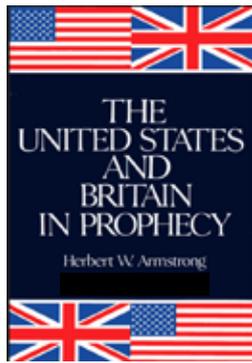


# British-Israelism

## Are The *TEN LOST TRIBES* Really Lost?

British-Israelism, also known as Anglo-Israelism, can be traced back to the French Magistrate, Counsellor Le Loyer, who wrote *The Ten Lost Tribes Found*, in 1590, and in Britain to Richard Brothers (1757-1824), who wrote, *The Invasion of England by the Saxons*, in 1822. The *British Israel World Federation* was formed in 1919 with its Covenant Publishing Company. They currently have their base in Bishop Auckland, County Durham, England. The majority of the forms of British-Israelism hold to orthodox Christianity, with the exception of *The Worldwide Church of God*, founded by Herbert W. Armstrong. Their magazine, *The Plain Truth*, coupled with their very numerous radio and television broadcasts make them the most prolific of the proponents of British-Israelism.



When Britain was in her heyday, British-Israelites proclaimed as proof the fact that Britain was receiving the blessings of the Covenant, since they were the descendants of the lost ten tribes. However, these "blessings" have now transferred to the United States as they have now surpassed Britain. There is also now a growing movement of Japanese-Israelites based on the same "blessings" idea, as Japan has become one of the most prosperous nations in the World.

British-Israelism is not in itself a religion and does not run churches of its own, however, many churches will only include as members those who believe in this theory. The people holding this belief are now estimated to number around three million.

### WHAT BRITISH-ISRAELITES BELIEVE

There are infinite variations of the minor details of British-Israelism, but the central beliefs remain the same. Put simply, British-Israelites believe that Britain and the United States are the present-day descendants of the ten tribes (the northern kingdom of Israel). After being exiled to Assyria in 721 B.C. the ten tribes were lost around 600 B.C. and never returned to their home land, but lost their national identity. In this theory, Britain is Ephraim and the United States is Manasseh.

Further to this, they believe that around 650 B.C. the northern ten tribes escaped and moved further north

and were in reality the Saxae or Scythians, who migrated westward through northern Europe and were the ancestors of the Danes (Dan) and the Saxons (Isaac's sons) who later invaded England.

Jeremiah (33:17) prophesied that Israel will always have a king in the line of David, so British-Israelites surmise that one of King Zedekiah's daughters, who was taken to Egypt with Jeremiah (ch. 43:6-7), later sailed to Ireland and married a king there, thereby becoming the ancestor of the British Royal family. Queen Elizabeth 2<sup>nd</sup> is then said to be a direct descendant of King David.



They also say that after the division between Judah and Israel the names "Judah" and "Israel" were never both used for the same group. Israel and Judah became quite different groups of people and from here on "Jew" is only applied to the tribe of Judah. Herbert W. Armstrong further states in his book, *Where Are the Ten Lost Tribes?* on page 8, "there are no exceptions to this in the Bible!"

British-Israelites believe all Biblical prophecies yet unfulfilled now apply to England and the United States.

### A BRIEF BIBLICAL HISTORY OF ISRAEL

After the death of King Solomon, the nation of Israel was divided into two separate kingdoms. King Solomon's son, Rehoboam, remained as king over his own tribe of Judah, together with the tribe of Benjamin, while the other ten tribes followed Jeroboam, an Ephraimite and made him their king (See 2 Kings 11 & 12). This division occurred around 930 B.C. The southern two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, became known as Judah and the northern ten tribes became known as Israel.



Altogether, Israel had 20 kings, the last being King Hoshea, before they were finally exiled after a long siege to Assyria. The first Israelites to be exiled were taken to Assyria from 738-732 B.C. by the Assyrian King, Tiglath-pileser. His successors, Shalmaneser and Sargon<sup>2nd</sup>, completed the overthrow of the ten tribes by 721 B.C. All of Israel was not exiled, but only the strongest and wealthiest of the people. Those that remained in their land (probably the majority), were subject to tribute imposed upon them by King Sargon<sup>2nd</sup>.



