

Anglo-Israelism and the Flesh

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A review of *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel...Found!*, by Steven M. Collins (Boring, Oregon, CPA Books, Copyright 1992, First Revised Edition, 1995)

Recently a friend insisted that I read a book by Steven M. Collins, titled *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel...Found!* This book tries to convince people that the "Lost" tribes of Israel after being uprooted by the Assyrians, started colonies all over the world and then ultimately migrated to Britain and then to America. The book attempts to prove in 439 pages what has been known as British- or Anglo-Israelism. The book was originally written in 1992 and was revised in 1995 and is gaining influence in some "patriot" circles. Some people who hold this theory are racists, following from their fleshly or carnal understanding of the outworking of God's covenant in history exclusively along racial lines. A major thesis of the book is that the Jews (Judah) and Israelites are two separate and distinct peoples and kingdoms who must never be confused. Mr. Collins says, "...the Jews ceased to be part of the kingdom named Israel" (23). The author goes on to say that "the term 'Israel' does not apply to Jews from the time of the divided kingdom forward" (23). Is this true? This is not a comprehensive review of Collins' book. There are numerous problems in this book some of which are dealt with below.

What are Collins' qualifications? The author has a B.S. in Public and Personnel Management. In my opinion, Collins has a serious lack of training in the area of Biblical languages and the various theological disciplines such as systematic theology. These faults may account for many of the errors in his book.

On page vii under acknowledgments Collins refers to Dr. Barry Fell, founder and president of the Epigraphic Society, and a Dr. Charles Dorothy, an assistant professor of Biblical Studies at Faith Lutheran Seminary in Tacoma, WA. Collins cites Dr. Fell 103 times in his book. The author makes it clear in his acknowledgments that Dr. Fell does not agree with the conclusions set forth in his book. This is a significant admission. I believe that Collins is overly dependant upon Dr. Fell. Dr. Fell sees a number of examples of Old World peoples having traveled to the New World and then engaging in various forms of commerce. The evidence cited from Dr. Fell by Collins does not speak directly to the issue at hand, namely, that America is the alleged descendant of the ten lost tribes. Even if Dr. Fell's examples are historically accurate it does not establish what

Collins argues for. It simply does not follow that if Dr. Fell is correct then Collins' arguments are proven. This type of fallacy is known as a non-sequitur. There can be any number of explanations of these facts other than what Collins has argued for. The evidence Dr. Fell sees has not driven him to accept Collins' arguments as true. The problem with such extensive citations from Dr. Fell's work is that laymen are susceptible to the fallacy of thinking because A might be true then B necessarily follows.

Dr. Dorothy studied ancient languages at Fuller Theological Seminary. The author also informs the reader that the linguistic information and conclusions of the book are his own and not Dr. Dorothy's. Dr. Dorothy simply checked to see if the transliterations were correct.

The most serious problem with the author's approach is that he starts with a preconceived notion and then begins accepting and rejecting material as it suits his case. This is clearly seen when he refers to Scripture. The Scriptures do not appear to be at all primary in his research. He cites them as proof texts to confirm what he is trying to prove. Collins says, "This book will also examine the life of Jesus Christ in light of new perspectives on world politics during his lifetime" (introduction xi). Clearly, the author is using a flawed hermeneutic in his approach to Scripture. Today, many so-called prophecy experts use the newspaper to interpret the Bible. Collins' approach is fundamentally the same. He alerts his readers to watch for his new book on prophecy. He announces that he will interpret "a cryptic prophecy of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:37)..." (434). He will do this utilizing material found in books by Eric von Daniken in *Chariots of the Gods*, and *In Search of Ancient Gods*.

Collins is not competent to handle the ancient languages that he refers to in the book. His attempted connection between the English word "British" and the two Hebrew words for covenant (BRT) and man (ISH) are completely unconvincing (392). Trying to get "Saxon" from Isaac is another incredible stretch (385). Dr. Leonard Coppes, who was involved with the Old Testament translation committee for the New King James Bible, had this to say during a Bible study, "there are very few Hebrew words that have come into English. Coincidence of sounds does not mean there is any type of substantive connection between the two languages. English and Hebrew are two completely different language families."¹ It is well known that English has been influenced extensively by Greek and Latin. If Collins' theory is correct there should be literally thousands of examples of Hebrew words in our language. The idea that the alleged "Lost" tribes somehow completely forgot Hebrew and virtually all traces of Hebrew vanished from their language is linguistically nonsense. In addition, a huge Israelite empire in the New World would have left unmistakable evidence.

