

THE ROLE AND RULE OF THE REMNANT

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It is very difficult for us to communicate to the churches all that God has revealed to us, in consequence of tradition; for we are differently situated from any other people that ever existed upon this earth; consequently those former revelations cannot be suited to our conditions; they were given to other people, who were before us; but in the last days, God was to call a remnant, in which was to be deliverance, as well as in Jerusalem and Zion. Now if God should give no more revelations, where will we find Zion and this remnant? The time is near when desolation is to cover the earth, and then God will have a place of deliverance in His remnant, and in Zion.¹

—Joseph Smith, Jr.

The “rule of the remnant” is found throughout the scriptures and in every standard work. It is the “remnant” that becomes righteous. The “remnant” are those who seek truth, and hear and obey the voice of the Lord. It is the remnant who will remain obedient to the things taught by the Savior in life and in scripture (see D&C 64:34–36; Mosiah 26:28; Helaman 12:23; Alma 5:38). It is to the New Jerusalem the “remnant shall be gathered” (D&C 45:43) and to Jerusalem the remnant will return (Joel 2:32).

Elijah

Elijah, after his encounter with the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel, “arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba...” After a meal at the last rest stop, he began to travel again “...a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I *am* not better than my fathers” (1 Kings 19:3–4). Feeling that he was still not far enough away from humanity “he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God” (1 Kings 19:8). The prophet, finding a cave at Mount Horeb, took up housekeeping and moved in. The Lord spoke to Elijah while in the cave asking him, “What doest thou here, Elijah?” (1 Kings 19:9). Frustrated because the masses have rejected his message, Elijah reminded the Lord of his faithful work, saying, “I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away” (1 Kings 19:10, 14). Elijah feels that with all the work he has done for the Lord, including the preaching and teaching, he has been more than discarded by the children of Israel as they even seek his life. The Lord then reminded Elijah of the “remnant rule” governing all preachers of righteousness who issue the call from the Lord to repent: “Yet I have left *me*

¹ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church* 2:52.

seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him” (1 Kings 19:18).

Isaiah

When Isaiah received his call as prophet, he heard the voice of the Lord say, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Isaiah responded, “here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8). During his interview in Isaiah 6, Isaiah is given the responsibility to declare repentance, not only to ancient Israel, but to Israel in all dispensations. One can only wonder what was going through the prophet’s mind when he is told by the Lord to “Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed” (Isaiah 6:9–10). It would seem that the first response of Isaiah might be, Why preach to deaf ears, blind eyes and hard hearts?

Something bewildered the prophet because he questions the Lord as to “how long” (v. 11) is it going to be this way? The answer from the Lord remains somewhat perplexing. “Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate...and *there be* a great forsaking in the midst of the land” (Isaiah 6:11–12). The conclusion and revelation from the Lord is that even though the preaching to the masses must take place, and the majority of men will reject the words of the prophet, there will still be a remnant who will not: “But yet in it *shall be* a tenth, and *it shall return...*” (Isaiah 6:13). The remnant motif is recorded as history and prophecy throughout the scriptures as the masses reject the words of the Lord and a righteous remnant is spared as they accept the teachings of the true prophets. A careful reading of Isaiah would force one to conclude that nothing should be expected from the masses. Isaiah learned and taught that the remnant exists, they need to be encouraged, and most important, the remnant will return and build again Zion. Though the word goes forth to the collective community, the real job of the prophet teacher is not to convert and change the direction of the masses, but instead to confirm and strengthen the righteous remnant that is always found among the listeners.

The Mass-man

There are two types of people found in the pages of scripture and in the world: the “mass-man” and the “remnant.” Each have different attitudes and goals.

The direction of the mass movement is always predictable, but the direction of the individual is not. At the same time, the direction of the masses is not necessarily the direction of the individual. Hence, the rule of the “remnant” that can be found throughout scripture. *The remnant can, and usually does, function independent of the masses.* They are capable of acting rather than being acted upon by popular opinion, direction, and thought. These are the believers who are seeking for the best in life and in their character, seeing beyond the limited vision and judgment of the masses. The other individual mindset is one of safety in numbers—a collective group called the “masses.” This collective group is controlled by the movement of the mass-man, caught like mindless driftwood in the cultural current and flood of vogue styles and fads. They are unconsciously controlled by their trend-maker peers and the money spent on Madison Avenue. These are led around by others who make intellectual, style and cultural decisions for “what is best for all.” Through these choices, they are subtly taking away freedom of thought and action in the statement that “everybody is doing it” and therefore it must be right. One cannot have freedom without responsibility, and that responsibility often resides in standing up for what

is right, righteous, and at least what is “best” for the individual. This stand is usually taken at the expense of being rejected by the mass-man, as happened to Elijah.