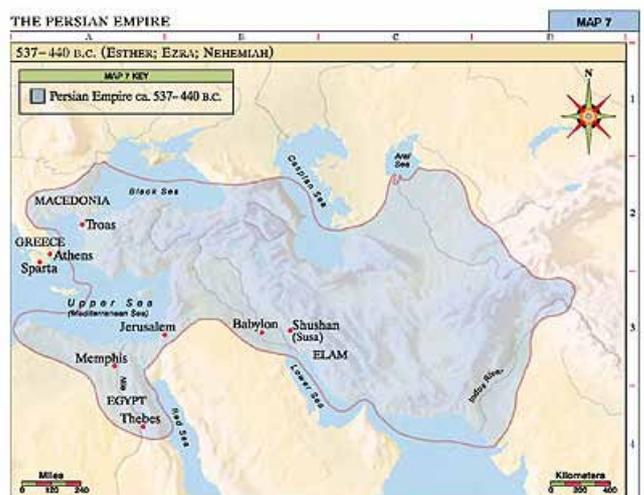
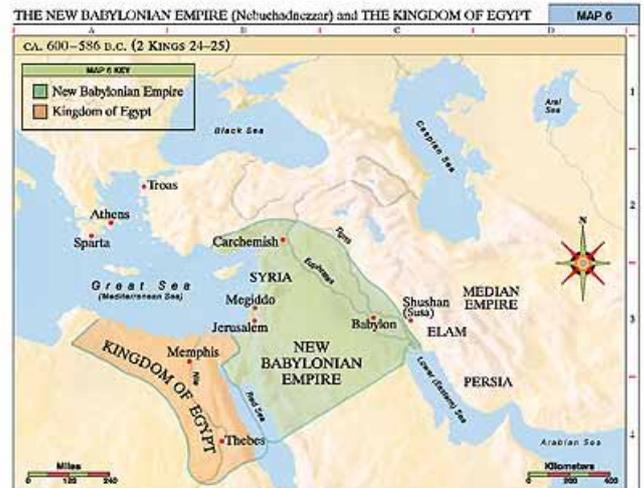
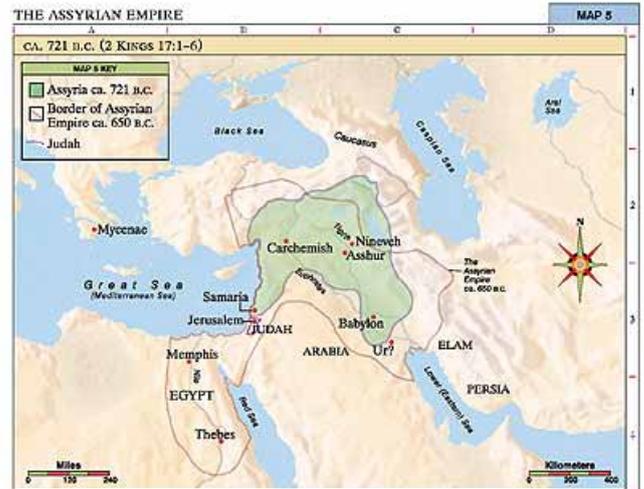
Between the overthrow of the northern ten tribes of Israel and the overthrow of Judah nearly 140 years later, from 605 to 586 B.C., the Babylonian empire succeeded the Assyrian empire. This meant that the region over which Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, ruled was the same region the Assyrian Kings, Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser and Sargon<sup>2nd</sup> had ruled over - only larger. The exiled members of all twelve tribes were therefore together again in Babylon. By 538 B.C. the Persian King, Cyrus, had conquered the Babylonian empire and issued a decree allowing Ezra and Nehemiah to begin escorting the twelve tribes back to their land, even with the King's financial assistance! This return and the rebuilding of Jerusalem took until around 420 B.C. At this time the silent years began between the Old and New Testaments.

### WHY BRITISH-ISRAELISM IS NOT BIBLICAL

The brief history of Israel outlined above is enough in itself to refute the British-Israelism theory. It's fairly obvious from these maps that Scythia shared a border with the Assyrian, then Babylonian, then Persian empires. The Scythians went much further north, east and west. However, to answer it in more detail, some of the numerous reasons why it is not Biblical are given below.

#### Firstly, some non-Biblical reasons:

There is not a scrap of evidence that the Scythians or Saxons are in any way related to the Israelites. The physical characteristics, traditions and culture



of the two groups are too far apart to be reconciled or linked. To think that millions of Israelites migrated into Britain and the United States, then dropped every trace of their previous culture is absurd - the Scythians (ancestors of the Saxons) could not have been the ten

tribes of the northern kingdom. With this first reason alone, the whole theory crumbles, as this destroys the only "link" between the Israelites and the British in the British-Israelism theory. Without this link, they have a gap of over one thousand years to explain between the exile of the ten tribes and the first appearance of the ancestors of the British. Also, there is no link between the languages of the Hebrews and the Saxons. They are as opposite as Chinese and English.

