

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

SHEAR-JASHUB; OR THE REMNANT SECTIONS IN ISAIAH.

BY THE REVEREND THEOPHILUS J. GAEHR, PH.D.

YELLOW SPRINGS, OHIO.

FORMERLY PROF. OF THE BIBLE, ETC., ANTIOCH COLLEGE

A class of twenty-six passages, some of them sections of considerable length, form the object of the present study and discussion.

Shear-Jashub, which signifies, "A remnant shall return," was Isaiah's first son. The LXX renders it: *Ho Cataleiphtheis Iasoub*. Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible has only this brief remark on the name and on this class of passages: "A symbolical name given to a son of Isaiah to signify the return of the remnant to God after the punishment at the hand of the Assyrians."

1. Our first task will be a statement, exhibition, and brief exegetical examination of the passages in question.

Isaiah i., 8-9. In the translation of Isaac Leeser, which I prize very highly and which I desire to recommend to every student of the Old Testament, this passage is rendered thus: "And left is the daughter of Zion as a hut in a vineyard, as a lodge in a cucumber-field, as a besieged city. Unless the LORD of hosts had left unto us a remnant ever so small, like Sodom should we have been, unto Gomorrah should we have been compared." (The A. V. has "cottage," instead of "booth.") The important Hebrew words here are *hothir* and *notherah*.

We next refer to iv. 2-3: "In that day shall the growth of the Lord be beautiful and glorious."¹ This passage represents three new Hebrew words (*peleytath*, *hannish'ar*, *hannothar*). Leeser: "On that day shall the

¹See The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text: A New Translation. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America. 5677. 1917. With a few exceptions, noted in particular, all the Old Testament quotations in this article are made from this translation.

sprout of the Lord be for ornament and for honour.") Dr. G. Campbell Morgan analyzes and summarizes the passage as follows: "Material prosperity, moral purity, and mighty protection."

Isaiah vi. 13, which has been translated quite differently: "As an oak, whose stock remaineth, when they cast their leaves."

We now come to a cluster of most important verses bearing still more directly upon our theme: viz. vii. 3; x. 14. The prophet meets Ahaz, the only one of the four kings of Isaiah's time who did not that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah his God, like his father David, and offers to him the divine sign of Immanuel ("God with us"). Isaiah viii. 1-3 is closely connected with this: "Take thee a great table, and write upon it in common script . . . Maher-shalal-hash-baz, i. e., the spoil speedeth, the prey hasteth."

Concerning these three sons now (Shear-Jashub, Immanuel, and Maher-shalal-hash-baz), we find the following important announcement in viii. 18: "Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth in mount Zion." Plainly all these words are prophetic of ix. 6-7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful in counsel is God the Mighty, the Everlasting Father, the Ruler of peace." (The Jewish translation of 1917 has the Hebrew names in the text, and their translation, as above, in the margin.) This prophecy has reference to no one but the God-man, born of the Virgin Mary in the city of Bethlehem, which is Christ the Lord. Otherwise they cannot be understood and would be absolutely useless.

The next reference to the Remnant is found in x. 19, couched in symbolical language. The Hebrew here uses *shear*.

In immediate connection therewith we have one of the strongest passages in x. 20-22: "They that are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more stay upon him that

smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. . . . Only a remnant of them shall return; an extermination is determined." Here the Hebrew is very simple (*shear-jashub*).

The next passage to be considered is xi. 11-12: "The Lord will set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, that shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt . . . and from the islands of the sea." (Leeser: "Acquire the remnant" [*Ligenoth eth-shear*]). Nothing could be plainer than the connection, in this chapter, between this promise and the Messianic redemption. Note, also, verse 16 of the same chapter. Not only the return of the Remnant but also a highway prepared for the same, is definitely promised. How great is the grace and condescension of God!

We now lose sight of the Remnant until we reach xxviii. 5, where, in the great temperance chapter of this prophetic book, we have the sparkling promise that "in that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of His people" (*shear*).

Again, in xxx. 15-17: "For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In sitting still ["returning," R. V.] and rest shall ye be saved." The Hebrew verb used in these verses is *nohartem*. This passage, with similar ones, suggests a hasty review of the predictions concerning the preceding destruction in i. 25; iii. 18; vi. 11-12, and others. (Notice the terms and synonyms for destruction.)

The climax of the Remnant prophecies is reached in xxxv. 8-10 (repeated in li. 11, where, however, the same Hebrew word is rendered "the redeemed of the LORD" in A. V.): "The redeemed [*geullim*] shall walk there: and the ransomed [*peduyey*] of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion."

Are we indeed guilty of jumping at conclusions if we assume that this incidentally affords a *proof for the unity of the book*, intensified by the discovery, as we shall presently see, of the Remnant idea in many other passages in the so-called Deutero-Isaiah? I was amused some

time ago, in finding in Lyman Abbott's delightful volume "The Great Companion" (p. 28) the following reference in his chapter on "The Quest After God:" "Or Isaiah? how did he know that they who wait upon Jehovah shall renew their strength; shall mount up with wings as eagles; shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint?" Everybody knows that this verse is taken from the so-called introductory chapter of Deutero-Isaiah (xl. 31). Does Dr. Abbott, then, really mean to accept Isaiah as its author? If so, we should have gained an important witness for our side of the case.

