

Kanye (‘Ye’), Kyrie, and the Black Hebrew Israelite Elephant in the Room

Read Time: 4 Minutes 20 Seconds

If you live in a major city of America, then you have probably been well aware of the Black Hebrew Israelites for a few decades. But for many other Americans, their numbers, their influence and their beliefs are coming as quite a revelation—and a shocking one at that.

In the early 1990s, while walking the streets of Manhattan before an outreach service one Saturday afternoon, I heard a loud voice booming through a PA system.

When I got closer to the sound, I was surprised to see a small crowd of listeners, all of them Black, listening carefully to the speaker who was standing on a platform, with bodyguards standing on the street in front of him.

Their outfits were striking—I remember thinking they looked like a cross between Star Wars and some type of angelic garb—but their words were even more striking. They were quoting the Bible and some other books, even using occasional Hebrew words. At once I realized who they were.

They taught that they were the original (and true) Israelites and that white Jews (like me) were not real Jews. Rather, we were the manifestation of Satan.

I politely challenged the speaker, asking him why Hitler wanted to kill us if we weren’t real Jews, to which he gave a very weak reply, instead trying to provoke the crowd against me.

I then shouted to everyone, “These men are preaching a

religion of hate! Jesus preached a religion of love! One day, we will both be at the bottom of the barrel and we will need each other.”

The response from the crowd was quick: “Death to the White man! Death to America!” (For my more recent encounter with these men, this time in Charlotte, North Carolina, where I called out their racism and bigotry and told them they needed Jesus, see [here](#).)

Over the years, however, these Black Hebrew Israelites (who have many different groups and divisions among them), have continued to grow and expand their influence, to the point that they appear to have well over one million adherents nationwide. More tellingly, millions more Black Americans are sympathetic to their viewpoints.

As noted in a Nov. 25, 2022 article published by the JTA, “The 2020 U.S. Census put the Black population at 41.1 million, so extrapolating from the Lifeway [polling] data, there are approximately 1.6 million Hebrew Israelites in the U.S.—not counting the small numbers of Latinos and Native Americans who also belong to Israelite groups—and 7.8 million people who may not identify as Israelites but who agree with the spiritual movement’s main teachings.”

Now, with Kanye (“Ye”) West and Kyrie Irving disseminating their teaching, and with videos of hundreds of their adherents marching through Brooklyn chanting that, “We are the real Jews” and it’s “time to wake up,” this sect can no longer be ignored. (They were marching to the Barclay Center in Brooklyn in support of Kyrie Irving, where his Brooklyn Nets basketball team plays.)

Christian apologists have become more aware of this cult in recent years, addressing the very real need to refute their biblical, theological and historical errors. And a select few have been focused on reaching out to and countering the BHI

movement for some time now.

But to the general American public, including the Jewish American public, much of this has taken place unawares.

To be clear, there are Black Jews, some of whom trace their ancestry to African slaves who were brought to our country, passing on their traditions over the centuries. And DNA testing has validated the claims of groups like the Lemba tribe in Zimbabwe, some of whom trace their ancestry back to the priestly line of Aaron in the Bible, going all the way back to the days of Moses.

But the claims of the BHI's are different. They believe that all Blacks (and, in some cases, Hispanics) can trace their lineage back to the original twelve tribes of Israel. They also believe that most Jews worldwide, including Israeli Jews, are not really Jews at all. Instead, in a misuse of the words of Jesus in Revelation 2:9 and 3:9, these Jews are frauds, literally the synagogue of Satan. (I addressed all this briefly in the 1992 edition of my book "Our Hands Are Stained with Blood: The Tragic Story of the 'Church' and the Jewish People," pp. 66-68; in the 2019 edition, I expanded the material to pp. 104-111. More broadly, see my 2021 book "Christian Antisemitism.")

As noted by history professor Tudor Parfitt, writing in February 2021, "This issue came to wider public attention in part as a result of the chance intersection in January 2019 of one very particular subgroup of Black Jews—the Black Hebrew Israelites; some participants in the Indigenous People's March; and a group of pro-life Catholic high school boys from Kentucky, in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. The Black Hebrew Israelites merrily saluted the Native Americans as descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel, cursed the schoolboys as white 'Edomites' and found themselves on the TV sets of anyone in the United States who happened to tune in to the day's news."

Today, it is Ye saying he can't be anti-Semitic because he himself is a Jew, while Kyrie (who has since apologized) recommended a movie espousing these very ideologies.

And when Ye went after Ben Shapiro (another evil Jew!) and Daily Wire on Twitter, drawing a sharp response from Ben in return, there were tens of thousands who agreed with Ye before he removed the tweet. (As of this writing, Ben's tweet had 22.3 thousand likes; Ye's had over 50 thousand, if I'm correct, before he deleted it.)

In light of this ideological volcano that is about to erupt in our nation, now would be a perfect time to find out more about these BHI's, praying for their conversion as well.

For a very helpful introduction to the Black Hebrew Israelites, including their history and beliefs, check out my interview with Vocab Malone. {eoa}

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