Albert Jay Nock has suitably explained the differences between the masses and the remnant by writing:

As the word *masses* is commonly used, it suggests agglomerations of poor and unprivileged people, labouring people, proletarians, and it means nothing like that: it means simply the majority. The mass-man is one who has neither the force of intellect to apprehend the principles issuing in what we know as the humane life, nor the force of character to adhere to those principles steadily and strictly as laws of conduct; and because such people make up the great, the overwhelming majority of mankind, they are called collectively the *masses*. The line of differentiation between the masses and the Remnant is set invariably by quality, not by circumstance. The Remnant are those who by force of intellect are able to apprehend these principles, and by force of character are able, at least measurably, to cleave to them; the masses are those who are unable to do either.²

The Remnant

The *hope* of humanity—though we are told differently in the media—is not in the action and direction of the masses. The only *real hope* that one might have for the human race and even organized religion may only be found in the *righteous remnant*. The result of a message that is constructed and delivered to change the masses will usually harden them in their opinions, attitudes, habits and sins; however, the remnant is capable of recognizing the message and the significance of the message. The world is never changed by the masses, but the environment in which the masses live is often created by the remnant. The remnant are the ones who formulate and accomplish the greatest changes that will affect humanity for the longest amount of time. The news media, on the other hand, likes to focus on the movement of the mass-man, as though this group of “followers” makes the changes that effect mankind. Experience teaches that the masses move together, following one another in the demand of what they *want* for the least amount of work and expectation. All promises made to satisfy the masses must be constructed to satisfy the lowest common dominator of intellect, taste, and character of the mass-man.³ The remnant seek for the best that can be offered for the benefit blessing of the highest possible potential that might be obtained through the personal responsibility of individual work and righteousness. The remnant are almost invisible among the masses. It is not known necessarily who they are, where they are, how many there are, or what they are doing, or will do. Therefore, the prophetic message must be delivered to the masses, knowing only two things about the remnant: *first*, that they exist, and *second* that they will find and listen to the message.⁴

The remnant motif is found throughout scripture because it is a “remnant” that will be saved, not the whole. At the time of Hezekiah, King of Judah, we read of the “remnant” of Judah and the blessing of this remnant in the last days: “And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD *of hosts* shall do this” (Isaiah 37:31–32). Isaiah taught in his introduction that the Lord “left unto us a very small remnant” (Isaiah 1:9) or Judah would have been left as desolate as Sodom and Gomorrah. It is a

² In Edwin J. Feulner Jr., *The March of Freedom*, [Dallas:Spence Publishing Company, 1998], 203.

³ *Ibid*, 207.

⁴ *Ibid*, 209.

remnant that is spared in destruction, a remnant that will return, and a remnant that will be found righteous, as both Isaiah and Paul teach:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but *shall stay upon the LORD*, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.

For though thy people *Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return*: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. (Isaiah 10:20–22; see also Romans 9:27)

One need only to do a search on the word “remnant” in the Old Testament to see how important this motif and doctrine is among the ancient prophets. It is also discussed by the apostles of the early church in the New Testament, indicating that there was even a remnant among those who “profess” to be part of the remnant that is saved by membership in the church. Nephi in the Book of Mormon declared that those who were descendants of Lehi were “...a remnant of the house of Israel, a branch who have been broken off...” (1 Nephi 19:24). This is the same remnant that Moroni address in the Title Page of the Book of Mormon as he declared that the record was “written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel.” And the purpose of this scripture “...is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever.” Even though the Lehites were considered a remnant of the house of Israel, there would be only a remnant of Lehi’s seed that would receive the record. “...For after the book of which I have spoken shall come forth, and be written unto the Gentiles...they shall carry them forth unto the remnant of our seed. And then shall the remnant of our seed know concerning us, how that we came out from Jerusalem, and that they are descendants of the Jews (2 Nephi 30:3–4; see also Mormon 5:9). One of the greatest discourses on the remnant and the remnant responsibilities is given by Moroni in the book of Alma.

Moroni said unto them: Behold, we are *a remnant of the seed of Jacob*; yea, *we are a remnant of the seed of Joseph*, whose coat was rent by his brethren into many pieces; yea, and now behold, let us remember to keep the commandments of God, or our garments shall be rent by our brethren, and we be cast into prison, or be sold, or be slain.

