situation, the prophets saw the remnant as the anchor upon which Israel's existence hung. No alliance with other nations was entertained by the prophets. The moral life of the nation Israel must be sound to retain her place in the election and covenant relationship. More-over, the people of Israel in the prophets' view had to retain their reliance on God to claim to be God's people and to claim that Jerusalem was the abode of God. Thus in the exile, the people of Israel thought that Israel's defeat was God's defeat, but the prophets saw the exile as a period of refinement to purify the nation, in order for the remnant to do the will of God. Instead of rejecting God, as powerless, the prophets convinced the exile that God was still in control at exile and was ready to restore Israel, even in the exile, as God of all nations of the world (Isaiah 40:1ff). The contemporary nations feared Israel as Yahweh's people, but the event of the exile might mean to them that Yahweh was not powerful after all. However the prophets saw the event as God's way of teaching other nations of the world that Yahweh is capable of using any person or nation in the world to achieve His purpose. Thus Yahweh is the God of all nations of the world.

The Fourth chapter discusses the theology of the remnant in Isaiah. The chapter admits that God deals with Isaiah by way of purifying him and commissioning him, as an example to the nation Israel. As Isaiah was cleansed, so will the nation Israel be cleansed before she will be able to witness to Yahweh, the holy God. Isaiah's call is therefore an episode which is prophetic to the national call of Israel. The call as it were testifies to God's dealing with Isaiah by ways of judgment and hope, destruction and restoration. Consequently Isaiah spoke of a holy remnant who will emerge out of the imminent destruction. This holy remnant will be Yahweh's representatives on earth. All these point to some theological themes in Isaiah which stand to communicate the concept of the remnant in Isaiah's prophecy. The themes are redemption and salvation, creation and eschatology. The chapter submits that Isaiah sees the remnant's motif as pointing to Yahweh's mighty action in creation in the following expressions: Yahweh the creator also destroys; He removes people to a far away country, He recovers and saves them. This chapter sees the remnant concept as tool which Yahweh used to sustain His creation.

In chapter five, we discuss the remnant in the corporate and individual persons. We focus on the nation, Israel as God's remnant. The chapter discovers Israel in some personalities who were representatives of Israel. This also includes some individual prophets. Specifically the chapter sees Isaiah and his disciples as remnant of God. For instance Isaiah identified remnant with all the things which were the object of God's choice, - his disciples, himself, Jerusalem, the community of the anawin (Isaiah 14:32) all constituted, if not the remnant itself, at least sure signs and pledges of its future coming and triumph, for a remnant will produce new roots below and fruits above.<sup>14</sup> We also look at Jeremiah and other prophets, kings like Hezekiah and Josiah, the servant of Yahweh and the Qumran community as sure signs of the remnant of God. Their contributions to the social, political and religious life of their generations betrayed them as the remnant of their time.

In chapter six, the new Israel of God is viewed as applied subject of the remnant of God. Thus the characteristics of the Church as God's elect, the body of Christ and the bride of Christ and as the light to the world are very much in tunes with our discussions on the remnant. The Divine commonwealth, according to Paul's writings is a situation where all people of race, colour and language are treated equally as people who by their obedience to the will of God are seen as God's remnant. The Gospels refer to this new life as the kingdom of God. The chapter submits that

the remnant is still a subject of research as one discovers himself or herself as either qualified or not within the context of the Church – the new Israel and the remnant of God.

Finally, in chapter seven, we relate the remnant concept to the Church situation in Nigeria. We first examine the Nigerian cultural heritages and see how much it has in comparison with ancient Israel. It also examines the prophetic movements in the churches in Nigeria and noted that Nigerian prophetic movements have a lot to borrow from prophets in Israel as the remnant of God. It sees the church as the remnant who looks back to Christ as remnant perse and who at the same time looks forward to the final consummation of the remnant.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### THE CONCEPT OF THE REMNANT

#### The Etymology of the Remnant:

The idea of the remnant according to Hebrew thought seemed to have existed in the mind of God before creation. The idea of the remnant is clearly viewed in the story of Noah. Noah and his family were the survivors from the flood, and so of the first humanity. The little group in the Ark maintained life through the crisis, and they became the founders of the new humanity. Thus the story of Noah contained all the essential remnant ideas.

There was an approach to the remnant idea after the dispersal from Babel (Gen.11). In this episode the 'second humanity' was not destroyed but scattered over the earth. Later the story was concentrated in Shem, Eber and Abram. The remnant idea came out as the interest centred in Abraham to the neglect of other branches of the line of Shem and Eber. From then on the future was concentrated in Abraham (Gen.20:1-3). The narrowing process was probably part of J's theory of history. Hence Barreth said:

Existence of a remnant – a nation within a nation – can be due to an act of choice and the choice must therefore have sprung from God's freedom or grace. Remnant is a word that spells grace.<sup>1</sup>

If remnant is due to an act of choice which originally sprang from God's freedom, there is need to look at the word remnant, in order to examine what it stands for in our study.

#### The Word remnant:

For the word remnant, 'A Theological Word Book of the Bible' will be used extensively. According to this source, the remnant terminology is represented by four roots \_\_\_\_\_ (sarad) \_\_\_\_\_ (palat); \_\_\_\_\_ (yatar) and \_\_\_\_\_ (sha'ar).<sup>2</sup> The first root (sarad) describes mainly survivors from disaster (Joshua 10:28, 30, 37, 39, 40), or what is left over in regard to possessions (cf. Job 20:21). The second root (palat) describes deliverance, the noun being rendered 'escape' or 'deliverance'. When it is rendered 'remnant' the emphasis is on an 'escaped remnant', and it is thus used of things (cf. Exod.10:15), of persons (cf. Judges 21:17, Isa.15:9), of Judeans who have escaped from the Assyrian invasion (cf. II Kings 19:30f. – Isa.37:31, 32, etc.), of the escaped of the nations (Isa.45:20), and from God's final judgment, (cf. Isa.4:2, Obad.17, Joel 2:32). The third root (yatar) means 'remain over', 'leave over', 'save over', 'show excess and reveal 'pre-eminence'. The noun is similarly mainly used for remainder, and there are cases where it may be translated 'superiority', excellence'. (Gen.49:3) or 'abundance' (Job 22:20). As a remainder, it is used of "the rest of the affairs of". The fourth root (sha'ar) means 'to remain; be left over; residue; remainder, or remnant'. These words are employed to describe the remainder of nearly forty objects or persons.<sup>3</sup>

The word (sha'ar) also connotes that the thing left over is from a larger or a quantity which has in some way been disposed of.<sup>4</sup> This may mean to the ordinary mind that what is left over from the whole number is less important than the part from which it had been a part and to the devastation and loss by which it had been brought into being. The root meaning therefore points to the fact that the remnant is supposed to be a representative of the whole, the totality of the race, to which it belonged originally.

The second root gives one reference only, (Joel 2:32; cf. Rom.10:13). "And it shall come to pass that all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered \_\_\_\_\_ (palat) for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls". This reference shows that the remnant is called by the Lord and it is connected with Zion. It is a future entity and it is a place (or possibly a nucleus) of deliverance.

In the Old Testament, the word palat was used in several places to connote the following: In the Book of Prophet Ezek.6:8, palat means, "will survive the sword;" Jer.50:28, where it means "will announce the Lord's vengeance". In Jer.51:50, where it means "will remember the Lord". In 2 Chron.30:6, "will be blessed by God's

presence” 2 Kings 19:30, cf. isa.37:32, “will have fruitful destiny”. Isa.4:2, Obad.17, “will have a holy character”. Ezek.9:8 “will be nucleus of life” and in Gen.45:7, where it means “will maintain life”. However, the sha’ar root summed up the varying identity of the remnant. Thus it could be used to illustrate the other roots mentioned above. Thus the remnant is the remnant of all Israel (Deut.4:27; 28:62, Isa.46:3), or the remnant of the Northern Kingdom (2 Kings 17:18; 21:14, 2 Chron.30:6, Isa.10:20; 28:5, Jer.30:7), or the remnant of Judah (2 Kings 19:30, Isa.37:31, Jer.40:11,15, 42:15, 19; 43:5, 2 Chron.36:20) or the remnant of Judah and Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:4, Isa.49:21, Ezek.9:4, 8), or of Jerusalem (Jer.24:8, 38:4, 52:15, Neh.1:2,3) and the remnant of the remnant of Mispah (Jer.41:16, 44:7,12, 28).<sup>5</sup>

The remnant idea apparently unfolded itself in the Exodus stories, as God provided a means for Moses’ safety when Pharaoh decreed that all male children should be slaughtered at birth. Moses could be said to be the remnant of the slaughtered children (Exod.1:15-2:10). The same Moses became the leader of the people of Israel after many years of his stay at Midian. Later in the Exodus stories, when God was confronted with the idolatry of His people, for they worshiped the golden calf, He proposed to destroy the people and make of Moses alone a great nation (Exod.32:10). Moses persuaded God to desist, but the intention of God was quite clear. God would have destroyed the people, but one of their numbers would have been preserved, and he (Moses) a remnant would have founded a new Israel. Finally, the wilderness generation did die in the wilderness, though Caleb and Joshua of that generation alone entered the Promised Land (Num.14:30), apart presumably from the house of Aaron (cf. Josh.24:33 and 14:1, 17:4). Here a generation had to perish for its sins, though the life of the people was continued through their children. Samuel, the leader of Israel and the inaugurator of the Monarchy, was a survivor of the priestly community of Eli which tended the Ark.. Thus Moses and Samuel were remnant of their own generations.

In the day of Moses and that of Samuel respectively and for many centuries thereafter, there can be no thought of a remnant in national terms. The history of Israel from Moses to the monarchy is the history of the achievements of the idea and the fact of Israel. The idea of remnant reappears in the decline of the nation. Thus the fall of the Northern kingdom before the Assyrians in 722 B.C. leaves Judah as the remnant of Israel (II Kings 17:18, (cf. II Kings 21:14, Ps.78, especially verses 67 -68; Hos.1:7; Isa.1:8, 28:5, Micah 2:12). Such passages show that Judah was regarded as the remnant of Israel. The prophetic denunciation of Judah leads us in turn to expect a further shrinking in the remnant. Hence there begins to emerge the idea of remnant of Judah, (Isa.4:2ff.; 37:31, 32, Zeph.2:7; Jer.40:11,15, Ezek.11:13, 14:22, Obad.17) though the remnant which survives the exile and is considered to have a future is variously described in these passages. Cf. Jer.3:11-14, 31:2-6, 7-9, and Zech.8:6,12, Ezra.9:8, 13, 14, 15.

The usage of the word sha’ar in the Prophets is not different from the general definition of the word. In Jeremiah the word sha’ar and shiarith are used interchangeably. Jeremiah used the term generally for residue of the people left in Jerusalem after the two deportations of 597 and 587 B.C.<sup>6</sup> It is noted that the doctrine of the remnant has no strong support in the book of Ezekiel. What we can gather from Ezekiel is that he used the root sha’ar to indicate the residue of the population of Jerusalem after the deportation. There is no mention of future hope as such, for he never uses the root sha’ar to denote that there will be a rebirth of the nation Israel in the Babylonian exile. This is not to say that Ezekiel has no place for the renewal of Israel’s hope in his prophecy. In chapter 37 of the book of Ezekiel for instance, there is a prophecy that God will restore Israel’s dead and dried life and bones by God’s breath of life. Ezekiel actually maintained that there will come up a new people who would maintain their purity through the general disaster. Isaiah is in the forefront as far as the doctrine of the remnant is concerned. In the book the root sha’ar is used no less than twenty-three times. In each case it refers to the survivors and the left over after the deportations. In Zephaniah, Nehemiah, Chronicles, Micah and Amos the remnant connotes the idea of ‘the rest’. The ‘rest’ here is mentioned in the sense of the remaining people after the larger group has been considered.<sup>7</sup>

From the definition and examination of the word sha’ar and from the appearance of the idea in the Old Testament, and in particular in the prophets, the following characteristics of the idea of the remnant are noted. One, the remnant is made up of survivors from a great catastrophe, which is often regarded as a punishment for sin. Second, though the identity of those who have thus survived or will do so is left uncertain, there is a tendency to insist upon the righteous character of the remnant. (Isa.4:2, Obad.17, Seph.3:12; Ezek.9:4,8), or the faith of the remnant (Isa.10:20), or to claim the poor of the land as the remnant (II Kings 25:12, 22, Jer.39.39:10; 62:16, Zeph.3:13 and cf. Isa.11:14).

Third, the surviving remnant survives the catastrophe, not only that its members may live, but that through them and indeed in them, the life of the people to whom they belong may go on. In that sense, the remnant is a ‘depository’ of

that life which is destroyed in the majority. Joseph, for example, is described as a 'Mihyah', i.e. a place where life is to be found, a nucleus of life (Gen.45:5). So in Isaiah 4:2, the remnant consists of all those 'who are written for life in Jerusalem'. After the restoration the children of Israel will be known as the children of the living God (Hos.1:10; Heb.11:22). The connexion of the idea of the remnant with the idea of life is fundamental and indeed, may be of greater importance than its connexion with the idea of righteousness in the ethical sense of this word. Thus Genesis 45:5,7 and Ezra 9:8 are especially instructive, because in the passages, we view how God preserved the life of one in order to save many lives. God preserved the life of Joseph in order that the lives of many of his people might be preserved during the famine. In this sense, the remnant is preserved in order to bring life to other lives.<sup>8</sup> In the text of Gen.45:5-7, we have the following: The Hebrew

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The Hebrew of the pointed masoretic Text translates this as:

And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are yet five years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.

The Septuagint Greek translates the last verse i.e. verse 7 as 'For God sent me before you, that there might be left to you a remnant upon the earth, even to nourish a great remnant of you. The Septuagint used \_\_\_\_\_ kataleimma for remnant and the same wrd was repeated in plural for the great remnant, namely \_\_\_\_\_ kataleiphin megale whereas the masoretic text used \_\_\_\_\_ for remnant and translated the second as many survivors using the root \_\_\_\_\_.

The variant readings here connote that the Septuagint translates the Hebrew text remnant without bothering about the second root which means survivors. It is noted that remnant and survivors may refer to the same thing, but when viewed in the context of our study \_\_\_\_\_ as we asserted brings us close to remnant. In the context of Gen.45:5-7, Joseph is referred to as a \_\_\_\_\_ a (mihyah) i.e. a place where life is to be found a nucleus of life. Cf. Isa.4:2. He is the remnant that was meant to preserve many survivors from the famine. Thus



\_\_\_\_\_ (palat) which means survivors would have been the appropriate word rather than 'remnant' as we have it in the Septuagint.

Other translations that is; King James Version, the NIV and RSV connote that the brothers of Joseph here were survivors whereas Joseph is referred to as the remnant.

Fourth, it is God who leaves a 'remnant'. He is the Deliverer who causes seven thousand to remain in Israel (I Kings 19:18). Elijah championed the course of God and in the process many prophets of God were killed leaving him to feel that he was the only one left. When the word of God came to him in the cave where he hid with the question 'What are you doing here Elijah?' He said:

I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts, for the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away (I Kings 19:10 and 14).

In verses 15 – 18 we have the command of Yahweh to Elijah thus:

And the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat or Abelmeholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. And him who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.

The quotation above shows that the concept of the remnant emerges from Yahweh's intervention to purify His world from rottenness. As it was during the Omri dynasty, everything which was started by Moses seemed to fall apart. Divine intervention was needed. The quotation above states that a more-than necessary intervention by Yahweh is at hand. Yahweh's action in history necessitates the sitting of the divine court. The Royal Assembly takes an irrevocable decision which changes the current of history. It sounds very harsh, war and violence are going to visit Israel. G. Fohrer captures the situation admirably well:

The events of the past determine the duties of the present. History is to be a lesson and warning for the present generation confronted with a new decision; this generation must find its way back to the sources of its faith if it and Yahwism are not to perish.<sup>9</sup>

The prophet was commissioned to execute the sentences given by Yahweh and urgently for that matter. Nevertheless, some hope remains, a 'remnant' shall subsist. The remnant here is a very important theological theme of the exilic prophecy.<sup>10</sup> It is evident from the passage quoted above that Divine sanction is provided for the overthrow of the dynasty of Omri, and as for the fate of Elijah who claimed to be the only survivor: Manus said:

.... Elijah's complaint of being the sole surviving worshipper is corrected in the theme of the 'remnant' the seven thousand who had not submitted to Baalism.<sup>11</sup>

A 'remnant' is always there to fulfil the command which was meant for the whole race, community or the society in the first instance. This remnant may be few in number but they are the tools which Yahweh uses to fulfil His salvific purpose for humanity.

It is evident that it is the will of God to leave a 'remnant'. Thus God made the remainders of the daughters of Zion a 'remnant' in Israel for Judah. (Isa.1:8; cf. Joel 2:32; Heb.3:5, Zeph.3:12).

Fifth, if it may be said that sin is the real back-ground or presupposition of election, thus the manifestation of God's grace as the divine response to sin, or indeed to human need, is the 'upper' or 'divine' side of the remnant, then it also follows that separation is also a mark of the remnant. The separated character of the remnant is seen in the fact of

its survival, in qualities of righteousness that it possesses, and especially in its relationship to the presence of God. Hence, the grace of God and His presence with His people, and their resultant separation, is clearly shown in Exodus 33:16. Thus:

For how shall it be known that I have found favour in thy sight, I and thy people? Is it not in thy going with us, so that we are distinct, I and thy people, from all other people that are upon the face of the earth.

Moreover, the presence of the King with the remnant receives concrete expression in that destiny of the remnant whereby they too shall exercise the over-lordship (Micah 5:8). Thus the remnant is to enjoy world dominion.

The remnant will enjoy the world dominion by here readiness to struggle in the world of sin, in order to attain the standard which God set for the world. It is noted that God manifested Himself throughout the pages of the Old Testament scriptures as a God who hates sins. In His loving kindness, He expects sinners to repent and enjoy the world as the children of light do. One basic revelation of God is that God loves life. He considers life as of vital importance. This is the reason God shared life with the first man Adam by breathing into his nostrils the breath of life (Gen.2:7). Thus it is the purpose of God to preserve life even when the whole race sinned against God, God sought for a way of preserving the race for the sake of the righteous few.

Consequently, God who creates also preserves. It is plain to us in the concept of the remnant that God hates sins and loves the sinners. Thus the relationship of God with His people as is seen in the concept of the remnant is to the intent that God preserves life. God is willing to share life and this particular life God wills to save in the remnant. On the importance of life to God Jose Miquez Borrino said:

The alliance (of God with Israel) has no preconditions; unconditionally, absolutely, totally, God is the God of life, of all life and particularly of all humankind with this mission of expanding, enriching and protecting life.<sup>12</sup>

The above quotation shows that God loves life, and the preservation of life is God's delight in the world. In order words, disaster or chastisement or exile will not be an end of the people. This is what the word remnant signifies. Remnant does not spell an end but the continuity of God's people. The word 'remnant' therefore signifies grace, and refinement with the connotation of hope in the midst of disaster.

### **The Importance of the Remnant to the Historical Israel:**

Israel as a nation took her origin from the call of Abraham in Genesis 12 and 17. The call of Abraham was followed by God's everlasting covenant which He made with Abraham on behalf of the whole race. Thus there was no period in Israel's history when she did not believe that she was the chosen people of God, and that her calling had been signaled and confirmed by God's gracious acts towards her in exodus deliverance.

In the Old Testament history of Israel, the saying 'God delivered his people from Egypt' is confessional in character. Indeed so frequent is it in the Old Testament that it occurred in every age and also in the most varied contexts, that it has in fact been designated as Israel's original confession.<sup>13</sup> The confession which is historical in outlook goes thus:

A wandering Aramean was my father ...and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there ...and became a nation, great, mighty and populous. And the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. Then we cried to the Lord the God of our Fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders. (Deut.26:5-8).

In the deliverance from Egypt, Israel saw the guarantee for all the future, the absolute surety for God's will to save, something like a warrant to which faith could appeal in times of trial. (Ps.74:2).

Moreover, the song at the crossing of the Red Sea speaks of the people whom God has 'acquired' or 'purchased' (Ex.15:16, cf. Ps.74:2). What calls for chief mention in this history is the idea of the 'redemption' from Egypt, which at a later time, that is, from Deuteronomy onwards, became the dominant thing. Terminologically, the redemption rests on two concepts both of which, the verbs \_\_\_\_\_ padah and \_\_\_\_\_ (ga'al) represent. The two verbs 'to redeem or ransom and recover belong originally to the sphere of Law. Padah signifies any kind of ransoming of someone who is not free, and perhaps also 'free' or 'redeem' in general. Ga'al is the redemption of what is one's own, and therefore of the restoration of a former owner-relationship. Of course, the way in which both concepts are used shows that, when they were applied to God's relationship with Israel, they became almost synonyms.

The above revealed that God recovered and ransomed Israel as His people. The idea of the remnant becomes important to the history of Israel, because it is the will of God to retain His relationship in the people even if it is in the remnant.

More so as the covenant which God made with Noah, Abraham and David, who stood for Israel, is an obligation that is binding for all ages, and it is God who took the initiative. According to Gen.9:8-17, human corruption cannot change the promise contained in the covenant. The author of J. account repeats the very words that motivated the flood again, 'For the thoughts of a man's mind are evil from little up'.<sup>14</sup> Thus God has been retaining the remnant in order for the history of Israel to continue and because of His covenant with Israel. In fact, the remnant gives the green light that even if the elect is at the verge of failing the covenant conditions, God will leave a 'remnant' to sustain the election. Thus the prophets who predict the end also hold out the hope of life even if that is only for a 'remnant'.<sup>15</sup> In the remnant idea therefore rests the continuing existence of Israel. The Remnant idea is the measure which God took to fulfil His purpose for His chosen race and also for the world. For a 'remnant' is saved in order for her to witness to God's act in the creation.

The Importance of the Remnant to the Religion of Israel:

John Skinner said:

According to the Old Testament, the religion of Israel dates from Abraham. Abraham's obedience to God under the condition of not knowing where he was going marked him out as the hero of faith.<sup>16</sup>

The obedience of Abraham marks him out as God's remnant and God's chosen person. This choice extends to his seeds. Hence from the beginning of Israel's history, she recognized that God has chosen her as His people. All her faith was based on that of Abraham. She also believed that God's relation with her was eternal. Israel's religious belief can be summed up in John Bright statement:

Anyone who has grasped the nature of Judah's national theology as popularly understood will see that it was totally unprepared to meet the emergency that was impending. This theology, as we have said before, centred in the affirmation of Yahweh's choice of Zion as his seat, and his immutable promises to the Davidic dynasty of an eternal rule and victory over its foes.<sup>17</sup>

It is noted that the religion of Israel rests solely on the eternal covenant which Yahweh made with Noah, Abraham and David. The choice is eternal. As strong as this theology was, the prophets held before the people the inevitable exile, as a consequence to their apostasy and disobedience in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The prophets were of the view that God would chastise His erring and unfaithful people. The prophets however held the view that the destruction would not be total, but that God would retain the life of the nation in a 'remnant'. However, it was discovered that the darker the hour the more desperate the nation clung to the eternal promises to David, finding safety in the Temple where stood Yahweh's throne (Jer.7:4; 14:21), and in the cult through which His anger was appeased and His favour gained. The more prophets Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah encouraged the people of Israel to seek God by doing justice and righteousness and by their act of obedience, the more the people clung to the national theology.

*On the Israel's faith Campbell said:*

The conception of the Remnant is a distinctive element in the national consciousness of Israel. It gives expression to the radical faith of that people in their national destiny. From a purely secular point of view it may be regarded as an idea of great survival value, contributing to the spiritual toughness of Israel ... The existence of the Remnant must be conceived in the light of the Biblical witness to the redemptive activity of the God of Israel. It is called into being by God acting in Judgment, and grace, not by secular condition or accident of history. That is to say that the continuity of Israel's history is not expressed in any of the forces or tendencies of secular history. It comes from the redemptive action of God.<sup>18</sup>

The willingness of God to make Israel His chosen people and the subsequent action of God to redeem Israel make the faith of Israel strengthened. Thus the nation never dreamt of a time when Israel will not remain God's people, even if that will be fulfilled in the remnant. This belief strengthened and encouraged the nation that they never doubted God's favour in the midst of the disaster that befell them as a result of their disobedience. Israel considered herself a unique nation as a result of God's election and everlasting covenant with her. It should be noted that Israel's hope was fulfilled only in the remnant. Thus the continuity of the history and religion of Israel was made possible by the idea of the remnant.

### **Election in Relation to Remnant:**

The word election is expressed in Hebrew language thus \_\_\_\_\_ bahar.<sup>19</sup> Bahar means 'to choose'. It also expresses the idea of deliberately selecting someone or something after carefully considering the alternative.<sup>20</sup> This view is expressed in Amos 3:2, where God said to Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth...". Election also implies a decided preference for (sometimes positive pleasure), the object chosen. Election is also an act of the Divine will exercising itself on creatures, among which it chooses some in preference to others.

In the Old Testament, the Divine election bears especially on Israel, the 'chosen people'; and among them in particular on those who do the will of God and remain faithful in time of trial.<sup>21</sup> Israel's faith was founded on the belief that Israel was God's chosen people. God's choice of her had been made by means of two connected and complementary acts, namely (1) God chose Abraham and his seed, by taking Abraham out of Ur and bringing him to the promised land of Canaan, making there an everlasting covenant with him and his descendants, and promising him that his seed should be a blessing to all the earth. (Gen.11:31, 12:7; 15, 17, 22:15-18; Neh.9:7; Isa.41:8). (2) God chose Abraham's seed by redeeming them from slavery in Egypt, bringing them out of bondage through Moses, renewing the Abrahamic covenant with them in an amplified form at Sinai and setting them in the promised land as their national home (Ex.3:6-10, Deut.6:21-23; Ps.105). Each of these acts of choice is also described as God's call. "This notion of election, says Theodore M. Snider, signifies a socio-religious pact of faithfulness and responsibility of a people of God."<sup>22</sup> It is an election which made Abraham and his descendants the people of God. It is through this election that Abraham and his descendants became sanctified for God's purpose. Moreover, it is evident from Noah, Abraham and David's elections that Israel elective choice rests not on Israel's boasting, that is, 'in its empirical achievement of covenant keeping' or in Israel's elitist awareness of its exclusive status before God, but solely in God's faithfulness to His promises.<sup>23</sup> Thus it is certain that from the earliest times Israel saw herself as a people chosen by God and the object of His personal favour.<sup>24</sup> Colin Gunton said that what is plain about Barth's theology of God is said of the one who is gracious from all eternity, that grace is revealed in his election of Israel.<sup>25</sup> Thus the election theology can be summarised in Gunton's words as he said:

The God who creates, reconciles and redeems, the God of the later volumes, is first and foremost the one who elects: that is, who loves and chooses the other to be his own, before the other knows it, before he shares in it, indeed, when he resists it, before even, he is created. The doctrine of election as part of the doctrine of God is that which teaches us that all we are and receive is of grace, and it is therefore the sum of the Gospel.<sup>26</sup>

The ruling thought as far, as election and covenant are concerned, is in the saying of God, that is, "I will be your God and you shall be my people". The mutuality in this kind of relationship is not that of two equal partners. It is a matter of a willingness on the part of God, and a subordinate obligation, a becoming and being on the part of Israel.<sup>27</sup> It shows the

mighty declaration of the sovereign will of God in history, by which He creates the relationship between Himself and the human race in accordance with His redemptive purpose. The election is God's initiative. It is a willingness on the part of God.<sup>28</sup> It is God who wills that Israel is His by God's election. It is God's election and not Israel's election. Thus by Israel's election, she became God's possession.<sup>29</sup> She became God's property. She became responsible to God in all spheres of her activity. The election is thus eternal and cannot lapse. Thus Rivka Schatz said:

The election of Israel cannot lapse because it was unconditional from its outset, nor can it be transferred to another object which sees itself as the legitimate heir of the promise to Abraham, but to his seed in the unequivocal sense of Israel. 'Abraham was not chosen as a private individual, but the Israelite nation which is his seed, was chosen'. This 'general election' (behivah kelalit) is a natural law or, in his words, "election per se" (behivah be-esem) and not an election by virtue of their good deeds.<sup>30</sup>

We can deduce from the above discussions that the idea of election contains the idea of the remnant. This is seen in the choice of Noah to be the survivor from the flood. It is also evident in the choice of Abraham and his seeds as God's elect. It is evident in God's choice of David and God's promise that his dynasty will rule for every in Israel. It is also implied in the call of the prophets. Thus it is important to state that the election of Israel is in the idea of the remnant retained and fulfilled. On the close relation of the remnant and election Solomon said:

The remnant and the election are not identical concepts, but it is not always easy to spotlight the difference between them. The Remnant is a result of an elective or choosing act of God and the Remnant ensures the continuance of the Election of Israel. The Remnant might be said to be the form in which Israel emerges from judgment, but the Israel that so emerges is the Israel-Elect.<sup>31</sup>

Solomon's submission is to the effect that the election is, in the remnant, retained. In other words, the remnant will perfect the election of Israel, which earlier in this chapter is described as eternal election.