There are many top rated scholars who would not agree with the author's belief that there have been discoveries of Semitic writing in America. One example cited by Collins is the

¹ Dr. Leonard Coppes, *Bible Study*, (Denver, CO November 22, 1997). Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Answering Mormon Scholars* Volume Two, (Salt Lake City, Utah Light House Ministry, 1996).

Bat Creek stone from Tennessee in 1889 (291). The late Dr. William Fox Albright, from Johns Hopkins University, and Frank Cross, a professor of Semitic languages at Harvard University, are two scholars in particular who have disputed this alleged example of Semitic writing in America (Tanner 134). It is also interesting to note that the Mormons have invested heavily in the same type of theories. One of the theories of the Book of Mormon is that the early inhabitants of America, the Indians, were in reality Jews from Jerusalem who spoke Hebrew. Mormons have made such fantastic claims over the years concerning the Book of Mormon that the Smithsonian Institution has issued a press release in effect saying, "Smithsonian archeologists see no direct connection between the archeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book."² The scholarly world as a whole remains unconvinced at this point concerning theories such as those held by Collins and the Mormons. Someone may say that "the scholarly world is intentionally suppressing the truth concerning Collins' theories." If so, this should be proven rather than asserted. Collins says, "It has been clearly shown that the 'Phoenician empire' was, in fact, the Israelite empire" (96). In my opinion, this statement was not proven, and this theory is nothing more than wild speculation. It is ironic that the author who insists that the Jews and Israelites are two different peoples and kingdoms and should never be confused, promotes a theory that the Phoenicians and Israelite empires are one and the same. Collins' theory that the Jews and Israelites are always to be viewed as separate peoples is nothing more than "special pleading" on his part.

The author also believes the Scythians were part of the lost tribes of Israel (200). Are the Scythians really some of the lost tribes of Israel? In the book *Foes from the Northern Frontier Invading Hordes from the Russian Steppes* by noted scholar Edwin M. Yamauchi, we learn that the Scythians drank the blood of the first enemy killed in battle. This is a violation of the Levitical law (Lev. 17:10-12). The Scythians drank from the skulls of their victims. They also practiced human sacrifice (Yamauchi 111). If these were really Israelites, they had certainly degenerated far from the true Biblical religion.

Arguments from silence significantly discredit Collins' book. Collins argues that there are eighteen years of the life of Christ not recorded in the Bible (280-316). In essence, the author is saying the Bible is incomplete in dealing with the life of Christ. Where the Bible is silent, Collins boldly presses on hoping to convince the reader of his theories which if accepted serve to create doubt in the Biblical record. He then proceeds to give the reader page after page, thirty-six in all, of his own speculation. The missing years theory is a glaring example of an argument from silence. According to the author, Jesus had to travel to the countries where the ten "lost" tribes had migrated (285). There is no Biblical evidence that Jesus did anything other than live with Joseph and Mary and remain in subjection to them (Luke 2:51). Did Jesus travel around the world visiting the various Israelite colonies? Did Jesus get his Roman citizenship as the author thinks (306)? Did he go to the moon, or Mars? Arguments based upon silence can lead anywhere.

2 National Museum of Natural History Smithsonian Institution, (Washington, D.C., Press Statement, 1982). p. 1. Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Foes from the Northern Frontier Invading Hordes from the Russian Steppes*, (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1982).

The author believes that in order for Jesus to gain knowledge of a geographical location and the inhabitants, he needed to go there (299). This is bizarre, and makes me wonder if Collins is an Arian in his Christology. The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is God and possesses all the attributes of deity. One of these attributes is omniscience.

The author tries to latch upon anything to prove his theories. He leads the reader into thinking that the Quetzalcoatl legend is proof of Jesus in America (286). Quetzalcoatl was not Jesus in America. Quetzalcoatl was the Aztec god of the air. To try and connect Jesus with a pagan deity is blasphemous.