Yea, *let us preserve our liberty as a remnant of Joseph*; yea, let us remember the words of Jacob, before his death, for behold, *he saw that a part of the remnant of the coat of Joseph was preserved and had not decayed*. And he said—*Even as this remnant of garment of my son hath been preserved, so shall a remnant of the seed of my son be preserved by the hand of God, and be taken unto himself, while the remainder of the seed of Joseph shall perish, even as the remnant of his garment*.

Now behold, this giveth my soul sorrow; nevertheless, my soul hath joy in my son, because of that part of his seed which shall be taken unto God.

Now behold, this was the language of Jacob.

And now *who knoweth but what the remnant of the seed of Joseph*, which shall perish as his garment, are those who have dissented from us? Yea, and even it shall be ourselves if we do not stand fast in the faith of Christ. (Alma 46:23–27)

Not only does Captain Mormon speak of this remnant of Joseph, but also does the prophet Amos in the Old Testament explain that "...the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph" (Amos 5:15). Mormon continued this same thought, stating as does Amos, that "Surely he hath blessed the house of Jacob, and hath been merciful unto the seed of Joseph" and that the Lord shall "...again bring a remnant of the seed of Joseph to the knowledge of the Lord their God" (3 Nephi 5:21, 23). To make sure, this blessing to the "remnant of Joseph" that Amos spoke of, Mormon continued to teach that there were other prophets from the Old World that spoke of the remnant motif of Joseph:

Yea, the prophet Zenos did testify of these things, and also Zenock spake concerning these things, because they testified particularly concerning us, who are the remnant of their seed.

Behold, our father Jacob also testified concerning a remnant of the seed of Joseph. And behold, are not we a remnant of the seed of Joseph? And these things which testify of us, are they not written upon the plates of brass which our father Lehi brought out of Jerusalem? (3 Nephi 10:16–17)

Moroni, translating the record of the Jaredites, discusses the statements of Amos, his father Mormon and his namesake, by expanding an understanding of the blessing promised the remnant of Joseph to be restricted to those who believe and accept the gospel:

And that a New Jerusalem should be built up upon this land, unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph, for which things there has been a type.

For as Joseph brought his father down into the land of Egypt, even so he died there; wherefore, *the Lord brought a remnant of the seed of Joseph out of the land of Jerusalem, that he might be merciful unto the seed of Joseph that they should perish not*, even as he was merciful unto the father of Joseph that he should perish not.

Wherefore, *the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built upon this land; and it shall be a land of their inheritance*; and they shall build up a holy city unto the Lord, like unto the Jerusalem of old; and they shall no more be confounded, until the end come when the earth shall pass away.

And there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and they shall be like unto the old save the old have passed away, and all things have become new.

And then cometh the New Jerusalem; and *blessed are they who dwell therein, for it is they whose garments are white through the blood of the Lamb; and they are they who are numbered among the remnant of the seed of Joseph, who were of the house of Israel.*

And then also cometh the Jerusalem of old; and the inhabitants thereof, blessed are they, for *they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb; and they are they who were scattered and gathered in from the four quarters of the earth, and from the north countries, and are partakers of the fulfilling of the covenant which God made with their father, Abraham.* (Ether 13:6–11)

Moroni, like his father Mormon, explained in verse 11 above that the gathering of the lost tribes of Israel will not be a whole (or mass) gathering of Israel, but instead a "righteous remnant" gathering:

Yea, and surely shall he again bring a remnant of the seed of Joseph to the *knowledge of the Lord their God*. And as surely as the Lord liveth, will *he gather in from the four*

quarters of the earth all the remnant of the seed of Jacob, who are scattered abroad upon all the face of the earth. (3 Nephi 5:23–24)

In this dispensation the Lord also explained that the gathering that is beginning to take place is a spiritual gathering among the remnant, saying, “I, the Lord, will make known unto you what I will that ye shall do from this time until the next conference, which shall be held in Missouri, upon *the land which I will consecrate unto my people, which are a remnant of Jacob, and those who are heirs according to the covenant*” (D&C 52:2).