The Old Testament Prophets were called to proclaim the doom of their contemporary sinful nation who was an elect of God. They proclaimed this with the possibility that a small part will repent and be saved, but also that as possessors of God's word and believers in it, they will form part of a 'remnant'. The connection of election with the remnant is to be seen notably in Isaiah. Isaiah, for instance, was called to be a prophet, consequently his family and himself were to form the nucleus of a 'remnant' mentioned in Isaiah 8., whose leader was to be no other than Immanuel. More individually; Jeremiah was to be the remnant of Judah, for God promised Jeremiah his life when Jerusalem did fall. (Jer.39:18). Here we discover the remnant in the elected people of God.

The above shows that election was the prior and positive context of the idea of the remnant. It therefore means, logically speaking that the remnant is at first a saved 'remnant' which becomes a saving 'remnant', for her function is to be Yahweh's witness to the world. Through the remnant's witness, the world will be saved. The remnant survives and is therefore saved just as it also seeks to save others. Furthermore, since election is really God's answer to human sin which unless remedied may bring about the end of life, the remnant throws into high relief the elect and the non-elect. The remnant gives the green light that even if the elect is at the verge of failing the election and covenant conditions, God will leave "a remnant" to sustain the election. In the light of this Davies said:

Thus when election is presupposed, as in the Davidic King, the prophets, the Messiah, the Servant of the Lord, the Danielic son of man, and the saints of the Most High, we have also to reckon with the idea of the remnant.<sup>32</sup>

Apparently, the idea of the remnant brightens the hope of Israel's election. The remnant idea retains the election and makes for the continuity of Israel as a people of God. The election is therefore in the remnant retained, for it was the failure of Israel to justify her election that brought about the idea of the remnant.

Thus far we have discovered the meaning of the word \_\_\_\_\_ and what contributions it made to the history and religion of Israel. We have also noted the close relationship of God and Israel which came to being by God's election of Israel. The election which assumed the eternal character by the will of God, the initiator of the election and the subsequent covenant is also noted. It has also been discovered that when the eternal character of the election was at the verge of failure, then came the idea of the remnant, to retain it. Thus the remnant ensured the continuance of the election of Israel. In the next chapter we shall examine the origin of the idea of remnant in the prophets by looking at every aspect of Israel's life which called for the idea of the remnant.

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3. Ibid., p.188.
4. Benjamin Davidson, \_\_\_\_\_ The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon Massachusetts: Hendrockson Publisher Inc. 1981. P.696. Also George Fohrer, Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament, London: S.C.M. Press Limited 1971.
5. G. Henton Davies, Op.cit., p.189.

Davies sees the concept of the remnant as that which arose out of God's commitment to His eternal election of Israel as a nation and the consequent covenant with her. Thus although the chastisement was inevitable for the erring people, it will not be total extinction. Out of the impending disaster God will bring out new life. According to Davies, those who participate in this new life are the new Israel, the heirs of the people of God, the colony of heaven, and the 'remnant, according to the election of grace'.

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Von Rad stressed the fact that the concept of the remnant arose out of the commitment of God to spare life. The concept came into being when the warfare aimed in principle at total annihilation. Israel used the term in the civil sense i.e. remnant of Edom, of Syria, of Jerusalem etc. To Rad it applies more to the survival after the campaign whose aim was their total destruction.

See also G. Henton Davies, Op.cit., p.188.

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In no sense, therefore, is the remnant concept peculiar to the preaching of the prophets, as Gressmann believed it to be. Muller is also right in saying that Elijah was not the first to transfer it to the language and ideology of religion, for the concept is obviously used by J. in his attempt to explain Yahweh's paradoxical designs in history.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE PROPHETS AND THE REMNANT

The idea of the remnant in the prophets is a distinctive element in the national consciousness of Israel. It gives expression to the radical faith of Israel in their national destiny. From the purely secular point of view, it may be regarded as an idea of great survival value, contributing to the spiritual toughness of Israel. Such rationalisations are within limits illuminating and legitimate.<sup>1</sup> When we turn to the particular Biblical witness to the remnant in the prophets, we find that it divides into two main tendencies. First, is in the optimistic message of the so-called false prophets where it was an ingredient in the eschatology of the wealth which served to soothe the hearts and up-lift the hopes of patriotic Israelites. Second, it is in the preaching of the canonical prophets where the popular conception of the remnant was subjected to rough and critical treatment and received a fresh content.

Thus in the prophets, the remnant idea signifies judgment and hope. The prophets look at the doctrine of the remnant from the fact that God will punish the erring people of Israel with 'may be' a few survival. The survivors will be called the remnant. In Amos 5:14-15, for instance, the Remnant of Joseph is more of a judgment. It is to the effect that God will destroy the nation with 'may be' a few survivals. In Zephaniah 3:8-13 the remnant signifies judgment but verses 12 and 13 is to the effect that the destruction will not be total. It will serve as an instrument to cleanse and renew the people after the judgment as those who remain will seek refuge in the name of Yahweh. Ezekiel combined the two ideas together. The remnant according to Ezekiel is the survivors from Yahweh's judgment. The remnant will also serve as instrument of redemption in Israel for through them new life will be revived among the people.

In Isaiah, the remnant idea is more of hope than of judgment. The remnant will emerge which provides the leaven whereby the whole nation will be redeemed. Isaiah looked forward to a day when the people will in word and deed acknowledge Yahweh as sovereign Lord. Isaiah described God as a refining fire, that is, after refinement, the people i.e. a 'remnant' will be restored. (Isaiah 1:24-26). In Isaiah 10:20-22 and 11:11.

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The masoretic translates the verses thus:

In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean upon him that smote them, but will lean upon the Lord, the Holy one of Israel, in truth. A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return, destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness.

The Septuagint translates verse 21 thus. "And the remnant of Jacob shall trust on the mighty God." \_\_\_\_\_

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The King James Version, The Revised Standard Version, The New American Standard, the New International Version, all followed the Hebrew masoretic translation – "A remnant shall return, the remnant of Jacob to the mighty God." The Septuagint omitted the first part of the sentence i.e. \_\_\_\_\_. That causes the variant reading. However return to the mighty God and trust on the mighty God mean, having communion and complete confidence on Yahweh's power to save. The repetition of \_\_\_\_\_ here is the Hebrew way of emphasis which is important to the translation from Hebrew to other languages. The copyist might have skipped the first remnant by oversight. Also in Chapter 11:16 there is a variant reading in the Masoretic and Septuagint Greek. The Hebrew masoretic renders the verse as such.

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which translates "And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant which is left of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt."

The Septuagint Greek renders it thus, \_\_\_\_\_

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which translates – And there shall be a passage for my people that is left in Egypt: and it shall be to Israel as the day when he came forth out of the land of Egypt.

Again the King James Version, the NIV, the RSV, NAS all render it 'the remnant which is left of his people from Assyria.' In the Hebrew text Egypt was not mentioned as the place where the remnant will come from but, Egypt was mentioned as the first place where the people were led out of slavery. Thus the masoretic and other translations mentioned above seem to us as the right translation which gives a better reading of the text. The idea is that of hope. It is with a view that behind Yahweh's judgment is His gracious will to deliver and renew His people. The remnant is described as the nucleus of really holy nation. The purification and confinement of the people is to bring forth new and true Israel who will do Yahweh's will. The prophets see the idea of the remnant as creating continuity in Yahweh's work, that is why they do not see the remnant as spelling doom altogether but as an avenue for fresh beginning for a new life under Yahweh's rule.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Emergence of the idea of the remnant in the Prophets:**

The remnant idea seemed to have existed in the mind of God right from creation. The reason being that God has ever been dealing with the few to carry out His plan for the world. The choice of Noah, Abraham and Moses out of many

that existed in their generations are evidences of this assumption. The pre-exilic prophets by whom the process of revaluating the idea is begun, saw the idea as a doctrine against the background of the prophecy of doom. To the pre-exilic prophets, it is one of the things that come within the sweep of the 'bosom of destruction'. The concept of the remnant which became prominent at the eve of Israel's deportation to Babylon arose out of Israelite's disobedience to the terms of the covenant. Since Israel has failed as a nation, the prophets looked for a new Israel who would fulfil God's eternal purpose. Thus the concept of the remnant in the prophets arose out of the Old Testament Prophets' quest for the true Israel.

In the opinion of some of the prophets, especially those referred to as prophets of doom, the residue of Israel will be destroyed. In a passage which appears to have the popular conception of the remnant in view, Amos 3:12 says:

As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the people of Israel who dwell in Samaria be rescued ...

In chapter 9:1-4, 9, Amos gives a description of escapees being ruthlessly hunted down by the wrath of God: "And what are left of them I will slay with the sword; not one of them shall flee away, not one of them shall escape". The summary of the prophetic message given in II Kings 21:10-15 stated vigorously:

I will stretch over Jerusalem as a man wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies.

It is implied in this passage that the Jerusalemites had been priding themselves on being the true remnant. At a later date, Ezekiel chapter 9 described with horror the commission given to a destroying angel to wipe out the residue of Israel. This radical rejection of Israel in those who claim to represent it seems final. The prophets proclaim a judgment in which no man can abide. Yet the prophets do not abandon the idea of the remnant who will survive the catastrophe.<sup>3</sup> The prophets give it a new interpretation. Where they speak of it, it appears as the creation of the grace of God. "It may be", says Amos 5:15 "that the Lord, the God of hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph". In the same spirit are the words of Isaiah 1:9, "If the Lord of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we would have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah". And in Micah 5:7 the remnant is "as a dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass which tarry not for men, nor wait for the sons of men".

According to the prophets, the remnant signifies a radical purge of the (in Israel's community) sins of apostasy and disobedience. Thus Jeremiah, as well as Zephaniah and Isaiah saw a busy cult, but no return to the ancient paths (Jer.6:16-21), a knowledge of Yahweh's law, but an unwillingness to hear Yahweh's word (Jer.8:8f); and a clergy that offered the divine peace to a people whose crimes against the covenant stipulations were notorious (Jer.6:13-15; 8:10-12; 7:5-11). The prophets realized that the demands of covenant had been lost behind cultic externals (Jer.7:21-23), and that the reform carried out by Josiah and later Manasseh as a superficial thing that had effected no repentance (Jer.4:3f.; 8:4-7).

The covenant which God made with Israel declared her as a people in special relationship to God. In the covenant God showed His mercy on the people by calling them to relationship. God relates to Israel in covenant as the next of kin – as a father, a brother, a husband – responsible for every human life. God, therefore, becomes the defender, the avenger and the redeemer of all Adam.<sup>4</sup> In covenant relationship with Israel, God shares life with His people. On sharing life Philip A. Potter said:

Thus the covenant is that bond which God creates with and between His people whereby they receive His life and power and share it with each other.<sup>5</sup>

The covenant which God made with Israel was conditional. The people of Israel were to keep God's commandments in appreciation of what God did for them. This showed prominently in what God said to Abraham in Gen.17:1-8. Here Abraham was to walk before God and be blameless, then God will be his God and that of his seeds. The conditional aspect of the covenant which God made with Israel is discovered vividly in the Mosaic covenant in Exodus 24. This followed the pattern of the Hittite suzerainty treaty, where the Suzerain gave the historical prologue of what he has done

to the subjects. In consequence of which the subjects were under obligation to keep the stipulations of the treaty. The covenant formulation of the Hittites, according to Von Rad, was known in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C.<sup>6</sup> Mosaic covenant is obligatory type while Abrahamic and Davidic covenants are obligatory and promissory type.<sup>7</sup>

The Old Testament prophets viewed covenant as a privilege to Israel. They further viewed covenant as privilege that demands great responsibility. Prophets Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, submitted that Israel was privileged in order for her to show forth God's holiness to other nations of the world. It is noticeable that the covenant between God and Israel did not only bring the two partners into a contact-relation, but also into a communion. Th C. Vriezen said:

The doctrine of the covenant implies therefore (1) the absolute recognition of the reality of a true communion between God and people (man); (2) the absolute recognition of God, the Holy one, the supreme, who has established and guided this relationship; (3) the absolute acknowledgement of the rules of the covenant, given by God.<sup>8</sup>

The above shows that the doctrine of the covenant is the clearest illustration of communion with God, the fundamental idea of the Old Testament message. Thus the making of the covenant is intended to secure a state of intactness, orderliness and rightness between two parties, in order to make possible, on the basis of this legal foundation, a relationship in matters affecting their common life.<sup>9</sup> The ruling thought is the saying of God, that is, "I will be your God and you shall be my people". The covenant with Noah, Abraham, Moses and David extends to the descendants after them. Thus an individual stands within the covenant because he or she belongs to the nation. On this corporate motif, Rogerson viewed that the Old Testament asserts that a man was conscious of his existence as an individual within his social group.<sup>10</sup>

The inability of the nation Israel to fulfil the obligation of the covenant brought about a crisis which gave rise to the doctrine of the remnant. Since the covenant is the nearest illustration of communion with God, which is the fundamental idea of the Old Testament message as said above, the prophets seek the fulfillment of this covenant in the remnant. For instance, prophet Jeremiah in chapter 31:31-34 viewed the keeping of the covenant in a new way. According to the Prophets the state of intactness, orderliness and rightness between God and Israel will be realized in a 'remnant' (a new Israel).

Thus before the fall of Samaria in about 722 B.C. the word 'remnant' became prominent in the prophets' messages. The prophets saw the conception of the remnant as the only anchor upon which Israel's existence rests. It was on this conception that one can rightly speak and refer to Judah as the remnant of Israel as mentioned in chapter two of this work. The prophets of doom, namely Amos and Ezekiel prophesied the inevitable deportation and devastation of Israel with 'may be' a 'remnant' which will be left. Thus the prophets condemned the Israelites for their disobedience so forcefully that it would have been easy for the people to think that God had finished with them altogether, and that they could have no further place in His plans for the world and for humanity.<sup>11</sup> The prophets however believed that at least a few who were repentant would remain to serve God. Jeremiah for instance, saw the people left in Judah after the three deportations of 597, 587, and 582 B.C., as a 'remnant'.<sup>12</sup>

Apparently, the conception of the remnant became prominent in the prophets at the eve of the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C., and at the eve of the deportation of the people of Judah in 597 B.C. and onward. Prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah saw the people who remained in Judah after the three deportations as a 'Remnant'.

### **The Righteous Character of the Remnant in the Prophets:**

In relation to the remnant of God, the presentation of the prophets differs from the traditional view of righteousness. The traditional view holds that the wicked suffer but the righteous are rewarded with goodness. They admit that the righteous may suffer, but if they do, then the unrighteous members of their group may be delivered from suffering, for the suffering of the righteous would sustain it. To the prophets the remnants are the purified members of the society. That is, the catastrophe of the exile would befall all, the wicked and the righteous together, but the righteous remnant would discover God in the catastrophe and return to God. This was a revolutionary view, for in traditional wisdom; suffering was inflicted only upon those who deserved it, that is, the guilty or the wicked. The prophets especially Isaiah took a higher and a more realistic view of suffering; it became a medium of salvation to the community. Only the

suffering of the innocent righteous has a 'plus' value in the community. The righteous must be the means of salvation for the unrighteous, for the unrighteous cannot be the means of salvation for themselves.<sup>13</sup> For instance, Abraham proposes that Sodom may be spared for the sake of a few righteous people within the city. (Gen.18:23-32).

Righteousness is considered as the basic quality of the remnant in the Old Testament's prophets. This quality attracts the idea of the remnant. Hence, the phrase 'righteous remnant' is common among the prophets and the later Biblical writers. In Von Rad's submission on the relationship of God with His people, he noticed that righteousness is required of God's people. Therefore, Abraham was told 'to walk before God and be blameless'. (Gen.17:1f.). According to Von Rad, the race or the representative of the nation referred to as a 'remnant' stood in right relation to God.<sup>14</sup> Noah, the second humanity was found righteous out of many people that existed in his days. Thus, he was a 'remnant' of God. His righteousness brought to light a new creation. It is evident that from the event of Noah, God saved the earth from complete destruction. Noah's family thus became the remnant of God, who remain after the flood. The righteousness of Noah was the measure used to save his family.

Abraham, the third humanity, also lived a life of outstanding faith and was in consequence known as 'the friend of God'. The faith of Abraham which was later counted as righteousness extended to his descendants which made them to assume the name: 'the people of God'. Concerning Abraham's faith John Skinner said that Abraham was obedient to God, and it was counted for him as faithfulness.<sup>15</sup> Abraham received the promise of God as a consequence to his righteousness. God found in Abraham good materials for carrying out His purpose in the world. Abraham was called out of his kin and kindred in order for God to fulfil through him, His purpose in the world. Looking at the nature of the remnant from Abraham and his descendants, and the related groups, namely Israel and later Judah, still smaller group, or even the prophets and their disciples, one discovers that an individual is considered as a 'remnant' only in the sense of his belonging to God. This is, by giving every bit of his life to God.<sup>16</sup> This came out of the awareness that an individual is accountable to God.<sup>17</sup> This thought spurs individual to be righteous before God.

It is only consistent with the whole religious nature of the Old Testament that the righteous person is regarded not simply as one who is just and upright towards his neighbours but as one who stands in a peculiar relation to God. The appeal which is sometimes made from human verdicts to the judgment of him who cannot err does not prove that this relation may be arbitrary and that the so called righteous person may be really unrighteous. Surely the appeal is from fallible and hostile decisions to the truth and reality of things. In fact, Job says that no man is righteous in the sight of God (Job 9:2). The Psalmist says that no one living is righteous before God (Ps.143:2). This only confirms the meaning which we attribute to the word "righteousness."

On the theory of imputation and mere forensic righteousness, some are considered righteous in the sight of God in spite of their short comings, and the introduction of this theory, instead of explaining, only makes more glaring the contradiction between these passages and others in which appeal is confidently made to the divine verdict. If the word 'righteous' has its proper meaning, the apparent contradiction disappears, for it is true that no man is counted righteous before God, in the sense that no blot of guilt rests upon him, and that in all respects he has reached the absolute standard. At the same time it is true that many a man who, in particular instances, is misjudged by his fellowmen may plead his innocence before God, and may honestly feel that the searcher of hearts will justify him, though the ignorance of enemies condemns. This submission is what the whole book of Job unfolds.<sup>18</sup>

Judging by the proper meaning of the word 'righteous' no one really qualifies to be so declared righteous except by the mercy or chesed of God. The idea of the remnant like that of election rests solely on God's chesed known as grace. That is to say 'unmerited gift'. On God's chesed which in other word is known as Grace Gunton says:

The doctrine of election as part of the doctrine of God is that which teaches us that all we are and receive is of grace, and it is therefore the sum of the gospel.<sup>19</sup>

Thus it is the grace and chesed of God that abound which creates the idea of election and the remnant. One therefore is considered righteous because he has found favour with God. On the favour of God James Drummond said:

Cremer, who represents the more recent philosophy declares that \_\_\_\_\_ in the Biblical sense, does not denote the essence of him

who is characterized as \_\_\_\_\_, but the condition of one who has the judgment of God in his favour. These two things appear to me to be identical, for the judgment of God is not precisely the most erroneous that can be found; and we have seen that He was expected to condemn the wicked and justify the righteous.<sup>20</sup>

Judging from the submission of Drummond, it means that a person is considered righteous before God by the chesed and grace of God. This, of course, is based on the person's readiness to do God's will always. That means that righteousness requires efforts from the person to be so declared by way of being hungry and thirsty to do the will of God. The Old Testament, accordingly lends no sanction to the opinion that 'righteousness' denotes a forensic conception, or objective relation between God and humanity, and not the quality of one who is just or righteous. In spite of this notion, it must be admitted that the chesed or grace of God overlooks all other aspects in a person's life and considers the person's before declaring the person righteous. Thus the concept of the remnant emerged out of the loving kindness of God. As such the idea of the remnant like the doctrine of election is a reflection of God's chesed and grace.

### **The Socio-political crisis of Israel which gave birth to remnant:**

The prophets viewed the introduction of the monarchy to Israel as an institution under the supreme rule of Yahweh. To the Prophets, Yahweh was the ruler of Israel.<sup>21</sup> Isaiah for instance, was deeply involved in the political struggle of his days. He decried the attempt by his country to seek foreign assistance in the prosecution of her wars. The same was true of Prophet Jeremiah. Every prophet in Israel or Judah saw God as the centre of all politics and, as a prophet of God, he participated along with Yahweh in the national and political struggle.<sup>22</sup> It will be recalled that even when the Israelite requested for a king in order to modernize their system, which was brought to life through the pressure of circumstances, the request was seen as divinely sanctioned. The king was seen as a servant of Yahweh and as an instrument through which Israel as a nation will gain her goal with less dramatic adjustments.<sup>23</sup>

Thus when the king of Judah especially Ahaz was making arrangement of alliance with Egypt, Prophet Jeremiah resisted on the ground that it was not divinely sanctioned. It was recalled that the alliance stimulated Israel's deportation to Babylon and cities around it in Assyria. At the break of the Kingdom to two, for political reasons, Jeroboam could not have his people participating in a cult that declared all rule save Davidic illegitimate. Thus in order to protect himself and to provide his state with proper religious undergirding, he set up two official shrines at opposite ends of the realm namely Bethel and Dan. The two were of ancient origin. Bethel having patriarchal associations and a clergy claiming Levitic – probably Aaronic and Dan having a priesthood boasting descent from Moses (Judg.18:30). Alliance with other states especially intermarriage of the Kings of Israel to the daughters of nations around them to solidify their relationship contrary to the prophets' warning, marked the beginning of crisis. For instance, Ahab married Jezebel who brought the Tyrian's gods, Baal and Ashera to the king's court. Eventually the Tyrian's gods were worshipped side by side with Yahweh.

In the Northern Kingdom which assumed the name Israel, the government changed hands several times. Thus there was instability and there was no security either. Between 920 – 722 about 18 kings reigned.<sup>24</sup> What characterized the two kingdoms was that they were in the centre of attractions for the then world powers, namely the Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Egyptians and the Romans. Each at the ascendancy of power wooing Israelites to herself. Most of the time she had divided opinions as to which one to join for security purposes. As a result of so many cultures bearing upon Israel as a nation she became polluted especially in the area of social life.

The books of Prophets Amos and Hosea supplied us with the social crisis which gave rise to the remnant. They both give an inside view of contemporary Israelite society, which makes it clear that the northern state at least, in spite of its healthy appearance, was in an advanced state of decay, politically, socially and morally. The books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel also show that Judah is not better off.<sup>25</sup> It is certain that the lot of the humbler citizens was unnecessarily hard and that the state did little or nothing to alleviate it.

Israelite society as we see in the book of Amos, was marked by egregious injustices and a shocking contrast between extremes of wealth and poverty. The small farmer, whose economic status was marginal at best, found himself often at the mercy of the money lender and, at the slightest calamity – a drought, a crop failure liable to forfeiture and eviction, if not bond service. The system, which was itself harsh, was made harsher by the greed of the wealthy, who took unmerciful advantage of the plight of the poor in order to enlarge their holdings, often restoring to the sharpest

practices, falsification of weights and measures, and various legal dodges to achieve their ends (Amos 2:6f.; 5:11, 8:4-6). There was dishonest practices everywhere, since the judges were bought over by the rich, the poor had no redress. In increasing numbers they were robbed and dispossessed.

From this time onward Israel's social structure had undergone a radical change of character. She had originally been a tribal federation formed in covenant with Yahweh: though she had in her early days known plenty of lawlessness and violence, her social structure had been a unified one, without class distinctions, in which the basis of all social obligation was Yahweh's and in which all controversies were adjudicated by covenant law. All these went through transformation. The monarchy with the attendant organization of life under the crown, had transferred the effective basis of social obligation to the state and, together with the burgeoning of commercial activity, had created a privileged class, weakened tribal ties, and destroyed the solidarity characteristic of tribal society.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the absorption of numerous Canaanites, who were not integrated with the tribal system, and whose background was feudal, had given Israel a mass of citizens with little comprehension of covenant or covenant law. The situation in Judah was a replica of that of Israel. The situation was hopeless.

Like Amos, Isaiah expected the day of Yahweh to come as a day of judgment (Isaiah 2:6-21). He viewed the Assyrian as the instrument of that judgment (Isa.5:26-29). Isaiah saw the nation crumbling within (Isa.3:1-12), (Isa.6:11ff.), reduced to a tiny remnant plunged into ruin (Isa.10:22f.) and declared that even that small 'remnant' would be plunged anew into the fires of catastrophe (Isa.6:13).<sup>27</sup>

Isaiah's first clash with the national policy came during the crisis of 735-733 B.C., when the Aramean-Israelite coalition moved on to Jerusalem to compel Judah's cooperation against Assyria. By this time Isaiah had a son to whom he had given the ominous name \_\_\_\_\_ (only a 'remnant' will return).

The name Shear-jashub means A 'remnant' shall return, (i.e. to God.) The name has both a hopeful and threatening connotation, i.e. disaster shall come but some will be saved.<sup>28</sup> The child supposedly referred to was the young Hezekiah in whose birth Judah would see the continuing presence of God among His people and another renewal of the promise made to David. Nevertheless, the solemnity of the oracle and the name 'Immanuel' lend credence to the opinion that Isaiah's perspective does not stop at the birth of Hezekiah.<sup>29</sup> It moves ahead to that ideal king of David's line through whose coming God could finally be said to be definitely with His people. The solemn oracle is spoken before the royal court, fearful lest the Davidic dynasty be overthrown. Such a catastrophe would mean the cancellation of the great dynastic promise to David's house. (II Sam.7:12-16). For it was on the royal successor to David that Judah pinned her hopes for the welfare of God's people.<sup>30</sup>

Isaiah accompanied by his son confronted the king (7:1-9) and assuming that the confederates would never be allowed to carry out their purpose, urged Ahaz not to do so, but to trust in Yahweh's promises. While Ahaz wavered, Isaiah appeared before the court (Isa.7:10-17) and offered a sign from Yahweh that what he had said was true.

