



ROMANS Part 98

Chapter 11:1-5

The people whom He foreknew.



I am saying, then, Does not God thrust away His people? May it not be coming to that! For I also am an Israelite, out of Abraham's seed, Benjamin's tribe. 2 God does not thrust away His people whom He foreknew. Or have you not perceived in Elijah what the scripture is saying, as he is pleading with God against Israel? 3 Lord, Thy prophets they kill, Thine altars they dig down, and I was left alone, and they are seeking my soul. 4 But what is that which apprises saying to him? I left for Myself seven thousand men who do not bow the knee to the image of Baal. 5 Thus, then, in the current

era also, there has come to be a remnant according to the choice of grace.

I first met Jim Coram, President of the Concordant Publishing Concern, on Saturday, November 6, 1993. I met *Unsearchable Riches* magazine Editor-in-Chief Dean Hough on the same day. Coincidentally, this is also the day that the two of them first met me.

I had traveled north to Almont, Michigan with my wife, my friend Matt Rohrbach (who edited my first newsletter in 1994 and edits for me to this day), and Matt's sister Marian. I had quit the Postal Service thirty-six days before to begin this adventure of publishing and speaking upon the particular truths of God unveiled by a properly translated Scripture. But I couldn't figure out why anyone would want to go to a conference.

"Dean and Jim are both going to be in Almont," Matt had said that week. I wondered why he was saying such things. I respected these men but felt no need to meet them. "We ought to go. Why not?" I had lots of reasons why not and I offered up several, including being completely happy on my own doing my own thing in my little room in my 150 year-old farmhouse with my wife and kids to keep me company.

"They're meeting at the First Congregational Church," Matt then told me. As soon as I recovered from *that* statement ("Cool it, Zender. It's a little meeting room; it's not a church service; no one from the church will be there), Matt said, "It will be good for fellowship." I had no idea why anyone would want or need fellowship, and I said as much. Matt was noticeably disturbed. I was so inside of myself back then, content to be and to remain insulated. I needed to concentrate on my studies and my newsletter and could not be bothered. I forget just what Matt said to make me change my mind, but it was probably the prospect of the 3 1/2 hour road trip where we would stop for coffee and maybe a donut. They say that half the fun is getting there, but sometimes for me it's 81%.



Lenny Miller's Restaurant,
Almont, Michigan.
It's still there.

Many great things happened on that weekend trip, but I will recall for you what took place at lunch on Saturday afternoon at Lenny Miller's Restaurant on Dryden Road. I strategically maneuvered myself next to *el presidente* Jim Coram. We had a lot in common. We were both future celestial magistrates and we were both eating chicken. I think Jim was about ten years older than I was, and probably still is. I'm not sure I warmed him up with too many niceties. "Let's suppose there's a guy living in Iowa," I subtly began. Jim kept at his chicken but was all ears. I probably came across like a circus act. "And let's say that this guy hates the gospel of Paul. Doesn't get Paul at all. Let's just say. But the Circumcision gospel—he's just crazy about that, this guy. He loves Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. Can't get enough of James. Loves the law of Moses. The Concordant Publishing Concern says that this guy is automatically in the body of Christ. Why? Because he believes in Jesus. This is what A.E. Knoch taught. 'Anyone who believes in Jesus is in the body of Christ. It's of no value whatsoever being an Israelite today.' That's what he said. But the thing is, how can this guy from Iowa be a part of the body of Christ if he rejects Paul? This guy can't even figure out how Paul ended up in the Bible. He half wishes that Paul were never *in* the Bible."

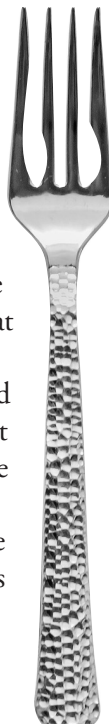
"The Circumcision gospel is not being proclaimed today," said Jim. "It's finished until the body of Christ is out of the way. Israel has been hardened until the fullness of the nations comes in."

I was ready for that one. "I know of places where it is being proclaimed—right now, today—but let's

forget that for now. I agree that it's not the active evangel. Paul's is the active evangel. But the Circumcision gospel is still in the Scriptures. It hasn't gone away. Why can't it still be believed? I'm talking about the remnant. Isn't there a remnant today? Romans, chapter eleven says that there is a remnant in the current era. This has to be a Circumcision remnant. I admit that this is a calling-in-waiting for Israel, but that's what the book of Hebrews is all about. It's telling them just to hang on and wait. They can't do law because there's no temple. But why can't they believe their own gospel and just hold on to it in faith? Just exactly when did the current era stop? Isn't this still the current era Paul talked about?"