Collins' understanding of Mark 6:1-6 is an example of a false interpretation of Scripture in an attempt to support the bizarre missing years theory (282). Remember Luke 2:51 regarding Jesus being subject to Joseph and Mary. Collins is forced to reject the plain meaning of the text, namely, that Jesus was a carpenter. This was supposedly a mistake on the part of the people of Nazareth. The author does not believe that the people of Nazareth recognized Jesus since he had supposedly been away for so long. Mark 6:4 makes it clear that the people did not believe that Jesus was sent from God. The basis of their sinful rejection was that they knew him. They said, "He is out of his mind" (Mark 3:21). Obviously, they knew him well enough to make this false judgement. How could he be a prophet? There was no doubt in their minds that he was a carpenter, the son of Joseph and Mary and nothing more. They even knew his brothers and sisters. This was Jesus' home town. There is no textual reason to disbelieve the Biblical facts concerning his brothers and sisters and his trade.

The author cites Matt. 3:13-16 as proof that Jesus was baptized by immersion (294). This illustrates how Collins reads into the text his preconceived notions of what the Bible is saying. The verse says that, "Then Jesus, when He had been baptized came up immediately from [apo] the water." This allegedly proves Jesus was immersed. When Phillip baptized the Ethiopian they both "came up out of [ek] the water"(Acts 8:39). Were they both baptized? When Jesus came up from the water he could have been standing in knee deep water and then came up from the Jordan onto the riverbank. Coming up from or out of the water does not prove the mode of baptism.

The author makes use of more novel interpretations of the Bible. One passage is John 10:16 about the "other sheep" (292). This verse should be connected with passages such as Isaiah 42:6; 56:6-8; 60:3-11; 66:18-21. This passage in John has always been understood as the fulfillment of the passages in Isaiah. This is the salvation of the Gentiles. The author uses this verse as a proof text to promote his theory that Jesus came to early America during the alleged missing years. Mormons also appeal to this verse for proof of Jesus coming to America. This is clearly an aberrational interpretation of Scripture.

The passage, Matt. 10:5,6, dealing with the lost sheep of the house of Israel, is another example where Collins mis-interprets Scripture. The author believes that the ten tribes of Israel were in different foreign lands at this time. In Matt. 10:5,6, Jesus instructs his

twelve disciples to go only "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Collins believes that the disciples were to obey these instructions after Jesus died, and actually go to these different locations (314). Note that in verse five Jesus sent the twelve disciples out at this time, not after his crucifixion. It should also be noted that the parallel passage in Mark 6:7,12 says, "And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two... So they went out and preached..." Where did Jesus send the twelve disciples? To Britain? To America? They were to go to the cities of Israel (Matt. 10:23).

Does the author's insistence that the Jews and Israel be considered different nations hold up? Consider Zacharias' prophecy. "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people" (Luke 1:68). Speaking of John, Luke goes on to say, "So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel" (Luke 1:80). What did the "devout" man Simeon say concerning Jesus? "A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel... this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel..." (Luke 2:32,34). Simeon said this in Jerusalem. In addition, Matt. 2:21 says Joseph and Mary traveled with Jesus somewhere. Where did Joseph and Mary bring Jesus? What land? The answer is the land of Israel. In contrast, John 18:35 makes clear that Jesus was delivered to Pilate by his "own nation," the Jewish nation. The reader can see by now that Collins' distinction between Israel and the Jewish nation is artificial and erroneous.

Ezekiel 37:15-28 prophesies the reunification of Israel and Judah. This passage completely refutes Collins' Anglo-Israelite theory. The children of Israel and Judah will be brought back from among the heathen, where God had driven them. The culmination of the prophecy would be that, "David my servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgements, and observe My statutes, and do them... and My servant David shall be their prince for ever" (Ezekiel 37:24,25). The fulfillment of this prophecy is in Christ. David was a type of Christ. The prophecy says that God will bring back the scattered tribes from among the heathen. They shall be one nation, with one king. In 458 B.C., King Artaxerxes said, "I issue a decree that all those of the people of Israel, and the priests and Levites in my realm, who volunteer to go up to Jerusalem, may go with you" (Ezra 7:13). In response to this decree the Scripture says, "Some of the children of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim, came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes" (Ezra 7:7). It is also recorded that, "the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads. Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners..." (Nehemiah 9:1,2). God's faithful remnant returned with Ezra and Nehemiah to Jerusalem in a number of mass migrations back to Israel. The center of religious worship for the Old Testament people of God was the temple in Jerusalem. God's people were obligated to bring offerings and sacrifice before the LORD in Jerusalem. Those who refused to return with Ezra and Nehemiah were unfaithful to the covenant