Isaiah did not, for all these surrender hope. The hope was in the remnant of Yahweh. Isaiah's doctrine of God was far too vast for him to suppose that the nation's dereliction could frustrate the divine purpose and cancel the promises, in spite of his conviction that Ahaz had betrayed his office, as a king in the line of David. Perhaps for this reason Isaiah treasured the dynastic ideal as this had been perpetuated in the cult (e.g. Ps.72) and himself gave classic expression to the expectation of scion of David's line who would fulfil that ideal (Isaiah 9:2-7) exhibiting the charismatic gifts supposedly reposing in the dynasty (Isa.11:12).<sup>31</sup> The expected king as Isaiah noted would establish justice which Ahaz had not notably done, and would also bring the national humiliation to an end forever. The expected king will stand as a 'remnant' of God.

Isaiah therefore viewed the present tragedy as a part of that purpose: a discipline, a purge by which Yahweh would remove the dross in the national character, leaving a chastened and purified people (Isa.1:24-26), cf. 4:2-6). The ominous note in the name of his son Shear-jashub began to give way to a hopeful one (Isa.10:20f.) perhaps only a 'remnant', but still a 'remnant', will return i.e. that God would bring forth from the tragedy a chastened and purified 'remnant' of his people (Isa.28:5f., 37:30-32) whose food and drinks will be to obey God's commands through keeping the covenant.

The Theological Crisis in Israel and the remnant:

The deportation of Judah to Babylon of 597, 587 and finally 582 B.C. brought a serious and great blow to the national theology of Israel, bringing theological crisis into the people of Israel. The national theology of Israel states that the people of Israel belonged to Yahweh, the most powerful God, the creator of the world. God's seat was in the temple in Jerusalem. The people are protected for ever. No nation or god is capable of conquering Israel because of Yahweh, for Yahweh belongs to them for ever exclusively. John Bright gave the number of the Jews living in Babylon after the deportation of 582 B.C. as 4,600. The number represented the cream of their country's political, ecclesiastical, and intellectual leadership – which is why they were selected for deportation. (Jer.52:28-30).<sup>32</sup> With the deportation of the key people from Judah and the fall of Jerusalem, the theological position reached crisis proportions. In the first instance, the dogma upon which state and cult were founded had been dealt a mortal blow. The dogma was the assurance of Yahweh's eternal choice of Zion as His earthly seat, and His unconditional promises to David of a dynasty that would never end.

Nebuchadnezzar's battering rams of course, breached that theology beyond repair. It was a false theology, and the prophets who had proclaimed it had lied (Lam.2:14). With that the very status of Israel's God was thrown into question. Before the time of deportation, Israel's faith had, for all its lapses, always been monotheistic in character. Though not formulating monotheism abstractly, it had from the beginning allowed place for but one God, and had declared the pagan gods to be nonentities (Ps.115). Are they not very mighty gods indeed? So many a Jew must have reasoned within himself in the exile. For such, the temptation to lapse from the promises of Yahweh and the faith that was so dear to their ancestors altogether was acute (cf. Jer.44:15-19; Ezek.20:32). More so as they could not see any end to their sufferings.

Consequently, wholesale loss of faith threatened moral and love of the Jews in exile. This was aggravated as Jews, turned from their homeland, for the first time and came into first hand contact with the great centres of world culture. Jerusalem, which in their parochial minds was the very centre of Yahweh's universe, must have seemed by comparison poor and backward indeed. With evidences of undreamed of wealth and power around them, with the magnificent temples of pagan gods at every corner in Babylon, it must have occurred to many of them to wonder whether Yahweh, patron God of a petty state which He seemed powerless to protect, was really the supreme and only God after all. The severity of the temptation to apostatize is witnessed by the great polemic of Isaiah 40 to 48 which otherwise would not have been necessary. Thus Israel's faith was on trial.

A solution to the problem before Israel, essentially one of supplying an adequate theological explanation for the national disaster and of keeping alive some spark of hope for the future, had in fact already been provided in advance by the very prophets who had presided over the tragedy, particularly Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Isaiah. These prophets and others saw the deportation as Yahweh's righteous judgment on nation's sin. The prophets saw the exile as a merited punishment and a purge preparing Israel for a new future.

The official theology as reinterpreted by Isaiah received a dramatic vindication in events. Isaiah like other prophets had announced the crisis as the divine chastisement for Judah's sins and Assyria as divinely appointed instrument of that chastisement. But clinging to the promises of the Davidic covenant, he had in the final pinch declared that Jerusalem would stand and that a 'remnant' of the nation would survive. And so it had been! This undoubtedly both gained Isaiah's great prestige and confirmed the national theology and its promises in popular mind. The inviolability of Zion became a fixed dogma which it would be dangerous to contradict. (cf. Jer.26). Although it was conceded that Judah might for her sins be punished, it was believed that she would always stand and that Yahweh's glorious promises would one day be made good to her.

Isaiah as well as Micah condemned the existing nation and, like Amos, viewed the Day of Yahweh's intervention as the day of His judgment. The Davidic promises, which they retained, were thus pushed beyond the day of Yahweh, which as the day of punishment, discipline, and purge, became itself the prelude to promise. Moreover, the ideal Davidic as they depicted him, the very embodiment of the dynastic ideal, lay in fact far beyond the capabilities of any actual Davidic. The National hope was thus retained – but thrust out ahead.<sup>33</sup> The promise was not just promise; it was in effect promise to a new and obedient Israel which did not exist.



Consequently, the national hope thus transmuted and pushed beyond the existing nation was of such a sort that it could, and did survive the fall of the nation, continuing to exist even after the royal theology, which had created it, had ceased to have meaning. In Isaiah's preaching, there lay the beginning of that restless search for a pure 'remnant', a new Israel, one day to rise out of the first tragedy, to which the promises would be given, and also of the longing for Him who would come at the issue of history to redeem Israel and establish the divine rule on earth.

Zephaniah, who might have been of the royal house (Zeph.1:1), in a true sense carried forward the tradition of Isaiah. He denounced the sins both cultic and ethical that Manasseh's policy had allowed to flourish as a prideful rebellion against Yahweh which had invited the wrath (Zeph.1:4-6, 8f., 12; 3:1-4, 11). Announcing that the awful Day of Yahweh was imminent, he declared that the nation had no hope save in repentance (Zeph.2:1-5) for which Yahweh had offered one last chance. Like Isaiah, Zephaniah believed that Yahweh proposed to bring out of the judgment a chastened and purified remnant (Zeph.3:11-13).

In any event, long after the Assyrian empire had become a mere memory, Isaiah's conception of Yahweh's 'remnant', the nation within a nation exerted its influence upon Israel.<sup>34</sup> Since the prophets had explained the calamity as a just punishment for the breach of covenant law, it is scarcely remarkable that sincere Israelites should have felt a more earnest attention to this feature of their religion. Sabbath and circumcision in particular, though both ancient institutions, began to receive emphasis as never before. In various passages of exilic and immediately post-exilic date, Sabbath appears as the crucial test of obedience to the covenant (Jer.17:19-27; Isaiah 56:1-8; 58:13f.), which is a perpetual "sign" instituted at creation (Gen.2:2f.) that Israel was Israel (Exod.31:12-17; Eze.20:12f.). Circumcision, which had been practiced by Israel's ancient neighbours (except the Philistines), likewise became a sign of the covenant and the mark of a Jew (Gen.17:9-14). All these became possible because the prophets assured the people that it was Yahweh's purpose that His people would be restored and that precisely in the Promised Land (Ezek.37, Jer.32:6-15). It was true that some Israelites lost hope in the national theology and resigned themselves to life in Babylon, but the hard core of the exile community refused to accept the situation as the final. A 'remnant' summoned courage and looked forward to the eventual fulfillment of Yahweh's promise of making Zion His eternal abode. During this time, they took their worship seriously because they believed that even in the exile Yahweh was still their God.<sup>35</sup> They were always longing for Zion, the centre of their religious activities (Ps.137). The remnant eagerly awaited Yahweh's judgment on proud Babylon and their eventual release. The ruin of Jerusalem – the Holy City pressed upon their hearts; confessing their sins (1 Kings 8:46-53), they prayed for its restoration (Isa.63:7 to 64:12) and for Yahweh's intervention as in the exodus day.

Thus the national theology which assumed a crisis status pre-deportation and at the deportation period later appreciated some hope for restoration in the exile. The national theology which was dealt a great blow by the exile would assume its proper place in a 'remnant', the true Israel after the restoration. Thus the national theology was not demolished, Yahweh's eternal purpose of making Zion His abode and of being Israel's God for ever will be fulfilled in a 'remnant' who will return to Yahweh.

### **The contemporary ideas of Israel's Religious Outlook:**

From the time Yahweh made the covenant with Abraham and with generation, after him, Israel as a nation became a worshipper of Yahweh. The giving of the law at Mount Sinai during exodus further enacted the fact that Israel as a nation must worship Yahweh alone. In Exodus 20:3-6, Yahweh would not tolerate the worship of other gods besides Him. Hence, Israel as a nation was an extreme Yahwehist. Thus the covenant made Israel Yahweh's people and Yahweh was their God.

Apparently, the secret of Israel's success at wars with nations around them was the presence of Yahweh in the symbol of the Ark. The Philistines, the Gibeonites and other nations around Israel feared Israel because of her God 'Yahweh'. Thus from Abraham until the periods of the Kings, Israel was adored by other nations because of her God. Other nations around her envied her for her achievements.

As from the time of King Solomon there arose a sort of syncretism which emerged as a consequence of Solomon's marriage to many wives from other nations of the world. The wives brought the gods of their nations to Israel and they were worshipped side by side with Yahweh. Jezebel the wife of King Abab for instance, brought the prominent worship of Baal and Ashera to Israel from Tyre. The people of Israel nearly accepted these gods but for Prophet Elijah

and seven thousand others who never bowed down their knees to Baal. Here the idea of the remnant first surfaced (I Kings 19:9-18). Thus from the period of King Solomon to the time of Exile (Jehoiachin) the city of God and even the temple in Jerusalem was filled with the worship of other gods, which were worshipped side by side with Yahweh. Kings like Manasseh and Josiah in Judah labored in vain to exterminate the worship of other gods in Israel. Consequently, the religious outlook of Israel to other nations was the worship of Yahweh first and considerations for other gods. The idea of a 'remnant' of God emerged from this religious syncretism. There and then, it became apparent that the law and covenant of Yahweh were carried out by only the faithful few led by the prophets. This faithful few were known later as the remnant of God. The conquest of Samaria in 721 and the consequent deportation of Judah in 597, 587 and 582 B.C. naturally revealed to the nations around Israel that her God was not powerful as they thought before.<sup>36</sup> To the Israelites it was not a defeat for them but a defeat for God. However, as mentioned above the time of the exile was a time of purification and of purge, it is a time when a 'remnant' discovered their shortcomings and made amends to return to Yahweh.

Moreover, powerful nations like Babylon, Media/Persia and Egypt were able to see in the events of Israel that her God is above all other gods. For while other Kingdoms rose and fell for ever, God restored His people to their own land after a period of chastisement in exile.

The above shows that Israel started as a nation as monotheistic in outlook especially when she kept the covenant of Yahweh. Later she turned syncretistic because of the pollution which was brought to light by the kings – who married foreign wives. At the time she continued in the worship of Yahweh she prospered, but when she worshipped other gods and Ashera side by side with Yahweh or instead of Yahweh, she was carried away into exile.

The nations around Israel feared her because her God led her to conquer at war. When later Israel was carried captives to exile the nations might have thought that Israel's God was not powerful after all. Yahweh, however, taught the nations a lesson by allowing Persia and Media to conquer Babylon who had been the instrument of Yahweh for Israel's conquest. Yahweh also showed that He is a living God by using Cyrus for the release of Israel, to return to their own land. Thus Yahweh for all times shows Himself as a powerful God, of the whole world in the remnant. As the God of all nations Amos condemned the sins of other nations like Damascus, Gaza, Edom, Ammon, Moab, just as he condemned Judah and Israel. Yahweh, however, would make Himself known to the world through His 'remnant' through whom true religion, in the worship of Yahweh will be revealed.

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32. Ibid., p.345.
33. Ibid., p.296.
34. B.W. Anderson, The Living World of the Old Testament, London: Longman Group Limited, 1958, p.291.
25. John Bright, Op.cit., P.351.
36. David F. Hinson, Op.cit., p.136.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE REMNANT THEOLOGY IN ISAIAH

The theology of the Remnant in Isaiah is adequately covered in the two books of Isaiah namely; Isaiah of Jerusalem, representing the historical remnant and Isaiah of Babylon, representing the eschatological remnant. The theology of the remnant is discovered in the two prophets as scholarship has always identified them. As we mentioned earlier in this work, Isaiah of Jerusalem (proto-Isaiah) and his group of disciples are signs pointing to an eschatological remnant. Isaiah of Babylon (Deutero-Isaiah) was said to have been a disciple of Isaiah of Jerusalem. He was among the exile himself, hence he went through the purification as foretold by Isaiah. He then became an eschatological remnant. In order to do justice to the remnant's theology, we shall consider the two Isaiahs that is Proto Isaiah and Deutero-Isaiah as points of reference, because we are indebted to the two for the development of the doctrine of the remnant.

The theological explanation of the doctrine of the remnant in the book of Isaiah developed from the call of prophet Isaiah (Isa.6:1-13). In this call we discover that judgment and salvation are two sides of Yahweh's action (Isa.6:13). Just as Isaiah was cleansed, so the remnant in Zion/Jerusalem will have gone through the cleansing judgment of Yahweh in the day of visitation. The cleansing judgment is the beginning of life to Isaiah. The cleansing is prerequisite to gaining admission to remnant circle. This is where the idea of holy remnant emerges in Isaiah. For Isaiah the remnant means everyone recorded for life. Thus in Isaiah the remnant connotes an eschatological community, who will be instruments in Yahweh's hands to be used for the promotion of Yahweh's reign on earth. Hence judgment was sure to come upon Israel, but its purpose was not to destroy but to purify the nation. The eschatological community will emerge because for them the judgment did not serve as a destructive agent, but as a cleansing agent. It will owe her existence and life to Yahweh's faithfulness to the election promises which are connected with the names; Israel and Zion/Jerusalem. It will be a holy remnant because Yahweh has purged and purified it.

The name of Isaiah's son Shear jashub is taken from Isa.7:3.

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The Hebrew text and the Septuagint Greek agree here on the translation of the text. Also the English texts namely KJV, RSV, NIV, NAS, all agree at the text which reads:

'And the Lord said to Isaiah, "Go forth to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-jashub your son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Fuller's field."

The name of Isaiah's son is a verbal sentence signifying threat and hope (cf. Isa.8:18). The remnant that will return in this sense is the one that is cleansed. It would have gone through purification in the devastation which will befall it. Immediately following this prophecy is Immanuel's sign, which has a close relationship with remnant motif (Isa.7:10-17) Immanuel here was a personification of the righteous remnant. Immanuel is the holy remnant and it is a symbol of the new Israel. Immanuel here also connotes rulership (Isa.9:1-6). Immanuel's rulership of the future remnant logically follows that Immanuel himself will be a member of the eschatological remnant. Thus we discover that Isaiah, his children and disciples are signs pointing to the future remnant. It is note-worthy that nowhere does Isaiah identify with clarity who will belong to the future remnant.

In Isaiah we further discover two types of remnant; they are historical remnant and eschatological remnant. Isaiah spoke about historical remnant a number of times (Isa.6:13, 1:8-9, 30:17). The eschatological remnant will emerge and go forth from the historical remnant of the decimated nation which will again undergo judgment. This may lend support to the sequence of thought discovered in Isaiah with regards to promise and judgment, doom and salvation (Isa.10:20-23; 1:27-28).<sup>1</sup> The promise of 37:30-32 that the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall take root and bear fruit and go forth from Jerusalem is important here.

There is no stereotyped mold in remnant motif in Isaiah. There are varying ranges of emphasis namely, return home, return to God, in repentance and faith. There are also the historical and eschatological aspects in the remnant motif. This corresponds to undogmatic flexibility of Isaiah's proclamation which was conditioned by the length of his ministry and the varying historical circumstances. The overall theological view of the remnant in Isaiah is his emphasis on Yahweh's mighty action; namely Yahweh destroys, indeed He removes men far away but He also recovers and saves them. From this view we shall discuss the theology of remnant in Isaiah, having the whole scripture as our background.

The evidence we got from Scripture shows that God purposely created man in His own image in order for God to communicate with man. Man enjoyed this fellowship and communion with God just for a short time, because man fell in the Garden of Eden and became estranged from God. The reasons for man's fall were disobedience and pride.

The fall of man and his subsequent expulsion from the Garden of Eden did not bring an end to the purpose of God, that is of communicating with man and of His communion with humanity and creation.<sup>2</sup> Thus God used various means to bring humanity back to Himself. In every generation of people in the world, God discovered that the hope of communication and communion was met in a few people. This few people according to our study will have to go through purification before the divine purpose is achieved. Some of them will depend on the willingness of God to save which to us we call the grace of God. This study submits that the few people are the remnant of God. The concept of the remnant therefore emerged from God's redemptive purpose for the world. Thus God's eternal purpose for the redemption of the world was achieved through the concept of the remnant. The object of this purpose is Israel. Isaiah sums-up the theology of the remnant in his proclamation of redemption, salvation, creation and eschatology which we view as hope in an expected end. We shall discuss these within the context of Isaiah's proclamation and prophecy.

Redemption and Salvation: According to Isaiah, Israel as a whole is the object of God's redemptive activity. God called Israel out to make her not only a witness to God's redemptive acts, but also to make her a channel of redemption to all other nations of the world. In Isaiah we discover that God revealed Himself to Israel in several ways, to confirm her as the object of God's redemptive plan. For example Isaiah stated that God is Israel's father (Isa.43:6), creator (Isa.43:1, 44:2, 24, and 45:11), and husband (Isa.50:1, 54:5f). God's love for Israel is likened to that of a mother (Isa.49:15). The consequence of all these was that God held Israel's hand in order to make Israel a light to the nations of the world. (Isa.42:6). Thus Israel is supposed to be salt that savours all the nations of the world.<sup>3</sup> Israel is called for a specific purpose namely to bridge the broken relationship which came to being through humanity's disobedience at the Garden of Eden. It has been the eternal purpose of God that humanity retains the perfect state of being which belonged to humanity at creation. God, therefore made some efforts to restore humanity to this perfect state through the covenant which He made with Abraham (Gen.17:1f.) and with Israel (Gen.28:13-15). God later extended the covenant to the whole people of Israel (Exodus 19:5-6).<sup>4</sup> In this covenant God promised to be Israel's God and to have Israel as His possession. Israel's was to be a kingdom of priests and also a holy nation to God, Israel is marked out for God's purpose out of other nations of the world. Thus she is a 'remnant' of God.

The existence of the remnant in the prophet's view is conceived in the light of the Biblical witness to the redemptive activity of the God of Israel. The election of Israel and the covenant which God made with her marked her out as a special people and a chosen race.<sup>5</sup> The notion later brought to Israel a kind of national pride which later led her to regarding other nations of the world as gentiles. Moreover, by virtue of being the chosen race, Israel saw herself, and she was also referred to as the body of true believers.<sup>6</sup> This exalted position made her the great example for all other nations of the world. Consequently, Israel was supposed to be a guide to the blind and a teacher of the foolish. For through her, God wished to fulfil His purpose for the whole universe. God therefore chose Israel in her weakness. In return, Israel in her gratitude pledged herself to God in undeviating loyalty. This pledge of Israel was supposed to be the pledge of the whole world. Israel as a 'remnant' of God was supposed to set the pace for other people of the whole

universe. She gained this position because of her choice as God's representative; namely a 'remnant' through whom God purposed to make His will known to the world.

In the book of Prophet Isaiah, it is discovered that Israel did not keep her pledge. This became a shortcoming on Israel's part. This shortcoming, however, did not in any way affect God's promise to be Israel's God, for the promise was eternal. It is therefore God's initiative to find the promise fulfilled in a few 'remnant'. For God never changes His promises. When it seemed all hopes to redeem and restore all Israel was about failing totally, God chose to fulfil it in the remnant. Thus the prophet looked for the fulfillment of God's promise at the covenant making in the few 'remnant'. It is compulsory for the divine purpose to be accomplished in the remnant. However other nations of the world would later join in fulfilling this mission of God. H.H. Rowley puts it thus:

The Old Testament declared that Israel was called to be light of the nations and that her law was destined for all men and her God was to be worshipped of all. It also recognized that not all who were of the nation Israel were worthy of their election, but declared that a remnant would inherit the privilege and the task that were hers, to be joined by proselytes from the Gentiles who would then share her election and her mission.<sup>7</sup>

It is evident that the remnant idea connotes the narrowing of the nation to an obedient few who will carry out God's redemptive purpose. From this few, God's purpose will be fulfilled and His will would be transmitted to all other nations of the world.

According to prophet Isaiah, the remnant is called into being by God acting in judgment and mercy, not by secular condition or accident of history. The continuing existence of Israel after the fall of the exile is not expressed in any of the forces or tendencies of secular history. It comes from the redemptive action of God. From this point of view, the prophet decried with horror the great fall of the people of God on account of their disobedience. Prophet Isaiah proclaimed judgment in which no person may abide, because of the horrible situation of the chosen race of God. This concept was evident at the beginning of his ministry where there is supposedly no evidence for the hope of the remnant. This arose during the Syro-Ephraimite crisis and receded into the background under the stress of the judgment message. Yet the hope never disappeared completely for it is evident that the Isaianic use of the remnant motif follows the tradition recognizable in Elijah and Amos, namely that the possibility of the survival of a remnant is uniquely dependent upon the will of God.<sup>8</sup> Thus the prophet foresaw a time when the chosen few (i.e. the remnant) will influence other people of the world to the intent of submitting all things to God in obedience to His will and covenant.

In Isaiah, the remnant connotes the restoration of hope after disaster had befallen the people. It shows the divine attribute of God expressed as chesed – (Loving-kindness) which does not overlook chastisement, but restores afterwards. It shows that God is a loving God, who at the same time punishes sins. Nevertheless He takes no delight in the death of a sinner but that the sinner should repent and be saved. To Isaiah, it was the will of God that Israel was spared. Since this became rather impossible because of the national sins of apostasy and disobedience, it became necessary to think of the narrowing down of the community to a part which could represent it and continue her existence and inheritance.<sup>9</sup> This view was consequent on the assertion of the prophets that the wicked would be removed from the land so that the pious remnant may abide in peace. To the prophets therefore, one becomes a member of the remnant by repentance and good works.<sup>10</sup>

The major function of the Old Testament prophets as discovered in their ministry, was first and foremost to communicate God's will to the people and to summon the people to give a positive and instant response.<sup>11</sup> In their ministries, it is evident that God preferred to deal with the few who were ready to do His will than the whole people who were transgressors. This few were known as the remnant of God. The prophets held the view that the purpose for which the few existed was to be a light to kindle the hearts of all other people of the nation. The few existed in order that through them, others will claim the love and salvation of God which were always ready for them. This was the original intention of God for Israel at the covenant making. Thus the remnant stands in the place of Israel to fulfil the divine plan for the world's redemption and salvation.

The idea of the remnant in the prophets and particularly in Isaiah brought to light the consistencies of God as He deals with His chosen race. It shows God as possessing love, long suffering and mercy which as we mentioned above is represented in the Hebrew word chesed. This distinguished Yahweh from other gods of the surrounding nations. Grubb described God thus:

While the heathen gods were simply enlargements of the characters of the worshippers, but with fiercer passions and instincts, full of caprice and vindictive wrath, Jehovah was regarded as possessing a righteous character and consistent moral purpose.<sup>12</sup>

Thus Israel's failure to carry out Yahweh's purpose for choosing her does not spell the total extinction of her as a nation. Yahweh looks for her fulfillment in the remnant of God.

From Isaiah's prophecy in chapter 7:3 it is discovered that the name Shear-Jashub means 'a remnant shall return'. The name is a sign of redemption from Yahweh. It means a remnant shall return to God. In Isaiah, it has both a hopeful and threatening connotation; that is, disaster shall come but some will be saved. The child about to be born, may be the young Hezekiah in whose birth Judah would see the continuing presence of God among His people and another renewal of the promise made to David. Nevertheless, the solemnity of the oracle and the name 'Emmanuel' lend credence to the opinion that Isaiah's perspective does not stop at the birth of Hezekiah. It moves ahead to that ideal king of David's line through whose coming God could finally be said to be definitely with His people.<sup>13</sup> The solemn oracle is spoken before the royal court, fearful lest the Davidic dynasty be overthrown. Such a catastrophe as foresaw by the prophets would mean the cancellation of the great dynastic promise made to the house of David and the eternal covenant which God made with Abraham. Thus it was on the royal successor to David that Judah pinned her hopes for the welfare of God's people.<sup>14</sup> The name 'Shear-jashub' means that the remnant shall return to God and it also signifies the assurance of the people's redemption, which will bring to light Yahweh's presence with His people.

The communion of God with His people is God's eternal purpose for the creation. God sought to foster the communion through love and not force. According to Caird:

God's omnipotence consists in His ability to work out His eternal purpose without violence to the freedom of the men and women he has created. Omnipotence and freedom appear to be opposites only when we think of omnipotence in terms of coercion, forgetting that God is love.<sup>15</sup>

In Caird's opinion, it was God's ordination to make Abraham and the nation he represented the light of the world. According to the prophet, it is God's purpose to make Israel His elect and His remnant. Israel as we submit in this work fails to fulfil this purpose, but God's omnipotence. For Divine omnipotence exercised in election or in rejection is never a denial of human freedom. Although it was God's ordination to make the Israelites the redeemed community, the Israelites through free choice decided by their action to put themselves outside the community. The nation Israel had no reason therefore to complain if they found themselves outside the redeemed community, for they were outside by their own choice. God had made to them His offer of salvation and they responded with unbelief. In the light of what we discuss above we may say that their exclusion was not due to God's sovereign will. Their unbelief was their own undoing, for which they alone bore the responsibility. God's choice and their choice coincided to bring about one result. The result is the emergence of the remnant, which was in the original plan of God. It is discovered in the Biblical record especially in the prophets that rejection is a path leading to salvation. The concept of the remnant in the prophets is an evidence that God's sovereign love is able whether through election or rejection, whether through faith and disobedience, to bring salvation to those who at last do His will, and to bring them to the kingdom of His mercy.

The failure of Israel opened the way for others, especially gentile nation to be used by God for His eternal purpose. This is evident in God's use of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus for the exile and the release of Israel respectively.<sup>16</sup> Suffice it to say that not all Israel had been rejected. Even since the time of Noah and Elijah there had been a 'remnant' of Israel who were faithful to the nation's calling. Thus the remnant represents in all ages, people who are faithful to God's eternal purpose which in the first place brought about their calling. If the whole nation fails, God seeks to look at the small unit in whose hearts are God's statutes in the nation. These are the remnant of God.



In the Old Testament, and especially among the prophets, the expression 'Yahweh delivered His people from Egypt' is confessional in character. It strengthens the prophet's view of Yahweh especially when it seems all have gone. The prophets, especially Isaiah applied this to the doctrine of the remnant. Thus in the deliverance from Egypt, Israel saw the guarantee for all the future, the absolute surety for Yahweh's will to save. It becomes something like a warrant to which faith could appeal in times of trial (Ps.74:2).<sup>17</sup> This obviously was the anchor upon which the prophets' faith rest, when it seemed inevitable that Israel will be carried to exile and they could see that God will make out of it a 'remnant' to return to fulfil the mission of Israel in the world. The remembrance of a deed of Yahweh in war i.e. the warding-off and the destruction of the Egyptians at the 'Red Sea' are the primary and most certainly the oldest datum in the confession concerning the deliverance from Egypt. This is the reason why Israel is seen in the first instance as the remnant of God in the world.