"Why Iowa?"

"We're surrounded by church people," I said. "We're even meeting in a church today. And they all love the law. Thank God they're all home today. We took over their place, and they don't even know it. They have the Ten Commandments nailed to the wall. Thank God it's Saturday; they're all home watching college football, otherwise they would throw us all out on our concordances. This weekend is the first time that the truth has ever visited their building, and they're home watching the Wolverines." Jim smiled. "They all love Israel, Jim. What do *we* say? We say that they're just ignorant Paul people. Even though they swear by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and Jesus when He was on Earth—we say, 'Oh, they're just ignorant.' As if ignorance of Paul is no problem whatsoever. We say, 'They're just ignorant of the only evangel they're able to believe today, which is Paul's.' I



say we're missing it twice with these people: one, ignorance is *not* bliss, it is disqualification, and two, the Circumcision evangel is still up for grabs in the sense that people can still believe in it. I don't see why they can't.

"But seriously Jim, how does ignorance equal belief? Why are we forcing these people into Paul when there's another option? But Knoch is even taking away the Circumcision gospel from *obvious* Israelites, from the so-called completed Jews. Knoch thinks that they're in the body of Christ, too, no matter what they believe. Are you guys telling me that not even these obvious Jews can hold fast to the Circumcision evangel if they feel like it?"

Jim said, "I see what you're saying. I suppose it all depends on whether or not there's a remnant today. I don't think there is. I think that the remnant died in Paul's day. But for now, tell me more about your guy from Iowa."

"He may be from Nebraska. It's just a random place, of course. There's lots of great corn in Iowa, that's true. But if you don't believe that this is still—today—the current era that Paul was talking about, then it really doesn't matter about my guy from Iowa."

"Let's just go ahead and say that it matters," Jim said. "Tell me more about this guy."

"Well, we know that the Assyrians took the house of Israel into captivity. Amos 9:9. The house of Israel was scattered among every nation on Earth. This was way back when, before even the Babylonians came and got the house of Judah."

Jim nodded agreement with me.

"So the northern ten tribes are the famed and mysterious 'lost ten tribes of the house of Israel.' They get scattered all over the Earth. It's a lot of people. Millions, probably. We know that they never came back to the land, like Judah did. They wandered to the north and to the west. They settled in Europe, mainly—let's say. They influence Europe. They're blood Israelites, but they've lost their national identity. Soon, they became English, French, Dutch. But, going back, they're pure Israelites. These are the people translating and working with the Scriptures. Do you see any Aborigines translating Scriptures today? Do you see anyone in the darkest Africa publishing the Bible? Are there any Inuits starting Christian television shows?"

"So you're saying that the Iowa guy is an Israelite."

"From way back. Only God knows he's an Israelite. Now he's an American. His great-great grandparents were English. But where did the English come from? He's got Israelite blood running through him thicker than the river that turned to blood in Egypt. So this guy naturally tunes in to his gospel. Why wouldn't he? It's as natural to him

as grass stains to white pants. His gospel is the Circumcision gospel. Sure, he *could* hear Paul's gospel, but he doesn't. He says the same thing Peter said about Paul's gospel, which is, 'Some things are hard to understand.' But this guy's not as smart as Peter, so for him *everything* about Paul's gospel is hard to understand. In fact, it's impossible for the guy."

"But he's not doing the law," said Jim.

"No Israelite can do the law today. As I said, there's no temple. Not even recognized Jews in Israel can do the law. They play at it, but they can't do it. Nobody can do it. The smart ones—and there aren't many—are all just holding fast, waiting for God to change their hearts and to bring in the new priesthood and the new covenant. Not to mention the new temple. With them, it's all a waiting game. Not with us. We're the only ones on the front-burner, I admit that. We don't need a temple. We're only waiting for our bodies to be changed. But why are we robbing this guy in Iowa of embracing his own gospel? We're pulling the rug out from under him.



"Why are we robbing this guy in Iowa of believing his own gospel?"

He himself doesn't even know he's an Israelite from way back, but he's telling us what he believes, but we don't listen to him. We write him off. We say, 'Oh, be quiet, you're in the body of Christ no matter what you say. Stop pretending you're an Israelite.' What if he's not pretending? Anyway, that's not very respectful of us to treat the guy this way. Or we say, "There is no remnant in the current era. This isn't the current era. The current era existed in Paul's lifetime only, and that's it.' In the meantime, since the guy talks about Jesus all the time but doesn't get Paul, we figure he has to be a believer in

something, so we force him into a compartment where he doesn't belong, into the only evangel that we think exists. We try to cram the square peg into the round hole and make him part of the body of Christ.