Professed to Know God

President Kimball once explained that the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1–13) represented the members of the Church. Therefore, the parable is teaching a lesson about the remnant motif. President Kimball said:

I believe that the Ten Virgins represent the people of the Church of Jesus Christ and not the rank and file of the world. All of the virgins, wise and foolish, had accepted the invitation to the wedding supper; they had knowledge of the program and had been warned of the important day to come. They were not the gentiles or the heathens or the pagans, nor were they necessarily corrupt and reprobate, but they were knowing people who were foolishly unprepared for the vital happenings that were to affect their eternal lives.⁵

This idea should make many members stop and think about the oil trimmed in the lamps and what caused the separation of the foolish from the wise *members of the Church*. The Lord taught also about a separation between the masses and the righteous remnant in salvation. He stated, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and *many (masses) there be which go in thereat*: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and *few (the remnant) there be that find it*. (Matthew 7:13–14).

One worldly nature of man and beast is that of self survival and self preservation. The natural tendency when reading a few verses like those immediately above is to ascribe to the masses an identity of non-members. The result would be that the “few there be that find it” could only be those who know the gospel of Jesus Christ, i.e., members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All parables taught by Christ in the New Testament were specifically directed to the members of the church, or those who knew the gospel. Let us presume for a moment that the discussion about the “straitness of the way,” is also exclusively about those who know and understand the gospel, i.e., members of the church. In other words, let us “liken the scriptures unto ourselves.” This point of view is uncomfortable and possibly even insulting as it insinuates that an active member of the church could actually be inactive in the gospel, becoming numbered among the “masses” and not the righteous “remnant.”

There exists an element of inspiration found in scripture that seems to work directly on the translator and translation of a text, which is connected to other prophets and translations of scripture in different dispensations. This might be seen as the same “word” becomes connected to the similar thought or doctrine in all scripture. For the sake of this dialogue, the word examined in this context is “profess” or “professed.” It is found in the different volumes of scripture that are used by the LDS community. The discussion of the masses and the remnant also should also include likening this scriptural concept to the members of the church. To do this,

⁵ Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* [Salt Lake City:Deseret Book Co., 1972], 253.

it first must be understood that the scriptures teach that among the masses of Latter-day Saints, there exist some that are not considered “saints” by the Lord. A brief review of the scriptures that relate to those who “profess to know God” and their relationship to membership in the church will bring the “mass-member” and “remnant member” into focus.

Speaking to the early members of the Church of Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul addresses some of the problems that exist among the Saints:

For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:

Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.

Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. (Titus 1:10–11, 15–16)

This council and chastisement by Paul is directed to the members of the church, indicating that the “works” of the saints might be a sign of a faithful Christian and “real” membership in the Kingdom of God. In the Book of Mormon Alma also supports Paul in his discussion to the Nephite saints, declaring the words of Christ:

Come unto me and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life; yea, ye shall eat and drink of the bread and the waters of life freely.

Yea, come unto me and bring forth works of righteousness, and ye shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire—

For behold, the time is at hand that whosoever bringeth forth not good fruit, or whosoever doeth not the works of righteousness, the same have cause to wail and mourn.

O ye workers of iniquity; ye that are puffed up in the vain things of the world, *ye that have professed to have known the ways of righteousness* nevertheless have gone astray, as sheep having no shepherd, notwithstanding a shepherd hath called after you and is still calling after you, but ye will not hearken unto his voice!

Behold, I say unto you, that the good shepherd doth call you; yea, and in his own name he doth call you, which is the name of Christ; and *if ye will not hearken unto the voice of the good shepherd, to the name by which ye are called, behold, ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd.* (Alma 5:34–38)

Alma’s message is directed to those who have accepted and know the law—“*ye that have professed to have known the ways of righteousness*”—without striving to develop the character that should identify them as a true member of the Church of Jesus Christ. The Lord’s recognition of a member of His church is centered on the works of the righteous, and not strictly upon

getting one's ordinances. Ordinances are of no value without the character that must be developed and the resultant seal of heaven to make the ordinances effective.⁶

Helaman enlightens the reader about the difference between “mass-members” who professes to know God and those who truly belong to “the church of God” (the remnant) by saying:

And in the fifty and first year of the reign of the judges there was peace also, save it were the *pride which began to enter into the church—not into the church of God, but into the hearts of the people who professed to belong to the church of God—*

And they were *lifted up in pride*, even to the persecution of many of their brethren. Now this was a great evil, which did cause the more humble part of the people [*the remnant*] to suffer great persecutions, and to wade through much affliction.

Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God.