The song at the crossing of the Red Sea for instance, speaks of the people whom Yahweh has 'acquired' or 'purchased' (Ex.15:16; cf Ps.74:2). What calls for chief mention here is the idea of the 'redemption' from slavery in Egypt, which at a later time that is from Deuteronomy onwards became the dominant things. Terminologically the redemption rests on two Hebrew words. The verbs being \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, the two verbs belonged originally to the spheres of law. While \_\_\_\_\_ signifies any kind of ransoming of someone who is not free, and perhaps also 'free' i.e. to redeem generally; \_\_\_\_\_ is the recovery of what is one's own, and therefore of the restoration of a former owner-relationship. Of course, the way in which both concepts are used shows that when they were applied to Yahweh's relationship with Israel, they become almost synonyms. It is, however, obvious that the idea of 'ransom' no longer regards the saving event in its military aspect, but as a liberating legal act of Yahweh.<sup>18</sup>

The event at the 'Red-Sea' took on primeval dimensions, and was transferred from its historical setting to the beginning of her whole existence. Thereafter it was only a short step to Deutero-Isaiah characteristic equation of creation and redemption. For he understood creation as a saving event, he was also able to describe Yahweh's saving act towards Israel as creation. This is what Isaiah discovered in Yahweh in the concept of the remnant. Yahweh is willing to redeem and save even when it is a few that are ready for this act. The few, however in the prophet are the tools which Yahweh uses to save the whole race. It is the prophet's view that Yahweh is always ready to bring existence out of: nothing, chaos and hopeless situation as He did at creation and at Exodus from Egypt. The prophet also asserted that God would perform the same act in the exile of Israel and Judah to foreign lands. At this time the prophets discovered God, performing this creation in the remnant. The remnants are the new Israel through whom Yahweh's name will be made known to the world. They will be Yahweh's representatives and witnesses. Thus the coincidence of creation and historical saving event in Isaiah 51:9f is unique to the redemptive aspect of God's act.

Consequently, throughout the Old Testament writings, the exodus traditions have made us aware that, the great act of God, the deliverance from Egypt was the motif behind Israel's great faith in God. The prophets saw the deliverance from Egypt as a new creation for the people of Israel. It marked the beginning of new life for the people of Israel.<sup>19</sup> Deutero-Isaiah likened the return from Exile to the first exodus. He saw the exodus as Yahweh's act.<sup>20</sup> The remnant returning not only to Zion with shout of joy but returning to God. Zion is to the Israelites and the prophets, the abode of God. Like in other Old Testament passages where exodus is linked with creation and redemption, the remnant signifies a new life for the people of God.<sup>21</sup> It is a life where Yahweh is acknowledged as the Lord of life and where his sovereignty is absolutely accepted.

Deutero-Isaiah did not present an apocalyptic future or dreams like we find in Joel or Daniel. He sees the real historical future of Israel in the remnant. It is obvious that the theme of his message is the mission of Israel in bringing salvation to all the nations of the world, for Israel is Yahweh's servant and witness. (Isa.41:8-9; 49:19; 44:1-2; 44:21; 43:10; 44:8; 48:6&20). According to Isaiah, the new Israel namely the remnant will receive prophetic office because other nations will accept Yahweh through Israel's witness (Isa.55:5). The mission of the remnant is to witness to the redemptive work of Yahweh in the world, for the remnant is the light to the world. (Isa.43:7 and 21). In addition to redemption and salvation aspects of the remnant in Isaiah, the remnant also presupposes a new creation. This theological theme further justifies the importance of the concept of the remnant in Isaiah as we new discuss below.

## **Creation:**

Deutero-Isaiah in his book sees the return of the ransom of God from exile as a new theology of creation. He claimed that Israel was saved in order to save other nations. Thus Israel, new Israel is to be a messenger of salvation. Yahweh is the creator of the entire universe and the controller of human destiny. This is why He retains the creation in the remnant and He saves Israel in the remnant in order for her to save the universe.<sup>22</sup>

Deutero-Isaiah reminded Israel of what Yahweh had done to save Israel in the past; Yahweh was forced to punish Israel because Israel continued in sins. The exile is therefore just punishment with a purpose to refine Israel for the Lord. Thus, Isaiah referred to the faith of Abraham and thereby telling Israel that her faith was a faith that has a history in the covenant made with Abraham. This faith was a faith that sees history going beyond the covenant with Abraham into the creation. The remnant concept in Israel made the creation more meaningful. Isaiah also associated the coming of Cyrus with the creation. God who spoke in the past and being came forth, is the same God who spoke and Cyrus rose up for the purpose of releasing God's people from exile. If Yahweh had made man and the universe, He cannot be indifferent to the cause of the event in the universe.<sup>23</sup> The instruments through which this will be made known to the world is the remnant whom Isaiah described as the ransomed of God. (Isa.35).

In the exile, there was a theological crisis, that is, whether Marduk, the Babylonian god, or Yahweh is the creator or was Marduk greater than Yahweh. This crisis forced Isaiah to insist on the cosmic power of Yahweh. Isaiah asserted that Yahweh alone is the God of the nations of the world. Deutero-Isaiah challenged the idols to meet Yahweh in an open forum of discussion. If they are really powerful, let them do anything good or bad or show signs of animation or life. Thus, Yahweh is the God who creates the world and the end of lives. He is the one who worked through the remnant to bring new life to Israel, not necessarily in the rebuilt of the wall of Jerusalem or in the rebuilt of the city but in turning of the hearts of the people to Yahweh thereby promoting fellowship and communion with God, which was the original intention of God at creation. Thus, 'the remnant will return' theologically means not necessarily return to Jerusalem from the exile but return to God through learning and keeping Yahweh's law. This is the purpose for which the remnant arose. Edwin Lewis when referring to the aspect of keeping God's law in relation to the concept of the remnant said:

The residue of fearless people would experience a new prosperity (Zech.8:12); would become a true people, through obedience to God's laws (Zeph.3:13) and their acknowledgement of God as Lord (Jer.32:39ff., Zech.13:9a). The whole concept of the survival of a righteous remnant presupposed God's care of His 'chosen people'.<sup>24</sup>

In Isaiah's theology of new creation in relation to the remnant, he called the returnees from the exile as "the ransomed of God" in Isaiah 35. Although this passage is found in Isaiah, it would have fitted properly immediately after Isaiah 40. If one has thought that the passage belongs to the second Isaiah, one would be justified, knowing, knowing well the content of the same. However, one could see that it has been Isaiah's characteristics to close each major section of his prophecy with a hymn of triumph like he did in Chapter 12. One is safe to say that Isaiah is projecting to the future by prophesying release to Israel after a period of punishment. The word 'ransomed' is a synonym to 'remnant', because it connotes the redeemed or refined people. Thus Israel as a nation turned the remnant of God after a period of servitude, confinement and punishment. This is justifiable especially when one notes the inevitable exile signifying punishment which the people of Israel have to experience as we have it in the preceding chapters. Like we have in chapters. Like we have in chapter 12, the chapter 35 passage is a triumphant hymn. This hymn signifies that the same people who forsook God and for whom punishment was due, were the same people who would return in repentance to God. The ransomed of God in this passage is Israel, refined and reformed. It signifies a new creation who is ready to carry-out the purpose of God in the world. The ransomed is the ideal Israel, designated the 'remnant' of God.

The hymn in chapter 35 signifies that new creation will have to emerge before the release of the people from the exile. As God of history, Yahweh, out of His free choice is going to create a perfect state there in the exile which will be both internal and external. Through this, He is going to provide freedom and forgiveness for the people. Leupold commenting on this passage said:

Since the previous chapters repeatedly referred to deportations of the disobedient, return from the captivity would seem to be involved here.<sup>25</sup>

All acts according to the prophets and especially according to Isaiah are from Yahweh. The deportation of Israel was allowed by Yahweh to justify the claim of Yahweh as the Lord of history. The return also was Yahweh's act to show both Israel and Babylon that Yahweh alone is everlasting and that His eternal purpose for Israel as His covenant people remains in spite of her exile. The exile is to the effect that Israel became reformed and became alert to the covenant terms by obeying the terms to letters. The passage implies that God is bound by covenant obligation under which Yahweh put Himself by making Israel His covenant people.

In the same chapter, verses 9 and 10 are related. 'The redeemed' and 'the ransomed of the Lord' are saying the same thing. Both terms imply 'remnant'. In Isa.35: 9 and 10. \_\_\_\_\_

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Here again the Septuagint Greek differs a little bit. Instead of the ransomed of the Lord as we have it in the Masoretic, the NIV, RSV and NAS, the Septuagint put it the "gathered on the Lord's behalf" '\_\_\_\_\_'. Instead of \_\_\_\_\_. The difference could have been the work of the copyist who made his own comment on the work instead of writing the original word. However we presume that a reading cum superscribed emendation lies at the basis of the following doublet in Isa.51:11, which was emended post-facto, by the erasure of one of its components. The extent text of Isaiah reads here \_\_\_\_\_, as against \_\_\_\_\_ of Masoretic which is supported by the Septuagint, and the Syriac Targum. In the parallel, Isaiah 35:10 both Masoretic Text and Isaiah read \_\_\_\_\_. Moreover, whereas the root \_\_\_\_\_ is presented twice more in the Book of Isaiah (1:27, 29:22), \_\_\_\_\_ is not found in it at all. Even if one assumes that the sectarian scribe substituted \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ under the influence of scriptures which use \_\_\_\_\_ in reference to Israel's dispersion (Jer.50:17; Joel 4:2; Esth.3:8), his reading still must be considered the lectio difficilior, with a fair claim at originality. Accordingly, \_\_\_\_\_ may be deemed a synonymous reading of \_\_\_\_\_, and its textual equivalent. This equivalence is further indicated by the fact that \_\_\_\_\_ actually had been written also in the text-base of Isaiah where it preceded \_\_\_\_\_, but was subsequently erased, possibly by a second hand. If indeed this was the case, the scroll initially contained the doublet \_\_\_\_\_ which, as we assume, resulted from a conflation of the main reading with a supralinear or marginal variant which the scribe of Isaiah had found in his voltage. The though is of a thorough-going redemption. The verses run:

The ransomed of the Lord will return and come to Zion with singing, everlasting joy shall be upon their head, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isa.35:9 & 10).

Hence the goal of the ransomed of the Lord is Zion. Zion represents the embodiment of all the blessings that God has prepared for His people – Israel. The time of the return is seen as the time of Yahweh's favour for His people. The ransomed of the Lord shall pass through the same desert which signified as place of dearth, where the shifting sand would from time to time uncover the bones of animals and men. Desert as we know represents a hostile place to all living things. This was why the sins of Israel were symbolically driven away to the desert on the day of Atonement. This same dreaded desert would be transformed by Yahweh and be turned to a pleasant road for Israel. A road from which the strongest might shrink to tread would become a way along which the weakest and most fearful would tread with joyous confidence.<sup>26</sup> This road shall be used by only the ransomed, that is, the privileged few who are healed, restored and forgiven. These privileged few are the remnant of God.

This term used for the remnant of God recalls the promise which Yahweh made to His covenant people, to be their God, while they remain His people. Yahweh promised to be Israel's God, to bless those who bless her and curse those who curse her. This 'remnant' as mentioned in this work were those who were able to survive the horrors and ordeals of life in the exile, and at the same time remained unpolluted with the new religion which they discovered in Babylon. Daniel was a type of this remnant concept. He could be said to be a prototype of the remnant of Yahweh.

The return of Israel as the remnant or ransomed of the Lord brought to light the second exodus, which recalled the first exodus from Egypt. The difference in this second Exodus is the fact that Yahweh would prepare the way for them and there would not be suffering or predicaments of any kind on their ways as it was in the first exodus.

Yahweh was breaking through the history of Israel in the exile to bring to being a new creation, through the people's second exodus. The return of the ransomed Israel from exile would justify God's action, to the intent that what happened to them at the deportation was not a defeat on the part of Yahweh but primarily Yahweh's act. Yahweh as it were did not forget His covenant with Israel but He was performing a miracle of renewal in Israel's life. This time the miracle is a vehicle for judgment. Speaking on this miracle John Macquarrie said:

In theology therefore a miracle is understood not just as a happening that excites wonder but as an 'act' of God. Such an act may be a vehicle for revelation or for grace or for judgment or for all of these together.<sup>27</sup>

In the Israelites' context the miracle is for judgment and revelation. This is the reason why Israel found it difficult to comprehend. They thought their exile was the end of Zion and that the glory had departed from them, which they believed was a result of Yahweh's defeat.<sup>28</sup> The call of the prophets on Israel to see the deportation as a result of Israel's sins was realized at the exile. The prophets were unanimous in the prophecies that the predicaments of the race were a result of their self-will, namely in choosing to disobey the terms of the covenant. The slavery in which Israel found herself was the consequence of her sin. Reviewing this Macquarrie said:

Sin is a slavery for the race and for the individual, yet a slavery that has arisen through voluntary decision. It is as if there is a critical moment at which the action initiated by man becomes a kind of runaway escalation that drags its initiator along, whether he wills it or not.<sup>29</sup>

In spite of the people's sin God still wanted to use them as instruments. Like it was done to Isaiah, (Isaiah 6:1-8), they needed purification through the exile.

The new community called ransomed or remnant would return to Zion with their sins forgiven. It would be a community that would do God's commands and obey the terms of the covenant. It was the initial purpose of Yahweh to create such a community of men and women who will serve Him gladly and live in peace and harmony with each other. God's work of salvation is directed towards this purpose in the remnant. The community of the remnant has three special characteristics – a community of God fearing people, of faith and of love. These three ideas found in the remnant, namely, fear, faith and love are used to describe the relationship between responsive humanity and God and between humanity and humanity in the Old Testament and especially in prophet Isaiah. The relationship that would exist between God and His people is that perfect one where the people would serve God. This relationship would spread among the people as well (Jer.24:4-17).

The description in Isaiah 35 shows that the ransomed of the Lord would be full of life, joy and gladness as it was at the first creation. Their return is primarily to God who is their source-being, for Zion is used as the seat of Yahweh (Isa.10:20, Micah 4:7, and Amos 5:15). The ransomed of the Lord will return to God. Thus Yahweh is carrying out His purpose of bringing light, life and joy to the creation through the new community of the remnant.

### **Remnant, a Theology of Hope:**

Prophet Isaiah presents the idea of the remnant as that of hope in already written-off nation. He was able to support this notion by the past deed of Yahweh in the national life of Israel. The assurance of God's consistence with Israel helped the vision of the prophet to look for God's salvation which will be brought to light in a 'remnant' of God. The Hebrew \_\_\_\_\_ 'Shear-jashub' (Isa.7:3) translates, 'The remnant shall return'. The prophet foresaw a time in the future when the faithful remnant of God will return to their source being. It will be a period when the people will be ready to do the will of God. This concept dominated the prophecy of almost all the Old Testament prophets. Like Isaiah, Jeremiah looked for a time in the future when God would make a new covenant with His people. The covenant will be written in the people's heart and not on tablets. This would bring an era where no one would teach

another saying, 'know the Lord' for they shall all know the Lord (Jer.31:31-34). Jeremiah like Isaiah foresaw a time when Israel as a nation will turn to the Lord to do His will. Those who made this move would qualify as remnant of God. By the same token, Amos who was very severe in his prophecy did not abandon hope. He saw the existence of Israel as one that depends on a 'remnant'. To Amos Israel's hope lies on the righteous remnant. In Amos 5:14-15, he says:

Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts will be with you, as you said,. Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph. The remnants of Joseph were those who survived Egypt's oppression and who were led out of Egypt by Moses and who settled in Canaan. The remnants of Joseph were the people of Israel. Thus Amos like Isaiah saw the continued existence of Israel in a 'remnant' (Isa.1:9). The note of hope in Amos is with may be a few survival. Apparently in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Amos, the remnant was the hope of Israel. The concept of the remnant was a sign of hope. Like other prophets, Isaiah anticipated a splendid day ahead when the faithful people would in word and deed truly acknowledge God as their sovereign Lord. So far as the relationship between God and Israel was concerned, a new relationship with emerge through a 'remnant' and through it the entire nation would be redeemed. From the meaning of the name of Isaiah's son the 'remnant shall return' one discovers that the name combines judgment and hope. In Isaiah 10:20f., we have the idea that after the disaster had come on Israel as a nation, the idea of the remnant became clearly one of hope.<sup>30</sup> Isaiah's opinion of the realization of God's expectation in the nation Israel is pushed to the future. It is evident here that Israel of Isaiah's days had failed to attain the expectation. Hence the hope was hung in the future. This is in line with the view of Fullerton on the remnant when he said:

This Remnant is to be the basis of the ideal kingdom of the future. It is the connecting link between the present and the future, and through it the transition from the one to the other is to be morally achieved. The future is not a wholly new creation, as Duhn would have us believe, due to the sudden irruption of the divine into history; the future is purified, idealized present. There is continuity in Yahweh's work.<sup>31</sup>

According to this assertion, the futuristic existence of Israel as a nation relies on the remnant of God. It is not going to be a new creation entirely as Duhn asserted, but a new creation in the sense that a 'remnant' will do the will of God. It is also new in the sense that the remnant is the purified and God's fearing Israel. This remnant points towards an ideal Israel. It is a representative of the Davidic dynasty whose food and drink are to do the will of Yahweh (Isa.4:3 & 4).

The notion of Isaiah on the purified remnant of God is seen by Jeremiah in his idea on the new covenant. Thus Jeremiah viewed this ideal Israel as being brought to life in the new covenant. The reason why Israel failed as a nation was because she was unable to stand within the covenant terms as mentioned earlier in this work. Isaiah, Jeremiah and Amos looked to ideal Israel in the future who will serve Yahweh's purpose of the redemption of the world through the ideal Israel. Since Israel was unable to meet the expectation of God, God decided to fulfil His own side of the covenant through the remnant. According to the prophets, God would fulfil this purpose in the ideal Israel, that is, the remnant by the means of the new covenant. Jeremiah devoted passages for this new covenant in his prophecy.<sup>32</sup> He said:

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will put my law within them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'know the Lord' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more (Jer.31:31-34 ref. 32:38-40; Heb.8:-12; 10:16-17).

This quotation confirms what Isaiah said in Isaiah 10:21. The remnant will return to the mighty God. The remnant will know the Lord. Isaiah and Jeremiah could see beyond the predicaments of Israel as a nation and therefore saw a ray of hope for the people in the new community of God.

Judging from the teachings of Jeremiah and Isaiah the following points are evident. The new covenant, like the old one, rests on the initiative and authority of God as evident in the above quotation. This covenant will be new in the sense that it will fulfil the original intention of the Sinai covenant. The new covenant will bring into being a new community who will emerge out of the old Israel, who will be referred to as the remnant of God. This new covenant will rest upon divine forgiveness.<sup>33</sup> The teachings of the prophets show that Israel's failure was due to her apostasy in ignoring the covenant law. The only difference is that this covenant will be established in an individual's heart, that is, all of them will have a good knowledge of God. With Jeremiah, personal religion will become an established reality in the lives of the new community of God. Henceforth, there would be such a thing like individual responsibility. Isaiah, Jeremiah and other prophets discovered that the written code in Deuteronomy could not provide all what humanity needed for salvation. The written code had failed because it had been an external thing written down on tablets and imposed on humanity by royal or ecclesiastical authority.

The prophets also discovered that the only valid authority as the alternative will be the law which comes from within. Consequently, the new covenant would be written in the people's heart. The new covenant would restore the fellowship between God and humanity. The result of which would make known God's purpose for His people and would also make the people willing to address themselves to doing the will of God according to the terms of the covenant. Israel, the new Israel, and the Israel elect will be the remnant of God, for she will return totally to God. This new Israel will take the place of the Old Israel with the new covenant replacing the Old covenant in order to fulfil God's eternal purpose for creation.<sup>34</sup>

The distinction between the Old and the new covenant is on the change of emphasis in its application. It is noticed that the new covenant will not be written on the tablets but in the hearts of the people. Moreover, emphasis was also shifted from corporate responsibility to individual responsibility. The knowledge of God will become clear to them. The individual's knowledge of God will bring about corporate responsibility. Moreover, the individual's knowledge of God will bring about corporate obedience to the will of God (Jer.31:31-34; 32:38-40). Individuals would be held responsible for his or her sins. On this note, Jeremiah and Ezekiel said:

In those days they shall no longer say: The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own sin, each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge (Jer.31:29-30, Ezekiel 18:2-4).

The prophets saw the fulfillment of God's purpose in the world in the new covenant and the new community who would emerge after the purge of Yahweh. Thus the hope of Israel was seen as being fulfilled in the remnant through the establishment of a new covenant. The prophets therefore did not see the judgment of the nation Israel which their exile in Babylon represented as total rejection of Israel as a nation. Each prophet was in a way a prophet of hope in an expected end. The purpose of God for the world will be realized no matter what happened. It will be realized in a 'remnant' of God with whom God will establish a new covenant.

Apparently Isaiah and other prophets saw the period of the deportation as playing dual roles. First, it served as a time of punishment for the erring people. Second, it served as a corrective measure, which was meant to refine the people. The refined people will then stand as the remnant of God. The remnant in this sense connotes the hope of Israel. The prophets had this notion on the basis of God's consistency and everlasting love for His creation in spite of their sins.<sup>35</sup> The outcome of this love was God's readiness to forgive His people.

The concept of the remnant in the prophets thus signified the hope that God will restore His people after a period of confinement.<sup>36</sup> The following passages viewed Israel's survival in the remnant. Amos 9:9-15; Hosea 2:16-20; Isaiah 10:20ff; 11:16; Jeremiah 23:3; 31:7; Ezekiel 36:10; 37:15-28. These 'remnant' will uphold God's eternal purpose and will represent the nucleus of God's people. Thus the hope for the future's survival of Israel as a nation rests on the remnant. In Isaiah we discover that true existence and life cannot be found outside the proper relationship of confidence and trust in Yahweh. In the next chapter we shall examine corporate and individual persons who in their days tried to have the proper relationship of confidence and trust in Yahweh, as the remnant are those who do the will of God.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE REMNANT IN THE CORPORATE AND INDIVIDUAL PERSONS

This chapter focuses on our examination of the corporate and individual persons, in the Old Testament, who are representatives of the remnant. It examines what such person or body contributed to the development of the concept of the remnant. Consequently we shall attempt to look at Israel as a corporate body, individual prophets as representatives of remnant, some identified kings whose roles show them as remnant. We shall also look at the Qumran community, an intertestament group which sees herself as the remnant. The line of the prophets and especially Isaiah and his group of disciples confirm the view that the remnant is not merely an idea, but a historical fact. This being the case, the question of the identity and function of the person and work of the remnant is of great importance to theology.<sup>1</sup>

In order to know the persons of the remnant, it is necessary to first discover the functions and missions of the remnant. The remnant in the first instance is to be the nucleus of the people of Israel. Thus as we discussed earlier, the remnant is the ideal Israel. The function and mission of the remnant like that of Yahweh's servant is to bring forth justice to the nations (Isa.42:1-4). The remnant is to be the symbol of true religion which was the feature of the Davidic King.<sup>2</sup>

Like the servant, the remnant is regarded as a missionary whose task is to save others. For a "remnant" is saved in order to save others. Her task is to bring the people of the world to the knowledge of God. Following the pattern of David, the remnant is the ideal people to the nations. Among other tasks, the remnant will bring restoration and healing. The remnant is to be a sign to the nations of the world, in order to show that Yahweh alone is God. The exile to which Israel was carried is for the glory and honour of Yahweh. The survivors from the exile, who will return to Yahweh will become light and salvation to the world. Peter Ackroyd said:

Israel is both the called people of God and also herself called to be agent of creating the people.<sup>4</sup>

Thus the remnant is Yahweh's agent in the world. Hers is to bring sanity to the world. Thus becoming the instrument of moulding the world to an awareness of knowing Yahweh as Lord.

The last two of the servant's songs: Isaiah 50:4-9 and 52:13-53:12 reveal the suffering which the servant passed through in the course of carrying out his mission, which is to establish justice and equity in the land. Like Jeremiah the mission rests in the recognition of the deep meaning of suffering. He is to achieve this mission through suffering as an innocent for the sinful people. The figure here represents the righteous remnant of Yahweh, who in spite of the sin of the nation and the wickedness practiced in the community which resulted in their exile remains loyal and faithful to Yahweh, (like Elijah did during the time of Ahab) trusting that Yahweh will ever vindicate his course. Suffice it to say that the remnant unlike the servant does not always need to achieve this mission through death.

Looking again at the function and mission of the remnant, the overall mission of the remnant is that of Yahweh's representative on earth. The remnant is to stand in the place of Yahweh on earth. The remnant are little Yahweh, this adduce reasons why they share in that great quality of Yahweh, that is, 'righteous one'. Looking at the functions and missions of the remnant, David Hinson said:

In the Old Testament the people who would respond to the steadfast love of God, and who would try to live life as God intended it to be for them are often described as the "Remnant".<sup>5</sup>

On the note of Hinson we shall look at the persons of the remnant. Who then are the remnant of Yahweh?

#### **Israel as a Nation:**

The theory of corporate personality as applied to the Old Testament was to make assertions about the way a man was conscious of himself as an individual within his social group. In the Hebrew set up and in the primitive set up,

people were dealt with not on the basis of the single life, but as members of a tribe, a clan, or a family, it would have been clear what they meant by corporate personality. This means that a man cannot be treated as an isolated individual, but must be viewed as a member of the society. Thus the theory of individual responsibility came to be combined with that of corporate personality, so that the individualism of the Old Testament is usually, if not always, conceived as realized in and through the society which is based upon it. J.W. Rogerson said:

The Old Testament is said to show a progression from corporate personality to the recognition of moral responsibility.<sup>6</sup>

On the submission of Rogerson one understands the reason, why the whole family of Achan was exterminated because of the sin of one man Achan (Joshua 7), just as the whole Israel suffered for Achan's sin. Rogerson, reviewing Maone's works said that primitive society has for its unit not individuals but groups, and points out that the narrowest personal relation in which a man stood was that of the family.<sup>7</sup> He said further:

A man was never regarded as himself, as a distinct individual. His individuality was swallowed up in his family.<sup>8</sup>

It is on this basis we shall discuss the corporate and individual view of the remnant as it related to the nation Israel. We will discover that God called or saved an individual as His "remnant" in order to save the whole family or the whole race, as we discover in the stories of Noah and Abraham respectively.

The concept of the remnant is indispensably linked with the call of individuals thereby showing that at every stage of God's act, He had always left a 'remnant' for Himself. Noah, Abraham, Moses and some prophets are examples, to mention a few.

**Noah and Abraham:** God's choice of Noah and Abraham can easily be viewed from two dimensions. First God took the initiative to act through the two figures. Thus it was a divine initiative. Second the initiative of God took into consideration the faith of these men. For instance Noah was asked to build an ark, and he obeyed. It could rightly be said that Noah completed the entire structure of the ark without knowing God's intention. Thus the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrew says:

By faith Noah being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, took heed and constructed an ark for the saving of his household. Heb.11:7.

By the same token Abraham was asked to leave his family and country for an unknown place. He also left without asking questions from God. These actions of both were regarded for them as righteousness. On righteousness Von Rad said:

According to the Old Testament, the Saddiq ('righteous person') does justice to a relationship in which he stands. If God abides by his covenant, acts according to the covenant, then he is 'righteous' God, if man stands in right relation to God believes, trusts God, then he is righteous. Righteousness in this sense is not a juridical term of relation, but rather a theological one.<sup>9</sup>

On account of the obedience to God's will Noah and his family became the survivors from the flood episode and so can be referred to as remnant of God. We discover that the choice of God and the obedience of Noah coincided to bring existence out of destruction. Thus God saved the world from complete destruction through a family and on the faithfulness of one person. The episode of the flood and the survival of Noah and his family reveal to us the concern and the wonderful saving will of God, for His creatures on earth.<sup>10</sup> Here Noah stands as a representative of the race, the survivor from the flood through whom existence and life continue.