"The way I see it, Jim, is that we're surrounded by 'guys from Iowa.' I believe that nearly every church person today is a descendant from these lost ten tribes. They act like Israelites too, in that they're a pack of hypocrites who chiefly believe for their own gain, for their own glory. That's a pure Israelite trait. Besides, they're rich, these churches. In fact, most Americans are probably descendants of Abraham from way back. Are these people going to be a part of the snatching away of the body? Of course not. They're going through the tribulation, just like the rest of Israel. This is assuming that they're believers at all. But I say that some of them are the remnant."

Jim said, "Assuming your premise, that would mean that you and I are also Israelites from way back. Why aren't *we* believing the Circumcision evangel?"

"Because we're like Paul," I said. "We've jumped the ship. It's not too far-fetched. You were a World-Wide Church of Christ guy. I was raised Catholic. Both of us were reared in the Circumcision gospel. It was Matthew,



could read from the letters of Paul. Paul was a second-class saint to these people. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—those were the Beatles to the Catholic Church. Too bad one of the disciples wasn't named Ringo. The apostle Paul was, like, Glen Campbell to them. They really dismissed Paul as inconsequential. Anyway, Peter is their main guy; as you know, they named their basilica after him. As for you, it was all law, all the time. I know about the World Wide Church of God. You tried to celebrate all the feasts. They forced you to tithe.

"But what happened with us? We jumped ship. We heard Paul's gospel and gravitated to it. No, we lunged for it. So we not only believe Paul, but we're *like* Paul. We were brought up in the Circumcision gospel, like Paul was, but then we heard a better thing and never looked back. Maybe that makes us weird. We're radicals, for sure. Most people hear Paul and they hate him. It's too much grace for them, I think. But you and me? We need grace, or we're doomed."

My boldness amused Jim to the point that he stopped eating his chicken for a while and stared at me. But what I wanted to know was if the president of the Concordant Publishing Concern—an organization founded by the Concordant Literal New Testament

creator A.E. Knoch—was able to pop my little "people-can-still-believe-the-Circumcision-gospel" bubble. If anyone could wreck my scenario, it was Jim Coram. I had listened to this man's audio tapes and had been reading his articles in *Unsearchable Riches* magazine for five years. He was one of the smartest men I knew and I respected the daylight out of him. "All I'm asking," I finally said,



Mark, Luke and John for us, all the time. Those names were even carved on the front of my high school building. Where was Paul's name? Nowhere. The priest at my church read from the four gospels. Only *he* was allowed to do it. My science teacher and other so-called lay people did what was called the first reading, which was, they read a section from one of Paul's letters. Any schlup

“is if you think that the situation I have just laid out for you is feasible.”

I’ll never forget what happened next. Jim Coram thought for a moment, wiped a little chicken grease from his chin and said, “Yes.”

It didn’t mean that he believed it—and he didn’t—but only that he thought it was feasible. All I could do then was blush a little and ask him to pass the cornbread.

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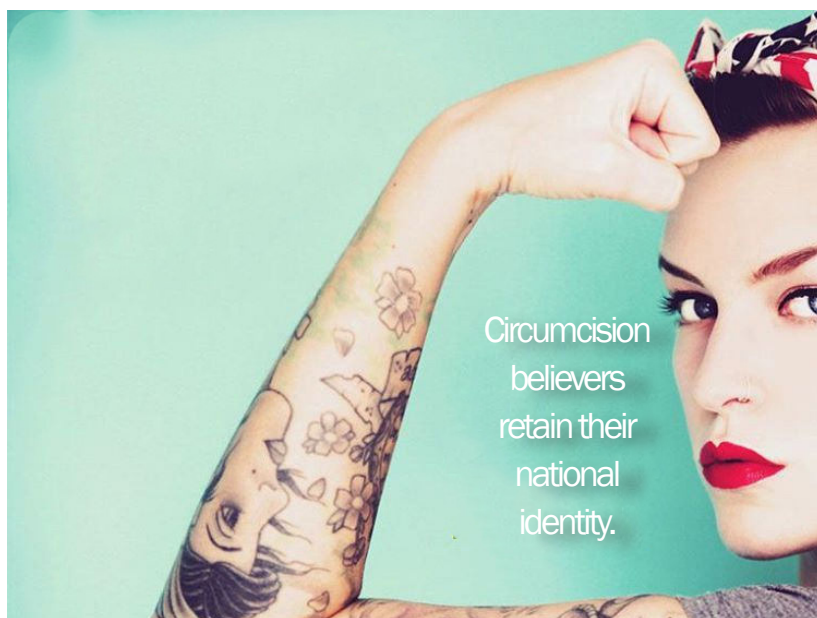
In Volume 27 of *Unsearchable Riches* magazine (1936), A.E. Knoch dismissed what was popularly referred to then and now as “Anglo-Israelism” or “British Israelism.” British Israelism was the belief that the lost ten tribes of Israel had escaped the Assyrian captivity to wander north and east and to settle Europe and then, naturally, head to America. Knoch had no beef whatsoever with the fact that God had scattered the house of Israel among all nations. He only refuted the penchant of the Anglo-Israelites to assign different tribes to different countries, i.e. Dan settled Denmark, the Ephraimites became Great Britain, and so forth. The United States was supposed to be of Manasseh. The Anglo-Israelites gleaned this knowledge, apparently, from ancient records, gravestones, and oral traditions. Here is a quote from A.E. Knoch on page 32 of Volume 27 of *Unsearchable Riches*:

That some Jews or Israelites wandered over the region of the Black and Caspian seas, and in all of the lands of Europe, and that they may have left traces on gravestones, etc., no one will care to dispute, when we know that this is God’s word concerning them. They were to be *sifted* among *all* nations.

Knoch thought that it was ridiculous to insist that this tribe settled here, that tribe there. I tend to agree. It’s overkill. But more than this, and much worse, Knoch exposed in this article his disbelief that the current era described by Paul in Romans chapter 11 continued into the era that we now occupy—the era of the nations. I, on the other hand, insist that the current era referred to by Paul *must* be the same era we currently occupy—the era of the nations—else Paul’s whole purpose for writing this section of Romans—to prove that God has not forsaken

the native call of His native people—fails on contact. I will make my case for this more exhaustively next week. Mr. Knoch believed that the remnant died with Paul, for as he writes elsewhere in the article—

Why make a main issue out of a matter of no importance? We all know that there are Jews, but these lose all that distinguishes them the moment they believe. Suppose that others are Israelites. Is it worthwhile even telling them this? If we make out that this is the least advantage to them, then we are in irreconcilable conflict with God’s Word...It is no advantage whatever to be an Israelite today. In practical effect it is an immense



hindrance, for it breeds fleshly pride and national hypocrisy, and distorts the Scriptures to drag God’s grace in the dust. It is earthly, soulish, and counter to the cross, so that they glory in their shame.

The shocking phrase in the above statement is, “it is no advantage whatever to be an Israelite today.” The assumption is that Jews lose all that distinguishes them, nationally, the moment that they believe in Jesus Christ. Such is the case in the body of Christ (for “in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek,” Galatians 3:28), but not with the evangel of the Circumcision. Did not Peter believe in Jesus Christ? Circumcision believers retain their national identity before God, hence there are twelve thrones in the kingdom representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Mr. Knoch’s assumption also assumes the destruction and subsequent absence of a Circumcision remnant.



No one can say precisely when the remnant ended, however. Wouldn't something as important as this be clearly stated? It may not be important to us, but Israel lives and dies by it. If it is important to Israel's future glory, then it is important to me. Israel is important to God, and I wish to love what God loves. I insist that to destroy the remnant is to destroy God's "Exhibit A" in defense of the truth that God yet remains faithful to His covenant people—in spite of having called the other nations to a new gospel.

Subsequent to Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, many believed in the Circumcision evangel. The question is: *can people still believe in the Circumcision evangel today?* If it doesn't matter today whether a believer in Jesus Christ is a Jew or a Greek, but it *clearly* mattered in the first century to Paul and his contemporaries—depending on which evangel they gravitated to—then where is the line when it stopped mattering? Where is the line when "the current era," referred to by Paul in Romans chapter eleven, ceased? When did the remnant of Israel die off? Or *did* it die off? If there is a specific line where this all-important remnant ceased to be, then mustn't we know it?

There is indeed a line when the presence of a remnant becomes moot, but it is future and so has not yet been crossed. When I show you this line next week, you will wonder how these other men missed it. The remnant of Israel has *not* died off. In the current era, there is a God-inspired remnant of natural-born Israelites believing in Jesus Christ yet simultaneously pining for the kingdom on Earth and practically dismissing Paul. They are embracing the Circumcision evangel. I know some of them. And so do you. I wish to give you peace concerning them, and I will.

Next week: The Identity of the Circumcision Remnant.
—MZ

Hi Martin,

Thank you for making sense for a living. God took me out of organized religion twelve years ago and led me to you. I surely thank Him for that. I'm learning so much. I have been through many trials, but I liken them to childbirth. Right now, I can't remember the pains. I'm almost finished with *The First Idiot in Heaven*. I want to give this book to many. Thank you for being you! I love your humor, Martin! Take care.