And it came to pass that the fifty and second year ended in peace also, save it were *the exceedingly great pride* which had gotten into the hearts of the people; and it was because of their exceedingly great riches and their prosperity in the land; and it did grow upon them from day to day. (Helaman 3:33–36)

The great separation is between pride and humility—the pride of the masses seeking to “have” while professing membership, and the humility of the remnant seeking to “become” a true follower of Christ. Helaman continued:

Now this great loss of the Nephites, and the great slaughter which was among them, would not have happened had it not been for their wickedness and their abomination which was among them; yea, *and it was among those also who professed to belong to the church of God.*

And it was *because of the pride of their hearts*, because of their exceeding riches, yea, it was because of their oppression to the poor, *withholding their food from the hungry*, withholding their clothing from the naked, and smiting their humble brethren upon the cheek, making a mock of that which was sacred, *denying the spirit of prophecy and of revelation*, murdering, plundering, lying, stealing, committing adultery, rising up in great contentions, and deserting away into the land of Nephi, among the Lamanites—

And because of this their great wickedness, and their boastings in their own strength, they were left in their own strength; therefore they did not prosper, but were afflicted and smitten, and driven before the Lamanites, until they had lost possession of almost all their lands. (Helaman 4:11–13)

It was not from a lack of ordinances that caused this “great wickedness” and division, for the ordinances were available. It was the lack of faithful action that caused this great loss. Without a sincere relationship *with* God and one's fellowman, one is just “professing” to be a Christian. The Savior's explanation to the Nephites about the fruits brought forth from the true believer compared to those who profess to know him is not so comfortable if viewed with the possibility

⁶ Ordinances are a necessary requirement for entrance into the kingdom of God, but in and of themselves they do not have the power to save. It is only through obedience to covenants and commandments, and the resultant spiritual change that accompanies such, that the ordinances become efficacious. It has been said that we “get” our ordinances when *we think* we are ready, but we “receive” our ordinances when *God knows* that we are ready. It is through the process of righteous living, putting off the natural man and putting on the armor of God, and reconnecting with heaven that the ordinances are truly received, thus allowing membership into His church.

that it was delivered and directed to members of His church. Christ Himself applies the interpretation that He is speaking to those who know the gospel, members of the church who bring forth fruit—some evil and some good. In 3 Nephi 14:26, Christ explained that the separation lies in the fact that some members “heareth these sayings” and “doeth them not.” He said,

Even so *every good tree bringeth forth* good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Therefore, whoso heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock—

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand—

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it. (3 Nephi 14:17–27)

To liken the scriptures unto ourselves we must view our membership within these verses. The implication to Latter-day Saints is specific. To make sure that the LDS community understood this, the Lord in this dispensation addresses the same thought, with the same words, yet again. The Lord reminded the members of the sin of drawing near to him with their lips, while their hearts are far from him, by stating:

Hearken and hear, *O ye my people*, saith the Lord and your God, ye whom I delight to bless with the greatest of all blessings, ye that hear me; and *ye that hear me not will I curse, that have professed my name, with the heaviest of all cursings*. (D&C 41:1)

The Savior then explained to the membership of the church how to determine who the real disciples might be by saying, “He that receiveth my law and doeth it, the same is my disciple; and he that saith he receiveth it and doeth it not, the same is not my disciple, and shall be cast out from among you” (D&C 41:5). In D&C 50, the Lord described those members who “profess to belong to the church of God” as “hypocrites” among the true saints:

Behold, I, the Lord, have looked upon you, *and have seen abominations in the church that profess my name*.

But blessed are they who are faithful and endure, whether in life or in death, for they shall inherit eternal life.

But wo unto *them that are deceivers and hypocrites*, for, thus saith the Lord, I will bring them to judgment.

Behold, verily I say unto you, there are hypocrites among you, who have deceived some, which has given the adversary power; but behold such shall be reclaimed;

But the hypocrites shall be detected and shall be cut off, either in life or in death, even as I will; and wo unto them who are cut off from my church, for the same are overcome of the world.

Wherefore, let every man beware lest he do that which is not in truth and righteousness before me. (D&C 50:4–9)

Again the Lord addresses those who are “members” of the church, yet are not of *his* church. There is a tendency to believe that these references were for the people who lived in the day that the revelation was given, and not for our time and day. In the verses below and following the “end time” is alluded to, specifically the last day destructions.

Hearken, *O ye people who profess my name, saith the Lord your God; for behold, mine anger is kindled against the rebellious*, and they shall know mine arm and mine indignation, in the day of visitation and of wrath upon the nations.

And he that will not take up his cross and follow me, and keep my commandments, the same shall not be saved.

Behold, I, the Lord, command; and he that will not obey shall be cut off in mine own due time, after I have commanded and the commandment is broken.