In the same way, the acceptance of God's elective choice on the part of Abraham and his devotion to God qualify him as the remnant of God. This obedience earned Abraham the grace as the father of many nations. Thus we discover that God's choice and Abraham's obedience coincided to bring about a people set-apart for God's work of

redemption. The seeds of Noah/Abraham later became Israel. Thus the obedience of Abraham marked him out as the hero of faith.<sup>11</sup> Consequently God promised that

- (a) Abraham will be the father of a numerous posterity
- (b) God will be a God to him and to his seed and
- (c) Abraham's seed shall inherit the land of Canaan (Gen.17:1-8).

It is evident from the three promises made to Abraham that the future generations are to share the blessing of Abraham. It can rightly be said that the call of Abraham is the call of the nation-Israel. Thus as Abraham is God's elect and His remnant, so is his descendants and the nation Israel. Apparently Noah/Abraham were representatives of their descendants and also the nation Israel.

It is apparent from the call of Noah, Abraham and Moses that they were representatives of their race. In the experience of Noah and Abraham's call, we have seen how the doctrine of the remnant was integral to the heart and soul of Israel's faith over many centuries of her history, and how that doctrine was firmly bound up with the doctrine of her election. Thus, there is no reason to reject the thesis that one day, in fact 'on that day', all Israel might possibly be represented and summed up in one man alone as it was in the call of individuals as Israel's representatives.

**Moses:** Moses as we may recall is a survivor from the killing of Hebrew male children in Egypt at the decree of Pharaoh. As such he is the remnant of that bitter episode. He stood in for the people of Israel in order to guarantee existence after the disaster which was inevitable for Israel.

Like Noah and Abraham, Moses was called out by God to fulfil a specific purpose, namely to deliver the suffering Israel from the bondage in Egypt. It is note-worthy that Moses experienced the suffering and groaning of the Israelites in Egypt as he related with them. Moses had earlier tried to rescue his people from the Egyptian bondage. This aspiration was shattered by his people who misinterpreted his intention. This move resulted in Moses' flight to Midian, for he feared that if Pharaoh should hear that Moses killed an Egyptian in sympathy with the Israelites, he would be killed.

The Divine commission to rescue the Israelites from the bondage in Egypt came to Moses in Midian. The Commission was for Moses to go back to Egypt and appear before Pharaoh and demand for the release of Israelite (Exodus 3:1ff.). Moses and Aaron carried out the commission of God. The deliverance of the Israelites was then a reality. The above shows that God usually uses the minority or a single person to carry out His salvation plan. Thus God used Moses as His remnant to retain the existence of Israel as the people of God.

### **The Prophets:**

The prophets can be referred to as the remnant of their days, because their confessions and the account of their calls bear witness to severe struggles with God.<sup>12</sup> The prophets are regularly introduced by name at the beginning of their writings and are identified by date and place of activity. The historical person of the prophet assumes fundamental importance for the transmission of his message.

In Isaiah 6:1ff., for instance, we have:

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up ...

The name of the prophet is essential because the prophets themselves stress that God has called them by name. Usually the prophets are giving vision and they hear God's voice. In the case of Jeremiah, God put forth His hand and touched Jeremiah's mouth: and the Lord said to him "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth". As remnant of God their mission is to bring God's salvation to the people. They are called out from their various professions to check the people of Israel from the sin of apostasy and idolatry. For instance, Amos was called from his work as a shepherd and a gatherer of sycamore trees. Amos said in chapter 7:15:

I am not a prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me: Go, prophesy to my people Israel.

It is discovered that the great prophets are careful not to derive their messages from their own desires or intentions. They are constantly in relationship with God. God also overwhelmed them when they least expected it. Amos explained this by saying:

The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord god has spoken; who can but prophesy? (Amos 3:8).

They did not become God's instruments in frenzy or ecstasy, but while fully conscious. They listened, observed and answered. In Isaiah's case, he heard the voice asking; "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and in a free decision he responded; "Here am I send me" (Isa.6:8).

It is discovered in the figure of the prophets that they were men under attack. God made claim on them through the call. Some of them were reluctant or tarried. Jeremiah and Amos are in this category. Some of them were sent to rebels – example of this is Ezekiel. The message brought loneliness and persecution to prophets like Elijah, Jeremiah and Amos to mention a few.<sup>13</sup>

In the midst of the predicaments that befell the prophets in their answer to God's call and commission, we noticed that they stood firm and delivered the message without fear or favour. They damned the consequences that arose on account of their bitter message because they were convinced of their mission, and also because they had great concern for their people. The prophets therefore were remnant of their own days, in the sense that they were faithful to God and also championed God's course in the midst of difficult people. God used them individually to bring corporate blessings to the people, to bring justice to the nation and to stand as light to lighten the darkness of their days. They were the faithful and righteous remnant of God, for God used them to bring redemption to the race. In a way the prophets were representatives of the nation Israel fulfilling the mission of the nation.

The discussion above shows that an individual was called out of the society to which he belonged in order for him to become a means of blessing to the society. The corporate view of the remnant thus sees the whole nation Israel as the remnant of God. For among other nations she was God's elect. The nation got this status from one person's righteousness, which was Abraham: through whom the whole nation received the blessing. The individual view of the remnant is to the intent that an individual is called out to bring salvation to the whole society. For there is nothing like an individual without reference to the community within which he lives. Thus, it is noticeable that whether the remnant is an individual member of the society or a group of people within the nation, the remnant is to bring justice to the nation and to be the light of the world. Thus the remnant are people who in their own age or several generations struggle to do God's will by being obedient to God's commands. One basic thing we have to admit is that for all Israel's corporate nature, her faith had never been unaware of the rights and responsibilities of the individual under God's covenant law. Nor did either Jeremiah or Ezekiel or any prophet proclaim an individual as over against a corporate religion, for both looked forward precisely to the formation of a new community. To the prophets and the remnant view, the old national cultic community to which every citizen automatically belonged was ending; a new community – called remnant of God, based on individual decision would have to replace it according to the prophets. That is, if Israel was to survive as a people.<sup>14</sup> It then means that whether the remnant is an individual or a group of people, remnant is a representative of the whole race. It is a new community pointing backward and not forward. For remnant or the root \_\_\_\_\_ Shear, primarily directs attention not forward but backward to the whole of which it had been a part and to the devastation and loss by which it had been brought into being.<sup>15</sup> The root meaning therefore points to the fact that the remnant is supposed to be a representative of the whole, the totality of the race, to which it belonged originally.

### **Prophet Isaiah and His Disciples:**

The quest for the remnant is a complex issue in the Old Testament prophets. My own view of the remnant is that Deutero-Isaiah, who was referred to as Isaiah of Babylon, regarded himself and his group of disciples as the remnant of God. Reading through the prophecy, one discovers that the people to return to God, who had been Yahweh's representatives in the midst of the suffering, are no other persons than the prophetic circle of which the author of

Deutero-Isaiah was head. Thus, the prophetic circle is the ideal Israel, and in this way represents Israel.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, the prophet Deutero-Isaiah bears the bunt of the activity of the prophetic circle, so that he is regarded by his contemporaries as the servant of Yahweh and so the remnant. Thus, there is a tension between an individual prophet, his immediate circle, and the whole nation for which they stand.<sup>17</sup>

Isaiah of Babylon must have got this notion from the prophecies immediately before the exile. For instance, Amos, Micah and Isaiah of Jerusalem who made most use of the idea of the remnant lived in a time of national disaster. This was the time when the northern kingdom was being destroyed by Assyria, and the southern kingdom of Judah was being defeated. These prophets believed that after that time, a few people would remain who had been saved from destruction by God's mercy, and these people would serve the Lord (Isa.10:12; Mic.4:7; Amos 5:15). Deutero-Isaiah and his group of disciples did not only fulfil this purpose in the exile but they also remained to serve the Lord. The concept of the remnant does not rest on the fact that one is a survivor of the catastrophe either back at home in Palestine or in Babylon or Samaria, but on the fact that the survivors will serve the Lord. For the remnant must live the life of obedience among many who would not serve the Lord.<sup>18</sup>

Deutero-Isaiah's prophecy is of the view that Yahweh had punished his people and that Yahweh would restore the people back to their land. However, Jeremiah realized that the Israelites who escaped the exile could not be relied upon to appreciate what God had done among them. On this note he regarded the remnant in Judah as of no use to God (Jer.24:8-10). Instead, Jeremiah put his hope in the people taken into exile (Jer.24:4-7). He believed that after their time of punishment they would return to serve the Lord. But the history of that period shows that Jeremiah was right, even though far fewer of those who returned from exile responded to God than could have been expected. Throughout the history of Israel the faithful remnant were always a small minority among those who survived the national disasters.<sup>19</sup> Deutero-Isaiah and his group of disciples fit into this minority group who survived the national disaster and who also in exile served the Lord. They also looked forward to their being freed from the exile to return to their land and serve the Lord. Thus Deutero-Isaiah and his group of disciples played the role of the ideal Israel in the exile, by serving the Lord and also by encouraging others to do the same. As the ideal Israel, they have been chosen and protected by Yahweh.<sup>20</sup>

It became difficult for most people of Israel to believe Yahweh or to cling to His promises since their hope had been dashed to the ground by the exile. It was clear from many passages in Isaiah that most exiles in Babylon in Deutero-Isaiah's time had become disillusioned; they had lost faith in Yahweh in two respects. First, they no longer believed that He was willing to help them. Second, they no longer believed that Yahweh was able to help them. As a light to the nation, the remnant of Yahweh, that is, Deutero-Isaiah and his disciples' task was to prove to them that neither of these doubts was justified. Thus the people must be ready for the great day of redemption when it came; they must be ready to accept what Yahweh offered them freely. Deutero-Isaiah also, like his predecessors, had another task which was in a sense basic to others that is, to convince them that he, the one proclaiming the message of redemption was among them in the exile, and was a true prophet called by Yahweh, and that the message was itself God's word.<sup>21</sup>

According to Deutero-Isaiah, the willingness of Yahweh to help His people could hardly be proved by logical argument. Thus Deutero-Isaiah did muster arguments which were intended to counter the exiles lack of faith by pointing out that they as a people had fully deserved their punishment. Yahweh's failure to intervene to save them during the years following their deportation was, therefore, due not to his bad faith or indifference, but was the result of a deliberate and entirely justified policy. Deutero-Isaiah was of the view that the punishment, though justifiable had a limit and that that limit had in fact been reached.<sup>22</sup>

Isaiah's task included convincing the exile of Yahweh's willingness to come to their aid by stressing his past faithfulness to His chosen people and his redemptive and forgiving nature. He made references to various incidents in the past history. He cited the incident of Noah. The historical event to which he most frequently refers is that of the exodus from Egypt. In the light of this he made assertion that Israel's present plight was similar to that of their ancestors in Egypt. Like Elijah, Deutero-Isaiah and his group of disciples had to stand in the place of Yahweh to open the eyes of the people of Israel of Yahweh's ability always to save His people. As the righteous remnant of Yahweh, Isaiah and his group of disciples were faced with the problems of dealing with the skepticism which had grown up among the exiles concerning Yahweh's ability to help His people. This is so because to the exiles, it must have seemed that the defeat of Israel by Babylon was due to the defeat of Yahweh by the Babylonian gods.<sup>23</sup> To the exiles, Yahweh whom they had regarded as their invincible protector, had been unable to withstand the attack of the Babylonians. Thus to the exiles,

Yahweh had shown himself to be powerless before their gods. In fact Yahweh had lost His credibility and therefore nothing could be gained from serving Him. Thus the people kept to worshipping the Babylonian gods. Even when Deutero-Isaiah proposed the imminent conquest of Babylon by Persia, it was to the exiles no proof of the power of Yahweh. For it could be that the Persian gods were more powerful than that of the Babylonians.

Deutero-Isaiah had to refer the exiles to the prophecies of his predecessors, namely; Jeremiah and Isaiah who stated that the successes of the great world conquerors rested not on the powers of their gods but the hidden power of Yahweh. Thus the conquerors were merely tools in Yahweh's hands. The Babylonians were permitted by Yahweh to conquer Israel as a punishment for Israel's disobedience to Him. This was the prophecy of Jeremiah but Deutero-Isaiah went further to say that if Yahweh could use foreign conquerors to punish Israel, He could also use them to save Israel. This explained the role of Cyrus as an instrument to destroy the Babylonians and also to announce the release of Israel from the exile.

Deutero-Isaiah and his group of disciples were the remnant of their age. The book of Deutero-Isaiah portrayed them as such, for they stood firm to the course of Yahweh. They were always conscious of the fact that Yahweh is the God of history. The importance of Isaiah's disciples cannot be over-estimated. Apart from remaining, faithful to Yahweh and encouraging others to see beyond the exile, they also preserved Deutero-Isaiah's words for posterity, and as chapters 56-66 bear witness, they were able to re-interpret his teachings to the needs of a new situation at a critical time when the exile had returned to Palestine but found themselves facing new and unexpected problems.

The position of Deutero-Isaiah and his group of disciples as Yahweh's remnant becomes clearer in Deutero-Isaiah's appropriation of the oracle of salvation which has three basic characteristics. First, his prophecy differs from all other Old Testament prophecies of salvation in that its essence is the proclamation of an event regarded as having already come about. For example, Deutero-Isaiah proclaimed that the great change from judgment to salvation was already an accomplished fact. Furthermore, the prologue of the book starts with the accomplished fact, 'Cry to her that her time of service is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned' (Isa.40:2). The same standpoint is also taken in the Psalms of Praise. Their structure, a simple one, is a summons, in the imperative mood, to give praise or to exalt, substantiated by a past tense. For the Lord has redeemed Israel (Isa.44:23).<sup>24</sup>

Isa.44:23

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*The Hebrew Masoretic translates it thus:*

Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it; Shout, O depths of the earth; break forth into singing, o mountains, O forest and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel.

The Greek Septuagint differs at the last statement. It states; \_\_\_\_\_ which means 'and Israel shall be glorified'. The KJV, RSV and NIV are closer to the Hebrew text, for instance "for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."; "For the Lord has redeemed Jacob and will be glorified in Israel" (RSV) and "for the Lord has redeemed Jacob, he displays his glory in Israel respectively (NIV). The variant reading here may be attributed to the work of the translator who put Israel as the subject who displays His glory in Israel.

Second, Deutero-Isaiah's prophecy is that of joy. His prophecy spontaneously evokes joy. The moment the exiles return home, Zion i.e. Jerusalem becomes a herald of joy (40:9; 52:8); from this time on, page after page, there

are commands to exalt and rejoice.<sup>25</sup> As remnant whose task is to be the light to the nation, Deutero-Isaiah's prophecy of joy reaches out far beyond the little band directly affected by the saving event (41:16, 51:11, 52:9, 54:1), for they are addressed to the inhabitants round about (42:11f.) to the ends of the earth (42:10), to the sea and the islands, the desert and its inhabitants (42:10f.) to the wild beasts of the desert (43:20), to heaven and earth, mountains and trees (44:23; 49:13; 55:12).

The third distinctive note owes its origin to the fact that Deutero-Isaiah's assurance of salvation is based on an oracle of salvation addressed to an individual. Throughout, the dominant note is of personal address. From the very beginning Deutero-Isaiah's prophecy is viewed from the personal sphere. Deutero-Isaiah's message is certainly always addressed to the nation taken all together: Nevertheless, the personal stamp of address to individuals is so marked as to leave its impression on every age. Thus Deutero-Isaiah and his group of disciples fit into the person and mission of the remnant of God.

### **Jeremiah and other Prophets:**

All we can say about Jeremiah as a "remnant" of Yahweh can be inferred from his life and ministry. It can also be viewed in the light of the call and ministry of other prophets as well. This is possible as we discover that the remnant does not mean only the survivors from the deportation or the cream of the people as a nation, who were carried away to Babylon, but those who served Yahweh in all circumstances of life. This is justified by our references to Noah, Abraham, Moses, Elijah and others who served Yahweh in their generations. As we have mentioned, the name of Isaiah's son 'Shear Yashub' which means the remnant shall return does not mean, return to Jerusalem or Palestine, but return to Yahweh, in the sense of serving Him.

In the passage in Jeremiah 6:9 we have:

Thus says the Lord of hosts Glean thoroughly as a vine the remnant of Israel; like a grape gatherer pass your hand again over its branches.

In this quotation the remnant of Israel is used not so much in the technical sense found elsewhere in the prophets for those who survived judgment or return from exile, but in a metaphorical sense.<sup>26</sup> Like other prophets, all of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry, however, fruitless it seemed, was a kind of grape harvesting, a gleaning of the vine of Israel. Thus Jeremiah's task was to glean Israel. He must ensure that there was none remaining who had not heard His message. His task to make the people serve the Lord, like other prophets lends support to what we said earlier that the remnant are saved in order to save others.

By Israel's election and the subsequent covenant, she became Yahweh's property. She was chosen to serve Yahweh and to appear before Yahweh without blemish. Israel lost this vision by her association with the nations around her and by her lust and pride of life. The prophets who found themselves uncomfortable with the situation rose to the occasion, in order to restore Israel to her God. The people of Israel themselves were insensitive and lacked the insight or understanding to comprehend the divine word. Yahweh's word was, in fact, a reproach in which they found no pleasure. Amos, Isaiah of Jerusalem and Jeremiah to mention a few were to speak the word, whether the people will hear it or not. As God's remnant, they were Yahweh's representatives and instruments to be used to reconcile the people to God. As true 'remnant' of Yahweh they were ready to suffer persecution on account of the task of bringing the nation to the knowledge of Yahweh. In actual fact the whole being of Jeremiah and other prophets were as though united with the being of Yahweh.

The summons of Jeremiah and other prophets was for Israel to return to the ancient ways, that is, Mosaic covenant as depicted in Deuteronomy. The prophets playing the roles of Yahweh's remnant were the overseers of the nation. Since the people were hopelessly impure metal, slack and cannot possibly be refined, the prophets described the coming judgment as a refining process designed to bring forth a purified "remnant" of the people.<sup>27</sup>

The prophets discovered that the people's refusal to hearken to the voice of Yahweh was not in itself an obstacle for Yahweh to get His 'remnant'. Thus they sought for the remnant through the exile. It was not possible for the people to

be an obstacle to Yahweh's plan. Since it was Yahweh's eternal plan to reach the entire world through a 'remnant', the mission has to be fulfilled, through the prophets of their generations, who would also make a 'remnant' out of the whole race in order for Yahweh's plan to be fully achieved. Thus Jeremiah and other prophets were the remnant of their time. They were instruments in Yahweh's hands used to achieve His purpose of making out of Israel a 'remnant' of God. Isaiah of Jerusalem, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and others were first purified by Yahweh before they were sent to the nations in order to make them purified for Yahweh. It was discovered at the point of the call of the prophets that majority of them resisted the call to be Yahweh's messengers. It was Yahweh's intention to save them, to strengthen them in order that the nations may realize and recognize the plan of salvation and redemption which Yahweh had for the nation. As God's 'remnant', the will and statutes of Yahweh were the food and drinks for the prophets. It was also their task to bring others to the awareness of the fact that Yahweh's will and statutes for the world must be obeyed, for it was Yahweh's plan to make the nation her remnant. Thus the qualities of the remnant were evident in the prophets. They were chosen and purified in order to bring sanity to others. In another word, they were Yahweh's representatives to the nations. Thus Jeremiah and other prophets were the remnant of their generations for they fit in to the person and mission of the remnant of God.

Kings, Like Hezekiah and Josiah:

Hezekiah and Josiah Kings of Judah distinguished themselves as "remnant" of God during their reigns. They sought to call the nation Judah to the fact of their loyalty to Yahweh in all facets of life. In 2 Kings 18:4-6 we have the following testimonies about King Hezekiah:

He removed the high places and broke the pillars, and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses made, for until those days the people of Israel had burned incense to it; it was called Nehushlom. He trusted in the Lord the God of Israel; so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him. For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following him but kept the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses.

Coincidentally Isaiah's call and prophecy came at the time of King Hezekiah. As "remnant" of God they called on the people of their own age to return, i.e. to repent and do God's will. Interestingly the word Shear Yashub connotes 'a remnant shall return' meaning repent and serve the Lord. Thus the remnants of the nation were those who repent and do the will of Yahweh.

By the same token King Josiah (640-609) carried out reformation during his reign, to purge Judah of the idolatries practiced in Judah and the temple. As a king he ordered that all the vessels made for Baal and Ashers be burned outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron (II Kings 23:4-6). He also deposed the idolatrous priest whom the king of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places at the cities of Judah and round about Jerusalem.<sup>28</sup> He wiped out the worship of other gods from Judah and advocated that the people should return to the covenant which the Lord God made with them. According to the kings, it was by clinging to the promises of the Davidic covenant that Jerusalem would stand and that a "remnant" of the nation would survive.

It will be recalled that after David's reign there was a yearning in Israel for another David. Kings Hezekiah and Josiah were really ideal Davidides of their own time. Their zeal for Yahweh's course and the covenant was outstanding. Although it was discovered that the kings who ruled after them both did not continue these good venture and reformation, what they did to reform Judah marked them out as great Davidiedes. They retained the Davidic promise. As 'remnant' of Yahweh, that promise was not fully realized because the succeeding Kings did not cooperate in ensuring that idolatry was not practiced during their time. Thus the Davidic promises, which they retained, were thus pushed beyond the Day of Yahweh, which as the day of punishment, discipline, and purge, became itself the prelude to promise.<sup>29</sup> Hezekiah and Josiah's reformation retained as it was the remnant notion and thus the ideal Davidide. As the remnant of Yahweh, they did not only worship Yahweh but made efforts that the people in their domain worshipped Yahweh as their God. Repentance which is the connotation of return to God was their basic concern. They created an atmosphere that allowed for the right about turn to Yahweh alone. Thus, like Elijah the prophet did during Ahab's reign by standing for Yahweh as Yahweh's representative, Hezekiah and Josiah as true "remnants," were sincere representatives of Yahweh in their own days, as such they could rightly be called remnant of God.



## The Servant of Yahweh:

Deutero-Isaiah saw the perfect Israel and the ideal Israel otherwise known as the remnant fulfilled in the servant of Yahweh. A particular section of his book was called by scholars as 'the servant songs'. These servants' songs are found in Isaiah chapters 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9 and 52:13-53:12. The four uneven songs are quite distinct but not deviating from the themes of the books. Because of the distinctiveness, some Old Testament scholars separated them from the rest part of Deutero-Isaiah. The songs show the mission to which the servant was called, the endowment given to him at the covenant and how the mission would be achieved through suffering and perseverance. The servant's mission and his perseverance represent the finest qualities of Israel and her great leaders.

In the first song (42:1-4) the servant is described as a chosen one like Moses (Ps.106:23), David (Ps.89:4) and all Israel (1 Chr.16:13; Isaiah 41:8). As a servant, he fulfils the role of Davidic king (2 Sam.3:18), Messianic King (Ez.34:23-24), and prophet (Am.3:7). He will bring to pass justice among the nations. The second song (Isaiah 49:1-6) moves in the style of Jeremiah's confessions. It was addressed to the gentile nations. Like Jeremiah he is called from his mother's womb (Jer.1:5). He has a vocation to the gentiles (Jer.1:10; 25:19f); he brings a message of both doom and happiness (Jer.16:19-21), of both suffering and purification. He reacts at times with heavy discouragement. The third servant song opens with the statement that God's word is the source of salvation. The servant must first be a disciple, receiving God's word before he can presume to teach others. The passage presupposes the prophet's persecution and Yahweh being his vindicator. The fourth song (52:13-53:12) is described by the Jerome Biblical Commentary as:

The finest thoughts and the most heroic acts of God's people which have been  
flowing into composition of the suffering servant songs.<sup>30</sup>

Here the servant remains one with all people in sorrow and yet distinct from each of them in innocence of life and total service to God. The doctrine of expiatory suffering finds supreme expression in these lines. The four hymns or songs suggest that the servant is specially favoured by Yahweh and therefore anointed to be the representative of Yahweh to the nation of the world. The responsibility as we have it in the songs involves suffering. Thus the servant is a 'remnant' of God per excellence.

The servant has been described as one person or group willing to carry out the divine purpose of Yahweh. Deutero-Isaiah sees in the servant the quality of the remnant. According to Deutero-Isaiah, the servant has been destined to be Yahweh's touch-bearer, committed to carry out the assignment which was Israel's through the covenant. The Hebrew words \_\_\_\_\_ ebed Yahweh translates, servant of Yahweh. The word ebed is also used in relation to kings in the near East. For instance, \_\_\_\_\_ translates "servant of the king". The verb \_\_\_\_\_ means 'to serve' \_\_\_\_\_ is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek \_\_\_\_\_ which means 'to wait upon' 'serve' or 'minister'. The Greek noun is \_\_\_\_\_ which translates 'servant' or 'deacon'. The word \_\_\_\_\_ is used for a person in the service of a very important figure in the Hebrew and Greek culture. The word is also applied to a vassal and any one employed in the service of a king. The word is frequently used as a submissive epithet in addressing a superior. Ebed Yahweh is therefore a servant of the Lord or one executing the purpose of God as a mere instrument in the hands of God.<sup>31</sup> From every indication the servant is the remnant of God, because the function of the remnant is the same as that of the servant.

The word ebed has also been translated 'slave' just as the Greek word \_\_\_\_\_ translates 'servant'. It signifies somebody called to a higher service. Paul the apostle in almost all his Epistles referred to himself as a servant or apostle of Jesus Christ (Rom.1:1; Phil.1:1; 1 Cor.1:1; II Cor.1:1; Gal.1:1; Eph.1:1; Col.1:1). The word is significant to Paul because he saw himself as a slave, someone who has been bought over from the service of Satan to the service of God. He saw himself also as one who was fully employed and engaged for this service. The office is a dignifying one, and according to Paul one becomes Yahweh's slave or servant by Yahweh's special grace.

The servant of Yahweh has an onerous mission according to our discovery, the mission is to be Yahweh's witness through service. This servant is a 'remnant' of God who is given the special grace in order to continually do the will of Yahweh. According to Isaiah the servant is first and foremost Israel, the remnant of Yahweh. It was when Israel failed as a nation that the search for the remnant shifted emphasis to the chosen few and at times individual who did the

will of Yahweh (Isaiah 41:8). What is clear from the servant's songs and the remaining part of Deutero-Isaiah is the fact that the servant and indeed the remnant is saddled with the responsibility of bringing justice to the nation and being light to the nation through faithful service to Yahweh in obedience to His will. What is peculiar in the usage of the servant and the remnant is that wherever the two appear, the idea of gracious relationship to Yahweh is clearly presupposed. 'The remnant shall return' or 'the righteous remnant' are to return to Zion the seat of Yahweh. The return here as we have asserted is to God. The remnant also is the servant of Yahweh. It is also discovered in the pages of the Old Testament that the patriarchs are pledges of divine will to save. For instance, Yahweh promises blessing to Isaac for the sake of Abraham His servant.<sup>32</sup> Through the remnant God will save the nation Israel.