*"The Scythians – the Greeks' name for this initially nomadic people – inhabited Scythia from at least the 11th century BC to the 2nd century AD. In the seventh century BC, the Scythians controlled large swaths of territory throughout Eurasia, from the Black Sea across Siberia to the borders of China. Some sources document that the Scythians were energetic but peaceful people."* (Wikipedia; Scythians) This means the Scythians existed around three hundred years before the Ten Tribes from Israel's Northern Kingdom are alleged to have gone missing.

*"The Saxons were a Germanic tribe that originally occupied the region which today is the North Sea coast of the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark. Their name is derived from the seax, a distinct knife popularly used by the tribe. However, it is hard to distinguish Vikings from the Saxons and Normans whom they fought. They were all North Germanic/Scandinavian tribes. (King Harald was descended from Danish Vikings for instance. The "Normans" were so-called by the fact of being descendants of Norsemen)."* (Wikipedia; Saxons)

Therefore, any play on words, such as "Isaac" becoming "Saac's sons" or "Saxons", is meaningless. British-Saxons write from left to right while the Hebrews write from right to left - a very major difference as no nation has ever been known to change their writing direction.



No evidence exists to suggest that the British Monarchy are descended from the tribe of Judah, let alone the line of King David. Even if the ten tribes were lost, what are the King David's descendants doing ruling on the throne of England instead of the throne of Judah, since Judah isn't lost?

British-Israelites claim that the Stone of Scone under the Queen of England's coronation throne is the very pillar stone of Jacob, which was brought there by Jeremiah!

The stone has been analysed however, and found to be a calcareous type of red sandstone of Scottish origin - perhaps Jacob lived in Scotland at the time of his vision!

*"After 70 years, many of the captives of Judah returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the city. Because of this and their renewed diligence in keeping God's Sabbath, their history continued. However, the northern 10 tribes largely disappeared from history. As a result, they are sometimes referred to as the lost 10 tribes of Israel. But while their nation disappeared, the descendants of these people continued to exist."* (Wikipedia; Ten Lost Tribes)

If the Scythians were related to the ten tribes, then as well as British-Israelites, there would be Swedish-Israelites, German-Israelites, Norwegian-Israelites, etc!

### And some Biblical reasons:

Members of all twelve tribes did return to their land after the exile. Ezra records in Ezra chapter 2:70, **"Now the priests and the Levites, some of the people, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants lived in their cities, AND ALL ISRAEL in their cities."**

And in chapter 6:17 Ezra further states that **"...TWELVE male goats, one for each of the tribes of Israel"** were sacrificed to dedicate the re-built temple. "Jew" and "Israel" are used interchangeably following the exile.

In Acts 21:39 and 22:3 Paul calls himself a Jew; in Romans 11:1 he calls himself an Israelite; then in Philippians 3:5 and 2 Corinthians 11:22 he calls himself a Hebrew! In Ezra, those who returned from exile were called "Jews" 8 times and "Israelites" 40 times, while in Nehemiah they were called "Jews" 11 times and "Israelites" 22 times. As well as this, Ezra the scribe uses the words "all Israel" over seven times.

Jesus is called **"the King of the Jews"** in Matthew 27:37, then **"the King of Israel"** in verse 42, just five verses later! Acts 2:36 refers to **"ALL the house of Israel,"** saying it was they that crucified Jesus.

Jesus, in his time on earth, only twice used the term "Jew" (John 4:22 and 13:33), preferring to use the term "Israelite" or "Israel". By Jesus day, the terms "Israelite" and "Jew" had become synonymous and the use of the tribal names had largely ceased.

The "twelve tribes" are specifically referred to after the exile many times; such as: Ezra 6:17; Ezekiel 47:13 and 48:1-35; Matthew 19:28, Luke 22:30; Acts 26:7; James 1:1; Revelation 7:5-8 and Revelation 21:12. 1 Chronicles

9:3 gives a list of those from Ephraim and Manasseh who were living in Jerusalem, after they came back from exile and 2 Chronicles 30:1-18 mentions people from the tribe of Ephraim, Manasseh, Zebulun and Issachar who were left behind in their land by the Assyrians. Anna the prophetess was from the tribe of Asher (Luke 2:36), and Nathaniel was called an Israelite. Levites were sent to John the Baptist to question him (John 1:19).

