

THE REMNANT REFORMATION RESISTANCE (Part One of a Two-part study)

Throughout redemptive history, God has always preserved a remnant of believers for Himself, who remain faithful to the Lord, in spite of ongoing, rampant apostasy. Even when true followers of Christ are a microscopic minority, a remnant has survived from one generation to the next, resisting every attempt by Satan to deceptively lead them astray. The apostle Paul viewed himself as a participant in the remnant of Jewish believers in the first century who had accepted Jesus as their Messiah, Savior and Lord, although they were surrounded by the overwhelming rejection of Christ from apostate Judaism. Notice how he expresses it in Romans 11:2-5 –

“God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? ‘Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life.’ But what is the divine response to him? ‘I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’ In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice.”

Sadly, it wasn’t long after Paul wrote those words that the Christian faith entered into an unholy alliance with the Roman Empire; eventually resulting in the Roman Catholic Church. But even during its apostate rule and reign, there was always a remnant, standing in opposition. It wasn’t until the Protestant Reformation, that the remnant became a movement, furthering the cause of Christ in our world in a very significant manner. That reformation was so successful due to its laser focus on purging Christianity from its doctrinal and ethical corruption. This is why we must never forget that all apostasy originates from false teaching, which has its source in demonic deception. Paul establishes this connection in 1 Timothy 4:1, where we read the following –

“But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons. . .”

While various apostasies have occurred throughout the Church Age, it seems as if the worst one of all will be reserved for the very end of the Church’s time on earth. Jesus warns us of this in His Olivet Discourse, recorded in Matthew 24, in response to the disciples’ question in v3. These warnings are repeated by Paul throughout his epistles, with one in particular that is especially relevant to the issue at hand, written in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 –

“Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction. . .”

Paul is seeking to reassure the Thessalonian believers that they have not missed out on the Rapture, due to the fact that in God’s prophetic timetable, the Christian faith will be in an apostate condition prior to the Lord’s return for His Church. But here is the ironic aspect of apostasy: no one is ever willing to recognize and/or admit that they are an apostate. More about that, next.