Thus we note that the remnant is the servant of Yahweh and the servant of Yahweh is the remnant. For example, Moses stands on the threshold of the Israelites' history. Forty times in the M.T. (Marry Text) the name \_\_\_\_\_ ebed is given to him. Two pre-Deuteronomic passages do so with special emphasis. In Numbers 12:7f. Moses is differentiated by a divine explanation from those prophets who know God only in a dream or vision:

Not so with my servant Moses, he is entrusted with all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly and not in dark speech; ... why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

Also in Exodus 14:31, Moses is referred to as the servant of God. In our context Moses is the servant of Yahweh:

And Israel saw the great work which the Lord did against the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and His servant Moses.

The remnant is therefore the second Moses who will lead the people, - Israel, out of their slavery to God.<sup>33</sup>

The further series of servants of Yahweh can be found in the king who was to perform an outstanding service in Israel. Thus in many places David is regarded as a savior in Israel. He led the people to war and he conquered many surrounding enemies of Israel to the extent that his reign was regarded as the golden reign in Israel, and to the extent that the people looked for another David.

It is evident that the more the history of the Israelites runs into disaster, the more intensely Old Testament faith clings to the figure of David, the servant of God. Israel waits for the day when this servant will again be king (Ez.34:23f; 37:24f). In Nebuchadnezzar, we see the universal nature of Yahweh by the way of appointing a royal servant who was foreign to Israel. In Jeremiah chapters 21 – 29, we have the warning that whoever resists Nebuchadnezzar, resists Yahweh.

Next to the kings, the prophets also are regarded as servant of Yahweh and therefore the remnant of God as mentioned above. In I Kings 18:36 Elijah prayed to Yahweh, regarding himself as Yahweh's servant. He said:

O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and I have done all these things at thy word.

The presence of Yahweh is felt in the midst of the people Israel in the persons of the prophets. In the Deuteronomic writing of history, prophet Elijah gains an almost instrumental significance. His teaching reveals the course of history as a redemption of the divine pledges made in prophecy. Ahijah of Shiloh (I Kings 14:18; 15:29), Elijah (II Kings 9:36; 10:10) and Jonah be Amittai as prophets of good things ( 2 Kings 14:25) are described as servants of Yahweh.

In the prologue of the book of Job, Job is several times named by Yahweh "my servant" (Job 1:8; 2:3; 42:7f.). We note that the active obedience of the servant of Yahweh is in the book of Job vigorously stressed. Job's fear of God, which was vividly depicted in the prologue, proves itself in faithful obedience, since in spite of all the temptation of Satan, he does not renounce God with a curse. Hence God acknowledges Job by graciously naming him his own servant. Job's outstanding piety and sincerity was contrary to the culminating speech of Satan as it is recorded in Job 1:8 and 2:3, and the self-righteous speeches of the friends in Job 42:7f.

The above shows that in the Pentateuch, Prophets and the writings, the servant of Yahweh has been used to depict an office or title for specially distinguished figures. The servant is saddled with the responsibility of being Yahweh's witness and representative in the world and among the people of Israel. The Old Testament's usage of the servant reached its height in the suffering servant. In spite of the fact that there were several personalities who were referred to as servants of Yahweh, namely Israel, Abraham, Moses, David, Hezekiah, Josiah, the Prophets and Job, the identity of the suffering servant in Deutero-Isaiah is difficult to determine in the servant's songs. Suffice it to say that the term servant supplies answer to our study of the remnant. What we find in the servant's songs that focuses on the remnant is the fact that the servant's greatest characteristic is his obedience to the will of God. Another is the servant's patience under suffering which he encountered as a result of carrying out his mission. These two distinct characteristics might have enticed B. Duhn who according to Old Testament scholars, was the first to distinguish the four passages since regarded as 'the servant songs'.<sup>34</sup> In Deutero-Isaiah, the distinctive element in the servant's figure is that of obedience and undeserved suffering leading to death as the means of taking away the sin of the people and making many to be accounted righteous.

The focus of the prophet here is on the great expectation of Yahweh from Israel, but since this is not realized, the prophet shifted this on the ideal Israel whom we call in our work as the remnant of Yahweh. The servant is best interpreted as a pious 'remnant' of faithful Israelites or the order of the prophets. Any of the two interpretations namely an 'ideal Israel' as distinct from the 'real Israel' that is, historical Israel or the pious remnant of faithful Israel will answer the question, who really is the remnant? Like it is mentioned earlier in this chapter, some individual kings, prophets and even Israel have been suggested as qualified as the remnant of Yahweh. However, the last servant's song Isaiah 52:13-53:12 directs our attention to someone who suffers for the sins of others and that patiently. We may therefore accept the traditional interpretations of the Jews and Christians who looked for the servant in the ideal individual figures of the future. That is the remnant per se: He is Yahweh's agent in redeeming His people. What we have discovered so far is the fact that whether the remnant is an individual or corporate body like we viewed in the servant, he sums up the nation Israel. The remnant like we discovered in the prophet Jeremiah for instance, is to bring his mission to successful end through suffering.<sup>35</sup>

### **The Qumran Community:**

The Qumran community is a monastic community which came into being 100 years before Christ. She was located at Qumran, an area near the Western shore of the Dead Sea.<sup>36</sup> Information about this community is contained in the Dead Sea Scrolls which was discovered as from 1947. The scrolls are the work of the Qumran community. The community is that of Jews who after a violent quarrel with the priesthood at Jerusalem made a home for themselves in the torrid region adjoining the Dead Sea.<sup>37</sup> This community saw herself as the nucleus of Israel, a 'remnant' of God who devoted themselves to studying and keeping the torah. Their goal is to live a disciplined and holy life. This is contained in the manual of the community.<sup>38</sup> The community regarded herself as the community of the "new covenant". The community separated herself from the world in order to practice monastic devotion to the torah, and to await the end of the historical drama, when God would overthrow the powers of the evil and inaugurate His Kingdom.<sup>39</sup>

In all the scrolls there is a strong eschatological hope. The community of the Qumran believed that they would one day resume the worship of God at Jerusalem. This explains the 'New Jerusalem' texts which are based on the vision of Ezekiel 40-48, where we have a dramatic description of the battle whereby the children of Light will overcome their enemies and establish themselves at Jerusalem. The community longed for Jerusalem, the earthly seat of Yahweh. Thus they saw themselves as the remnant of God.

This community was described as Essence in character. The community appeared to have seen baptism as representing a decisive break for the individual. It is this initiation rites that marked them out for God and also separated them from other people as God's remnant. It is opined that John the Baptist adopted the community's baptism as the basis of his call to repentance.<sup>40</sup> Thus the closest background for the activity of John the Baptist is proved in the scrolls of the Qumran sect who did not look specifically for the coming of Elijah at all. It appeared that John the Baptist must have associations with the Qumran community for he lived an ascetic life.<sup>41</sup>

The Qumran community was convinced that all the writings of the Old Testament especially that of Prophets concerning remnant point to them, for they believed that the message of the promised remnant and the new Israel are

predictions which was being fulfilled in them and in their time.<sup>42</sup> Apparently the community sees herself as the community of the faithful. She is the remnant of God; for the community understands herself as the elect of God on earth. By their practice, they believe, they form a liturgical community with the inhabitants of heaven. Moreover, the community feels herself constituted as the true sanctuary of Aaron, in which perfect worship is offered in place of the Temple in Jerusalem which in their eyes had been defiled.<sup>43</sup> This community sees herself as the true Israel, a 'remnant' through whom true worship is offered to God. They considered themselves not only the faithful 'remnant' but also the last in the great line of God's chosen ones.<sup>44</sup> The community is thus the symbol of true worship of God.

Although this community saw herself as the remnant of Yahweh, one thing that is distinct in them is that they earnestly waited for the coming of the Messiah through whom their action of purity of life will be vindicated.<sup>45</sup>

It is certain that this community of the Essence tried to meet the standard of the remnant of God. Actually, the community saw herself and also claimed to be that 'remnant' which the prophets foretold. The community was undoubtedly recognized by the contemporary world as a 'remnant' of God. This community met the standard of the remnant as we asserted in this work in two ways. First, they separated themselves from other people of the world in order to keep themselves pure through Scriptures' reading and addressing themselves to keeping God's holy will. They had their manuals as a guide in this line. In this wise, as a 'remnant' they became a nation within a nation. Second, as a light to the world, they went out constantly to serve the world and to show the world how best to remain in God's statutes. Some of them did not live a life of separation; they lived within the people to show them how best to be at one with God. What makes this community a 'remnant' of our description is the fact that the categories of people to be included in the remnant are represented in her, namely priests, Levites, children of Israel and the proselytes. This community fits rightly into the remnant idea.

**Picture  
Here**

This is the ruins of the Qumran village. Here they devoted times to living life of purity, studying the scriptures and writing in scrolls the Torah and the Prophets. This picture was taken by the student when he visited the site on April 14, 1990.

Here the Qumran community waited for the day the children of light will overcome the children of darkness. Thus realizing the kingdom of God on earth. The community based all life as preparation for the end of days.

**Picture  
Here**

The Date Tree is a symbol of righteousness to the Qumran community. Date trees are always straight, thus providing basis for righteousness and faithfulness found in the remnant concept. This picture was taken by the student in front of the Church of Annunciation at Nazareth on April 16, 1990.

Apparently the community's view of adherence to the scripture especially the book of Habakkuk which stressed the fact that the righteous shall live by faith and their mission to inculcate and apply the law of God to daily life testified to the fact that they fit into the person and work of the remnant of God. The community's forward looking to the coming of the Messiah which made them to stress the purity of life also testified to the fact that they are the remnant of their own days. It is noticeable that the Pharisees who kept the Law and enforced it saw themselves as the remnant of their days but they were condemned because they kept only part of the Law. The fact remains that although the qualifications of the remnant consists in the efforts of the people to keep God's commandment and live a pure life, the remnant assumes this status by God's grace. The remnant is the word that spells grace. It is therefore necessary to make further steps to discover the remnant.

It is safe to conclude this chapter by saying, that whoever the remnant is, in spite of our various propositions, either to the collective or individual, corporate personalities or even the prophet himself or his contemporary, it is clear that the mission of the remnant is to bring others to the service of Yahweh. The remnant is Yahweh's servant through whom justice and equity will be established in the world. He is to be Yahweh's touch-bearers to the nations of the world. Like the servant the remnant is the perfect and pious nucleus of Israel. The Church can be seen as 'a remnant' coming out of the old dispensation. As such, performs the role similar to that of the servant of God through whom God's grace flows to the world. This is perhaps why North said:

One of the most famous symbols suggested in the long debate on the problem is that of Franz Delitzsch, who likened the servant conception to a pyramid with Israel as its base and Christ as its apex. Any horizontal line drawn through the pyramid would represent a pious nucleus, larger or smaller, of Israelites. An extension of the figure would give a graph somewhat like this:

**Picture  
Here**

The Christian Church is the heir to the servant vocation of Israel in the Old Testament. The intermediate horizontal lines represent faithful nuclei, of Jews under the Old, of Christians under the New Covenant.<sup>46</sup>

Historically, the Old Testament has prototypes of the remnant of God, who at their generations fitted properly into the remnant ideas. The figures like Israel as a nation, Prophet Isaiah and his group of disciples, Jeremiah and other prophets, Kings like Hezekiah and Josiah the servants of Yahweh and the Qumran community are physical figures of this idea. Moreover it is necessary and important to our study to make further search for the remnant in the present day world. In the next chapter efforts will be made to discover the remnant in the Church and individual member of the same.

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North suffering servant view, sheds light to the necessity for the remnant's sufferings. Nothing that the remnant though few is to make many righteous through her work as God's witness just as that of the suffering servant. Although the suffering servant just as the remnant in our work looks forward to the consummation of this mission of witness to an ideal figure in future.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AS THE REMNANT

The English word 'Church' is derived from the Greek \_\_\_\_\_ 'kuriakos'. It is used in some such phrase as \_\_\_\_\_ meaning 'the Lord's house', that is, a Christian place of worship.<sup>1</sup> The word 'Church' in the New Testament is rendered in Greek. \_\_\_\_\_ which mostly designates a local congregation of Christians and never a building. Although this congregation is often referred to collectively as the New Testament Church or the early Church, its commonest usage is for the public assembly of citizens duly summoned to praise and worship the Lord. This was the feature of all the cities outside Judea where the gospel was planted. Ekklesia was also used among the Jews for the congregation of Israel which was constituted at Sinai and assembled before the Lord at the annual feasts in the person of its representative males (Acts 7:38).

In the Acts of the Apostles, Letter of James, The Third Letter of John, the book of Revelation and Pauline Letters, 'Church' is always a particular local congregation namely; the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria (Acts 9:31). The Church in the Christian sense appeared first in Jerusalem after the ascension of Jesus. It was made up of the predominantly Galilean band of Jesus' disciples together with those who responded to the preaching of the Apostles in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and thereafter.

The members of this church saw themselves as the elect remnant of Israel, destined to find salvation in Zion (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:17ff). The Church is also seen as the restored tabernacle of David which Jesus himself had promised to build (Acts 15:16; Matt.16:18). The Church is viewed by the contemporary world as the group of baptized believers who had the character of a sect within Judaism. In fact the Jerusalem Church had Jewish character. The members of the church accepted the obligations of the law and the worship at the Temple.<sup>2</sup>

The Church's distinctive belief is that Jesus of Nazareth is Israel's Messiah, that God Himself had vindicated this by raising him from the dead after he had suffered for Israel's redemption. The Church also affirms that 'the great and manifest day' of the Lord was even now upon them and would culminate in a final appearance of Jesus Christ in judgment and glory.<sup>3</sup>

The distinctive practices of this Church include a baptism in the name of Jesus, regular attendance at instruction given by the apostles and fellowship on a household basis, which Luke the evangelist described as 'the breaking of the bread and the prayers' (Acts 2:41-46). The Jerusalem believers had no exclusive claim on the term ekklesia, despite its Old Testament association, and the mixed assemblage of Jewish and Gentile believers which was formed at Antioch in the Orontes was without ceremony also called 'the Church' (Acts 11:26; 13:1). However, Antioch was the model of the new Church, and not Jerusalem. This model was to appear all over the world. It was founded by Hellenist Jews. Here believers were first dubbed Christians or Christites by their gentile neighbours (Acts 11:26).<sup>4</sup> The Church within this context is the body of Christ. It is for the purpose of the Church that Jesus Christ died. The word Church was first applied to the followers of Jesus Christ by Jesus Christ himself (Matt.18:7). The Church is the congregation of the people of God (Acts 17:37; Heb.2:12).<sup>5</sup>

The Church according to the contemporary world is the new Israel of God. The name 'Israel' is of value to the doctrine of the remnant. The meaning is 'God strives'. The new Israel is the nucleus of God's people, who will achieve for God what the Old Israel lost by transgression. It recalls what the prophets viewed about Judah. On the new Israel B.W. Anderson said:

The wilderness identified by the Prophets with the waste places of Judah will be converted into a garden like Eden (Isaiah 51:3). And there will be a New Israel bound to Yahweh in a new relationship (Isa.54:4-10) and with a 'new song' on her lips (Isa.42:10-12)<sup>6</sup>

The new Israel is the remnant of God in the context of our study. The New Israel who is the exact representative of Christ shares with Christ the first fruit privilege of God's heirs. In Paul's usage of the first fruit, the interpretations given to it are, first that the first fruit is the remnant of God, focusing on few Jewish Christians who became the pledge of eventual salvation of all Israel. Second, it is certain that Paul's usage of first fruit, first applied to Christ. This conforms with the Rabbinic precedent for describing Adam as the first-fruit-loaf.<sup>7</sup>

The Church as the New Israel is to fulfil a function similar to that of the Old in glorifying God in good works.<sup>8</sup> All believers of the new Israel, i.e. the remnant of God are priests. For there is no priesthood in the new Israel as in the Old Israel because the new Israel is totally priesthood.<sup>9</sup> The Church is called to the same mission with Jesus Christ. In 1 Peter 2:5 and 9 and 10, we have the evidence:

And like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.

The Church is to achieve the above standard by living the life of Christ, first by placing her absolute trust in Christ as her Lord. Secondly, in her readiness to accept and obey the Bible, thus the responsibility of the Church, which is the remnant of God is to God alone.<sup>10</sup> The Church is therefore constantly in the service of God. In order to do this the Church engages in teaching with particular emphasis on topics like 'to grow in grace' 'to gain victory over evil habits' and 'to learn to demonstrate the fruits of the spirit'.<sup>11</sup>

The church is a small group of believers forming a community within the large society. Her role is to make known the wonderful works of God to the larger society. As a community within a larger society, her roles is to draw the society to God through her teachings and deeds.<sup>12</sup> The Church is therefore God's elect, the Church received salvation through atoning death of Jesus Christ in order for the Church to save the whole world. Thus the main purpose why the Church is saved is for her to save the world, and to bring the world to a state of praising and glorifying God.

The Church performs the work of our Lord Jesus Christ and thus it is a minority group. In His days in the flesh Jesus Christ was a lone voice, a minority within the society He found Himself. Even among the disciples who were close to Him, there were some who did not accept His own standard of life. This also was the experience of the first gathering in Antioch who were dubbed Christians. They were a minority group. Thus like it happened to Jesus Christ, they were persecuted beyond measure but they triumphed. In the first three centuries of the Christian era, Christians were persecuted and regarded as a cult until Emperor Constantine adopted Christianity as a state religion. Before this time 'the power that be' wanted to stamp out Christianity because its standard was just too high for the world of their age. Today, it is the same experience that the Church undergoes. For it is evident that where the Church is a minority movement and its presence appears to be a threat to the social or political structure in power, it is often completely rejected and systematically stamped out.<sup>13</sup> Even though the Church is regarded as a minority group within any social set up, the Church has a problem of a sect within a sect, namely, a minority within a minority group. Within the Church it has always been a sect regarding herself as the only one fulfilling the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ and therefore seeking to convert others who were Christians already. This attitude suggests what we can call, a remnant within a 'remnant' of God.<sup>14</sup> The problem of Ethnic group claiming superiority also surfaced.<sup>15</sup> In order to distinguish the true remnant from other people who claim the same status, Jacob A. Loewen in quoting James Scherer, said the following as a sign of true remnant of God as viewed in the Church:

Any Church, any where, any time that lives in obedience to Christ as Lord, keeps God's word and his sacraments and preaches the gospel in the power of the spirit....<sup>16</sup>

The evidence of this must be clearly seen in such a Church. This is why Okeke said that the mark of such a church must be love, agape which must have its vertical and horizontal line properly working, that is, Love to God and to neighbor.

According to Okeke, quoting from 1 Corinthians, "Love is the greatest mark of a man in Christ".<sup>17</sup> This Church is not just a separatist movement like the Quakerism of the seventeenth century.<sup>18</sup> They are the people who do the Lord's commands.

The above shows that before we can describe the Church as the remnant of God, the church must admit that she receives her revelation of the Old Testament through the Israelite people, and that in Christ the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles was made possible. This Church is the new people of God which includes Jews and Gentiles. There is no discrimination whatsoever in the Church for the Church knows no bound.<sup>19</sup> It is a gathering where believers see themselves as one unit and where they serve God in spirit and in truth.

Thus the Church has gone through ten major trends to assume this universality as said by Howard A. Snyder. It has gone:

From regional churches to world church.  
From scattered growth to broad revival.  
From Communist China to Christian China.  
From Institutional tradition to Kingdom theology.  
From Clergy/laity to community of ministers.  
From male leadership to male/female partnership.  
From secularization to religious relativism.  
From nuclear family to family diversity.  
From Church/State separation to Christian political activism.  
From safe planet to threatened planet.

The Church has always considered itself universal; but today this is empirically true as never before.<sup>20</sup>

The Church today is the manifestation of God's presence in the world. The words 'new Israel', 'remnant' or 'people of God' are applicable to the church. The remnant is the remnant of God. The Church as the remnant of God today does not only to the will of God on earth but also show by her example that God is present among his people.

The Prophets looked forward to the fulfillment of the ideal remnant in a figure in the future. This hope was met in Jesus of Nazareth, as Jesus of history. Above all the physical remnants we mentioned in the last chapters, He is the very man of very man. In Jesus' personality we discover the remnant *per se*, that is, 'the ideal and real remnant'. Jesus is not only the true remnant as we have said, He is also the very God of very God. He is Jesus the messiah, The anointed One of God. In Him is met all the qualifications of the remnant, that is, return to God, to serve God and the presence of God among His people in the world. Thus Jesus Christ is the ideal remnant in the context of our study. All other personalities were focusing on the Christ of faith. Jesus Christ performed His work of salvation in order to leave a 'remnant' in the world. This remnant will follow His example in her bid to witness to Christ in the world and also to make God's presence felt within His people. The meaning of the remnant for the church is derived from what John the Evangelist said concerning Jesus:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only son from the Father (John 1:14).

In order to fulfil the mission of the remnant in the world, that is, a light to the nation and a witness to God, Jesus Christ purchased by the shedding of His blood a 'remnant'. That remnant is the Church (Eph.5:25f). The Church is therefore God's elect.

### **The Church as God's Elect:**

As we noted earlier in this work we asserted that it is not easy to separate the terms remnant and election in the Old Testament. The two terms though not identical, prove to us difficult, because it is not easy to spotlight the difference between them. The reason is that the remnant is a result of an elective or choosing act of God and the remnant ensures the continuance of the Election of Israel. The Church herself is called New Israel because the Church consists of the redeemed people of God. It is the remnant concept that sustained the election and also gave birth to the Church. Since

Jesus Christ is the remnant per se, the Church's election is an extension of the Grace received from Jesus Christ. It, therefore, means that the Church could not have been called 'elect', if not for the fact that there was a remnant of God.

According to Protestant Church Catechism, a question is asked thus: "What does thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief?" The answer to this question goes thus:

First I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world.  
Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind. Thirdly, in  
God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God.<sup>21</sup>

The answer here shows that the grace given is narrowed down to those who believed sincerely in the promise of God. They are regarded as the faithful remnant of God. So they are called the Elect of God. The Elect people of God according to the answer are those who believe and also claim the redemption which was originally meant for the whole world and also for all mankind. This 'elect' are the people in the household of God.

Throughout the pages of the New Testament especially in Pauline Epistles, we have the idea that the Church is a company of faithful people of God, to whom the promise in the Old Testament is fulfilled. It is necessary to examine how the Church won the title "elect". The Church as the elect of God won this important status by reason of the death of Jesus, which is a redemptive act. In Pauline Epistles, the Jews were supposed to be the beneficiaries of this status. The rejection of Jesus Christ by the Jews shows that they cannot see the favour extended to them by God. Their case can be likened to what happened to Pharaoh. Pharaoh's heart was hardened in order that the whole earth might see the Israel's deliverance as the act of Yahweh and that the Egyptians might know that Yahweh is the Lord. We can see that the hardening of Pharaoh and Egyptian's hearts served the redemptive purpose of God for all peoples, and particularly for Israel. In chapters 9 and 10 of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, we see this fact coming out clearly. However, in chapter 11:7-10 Paul sees the sovereign God performing the same redemptive purpose, yet the instrument is no longer Pharaoh, but hardened Israel. As it is, Hardened Israel becomes a part of God's redemptive plan for all humanity. According to the passage, it is through the Israel's trespass that salvation comes to the gentiles. To Paul, the apostle of the gentiles, the destiny of the gentiles is a penultimate concern while the full inclusion of the Jews is his ultimate concern. To Paul the hardening of the Jews is a temporary issue for he believes that they were originally in Yahweh's plan of salvation.<sup>22</sup> Here we see that the Church as the New Israel, receives her election as a gift from Christ. Moreover, we see that the Church's election is an off-shoot of Israel's Election. It was the original plan of God that all mankind receive the salvation.

Since the Church is specially favoured by this election, she, as the remnant has a great responsibility to fulfil. Theodore M. Snider as quoted below seemed to believe that the rejection of the Jews was a total expulsion from God's plan of salvation, which to me is not exactly the mind of God. Snider said:

The early Church soon began seeing itself as the 'new Israel' arguing that God's chosen people were no longer the Jews but the Christians. The Christians were now the rightful heirs of the faithful Abraham.<sup>23</sup>

The Church received sonship, adoption and election by extension. The rejection of the Jews is temporary. It is to show that Yahweh does not belong exclusively to the Jews but to the Gentiles also and even to the whole universe.

The Christians remain rightful heirs of faithful Abraham as long as they fulfil God's demands. It is only then that they can claim to be the remnant of God. Christians are called to share in the Sonship and Priesthood of Jesus Christ, for Christ combined the Sonship and Priesthood in his personality. His Priesthood signifies humility and obedience, for He is both priest and victim.<sup>24</sup> Christians will be able to achieve a true election by remaining in this sonship as they follow closely the footmarks of Jesus Christ. This is so as the Church can only be called elect in her relation to Christ who is the 'elect of God'. It is a great honour on the part of the Church to be called "God's elect". This is why Christ established the Church as the new Israel and endowed her with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. As elect of God there are four traditional qualities which the Church is expected to have. They are unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity. As God's elect, it is held that there could be only one such body founded by Christ; as being of Divine origin, it must be holy;

as being by Divine intention world-wide, and having in fact spread over most of the known world. The Church owes her teachings or doctrines to the apostles as it was historically descended from them.<sup>25</sup>

As God's Elect the Church today is going through some persecutions, as it happened to the remnant of God in the Old Testament. The church, in an attempt to carry out her role as the remnant, is surrounded by enemies and obstacles everywhere. The Church faces challenges and accusations without reasons, just as it happened to Christ and the figures of the remnant mentioned earlier on in this work. The Church as the remnant is struggling to demolish the darkness of our age and to replace it with light. One noticeable point in the church's struggle is that the challenges and obstacles that confront the Church are not basically from without the Church, most of them are from within. This shows that among the congregation of God's people, there are people who choose to be enemies of the same congregation. In other words, those who are really regarded as God's Elect are those who fulfil the commands of God by remaining faithful to God and believing in the power of God to save always in any circumstance of life. Therefore, like the Old Israel, the remnant doctrine has its base in the New Israel – the Church – namely, among the chosen people of God. There are of course many who do not respond positively to the special privilege, which they receive from Christ as elect of God. It therefore means that only those who do the will of God are regarded as elect. These are the few faithful remnant (Matt.7:21; 24:13). The Church of Christ is the means by which the remnant is sustained today throughout the world. What this means is the faithful members of this household of God, who in the face of persecution and frustration continue to look to Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of faith (Heb.2:2). For Christ is the remnant and elect per se.

The Church by her nature receives from Christ the election, for the Church as a remnant of God has got the mission of the remnant, namely, to go and be God's witnesses to all the world (Matt.28:19-20; Acts 1:8). The Church is chosen in order to bring other people of the world into the reign of God. The Church is therefore the elect for the purpose of bringing other people into the election of God. The Church therefore is the channel through which the eternal purpose of God will be fulfilled. For it is the wish of God that all the world may be saved. The Church therefore is the body of Christ who is expected to immunize others to become like Christ.

### **The Church as The Body of Christ:**

In the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians Paul generalizes his use of 'Church' to indicate, not an ecumenical Church, but the spiritual and heavenly significance of each and every local 'body' which has Christ as her head. By this union of Christ and the Church as the body of Christ, God demonstrates His manifold wisdom through the creation of 'one new man' out of all races and classes. Paul describes the work of Christ in the salvation and redemption of the world, as that done particularly for the Church His body. Paul describes the unending and unconditional Love of Christ for the Church; as the Love which made Christ to give his life for the church by dying on the cross. Christ did this in order that he might present the Church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish (Eph.5:27). As said by Dr. S.O. Abogunrin in Orita:

In the incarnation and on the cross Christ became what we are in order that we may become what He is.<sup>26</sup>

Christ as the remnant per se did this at incarnation and on the cross in order that the Church might remain the remnant of God. In other words, the Church like Christ will live the life of Christ, a faithful, humble and obedient life that reveals the presence of God and also the life that shows that the Church is in covenant with God as his elected and chosen people.