*"The introduction to the book of James says, "To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," which confirms that some in the early New Testament Church knew where at least some of the descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel were located."* (Wikipedia; Ten Lost Tribes)

In 2 Samuel 7:13 the LORD says to David through Nathan the prophet, **"and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."** This does not mean there will be a continuous line of kings on David's throne, because Hosea 3:4-5 and Amos 9:11 clearly show that this line of kings will be broken for a while.

In 1 Kings 11:39 the Bible says, **"Thus I will afflict the descendants of David for this, but not always."** Judah and Israel were divided - but it was not to be forever. The ten tribes were never lost and the destinies of Judah and Israel were not separated forever. Ezekiel prophesied around 580 B.C. (just before the exiles started returning), that Israel and Judah would one day be one nation again and would be brought back to their own land. (See Ezekiel 37:15-23 and also Jeremiah 30:1-24, Jeremiah 50:4 and Zechariah 10:6.) Does this mean the British and Americans will all one day move (or squeeze!) back into the small land of Israel?

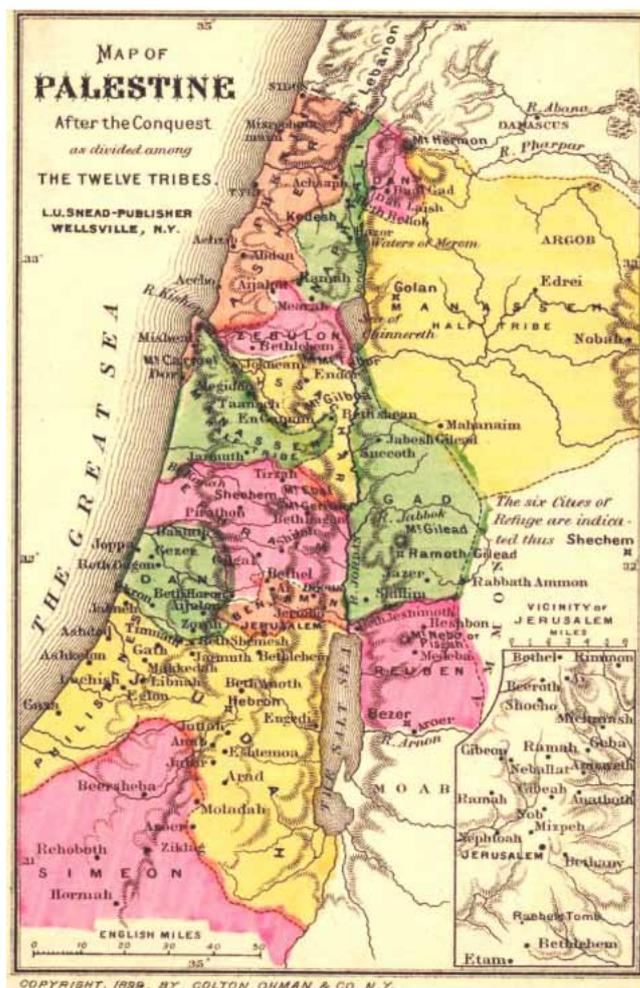
If Britain and the United States are receiving the special blessing of God because they are the descendants of the lost ten tribes, do the Old Testament laws also apply to them? Are all the males in Britain and the United States circumcised for instance - or are they all Christians? And since Biblically, Ephraim is preeminent over Manasseh and called "the exalted one", then why is the United States more prosperous than Britain? It is abundantly clear that the ten tribes are not lost. Any prophecies yet unfulfilled are either still to be fulfilled or were conditional promises broken because of Israel's unfaithfulness; they are not to be ignored as the British-Israelites do to the countless prophecies that do not fit into their theory.

### TO CONCLUDE

The theory of British-Israelism or Anglo-Israelism, is "extra to the Bible". There could be great harm done by believing in this theory, as it causes one to hope in the

flesh instead of putting their faith personally in God. It can also be a bad foundation, leading on to serious errors on other doctrines. Ask British-Israelites, **"Did you get this theory reading the Bible alone, or did you hear it or read it elsewhere and are still trying to squeeze it into the Bible?"** The answer will always be the latter. Let's not speculate about what the Bible doesn't say, instead let us learn thoroughly and be transformed by what the Bible does say. **"...who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie ..."** Revelation 3:9.

**"Have nothing to do with the things of darkness, but rather expose them."** (Ephesians 5:11)



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