Even in the historical interlude (xxxvii. 4:31, 32), we find the subject of our search, the Remnant. This chapter, you will recall, narrates Sennacherib's invasion and the defiance offered the Israelites and their king, Hezekiah, by the Assyrian king's legate, Rabshakeh. In his distress Hezekiah sent a strong delegation to Isaiah the prophet, urging him, "It may be Jehovah thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom his master, the king of Assyria, hath sent to defy the living God, and will rebuke the words which Jehovah, thy God hath heard; wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left" (lit., "found:" Heb. *hashsheerith*). Then Jehovah by his prophet answers as follows: "The Remnant that is escaped [*hannisharah, sheerith*] of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and out of Mount Zion they that shall escape: the zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this."

We now come to that part of the Book of Isaiah which has been the battleground for so long a time and has been called 'Deutero-Isaiah' by the higher critics. It is not surprising to find ten references to the Remnant here, the first meeting our eyes in xlvi. 3 (*kol-sheerith*).

Again, in xlix. 6: "To restore the preserved of Israel" (*natsir*); lii. 8: "For they shall see, eye to eye, the LORD returning to Zion" (*shub*). The A. V. here has, "When the LORD shall bring again to Zion."

Isaiah lvi. 8. *Nidchey Israel.*

Isaiah lix. 20. *Goel uleshabey.* In the A. V. and in

Leeser the definite article, "*the Redeemer*," is used. The return of the Remnant is made at once a prophecy and an emblem of its spiritual return, its conversion unto Jehovah.

In lxiii. 16-17 we find a touching appeal to Jehovah for his return to the outcasts (*shub*).

Isaiah lxx. 8-9. Here the preciousness of the Remnant in God's eyes is indicated.

We now come to the last chapter of the book, where we find two references to the Remnant, the first in verse 19 (*peleytim*). Lesser: "I will display a sign . . . and will send from them those that escape."

And as the star followed the Wise men from the East until they found the Messiah, so this benign star leads us, too, on to the concluding verse of our discussion (22), rendered as follows by Leeser: "For as the new heavens and the earth, which I will make, shall have permanence before me, saith the LORD, so shall exist permanently [lit. "stand"] your seed and your name."

The circle is completed, for we have found the Remnant in the first and now also in the last chapter of Isaiah. The idea of the Remnant thus forms a substantial unit in this prophetic record.

2. Our next object will be to tabulate and to classify the Hebrew words, to note their frequency and their meaning.

The most frequent word, of course, is *shub*, to turn, return. Sometimes it is used figuratively, of state or condition, to come back, to be restored. It occurs twelve times.

With this is closely associated *shear*, as indicated in the name which forms the present subject. *Hannishar* with its derivatives occurs several times, and originally means to be left, to survive, to be firm, the noun *sheerith* signifying a remainder, a residue.

The root *yathar* occurs five times, usually in the Niphal stem, i. e., to be left over, to remain; a remnant.

Another word of like frequency is *palat*, to slip out, to escape, (in the Hiphil stem, to place in safety).

Nidchey occurs twice, and signifies to be driven, cast out, chase away.

Peduyey also occurs twice, and means to be redeemed, released, set free, without any special reference to the ransom price of the release or substitution which we find in other words, especially in the synonym *geullim*, noted in chap. xxxv.

The remaining words are noted in single instances only:

Sarid, a fugitive, a survivor, one who escaped.

Matsebeth, stump of a tree.

Naphats, to scatter or drive about.

Natsar, to watch, guard, preserve.

3. Thirdly, let us notice the teaching of these passages. We may sum it up as follows, again observing the order of frequency. The Remnant is greatly reduced, small, and lonely; but, nevertheless, it forms the nucleus of the new nation. It is the object of the Lord's special and faithful care and of his zealous activity. He provides for their safety. He makes the Remnant a sign to kings and nations. He holds up before them a great future, a mighty destiny, and entrusts them with a mission to the Gentiles. They are the saviours of the nation (i. 8-9), a holy stock or seed, delighting in the Lord and, in turn, the object of his delight. With the return of the Remnant, and their conversion unto the mighty God, a new hope and trust in Jehovah is born. Theirs is to be a happy state henceforth; they are to take root downward and bear fruit upward. They were the object of prayer, but also learned to call upon the name of the Lord and had the assurance of salvation. Great blessings are promised them, as they were to bless all the nations of the earth. But the crowning promise is the coming of a personal Redeemer, appearing as a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit, and the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him.

This Remnant, then, this new people of God coming from the old stock and purified from their former sins, is to be the Church of the New Testament,

"The Church our blest Redeemer saved
With his own precious blood."