The Church as the body of Christ has always been the 'remnant' of God's people throughout the ages. She has been in the minority for ages. She is known by the practical demonstration of Christ-like life. This is what distinguishes her from the other sections of the world. Without her practical Christ-like attitude, it would have been submerged into the surrounding cultures.<sup>27</sup> The characteristic of the Church is known and based upon the revelation of God which was given in Jesus Christ. What is discovered in the first gathering of Christians is the fact that they were always together. We have the record in Acts of the Apostles Chapter 2:44-47:

And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their

homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

This passage shows that the basis of their togetherness and common life was a common belief from which their witness proceeded. What made the gathering to survive, even as a minority was her life propagating ministry which was manifested to the surrounding community that necessitated their being given the name "Christians". Acts 11:26. "And in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians".

As the body of Christ, Christ purposed the Church to be united and to be one. This is contained in the prayer of Jesus Christ as recorded in St. John's Gospel chapter 17:20 and 21:

I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me".

As a witness to the presence of God in the world, the Church as the body of Christ must remain one. The unity of the Church is to be patterned after that of God and Jesus Christ. This unity will bring about common belief and faith, out of which purity will be seen. As Peter said in his first letter chapter 1:15 and 16:

But as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (cf. Lev.11:44 – 45). St. Paul calls for unity of the body of Christ, as we have it in his Epistle to Ephesians chapter 4:1-6:

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all who is above all and through all and in all.

The unity of the Church is of paramount importance to Paul, and as such he gives it adequate attention, in his letters. In Romans chapter 14:1-12, Paul appealed for Christian unity. Also in the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 12, Paul describes how the Church as the body of Christ should distinguish herself by using the varieties of gifts endowed to individuals for the benefit and edification of the Church. Here he compares the Church to the human body. As no part of the body can claim sufficiency on its own, so individual members of the Church are indispensable. The endowments of individual members of the Church should be used for the good of the Church. The unity of the Church, which is manifested in the working together and relating perfectly of the various organisms of the Church, demonstrates and reveals the unity of the God-head.

The Church as the body of Christ is Catholic, (universal) apostolic, and holy. As the body of Christ, the Church is the remnant of God. Through the Church, the divine purpose of God at creation will be fulfilled, namely, the intimate perfect, and complete relationship between the Church and God, which will later result in the perfect relation between God and the world. The Church will, however, take the rough road to achieve this, as Christ Himself did. The cost for this achievement is suffering, persecution, hatred and temptation. As a minority in the midst of these predicaments, the Church will achieve this through leaning on Jesus and looking at Him as the pioneer and perfecter of faith (Heb. 12:1 and 2).

### **The Church as The Bride of Christ:**

In the discussion of Paul the Apostle in his letter to the Ephesians chapter 5:26 to 6:4, he states that the Church is the bride of Christ, which means that Christ looks upon this Church as a part of Himself. He, therefore, cares for her, nourishing and cherishing her. In the marriage bond too, the husband has a responsibility for his spouse, the responsibility which Paul likens to that of Christ in His relationship to the Church.



The analogy of Christ and the Church which is applied to husband and wife shows the expectation of Christ from the Church which is sequence to the Love of Christ for His Church (His Bride). Paul here is drawing upon Yahweh's marriage with Israel as described in Hosea 2:16; Isaiah 54:4f; 62:4f; & Ezekiel 16:7f, which is pointing towards the covenant which God made with the nation, Israel at Sinai. In this covenant the Torah became the marriage contract and Moses as the person who led the bride to God. Moreover Paul is saying that Christ's relationship to His bride, the Church, is one further way of saying that the Torah-age has given place to the new age of Messiah's fulfillment. Paul traced back Christ's action as the bridegroom to His love and self-giving on the Cross.

The purpose of this Love and self-giving on the Cross is very important for us in this work. According to the passage under our consideration the main purpose is:

That he might present the Church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish", (Eph.5:27).

The main purpose is that of sanctification. The Church, by the act of Jesus the Christ on the Cross, is taken out of the sphere of sin and placed in that of holiness.<sup>28</sup> The purpose is to make the Church what Christ is, that is, the remnant per se. The holiness of Christ is the holiness of the Church His bride. The Church is Christ's bride and she remains holy in spite of what happens or what is happening to individual members of the Church today. The intention of Christ for the Church stands, that He may present the Church without blemish, spot or wrinkle. The holiness of the Church is claimed on the basis that the Church belongs to Christ. The Church is made holy, so that through her all other people in the world might be brought to her holiness. This calls to mind what God said to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12:2-3:

And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse, and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves.

We note that God chose Abraham, a representative of his family and clan in order that through him all other families of the earth shall bless themselves. Gerhard Von Rad said concerning this quotation thus:

Here, at the very beginning of the Old Testament history of salvation something is said about its end: already we are told that God's plan of salvation will broaden out from the particular to the universal, and that in the end it will be significant for mankind as a whole far beyond the limits of Israel.<sup>29</sup>

As God called Israel and made the covenant with her in order for her to be example to other nations around her, Christ, out of Love and self-giving receives the Church as His body and spouse who through His nourishing and cherishing will become holy. That holiness is supposed to extend to other people through her exemplary life. We have noticed earlier in this work that God always carries out His mission through the minority. He starts His work of salvation from a particular individual or group and extends it to other people of the world.

The Church as the bride of Christ is therefore the representative of Christ in the sinful world. The Church as the remnant of God, as new Israel, the bride of Christ is the light to the Gentiles (cf. Isa.49:6). The Church as the bride of Christ stands for the continuation of salvation History. It is through this body, already washed and cleansed in the blood of Jesus the Christ that the whole universe will be brought in subjection to Christ. The sanctification of the Church is in order that the Church might commit her life to Christ, which will also bring about the whole world committing her life to Christ in obedience to the will of God. The Love and self-giving of Christ call for total submission and obedience to the will and commands of God. This is what that Love of God and self-giving of Christ on the Cross demand from the world especially from the Church, His Body and for whom He is the husband.

The imageries which Paul used concerning the Church, namely as the bride and body of Christ point to the unity of the Church. It is brought out in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, chapter 4:4-6, where Paul spoke of the unity of the Church as quoted earlier in this chapter. Paul further pointed to the fact that the Church was meant to be one, as the

body of Christ bestowed with varieties of gifts just as organs of the body have various functions. These gifts and organs are meant to be used for the building up of the body of Christ (Eph.4:4-13). This is in order that the Church, the body and bride of Christ may attain to the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, to mature manhood; to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.<sup>30</sup> This is the purpose of God for the world which God will achieve through the remnant, that is, the church, which is the body and bride of Christ. This purpose when achieved will bring about the Kingdom of God on earth where perfect peace will be enjoyed. This is what is seen in Pauline letters as the divine commonwealth which will come about through the mission of the Church to the world.

### **The Church's Mission As Light to The World:**

The Church is the present realization of the remembrance and hope of Christ. The Church's main task is not the relationship between time and eternity, or between the present and the origin; it is the relationship between history and eschatology. The Church is therefore alive as long as it combines with remembrance of Christ, hope in the coming God, and as long as it can link with the present existence of His mission and His self-giving which is for the liberation of humanity for their true future. The Church as the body of believers is the people of the Kingdom. It is the community of the liberated, the community of those who are making a new beginning and the community of those who hope. The Church gains all these from the liberated work of Jesus the Christ, as we have it in the gospels.

Reading from Isaiah chapter 61:1f. Jesus Christ declared His mission when He was asked to read the Scripture at the synagogue in Nazareth. His mission according to the passage is to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Ref. Luke 4:18-19). Jesus, the Christ summed up this mission when John the Baptist sent his disciples to inquire whether He is the Messiah, in the Gospel according to St. Matthew chapter 11:4-6. The mission was given to the Church as we have it at the sending out of the twelve in St. Matthew's Gospel chapter 10:7, where Christ charged them:

“And preach as you go, saying, ‘the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand’. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers and cast out demons”.

The Mission of the seventy was similar to that of the twelve as we have it in the Gospel according to St. Luke 10:1-16. The charge to them is to spread peace to the world, just as the twelve tribes of Israel were meant to be witnesses to other nations. In the last chapters of the Gospel according to St. Matthew and Mark we have the commission of Christ to the disciples, to go out, preach and teach whatever they have heard and seen in Jesus. This also includes baptizing believers.<sup>31</sup>

The above shows that the Church has no other mission apart from that of Christ. The Church is a light to the world in the light of the fact that it is the body of Christ. In other words, the Church is in Christ sanctifying the world. For it is the work of sanctification to which the Church is called. The Church is the remnant of God by sharing in the life of Christ, the remnant per se. He is in Christ bringing to fulfillment the main purpose, aim and objective of God for calling Israel and choosing her for His own. The Church today is therefore the remnant of God saddled with the responsibility of returning the world to her rightful place in creation. The Church is a light to the world as the true body of Christ. The Church as the new Israel only inherits the mission of the Old Israel (Isaiah 49:6) as the light to the nation. This onerous mission is in accordance with the saying of Jesus in St. Matthew's Gospel chapter 5:14-16.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

The above shows that the mission of the Church can be viewed from two dimensions, namely, the mission of the Church is functional and missionary as we have it in the New Testament. This functional aspect of the Church's mission is to be seen in her service to the community. The verse states: ‘Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works ...’ (Matt.5:16a). To see your good works is to see your service to the world. This service is the very essential part of the Church's life. It was that of Christ's earthly ministry. This was why He said to His disciples thus: “For the Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45)”. The

whole life, ministry. Death and resurrection of Christ were spent for the service of the world. He poured his life out for the world in order that the world might gain life in Him. The purpose for which Christ sacrificed His life for the Church, was for the Church to render her authentic service to the community.<sup>32</sup> It, therefore, means that as the light to the nations of the world, the Church must be ready to render Her service to the world. All other things should be sacrificed for this service, (1 Cor.9:19-27) just as Christ did. This is the remnant's mission and it is the Church's mission.

The second aspect of the Church's mission to the world is missionary. This represents the perception of Jesus Christ's original projects as we have it at the end of the Gospel of St. Mark and St. Matthew (Mk.16:15-20 and Matt.28:16-20). The commission is for the Church to go out into the world and make disciples of all people. In this missionary spirit, the Church is to represent Jesus Christ, by teaching all that the Church has learnt from Christ. The evidence in the New Testament shows that the itinerant ministries as is known in Paul and Barnabas prevail over the sedentary ones. Speaking on this issue Raul Vidales, said:

In their origins and through the period of their expansion, the itinerant ministries prevail over the sedentary ones, not only because of geographical displacements, but above all because of their outward-looking nature and effectiveness.<sup>33</sup>

In accordance with the injunction of Jesus Christ the Church has received a two fold ministry, that is, functional and missionary. The Church will remain the remnant of God as long as she faithfully performs the two functions. These two functions will be about the Kingdom of God on earth which I shall discuss under the heading "The Divine Commonwealth". The goal towards which the remnant are called and set.

### **The Divine Commonwealth:**

All the prophecies of the 8<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries' prophets were directed towards a realization of the eternal purpose of God for the creation. The purpose is that the world may enjoy peace through her obedience to the commands of God. All of them looked toward the future for the fulfillment of this purpose in the remnant which is met in the Messiah. Isaiah, however, saw this purpose being achieved through the suffering servant. The suffering servant passages are testimonies to this (Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9 and 52:13-53:12). The world into which Jesus the Christ was born was a world of hostility. The Peace of God was not enjoyed by this world; in fact it never knew that peace. In fact this same world was hostile to Jesus, the Christ because it never appreciated Christ's mission.

In the first century A.D., when Paul the 'Apostle was looking back to the work of Christ, He affirmed that Christ has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between humanity (Eph.2:4). According to him, by the vicarious suffering and death of Christ all people through faith have been brought into a divine commonwealth, a sphere where there is no Jew or Gentile, no Greek or Barbarian, no male or female but all are mystically united together in one body bringing to an end all social, political, racial and religious discriminations among people. This is the mission of the Church as the remnant of God, and for this purpose Christ came into the world. Jose Miguez-Bonino in describing the work of Christ said:

In the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a new world has erupted; a new age is inaugurated under the sign of liberations, from the world, from sin, from death, from the law, a liberation that is to be consummated in the Parousia. The Christian is "called to Liberty" (Gal.5:1 and 13), a liberty which is both an anticipation of the definitive freedom to come and a stimulus for a new life. (Rom.8:15-27), a liberation that the whole creation desires and awaits (v.22).<sup>34</sup>

This shows that the mission of Jesus Christ is also the mission of the Church. The mission which will bring about unity and oneness among people of different race, colour, religion and background. This commonwealth will come about through the liberation which Christ brought and which the Church takes up as an heritage. Liberation has been defined by Jose Miguez-Bonino thus:

Christian thought and practices, in part constrained by circumstances but mainly influenced by the philosophic and religious view of the surrounding

world (Hellenistic), interpreted liberation in terms of inwardness, the emancipation of the soul from the cares, appetites, and ambitions of the body and the world, in order to be dedicated to contemplation and communion with God ... Sometimes liberation is linked to the integration of man with the universe of moral values: sometimes to the emancipation of the spirit in a vision of the dialectic that governs history. Sometimes, in the existential moment of decision, liberation is related to a flight from the "Objective", from the world of things, from the "brute" processes of history, a flight, that is, to a world where objective reality can be explained, dissolved, or ignored in mental and mystical processes.<sup>35</sup>

The New Testament sums up the various definitions of liberation when it asks for denunciation of the material world, and demands for the taking up of spiritualism (Matt.6:33). The liberation we are talking about is far above the liberation of the poor from the rich or subjects from rulers, but the liberation of both rich and poor, rulers and subjects from spiritual poverty.

The Divine Commonwealth therefore is the sphere which was in the mind of God right from the call of Abraham. Its achievement rests in the hands of the remnant of God. Christ through His death and resurrection has provided a link between the world and God. The Church through her various ministries, is left with the same mission of making the Divine Commonwealth a reality in the present age. This she will achieve through service and missionary work. The purpose for which the remnant is saved is to bring others to the divine commonwealth which is fellowship with God.

### **The Remnant Today and the Individual Member of the Church:**

The Church has been described as the body of Christ and the gathering of the believers who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Saviour. The Church has been referred to in this work as the Church universal. There is only one Church but the work admits that this one Church has several denominations; just as there is one body with several members of the body. Thus, the Church could be referred to as the remnant of God or new Israel only if individual members of the Church relate perfectly to the course of the Church as the light to lighten the darkness of the world. Today this fact is found wanting in the Church as the body of Christ. It is therefore our concern to discover the remnant in the individual members of the Church. This is so because a 'remnant' has been the chosen Israelite by God, by an act of free favour. They are those who remained loyal in spite of the masses who have been destitute of spiritual insight and unbelief. For the doctrine of a remnant implied that the mass of the people has ever been unfaithful and that it is the individual or small body that has remained true to God in all the changes of Israel's history.<sup>36</sup>

As in the days of the Prophets Elijah and Jeremiah, to mention just two, the remnant in the Church today is preferably viewed in the light of individual response to the law and call of God. The individual members of the Church could be described as a 'remnant' within a 'remnant'. In as much as the Church comprises the remnant of God who are regarded holy only on the strength that she is the body and bride of Christ, the individual who responds to the law of God represents the main body of the Church as the remnant. For there is always a 'remnant' who carries out the mission meant for the whole nation, race or the Church.

The concept of the remnant has been discussed in three perspectives, namely it has been viewed first, in prospect, two, apex and three, retrospect. In prospect because in the prophets, the focus was on a remnant who will return to God. To the prophets, the righteous remnant was viewed as returning to God and to Zion the earthly seat of God. The remnant also connotes the presence of God among His people. Thus, the remnant that returned from exile is only a proto-type of the remnant *per se*. It is viewed in apex, because the coming of Jesus Christ connotes to the world the presence of God in the midst of His people. John the evangelist said "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us ..." (John 1:14). Thus, the person of Jesus Christ and His mission brought to earth the real remnant. The issue today is that the Church as a whole is not really fulfilling the roles of the remnant of God because of the danger of those who are drawn by the socio-political set-up of the world order among the Church members. It is therefore necessary to discover the remnant in the pious believers in the Church. Hence the remnant today is viewed in retrospect in the sense that an individual who aspires to be a remnant aims at becoming perfect like the man Jesus.<sup>37</sup> This individual will carry out the mission meant for the Church.

The individuality of the remnant idea within the Church confirms what our Lord Jesus Christ said about the majority in the Church. This was also confirmed by the spiritual event of the Pentecost which depicts the fact that whenever two or three were gathered in Jesus' name, God is present.<sup>38</sup> (Matt. 18:20). Thus, the remnant is the agent of God as the light to the world. The remnant assumes a missionary task. The world is the focus of God for this task. Jesus Christ gave the work to the Apostles who later handed over the task to the Church. The task of the remnant is carried out in the Church today when individual members of the Church perform the work in the place of Jesus Christ. The task is in the form of God's confronting man of his duty in the world. Thus Davey says:

God confronts man through Christ, first in the pattern of creation history, secondly in the calling and history of Israel, thirdly in his coming in flesh and blood.<sup>39</sup>

It is this third coming which discloses to man the mission God sets before man in creation. This is made clear in the prologue to the fourth Gospel, that is, the gospel according to John. The prologue justifies the approach of John. The prologue justifies the approach of John to Christ's missionary work and therefore the remnant's missionary work, namely "the true light that enlightens everyman was coming into the world" (John 1:9). The remnant's mission as we said earlier in this work is to show the light to the world. The individual's mission is the mission of Christ. That is to say to be the light to the nations (Isa. 49:6). In order to be light to the nation, an individual engages in the acts of evangelism. The Anglican information of September 1989 states: "To evangelise is to make known by word and deed the love of the crucified risen Christ in the power of the spirit ..."<sup>40</sup> This is the task of the remnant of God today. The remnant undertakes to proclaim Christ with his total being. He learns the language of the people and proclaims the gospel to them within the context of their cultural back-ground. Thus Effions Utuk, in his paper titled "An Analysis of John Mbiti's Missiology" said: "Public evangelism is "an act of proclaiming Christianity's universality and cosmicity".<sup>41</sup> According to Mbiti public evangelism must mean localization of Christianity's universality and cosmicity by translating the Christian faith into a language understood by the people of the given eligion.<sup>42</sup> An individual member of the Church is an agent through whom this witness spread to the world. When an individual member of the Church does this, he or she fulfills the mission of the Church in the world. On the above point, Timothy Njiya said that uniting into one body through Baptism, communion and service; the Church becomes a living parable or paradigm of the Kingdom of God in the world by the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>43</sup> The presence of God in the world is felt through the dedication, commitment and faithfulness of the individual member of the Church. The individual member of the Church becomes a saved remnant who is saddled with the responsibility of saving the whole world. The word 'Church' becomes the gathering of believers who have the goal of winning the world to God as light to the world, when the individual member of the same knows the divine imperative to be God's representative in the world. Thus the remnant is the individual member of the Church who lives and dies for God's mission in the world. The remnants in the Church today are a company of individual members who are ready always to do the will of God. Jesus Christ said:

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord: shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father who is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

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# CHAPTER SEVEN

## CONCLUSION

### The Relevance of Remnant to the Church in Nigeria

In the last chapter, efforts are made to discuss the Church in relation to the subject of our study. We submit that the Church, by her characteristics is the remnant of God, the new Israel through whom God purposes to fulfil His eternal promise to the whole world. The church is the light through whom all other people in the world will receive illumination. This illumination will help them to know the will of God and to do the will in order for them to be in communion and fellowship with God. The Church according to our usage is one, universal, holy and apostolic.

In this chapter, effort will be made to see how the Church in Nigeria, as part of the universal Church, fulfils her role as 'a remnant' of God. We shall also examine the prophetic movement in the Nigerian Church with a view to know how much the movement borrows from ancient Israel prophets. This will help us to decide whether they fit in into our concept of the remnant in the Old Testament prophets. As we discuss the Nigerian Church and her prophetic movement in relation to the concept of the remnant, references will be made from time to time to Africa. This is so because the Church in Nigeria is an integral part of the Church in Africa. Furthermore, African world view has a lot in common with the Nigerian world view as Nigeria is a country in Africa. Our starting point will therefore be African world view.

Looking at the African world view and culture, Abogunrin said:

African life and thought share many things in common with the ancient Israel and the middle East. "There are similarities in the concept of time, human destiny, sacrifice, the relation between Deity and the land, death and the hereafter.<sup>1</sup>

Abogunrin's view of African life and thought is the same with Nigeria. The concept of life as it were is the same with the ancient Israel and the middle East. In looking at the similarities between the ancient Israel and Africa care must be taken so that we do not run into errors of identity. Thus Dickson seriously warns when he says:

Caution needs to be exercised in drawing parallels between the Old Testament and African life and thought. The one drawing parallels must have seriously studied both the Old Testament, and African traditional beliefs.<sup>2</sup>

In discussing the relevance of the remnant concept to the Church in Nigeria, therefore, Nigerian life and culture must be taken into consideration, because the Church was born into a culture which till today influences the life of the Church. When Abogunrin was discussing this in relation to Africa, he said:

African religion and culture which shaped the lives of our fathers, to a large extent still continues to shape life in Africa. Biblical scholars must therefore take cognizance of the particular, cultural and intellectual milieu of the non biblical world to which they are addressing themselves. This is imperative since the Gospel is never preached in a cultural vacuum. The Biblical scholar requires a spiritual perception that will enable him to translate the Bible in such a way that the word will become incarnated once again in the language and life of people of Africa.<sup>3</sup>

It is apparent from the above quotation that we cannot separate the Church from the culture she found herself, hence the cultural life of Nigerians has got a mark on the life of the Church. We will try to discover the traits of the remnant in the Nigerian culture as we agree with Abogunrin that Africa has many things in common with the ancient Near East. Thus we shall spend sometime discussing the Nigerian culture in relation to our subject, since the Church in Nigeria does not come into a cultural vacuum. Bishop Ademowo in his charge to the Diocese of Ilesa Anglican Communion Nigeria on May 18, 1990 said:



The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and culture is one of the Lambeth Conference 1988 resolutions under "Christ and Culture". It is resolution 022 and I quote: this Conference

- (a) Recognises that culture is the context in which people find their identity.
- (b) Affirms that God's love extends to people of every culture and that the Gospel judges every culture according to the Gospel's own criteria of truth, challenging some aspects of culture while endorsing and transforming other for the benefit of the Church and society.
- (c) Urges the Church everywhere to work at expressing the unchanging Gospel of Christ in words, actions, names, customs, liturgies which communicate relevantly in each contemporary society.<sup>4</sup>

While addressing himself to the Lambeth Conference 1988 Resolutions quoted above, Bishop Ademowo commented:

... The Gospel becomes African, in terms of our songs, drumming, praying, dancing etc. The Gospel eliminates those things in our culture that are unchristian, for example the killing of twins in Calabar during the time of Mary Slessor.<sup>5</sup>

The Church is a transforming body wherever she finds herself, and the Church in Nigeria is not an exception. The Church in Nigeria as quoted above, came into Nigerian culture to sanctify what is good in our culture as well as to exterminate what is evil in the culture. Jesus Christ Himself is Christ of culture, for He was born and nurtured within Jewish culture. In His earthly ministry, He used Jewish language, He dressed the Jewish way and worshipped the Jewish way. Thus Jesus Christ is Christ of culture and the Church in Nigeria is the Church of Nigerian culture. As the remnant is the light to the nations of the world, the Church in Nigeria is the light to the Nigerian world. In Nigerian Church, we discover that the religion and culture are interwoven and interrelated. If religion is the tree, culture is the root by which religion becomes firmly rooted in a people. No religion develops or grows in a vacuum, religion develops in a particular cultural setting. For a religion to be firmly rooted in a community, it must be properly integrated into the culture of the people. In order for the Church to be relevant to her environment, she has to be integrated to her culture. The concept of the remnant has its feet on the culture of the Nigerians. This concept is brought to the limelight by the advent of the Church in Nigeria.

According to available historical sources Christianity had been in Northern parts of Africa since 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Centuries A.D.<sup>6</sup> It found her way into Nigeria in 19<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.<sup>7</sup> The Church integrated herself into the culture of Africans and Nigerians respectively in order to transform it as God's remnant. In the Church's struggle to be relevant to her environment as the righteous remnant, Richard Niebhur has distinguished five different types of attitudes of the Church towards human culture, which received significant expression in the history of the Church. They are:

- Christ against culture
- Christ of culture
- Christ and culture in relationship of Paradox
- Christ above culture
- Christ as transformer of culture.<sup>8</sup>

These five attitudes are not contradictory. They are different stages of the Christian encounter with human culture. Niebhur explains how the Church relates to culture at every stage of her existence in his submission. Our claim in this chapter is to the intent that the Church in Nigeria serves as a refinement and transformer of our culture; which is her mission as the remnant of God. For Christianity or the Church to be fully integrated to Nigerian cultural setting: she must oppose whatever is against God's will in Nigerian culture; she must appropriate or lend support to whatever is good and edifying to God's will in Nigerian culture. It then means that Christian faith in its essence must transcend the culture while Christian charismatic renewal must transform Nigerian culture.

In discussing the Church in relation to her cultural environment, E. Bolaji Idowu said:

It is time for the Church to realize that in order to be effective in her life and mission in Nigeria, she must respect, preserve and dedicate to the glory of God anything that is of value in the culture and institutions of the country. The purpose of Christianity, she must constantly remember, is to fulfil, and not to destroy; to make free and not to enslave. As the Church in Nigeria, she should bear the distinctive stamp of the country, although in essence she must preserve full allegiance to the eternal, cosmic, and unchanging Christ who is her only Lord.<sup>9</sup>

The Church in Nigeria, as the remnant of God is struggling to identify herself with Nigerian culture without losing her allegiance to the one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. In as much as we agree that the Church in Nigeria should be indigenized in such a way that she becomes the Church of God in Nigeria, bearing the stamp of Nigerian culture, this itself must not rob the Church of her essential holy and catholic natures. As the righteous remnant, the Church in Nigeria should be the Church which affords Nigerian the means of worshipping God as Nigerians, compatible with Nigerians spiritual and cultural temperament. Of course, this is with the caution that she does not lose her touch with the mission of the Church universal, as salt to sweeten the bitterness of the world and as light to illuminate the darkness and injustices in the world (Mat.5:13-16). In short, the Church as 'a remnant' should be the Church which is the spiritual home of Nigerian Christians – a home in which members breathe an atmosphere of spiritual freedom. At the same time, the Church as remnant should bear always the stamp of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, where in all things, Christ is pre-eminent. Thus while the Church as the remnant of God is relating to Nigerian culture, her allegiance to the Lordship of Jesus Christ should be total and undivided.

Remnant Idea in Nigerian Church Heritage:

Christianity first found her foot in the soil of Africa within the first five centuries of the Christian era. Two centres of theological activity developed at this time, namely Carthage – serving as the main stream of Latin West and Alexandria, the Greek East. The third and fourth centres in the then Christian world were Antioch and Rome which fell outside the region of Africa. These also were important formative centres in the early period of Christian Theology. In the African centres. Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine in Carthage, Clement and Origen of Alexandria were prominent theological figures.<sup>10</sup> Hence they were commonly called 'African Church Fathers'.