Did Israel return with Ezra and Nehemiah like the Scripture says or not? Was Ezekiel's prophecy fulfilled? The two nations had become one according to the testimony of

Scripture. Collins in essence argues that this prophecy was not fulfilled. Ezekiel 37:21,22 deals unequivocally with the reunification of the two nations. This prophecy was clearly fulfilled. Consequently, Collins' "lost" tribe theory collapses. After the return of the captives under Ezra and Nehemiah we never hear again about the separate Northern and Southern kingdoms. If members of the alleged "Lost" tribes never returned to Palestine, what type of questions could be raised about their covenantal faithfulness? Collins does not say.

Consider the following examples of the usage of Jew and Israel in the New Testament. Here, Paul describes the Israelites as his brothers. And yet, Paul said, "I am a Jew from Tarsus" (Acts 21:39). Paul also said, "...for I am also an Israelite..." (Rom. 11:3). Was Paul a Jew or Israelite? He was both. Paul was a descendant of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil. 3:5). The tribe of Benjamin was part of the Southern kingdom with Judah (1 Kings 12:21). Furthermore, Jesus came through the tribe of Judah, which would make Him a Jew. And yet, the Scriptures say, "Who are Israelites... and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came..." (Rom. 9:4,5).

Collins believes people "who rediscover their Israelite 'roots' have every right to a sense of wholesome pride..." (376). Is this pride always wholesome? Can this pride ever result in racism, or racial superiority of one group over another? What about Black, Indian, Hispanic, or Asian Christians? It seems that they are left out of this "wholesome pride" theory. Collins himself believes that the alleged "Lost" tribes of Israel in the modern world must be located among the "White" or "Caucasian" nations (378). Some individuals who hold to Anglo-Israelism are racists. By his refusal to accept the fulfilled prophecy of Ezekiel, Collins has created an irreconcilable tension in his theology. This tension is exhibited by his repeated disclaimers, distancing himself from those who may jump to racist conclusions. He acknowledges that, "Jesus presented himself as an equal-opportunity Savior for all nations and ethnic groups" (376). He expressly repudiates racism and distances himself from those who promote racial superiority of the modern descendants of the alleged "Lost" tribes of Israel (375). However, he seems to be keenly aware that some individuals may jump to racist conclusions after accepting the thesis of his book.

The Christian Identity movement which is a subset of Anglo-Israelism clearly holds to racist views. This is because in the hands of carnal men a fleshly understanding of the covenant exclusively along racial lines can become a pretext for racial superiority, and is used as a justification for racism. Pride in race has gotten out of hand at times in history. Hitler's Aryan race experiment is one example. When a society embraces theories that foster racial superiority, what happens to minorities during economic hard times? Some forms of Anglo-Israelism, most notably the adherents of Christian Identity, understand the outworking of the covenant to be along racial lines, and this accounts for their racism.

In closing, we should remember that the gospel properly understood breaks down racial walls or barriers. In Eph. 2:12,13 we learn that the Gentiles are grafted into the Commonwealth of Israel. The Gentiles are now part of the church. They are also part of

Israel. “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16). The Commonwealth of Israel in the New Covenant is the church made up of Jews and Gentiles. In Rom. 2:28,29 we learn that the regenerate person who has been circumcised in his heart is a Jew. The author's refusal to accept the fact that God reunited the Northern and Southern kingdoms in fulfillment of prophecy is an attack upon redemptive historical progress, and is therefore, non-Biblical and false. Collins' theory of Christ's purported world-wide travels undermines the authority of Scripture by calling into question its completeness. In this reviewer's opinion, the author's view of history, argued for in this book, is nothing more than imaginary. There is an inherent tendency within Anglo-Israelism to glory in the flesh. The Scriptures teach that we should glory only in the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear, “There is no Jew nor Greek.... And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:28,29).

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