Wherefore I, the Lord, command and revoke, as it seemeth me good; and all this to be answered upon the heads of the rebellious, saith the Lord. (D&C 56:1–4)

Even the great destructions of the last days are because of the “abomination that will make desolate” (JS–Matthew 24:32; see also Daniel 12:11). This “abomination” is not tied exclusively to the wickedness of the world and non-believers, but it is tied to those who have known the word of God and have entered into a covenant of obedience by baptism, and even expanded their covenants of obedience into the sacred rooms of the temples. The verses below are most sobering when we understand that those who “profess to know” the Lord are actually members of the church, ones who have made solemn covenants with the Lord:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face.

Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants *of the earth*, a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation; and as a whirlwind it shall come *upon all the face of the earth*, saith the Lord.

And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord;

First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord. (D&C 112:23–26)

The last two verses explain that the abomination that causes this desolation will be a result of the wickedness of the Lord's people. For "*upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth*" because of those "*who have professed to know my name and have not known me.*" This means that there are those who have made covenants in the "name of God" in His temple, and knowingly by their choices have not kept those covenants. This disobedience—or specifically, the act of making a covenant in the name of God without seeking to live up to the covenants made—is the definition of taking the Lord's name in vain. Thus, many have "blasphemed" against God himself in the "midst" of His own house. This verse does not mean nor imply that all have taken the Lord's name in vain, but there will be some who "professed to know God" and have not known him.

The Lehtes were a remnant of Israel, and a remnant of Lehi's descendants will be spared from destruction in the last days, just as the Lehtes were spared from the destruction of Jerusalem with Lehi's departure. From that remnant of Lehi, there will be a remnant of those who will accept the Gospel and be spiritually saved. Likewise, members of the church are proclaimed to be a remnant of the tribes of Israel, yet among that mass-membership there are those within the church who "profess to know God" and have not known him, and shall eventually be cut off. However, there exists within the church also a righteous remnant who know the gospel; they are baptized members with not only a religion, but a relationship with God and their fellow man. These are those that bring forth good fruit.

The Righteous Remnant

Righteousness, like repentance, is a personal choice and action. It is something that can only be accomplished by the individual, as one cannot repent for another. As good as "law" might be, communal law, with its collective purpose may help, but it does not make the solitary heart and mind righteous. The gospel is new in every generation, and a testimony is not genetic. It must be acquired by personal faith in Jesus Christ. Righteousness is a result of a character change based upon that faith in Jesus Christ. However, a group of individuals who are pure in heart may create a city of Zion, a community of righteous individuals. The Latter-day Saint community has become a distinctive culture within specific cities and neighborhoods that can affect the environment of life for member and non-member alike. Even within these communities, the religious attitudes and activities among the Mormons might be divided into the Mass-Mormon and the Remnant-Mormon.

Secure in the thought that the "works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught" (D&C 3:1) we often forget, as did those in Jerusalem at the time of Lehi, there are responsibilities connected to the blessings and freedoms we enjoy. There is no power on earth that can cause the fall of the Kingdom of God except for one: "For the Lord hath said: *This is my church, and I will establish it; and nothing shall overthrow it, save it is the transgression of my people*" (Mosiah 27:13). History has always taught that the greatest threat to a culture is the culture itself. The Great Wall of China failed because the gatekeepers on the inside could be so easily purchased.

The most destructive individual and collective attitude is an apathetic declaration that "all is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth" (2 Nephi 28:21). Statistics have shown that the attitudes and actions of the Church members are about seven years behind the world. Seven years behind in the number of divorces, teenage pregnancies, inappropriate relationships, etc. Being seven years behind the world means arriving at the same destination, just a short time later. This is true because the mass-movement is in the same direction, if only slower. The "remnant" motif is in force today. The marketing of Madison Avenue and special effects of Hollywood have created

the visions and desires of the preferred destination in all aspects of trends and styles. The Zion society or the pure in heart individual lies in the *opposite* direction from the destination which the world seeking and the mass-man is pursuing. What manner of man can resist the commercials of prime-time television? The natural man cannot. Often, the following of fads, fashions, and trends is nothing more than the weak “will” of those who are declining and part of the masses, although perhaps a few years behind the rest of the world. The righteous remnants include those individuals who are unafraid to stand alone while moving forward and upward at the same time, moving in the exact opposite direction of the masses.

Every individual must come to the personal determination of their position within their faith and religion and their relationship with God and their fellow man. Only the actions and character of the individual will determine if the individual is found in the movement of the masses or that of the remnant.