Remarkably theological interests were readily discernible in these centres. There was a firm commitment to scriptural authority as the basis of Christian thought and life. However the Alexandrian centre was not at all reluctant to speculate about matters on which there was no authoritative tradition remote from the Biblical Literature for the elaboration of its essential truths. As such 'Greek philosophies' (Stoicism, Platonism and Neo-Platonism) served as the tool for explaining such theological themes as the Trinity, the person and relevance of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.<sup>11</sup>

The theologies which developed in these centres at these formative periods unfortunately did not cross the sub-saharan region of Africa, probably due to the Arab invasion of North Africa towards the end of 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The invasion dealt a blow to North African Christianity. However, the theological achievements of Carthage and Alexandria survived through Augustine. Consequently, Augustine's theology became much cherished in the Latin West and according to T.A. Burkill while commending the work of Augustine, He said of him thus:

He largely determined the shape of medieval scholastic thought (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries). He also to some extent inspired the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation.<sup>12</sup>

It was the medieval and the Reformation theological trends that influenced the shape of theology in the present day Nigeria from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>13</sup> This century saw the influx of European missionaries trooping into Nigeria with support from the colonial masters. The missionaries were trained either in the medieval or reformed theological traditions. Thus the story of God's salvific self-revelation in the Old Testament and the New Testament has to be proclaimed, not in a vacuum, but to a people who have their theological heritage which provides the basis for Christian theology. This theological heritage is expressed by the people of Africa in her religion which is called 'African Traditional Religion'. Therein God's presence is felt in all spheres of life – social, political, economic and religious practices.

Previous studies on the African by the Europeans denies her being religious. However recent studies as a matter of fact, show that the Africans are incurably religious. Mbiti's works have made an extensive survey of the religions of the African people. His conclusion is that the traditional Africans have concepts of the deity.<sup>14</sup> In the same vein, Idowu writes:

... We must admit that God's self-disclosure is, in the first instance, to the whole world (General revelation) and that each race has grasped something of this primary revelation according to its native capacity.<sup>15</sup>

From the submission of the two scholars in African traditional religion, we admit that African traditional religion belongs to this general revelation. Thus Africans know the will of God right from creation. The problem is how to put the will of God to practice, just as it happens to the Jews. In relation to the concept of the remnant therefore, it is discovered that Nigerians like the whole Africans struggle to remain in the presence of God through those we can call 'mini remnant' who remain faithful and excel others in doing the will of God.

It is not our major concern in this study to analyze the tenets of African Traditional Religion, we leave that to Scholars in African Traditional Religion. Moreover, Mercy Oduyoye has illustrated in a scholarly manner the value of African Religious Beliefs and practices for Christian theology.<sup>16</sup> Suffice it to say that the theological principle advanced in the 4<sup>th</sup> century by Chrysostom John, remains valid today. Thus for the Christian Church to become relevant in Nigeria, it has to assume the theological heritage of the African Traditional Religion, as a material to build on.

In relation to our study, the idea of the remnant is apparent in the Nigerian ancient past as revealed in her concept of sin, salvation, healing, liberation and the hereafter. The Nigerians are conscious of the fact that every bit of their lives is lived in the presence of God, with the deities and ancestors' spirits as the executors of God's judgment. Thus the religion forbids sinning and as such Nigerians fear sinning, for Nigerians consider sinning as rebellion to God in the first instance, and also as a rebellion to their fellows in the community. The trend is towards a perfect community. Sin is regarded as moral ills. In his submission on the Yoruba on the concept of sin, Jemiriye said:

... The moral level may be viewed as being somehow higher than the social level. The moral level involves the issues of right and wrong. The situation between parents and children would come here. To the Yoruba people this will still be with ese (sin). Lying, fraud, and stealing would be within this range. On more personal level to any individual selfishness, greed, and pride would all be in this realm of ese to the Yoruba people.<sup>17</sup>

The Yoruba people see the divinities as guardians of all morality on behalf of God. The divinities ensure that all things are kept under God's control. The same is true in the beliefs of the Igbos and Hausas of the Eastern and Northern Nigeria respectively. When one sins, he or she commits the sin against God. Thus like the Israelites, the Nigerian's ancient past was theocentric. Olodumare, i.e. God is the ruler of all lives. Thus those who do His will could be considered as 'a remnant'. This attitude to life among Nigerians is brought to light in her religion.

In the study of African Traditional Religion, Idowu has said of the Yoruba man in the traditional setting of pre-colonial era that in all his undertakings however trivial or vital, he puts his divinity first and calls upon him for blessing, support and succor ...<sup>18</sup> He said further that the Yorubas 'are generally incapable of beginning any venture without consulting the oracle'.<sup>19</sup> The oracle tells the Yorubas, the mind of Ifa who is the divinity of Olodumare i.e. God. Ifa knows the mind of God and gives assent or says no to the venture. Here Idowu claims that the totality of the Yoruba man or woman like all Nigerians is traditionally rooted in the religion.<sup>20</sup> Similarly Awolalu said concerning the Yoruba of Nigeria thus:

From the sense of belonging and of concern for each other, a sense of moral obligation emerges. Men believe that they belong all together to Deity but severally to one another. In this way the life of the community is guided and safe guarded.<sup>21</sup>

The above shows that religion is a social regulator which always helps humanity out of perils and confusions of the world. This suggests that there will be an aching void if there is no religion. It is noted that the more the Nigerians tried to keep God's commandment, the more sins surfaced. In spite of the fact that there are traits of the remnant of God in Nigerian religion, evidences of lives lived under the traditional religion show that the remnant ideal is yet to be realized. The Church as the remnant of God came to show the remnant ideals to Nigerians. The Church came to proclaim Jesus Christ to the Nigerian people. Jesus Christ as the remnant per se became an example of imitation to every believer in Nigerian Churches. Jesus Christ thus becomes the standard and ruler for every Christian in Nigeria. Thus the Church in Nigeria promotes the purity of life and good relationship between God and humanity and between humanity and humanity. The Church affirms the sacredness of human life and teaches that God is the lover of life which He shares with all people of the world. This affirmation changed the Nigerian view of life.

The Church in Nigeria henceforth became the small group in her advent. The Church stood as the remnant to sweeten the bitterness of Nigerian lives, an example of which showed in the human sacrifice and killing of the twins which pervaded the African Traditional Religion practices. The Church as the remnant also threw light into the darkness of Nigerian lives which showed itself in the surrounding fears of nature, witches, wizard and spirit world. Christianity thus brought abundant life of freedom from fears of natural world and also affirmed the sacredness of the world. From her advent the contemporary world in Nigeria regarded Christians as custodians of truth and the representatives of God. Thus Christians were given respectable places in the society. The Church in Nigeria stood as the remnant of God to the Nigerian people. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Church was mainly comprised of the clergy and the people who were set aside or marked to proclaim the redemptive work of God in Christ in word and deed. The various denominations were referred to as established churches. Out of these Churches grew up what in our study we refer to as prophetic movements. This group started to find her way out of the established churches because they were dissatisfied with the mode of worship and some doctrines of the established churches. Part of the reasons for exodus was leadership tussle which the history of the Church in Nigeria has taken better care of. Important to our study is the yearning of some members to have better communion with God. Some identified members claimed to have the gifts of prophecy, visions, dreams and so on which the established Churches were not ready to accommodate. Henceforth, there arose what we call the Prophetic movement in Nigerian Churches who claimed to be followers of the Old Testament prophecy and therefore can be called the remnant of God.

The Remnant Concept in Nigerian Churches' Prophetic Movement: A significant approach to our study is the discovery of the concept of the remnant in the Nigerian's Church situation as viewed in her prophetic movements. The prophets in Nigerian Church have a lot of things in common with the Old Testament prophets. In fact the Nigerian prophets traced their call to prophecy to the Old Testament prophets and thereby claim to be followers of Israelites prophetic figures. The question that arises is; Can they really claim to be remnant in that context, since they did not come from the same socio-political and cultural background? The answer is No, but within the context of the wider Church as the remnant, they have a claim. It is necessary to examine the similarities between the Old Testament prophets and Nigerian prophetic movement in order to discover the prophets' place in the remnant concept.

The prophets are generally devoted people, soul and body, to the course of God. They are inspired personalities who have the power to receive divine revelations. They are compelled by higher powers and kept under divine constraint. Another important aspect of the prophets' characteristic, in the Old and New Testaments as well as in the Nigerian Church situation is the prophets' special call. A prophet knows that he or she has never chosen his or her way. The choice comes from God. Thus a prophet points to a particular experience in his or her life through which it has become clear to him that God has a special purpose for him and that God has designated the prophet to perform a special mission. The call often takes the prophet by surprise and he or she sometimes offer resistance (Jer.1, Exodus 3). At the point of resistance, the prophet is vanguished by God and the prophet makes an unconditional surrender. The call is often accompanied with super-natural experience which exceeds all human reason. It is often accompanied by physical and psychical phenomena. The call is frequently met with fear and trembling, but it is always regarded as an act of divine grace.<sup>22</sup>

The prophetic movement in Nigeria started within the established churches in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and specifically between 1920 and 1940. It arose out of some members of the established churches' love for spirituality, visions, dreams and trances.<sup>23</sup> The group wanted to use the gifts of prophecy and vision in the Church but the Church

found them strange. Hence the group went out to form their own group which was called the Faith Tabernacle. This later spread to assume names numerous to mention.<sup>24</sup> For the purpose of identification I called them Pentecostal and evangelical Churches.

No doubt, the prophetic movements in Nigeria have been influenced by the Old Testament prophets in various ways namely; in their prayer style, dresses, nomenclature and the way they deliver the message from God. The fundamental basis of the comparison is found in that radical break through, characteristic of some of the independent Nigerian Churches. A break through from traditional animism and polytheism, with their associated magic practices, in favour of faith in one God.<sup>25</sup> The main characteristic of the Nigerian prophets which portray them as remnant of God is first and foremost their call on the people to worship the only God which was the main message of the Old Testament. This is known in the Old Testament as 'ethical monotheism'. The episode of the Mt. of Horeb is an example of these motifs in the prophets. The prophets are God's loyalists. Moses the first champion of Yahwism was given an important place in the religion and political history of Israel. The multiple function attributed to him namely, prophet, savior, founder of religion, and law giver point to his unique position in Israel.<sup>26</sup> All these functions lend support to one most important prescription of ethical monotheism. Robinson said of Moses thus:

Moses activity and influence released impulses of fundamental significance for Israelite religion and the development of transmission history makes it clear that these impulses contained the trend towards recognizing Yahweh as the only demands on them.<sup>27</sup>

Most prophets of the Old Testament as well as Nigerian churches made attack on other gods. In the independent Nigerian Churches, the prophets and their enthusiastic followers take the lead in violent campaign against paganism in Nigerian community. The bands of prophets have always played significant roles in the war against all symbols of idol as represented by fetishism in the Nigerian context. Prophet Harris said; "I am like the prophet Elijah to destroy fetishes".<sup>28</sup>

### **Prophetic Consciousness:**

In Israel as well as Nigeria, the certainty of being called for a specific purpose is one of the most characteristic features of the prophetic consciousness. This certainly is an impending force in the lives of the prophets and at the same time a source of confidence and fortitude. Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel were called by God for special mission among their own people. Majority of Nigerian prophets claimed to have similar call from God which affords them the extra-ordinary power and courage to carry out their mission among the people. Prophets S.K. Abiara, T.O. Obadare, and Idahosa are examples. John Mmuo-Nso, the prophet of the Holy Chapel of Inso Church, Onu in Eastern Nigeria heard the voice of God in his shop while working. He was a local barber, and fairly literate when he heard the call which turned him another person.<sup>29</sup> In addition to the above, God appeared to many people at different times and ways and they were commissioned to do special mission for God. We have some leaders of Established Churches, Pentecostal Churches and Evangelical Movement today in Nigeria who by their ministries have proved to be remnant of God. At the same time there are many among the prophets in the Nigerian Church who claimed to be called by God but who are false prophets. The mere fact that they are called prophets does not qualify them to be remnant of God. The same rule is applicable to leaders in the established churches namely; lay people in the established churches and all evangelical movements and Pentecostal Churches. This is not peculiar to Nigerian situation as this phenomenon was apparent in the Old Testament times and among Old Testament prophets. It is a common phenomenon today to see that the Church of God is expanding daily in Nigeria. However within each group there has always been a small body who also claim to be the remnant.

More than ever before Churches in Nigeria are witnessing a revival period. There are evangelical and charismatic movements all over the nation. Each group comes out of the larger group seeking to purify the larger group. Each group has always claimed to be the body of Christ commissioned to bring Christ to the larger group. It has been the characteristic of each group to have some measures of things in the larger groups which are listed for condemnation. Each group which could be termed the remnant sees herself as light to illuminate the larger group. This is where the idea of 'a remnant' within 'a remnant' surfaced, namely the Church is the remnant of God as asserted in the last chapter, but the groups see themselves or are seen as 'a remnant' of God, to purify the Church and to reawaken the whole

Church of her mission of witnessing to the whole world. This position is similar to the place of the Old Testament prophets among the people of Israel.

### **Features of the Remnant in Nigerian Churches:**

It is however evident that many Christians in Nigerian see the Church as the end of social, political and economic injustices and the antidote to fears without addressing themselves to the basic tenets of Christian faith. It is noted that provisions are made by Churches for thorough knowledge in this truth but many Christians in Nigeria are far away from the qualities of the remnant. The remnant of God today in Nigerian Churches are those who see Christology not only from above, that is to say that God became man in the person of Jesus Christ and dwelt with Nigerians for the purpose of our salvation; but also who see Christology from below, that is to say from the person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who is true man, who went through trial and tribulations for the salvation of sinners. Those who are prepared to tread the path which Jesus Christ trod are the remnant today. There are many churches in Nigeria as well as many who claim to be Christians but there are few 'remnant' in the churches that is those who fulfil the will of God. For the remnant, the righteous remnants live for the course of others. The sufferings of the righteous remnant will continue to be a source of redemption for the unrighteous people. It has always been the duty of the remnant to witness to others around them; such is the place of the church in Nigeria and of course the place of the prophets in Nigerian Churches. Like the remnant in the Old Testament prophets, the Christians as well as the prophets in Nigerian should be prepared to accept that the way of the cross is the paths of the remnant. Jesus Christ said:

If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me (Luke 9:23).

The Nigerian Church will fulfil the remnant's role as light to the nation by admitting that the way of the cross is a royal road. In this wise the Church in Nigerian will stand as imitators of Christ in all spheres of life. To become the remnant of God, the cross must be her heritage. The Church must look at Jesus as the suffering and conquering messiah. Jesus Christ was first the suffering messiah before He became the victorious messiah. The Nigerian Church as 'a remnant' has a duty to present Jesus first as a suffering messiah and then a conquering messiah. The suffering aspect of Christ's mission is efficacious and relevant to the concept of remnant in the Church today. In relating this view to the Church Pobe said:

The sovereignty of God can be asserted only at great cost to the men of faith. But the man of faith also looks beyond the vale of sorrows to see the other side of the cross as the symbol of victory, love, selfless and self-sacrificing devotion to fellow human beings. He or she who seeks to secure the sovereignty of God in God's created world and to secure the Imago Dei in the political and economic area can conquer only in the cross.<sup>30</sup>

This study reveals that there is 'a remnant' of every generation and in Nigeria there is no exception. The Church in Nigeria is 'a remnant' which will by her practices allow the will of God to dominate the nation, through her example of selfless love and self-sacrificing devotion to fellow human beings. Our understanding of the Church is the people who strive daily to do the will of God, and those whose daily practices are in line with the righteous remnant of our submission. We then note that the quest for the remnant though realized fully in Jesus Christ who is the remnant per se, it is yet to be consummated in the life of the Church in Nigeria and the Church throughout the world. This is so because only a few righteous people are alive to the mission of the remnant. Thus the quest for the remnant continues.

### **Remnant: An Act of the Forgiving love of God:**

The concept of the remnant in the prophets stands as a wheel that keeps the purposes of God going in- spite of the disobedience of the elect people of God. The concept of the remnant in the prophets comes from the redemptive action of God.

The shape that Israel's history takes is that of hope in an expected end. This shape is evident in the life of the Church in Nigerian. The conception of the remnant is a supreme expression of that eschatological character of Israel's history.<sup>31</sup> It is this relation of human action to an expected end, this element of eschatological tension that explains why

the grace of God is never conceived of as operating in a mechanical and lifeless way. This eschatological tension is apparent in the character of the remnant. Thus a hopeful response and a sign of grace and new life are obvious in them. The concept of the remnant sustains the existence of Israel as a people chosen by God by looking always beyond the catastrophes, to a people who in every generation does the will of God.

In every generation, the remnants are regarded as a task force, active in building up a-new the people of God. According to Isaiah, the remnants are to be signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts. In Biblical usage, signs and wonders refer to events or things witnessing to the redemptive activity of God. According to this study the object of that redemptive activity is first and foremost Israel and later new Israel i.e. the Church of God. It is this redemptive activity witnessed to by Isaiah, his children and his group of disciples which gives the remnant their significance. The remnant are there in a representative capacity to witness to the present existence and justification in God's sight not of the remnant only but of the whole body of Israel, saints and sinners. They are a sign that God has not forsaken his people. This is clearly brought out in I Kings 19:18. The seven thousand faithful people who do not bow their knees to Baal represent the whole of Israel.<sup>32</sup> We find this symbolism in I Kings 20:15. "He numbered all the people, even all the children of Israel being seven thousand".

This study also submits that the remnant is exercising a vicarious function. For instance, it is the characteristic of the remnant of prophetic and biblical witness that they do not seek a destiny for themselves apart from the judgment that falls on the mass of the people, as if they merited a better fate. The prophets and the men who put together the Old Testament have the same outlook. They give an unsparing condemnation of the national life and religion of Israel. Israel in their testimony appears as anything but the people of God. It is the unflattering picture of their people that has at different times made men wish to disparage and disown the Old Testament and the tie of Israel. It is important to note that the prophets though often weary of their people and filled with horror at their evil hearts and evil ways, never disown their people. It is this people, all Israel that is their whole concern. They took this position not on account of any racial or national loyalty, but by the constraint of the justifying grace and love of God. They conceive the love of God so infinite in its resource and unwearied in purpose that it can bear and overcome the rebellion and sin of Israel.

This witness of the prophets and the remnant culminates in the prophecy of Deutero-Isaiah where Israel, the remnant and the figure of the servant alternate as object, witness and agent of a final revelation and act of the forgiving love of God. This is the essential burden of biblical prophecy. The prophets witnessed to the presence and coming of God in judgment and grace.

The concept of the remnant is not an enthusiast's dream nor a distant ideal. It took a concrete shape in history. At different times in the history of Israel, the remnant of God played the roles of her sustenance.<sup>33</sup> For example, prophet Isaiah and his group of disciples saw themselves as the remnant of God. The same claim can be made of Jeremiah and other prophets, kings like Hezekiah and Josiah, Israel as a nation, the suffering servant, the Qumran community and the Church. The closing chapters of Ezekiel are about the remnant. In Maccabean times, we hear of synagogue of scribes who claimed to represent the new Israel (Macc.2:42; 7:12). The Pharisees also seemed to have thought of themselves as representing the true Israel in distinction from the mass of the people.<sup>34</sup>

This study sees the concept of the remnant as that which looks forward to the ideal Israel or new Israel in the remnant of God.<sup>35</sup> The concept is met in the person of Jesus Christ who is the remnant per se. In His person, all the characteristics of the remnant are met, namely, the remnant's representative function, His vicarious function and His righteousness. The witness of the remnant in the Old Testament is imperfect in all the figures mentioned. In many forms and in different situations, it takes concrete shape and bears its testimony in word and deed but the hour of the great return to God, which the appearance of the remnant is to herald, has not yet struck. But the hope never dies in the Old Testament. The New Testament witnesses to the fulfillment of that hope in judgment and grace through the action of God in Jesus Christ. In that judgment Christ alone abides. In that sense He fulfils all what other figures of the remnant had seen afar off. He is the pledge that the fullness of Israel and the gentiles will be brought in. Through this act, a remnant, that is, the nucleus of a renovated community is formed.<sup>36</sup>

The Church today is the agent of Christ, the bride of Christ and so she is the remnant in the world. She receives this in the power of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Strictly speaking, the resurrection of our Lord is the end of the remnant idea. Here He who is truly the righteous remnant 'survived' the ultimate catastrophe, namely death by

resurrection. In that survival life was maintained and indeed made available by the act of God, and thereafter the presence and kingship of God are manifested in an bound up with the resurrected Lord. The resurrection was like a fly-wheel to the purpose of God in His remnant.

The people who participate in this new life are the new Israel i.e. the Church, the heirs of the people of God, the colony of heaven, and the 'remnant' according to the election of grace (Rom.11:5).<sup>37</sup> It is discovered that the resurrection of our Lord has put the remnant into reverse. Henceforth, it is the mission of the Christian remnant to expand and not to dwindle. Every member of the Church is to witness in order to make the whole world, the remnant of God. This was the original purpose of God for Israel which later became the mission of the Church.

Finally, the remnant witnesses to the wholeness of the Church as something already given, as a present or gift to God. It is the token of fullness already there. The Church today as the remnant of God must not be ruled by the same laws as that of the kingdom of the world. The Church is to submit herself to the rule of God and the fellowship of his people mediated through word and sacraments. In his discussion of the position of the Church in the world, Campbell says:

In response to the word of the Apostles and prophets, acting in faith and obedience as the Israel of God it will discover anew the abundant life of Zion, the Jerusalem from above, the mother of us all.<sup>38</sup>

In the light of Campbell's discussion, the term "the remnant shall return" which is the name of Isaiah's elder son connotes among others, return to Zion, return from exile, repentance, and above all it means return to God and be under God's perpetual sovereignty, in spite of the horror of the judgment.<sup>39</sup> The remnant's concept points to the righteous people in every generation, who in spite of the hostility of the world, namely; persecution, chastisement, war and exile remain faithful to God. The remnant idea in our study points more to the faithful and righteous people of God in the face of catastrophe rather than the survivors from the catastrophe. The Old Testament prophets' concepts of the remnant established the fact that in every age God always has His witnesses who stand to fulfil His purpose in the world. These witnesses are not only God's representative, but also the embodiment of the whole world. For in them the expectation of God for the world is met.

It is our submission in this study that all the remnant figures in the Old Testament were sustaining the event of the world until Jesus Christ, the remnant *per se* appeared. Thus the Old Testament remnant figures look forward to the perfection of the remnant concept in the person of Jesus Christ, the faithful and righteous remnant. The Church today as the remnant of God looks backward to the person and ministry of Christ. It is on what is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ that the universal Church in general and prophetic movements in Nigerian Church in particular pattern their lifestyles.

It is worthy of note that all the efforts of this study as discovered in the remnant of God is to the intent that all spheres of life are brought under God's control. These spheres of life are free of crime. Hence Sowale said:

It then follows that a life that is brought under the relationships, namely, a wholesome relationship between God and humanity and between humanity and humanity is a life free of crime.<sup>40</sup>

Thus 'a remnant' is a people in relationship and touch with God. 'A remnant' is a people who does the will of God throughout life, and also encourages others to do the same. The Church by her nature is that remnant and the Church through the righteous remnant within her works for the consummation of the remnant of God. The perfect life where God reigns through and through is the life of 'a remnant'. Hence 'a remnant' will return 'to God' and the adequate interpretation of the concept of the remnant is God's presence in creation.



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2. K.A. Dickson, African Theological en route, Papers from the Pan-African Conference of Third World Theologians December 17-23, 1977, New York: Orbis Books. 1977. P.98 cf. Williams Hebrewism of West Africa, George Allen and Unwin Limited.
3. S.O. Abogunrin, op.cit. p.14.
4. E. Adebola Ademowo, 'The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and Culture' Bishop's Charge delivered to the First Session of the Sixth Synod at Bishop John Falope Memorial centre, Ipetu-Ijesa on Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1990, p.3.  

Bishop Ademowo submits that the Gospel as a divine revelation cannot in any way be equated with any human culture. The Gospel polishes and refines cultures. Such is the place of the Church in Africa. It started as a small remnant and is still a remnant to transform Nigerian culture.
5. Ibid p.4, See also Prof. M.F. Euler – Ajayi's Anniversary Sermon preached on 22-12-1907 and published in the African Church Chronicle (Iwe Irohin Yoruba) A quarterly magazine devoted to the Affairs of the African of the African Church Vol. III No.4, of April – June 1936 p.10ff.
6. Read for instance, Harry R. Boer, A Short History of the early Church, Ibadan: Daystar Press 1976, pp.83-94.
7. J.E. Flint, The Growth of European Influence in West Africa in the Nineteenth Century, Ed. By J.F. Ade Ajayi and Ian Espie, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press 1965 p.370.
8. Richard Niebhur: Christ and Culture, New York: T & T Clark 1972 Edition p.19ff. Niebhur sees Tertulian and Tolstoi as the Chief Exemplars of Christ against culture. They emphasize the opposition between claims of Christ and those of all forms of human culture. They do not see it as their responsibility to try to build a stable order in human society. Their duty is to withdraw into a community of their own in which they do their best to minimize their earthly desires and to reduce their contacts with those outside the saved community as much as possible. This position is fallible.
9. E. Bolaji Idowu, Towards and Indigenous Church. London: Oxford University Press 1965, p.7.
10. T.A. Burkill, The Evolution of Christian Thought, London: Cornell University Press 1971, pp.57-72. Also Harry Boer op.cit. p.83-94 and p.156. It is remarkable to note that their theologies developed within the cultural (socio-political, economic and Religions) context of their time.
11. A good example is the 'Logos' concept which played such a key role in the development of Christology.
12. T.A. Burkill, op.cit., p.117.
13. J.B. Schuyler, S.J. Conceptions of Christianity in the context of Tropical Africa: Nigerian Reactions to its advent Ed. By C.G. Baeta, Christianity in Tropical Africa – Studies presented and discussed at the Seventh International African Seminar, University of Ghana, April 1965, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1968 p.203.
14. See for instance his African Religions and Philosophy and concepts of God in Africa.
15. Ed. Kwesi A. Dickson and Paul Ellingworth. Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs, New York: Orbis Books 1969, p.12.

16. Mercy A. Oduyoye. The Value of African Religions Beliefs and Practices for Christian, African Theology en route, Papers from the Pan African conference of Third World Theologians December 17-23, 1977. Ghana, New York: Orbis Books 1977, pp.109 – 116.
17. T.F. Jemiriye, 'The Concept of Ese Among the Yoruba', A seminar presented at the Department of Religious Studies University of Ibadan September 8, 1988, p.6.
18. E. Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief, London: Longman Group Limited, 1962 p.108.
19. Ibid. p.112.
20. Ibid. p.112.
21. J.O. Awollalu, 'Sin and its Removal in African Traditional Religion, Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies X/1 June 1976, p.9.
22. D.O. Akintunde, comparison of related Features between the ancient Israelite and Nigerian Prophetic Movements, Unpublished B.A. Essay, Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, July 1988 p.12
23. E.O. Babalola, Christianity in West Africa, An Historical Analysis, Ado-Ekiti Bamgboye & Co Press Nig. Ltd. 1976 pp.163-165. See also E. Bolaji Idowu, Towards an Indigenous Church, p.43 and D.O. Akintunde op.cit. p.40.
24. D.O. Akintunde op.cit 40.
25. Ibid.40
26. Nathaniel I. Ndiokwere, Prophecy and revolution. The role of Prophets in the Independent African Churches and in Biblical Tradition, London: SPCK 1981 p.237.
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38. J.C. Campbell op.cit., p.85.
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40. S.O. Sowale 'The Old Testament Basis for Crime Detection and Control, A Paper presented at the Annual religious Studies Conference held at the University of Ibadan August 11 – 14, 1987, p.9.

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