

## THE VERDICT

- We've established that not only are we called to preach the gospel, share the gospel, and live by the gospel. We are also called to **DEFEND THE GOSPEL**.
- **I Peter 3:15, 16 (NLT)** – *Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, ALWAYS BE READY TO EXPLAIN IT. <sup>16</sup> But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.*
- **Jude 1:3 (CEV)** – *My dear friends, I really wanted to write you about God's saving power at work in our lives. But instead, I must write and ask you to **DEFEND THE FAITH** that God has once for all given to his people.*
- We've equipped you to answer the question, Does God Even Exist? And Can We Trust the Bible? And Is Jesus Really the Son of God?
- Today, let's establish The Case for Christianity: *Is Christianity too Narrow?*

### Week #4 – The Case for Christianity: Is Christianity Too Narrow?

- Christianity is often referred to as being too narrow or too exclusive, because we unapologetically say what the Bible teaches: **Jesus is the ONLY WAY** to a relationship with the God of the Bible.
- **Acts 4:12 (NIV)** – *Salvation is found in NO ONE ELSE, for there is NO OTHER NAME under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.*

#### Is Christianity too Narrow or Exclusive?

**RESPONSE #1:** *Truth is by nature, EXCLUSIVE.  $2 + 2 = 4$ . It's not 5, 6, or 7 depending on whether you had math in Michigan or Florida.*

**RESPONSE #2:** *Saying “all religions are true” or “all religions are just different paths to the same God” is actually self-contradictory because different religions teach opposite things.*

- **John 14:6 (NIV)** – *Jesus answered, I am THE WAY and THE TRUTH and THE LIFE. No one comes to the Father except through me.*
- **Matthew 7:13, 14 (NCV)** – *Enter through the narrow gate. The gate is wide and the road is wide that leads to hell, and many people enter through that gate. <sup>14</sup> But the gate is small and THE ROAD IS NARROW that leads to true life. Only a few people find that road.*
- **QUOTE:** *Christianity is not exclusive because it keeps people out; rather, it's exclusive because **Jesus is the only one who can save.***

### Three Questions:

#### **1. What makes Christianity Different?**

- All other major religions teach a WORKS-BASED salvation:
  - **Islam** – Salvation is based on good deeds outweighing bad.
  - **Hinduism** – Multiple reincarnations to reach enlightenment.
  - **Buddhism** – Achieving Nirvana through self-discipline.
  - **Jehovah's Witnesses & Mormonism** – Salvation is earned through works.
- Christianity stands alone in saying SALVATION IS A FREE GIFT.
- **Ephesians 2:8, 9 (GNT)** – *For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it.*

## 2. Why is Jesus the Only Way to God?

- **Because He said He was.**
- **QUOTE (C.S. Lewis in Mere Christianity):** *Jesus Christ was either a liar, a lunatic, or Lord.*
- **Because He had Miracles and a Resurrection to Back it Up**
- **John 14:11 (NCV)** – *Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or believe BECAUSE OF THE MIRACLES I HAVE DONE.*
- No other Imam, Rabbi, Prophet, Dalai Lama, or Shaman was killed and then showed back up alive three days later.
- **QUOTE:** *The empty tomb validates that Jesus is exactly who He said He was.*

## 3. What's Wrong with the OTHER Ways?

### a. Progressive Christianity

**WHAT IS IT:** A modern attempt to redefine truth, because of an erroneous belief that Christianity must change to fit modern culture.

**TRUTH:** If we believe the truth of the Bible concerning Christianity, then we must accept that our methods may change, but God's truth is unchanging.

**Hebrews 13:8 (NLT)** – *Jesus Christ is THE SAME yesterday, today, and FOREVER.*

### b. The Black Hebrew Israelite Movement

**WHAT IS IT:** A growing group teaching that African Americans are the true Israelites – descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. Some sects claim that modern Jews are imposters, and that salvation is for Black Hebrews only.

**TRUTH:** Whether African Americans are the true Israelites or not is a subject for debate on another day. **What is irrefutable is that authentic Jews and authentic Gentiles all need Jesus, just the same!**

**Galatians 3:28 (MSG)** – *In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. AMONG US YOU ARE ALL EQUAL. That is, we are all in a common relationship with Jesus Christ.*

### c. Universal Christianity

**WHAT IS IT:** A growing belief (even among some Christians) that everyone goes to heaven and God will save everyone, regardless of faith in Christ or not. It's birthed out of man's struggle with Heaven, Hell and Judgment.

**TRUTH:** Jesus said the exact opposite of this in **John 3:36 (NIV)** – *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath REMAINS ON THEM.*

## Additional Resources When Engaging Someone from the Black Hebrew Israelite Movement: **Biblical Refutation of the Movement**

### 1. Salvation is for ALL People

- **Galatians 3:28** – *"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*
- **Romans 10:12-13** – *"For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

### 2. The Gospel is Not Based on Ethnicity

- **Acts 10:34-35** – *"Then Peter began to speak: 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right.'"*
- **Revelation 7:9** – *"After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb."*

### 3. The True Identity of Israel in Christ

- **Romans 9:6-8** – *"Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children... In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring."*
- **Ephesians 2:14-16** – *"For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility... to create in Himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace."*

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## **How to Respond to Black Hebrew Israelites**

### If You Encounter a BHI Believer:

1. **Stay Calm and Respectful** – Many adherents are passionate about their beliefs, so avoid heated arguments.
2. **Ask Questions** – Challenge their worldview:
  - *"If salvation is only for Israel, why does the Bible say God accepts people from every nation?"*
  - *"If we are saved by keeping the Law, what was the purpose of Jesus' death?"*
3. **Point to Jesus** – Many BHIs focus on ethnicity and the Law – redirect the conversation to Christ's sacrifice and grace.
4. **Use Scripture Effectively** – Many will twist Scripture, so read in context and emphasize New Testament teachings.
5. **Pray for Their Heart to be Open** – Many BHI believers are deeply entrenched in their worldview, and only the Holy Spirit can bring revelation.