Compare Heb. xii. 22-24. The wonder is that these promises were announced so far in advance. Isaiah labored about 720 *B. C.* The date of the return of the Remnant from the Babylonian exile is 537 *B. C.*, i. e., 183 years after the prophecy, and about four times that length of time until their fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

We may get some additional light on the subject under consideration by glancing at the contemporary witnesses of Isaiah. See Joel ii. 32; Amos iii. 12; v. 3, 15; ix. 8, 9. What remains is good wheat. Micah ii. 12; iv. 7 and, lastly in the Bethlehem chapter, v. 7.

Let us continue our investigation by tracing the Remnant into the New Testament, and there study the following passages: Rom. ix. 27 ff., concerning which C. I. Scofield, in his Reference Bible, has the following note:—

“In the history of Israel a ‘remnant’ may be discerned, a spiritual Israel within the national Israel. In Elijah’s time seven thousand had not bowed the knee to Baal. In Isaiah’s time it was the ‘very small remnant’ for whose sake God still forbore to destroy the nation. During the captivities the remnant appears in Jews like Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, Esther, and Mordecai. At the end of the 70 years of Babylonian captivity it was the remnant which returned under Ezra and Nehemiah. At the advent of our Lord, John the Baptist, Simeon, Anna, and they that ‘looked for the redemption in Jerusalem,’ were the remnant. During the Church age the remnant is composed of believing Jews. But the chief interest in the remnant is prophetic. During the great tribulation a remnant out of all Israel will turn to Jesus as Messiah, and will become his witnesses after the removal of the Church. Some of these will undergo martyrdom, some will be spared to enter the millennial kingdom. Many of the Psalms express, prophetically, the joys and sorrows of the tribulation remnant.”

Again Rom. xi. 2-5; xi. 25-26. How beautifully Scripture explains Scripture! According to these statements, Israel’s present rejection is only partial and temporary. May we not recognize in the recent historical reversals and developments in Palestine a fulfillment of “the Remnant’s return” as well as of “the Lord’s returning unto Zion?”

In conclusion, permit me to introduce *a few authorities* from modern Christian literature on the subject.

Professor George Adam Smith, of Aberdeen, has the following paragraph in one of his commentaries in the Expositors' Bible:—

“Over against this moral conviction that Judah must be devastated for her sin, and this political, that Assyria is to be the instrument, even to the extreme of a siege of Jerusalem, the prophet still strongly holds to the religious assurance that God cannot allow His shrine to be violated or His people to be exterminated. At first it is only of the people that Isaiah speaks—the Remnant. Similarly when he speaks of God's grace and salvation the objects of these are again collective ('the escaped,' also a collective noun); a 'holy seed'; a 'stock' or a 'stump.' It is a 'restored nation' whom he sees under the Messiah, the perpetuity of a city and a state. What we consider a most personal and particularly individual matter—the forgiveness of sin—he promises, with two exceptions only, to the community: 'This people that dwelleth therein hath its iniquity forgiven.' We can understand all this social, collective, and wholesale character of his language only if we keep in mind his divinely appointed work—the substance and perpetuity of a purified and secure Church of God.”

The late Dr. A. B. Davidson, in his “Old Testament Theology,” has a beautiful chapter on “The Inner Israel” which contains the following:

“They are not all Israel who are of Israel; within the outer frame of Israel, the nominal people of Jehovah, there is an inner circle to whom, in truth, God is communicating the blessings of the covenant. . . . God's external treatment of the individual, or the people, is not the index of God's true relation to either. (Job, Jeremiah.) The dispersion of the nation, or at least the breaking up of the external forms of the religious state, did not invalidate religion. This may seem a commonplace to us, but perhaps it was little short of a revolution in the thinking of many in Israel.”

Dr. James M. Gray, in his “Introduction to the Prophetic Scriptures,” says:—

“The tribes of Israel will be re-gathered, and a remnant purified by discipline shall form the nucleus of the reconstituted nation, among whom Jehovah will again dwell with blessings, temporal and spiritual. This reconstituted nation of Israel will be the germ, so to speak, of the Messianic kingdom and extend over the whole earth.”

In his article on the “Remnant” in the Standard Bible Dictionary, Dr. A. C. Zenos uses the following language:

“The term has, besides its general, also a semi-technical sense. The latter arose during that period in Israel's history when the

judgment of Jehovah upon the people for national sin was announced by the prophets. A misleading impression was apt to be produced by their warning words, to the effect that punishment meant extermination. This the prophets hastened to rectify. A portion of the people should survive the purging process and constitute the Remnant (Residue). But being rescued from destruction was only the beginning of the Remnant's career. Whereas the judgment of Jehovah was to scatter the body of the nation among their enemies, the Remnant would be gathered together from all such places. It would then form a nucleus of a new Israel, grow into large prosperity, live in accordance with Jehovah's holy law, become holy, and recognize Jehovah as its God. All this, however, was to occur as the result of the gracious control of Jehovah's love for His Chosen People ('The zeal of Jehovah of hosts shall perform it.')

The scarlet line which binds together both parts of Isaiah, as well as the Old and New Testaments, ends and finds its highest fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the world's Redeemer.