

Chosen people

Throughout history, various groups of people have considered themselves to be **chosen people** by a deity for a purpose, such as to act as the deity's agent on earth. In monotheistic faiths references to God are used in constructs such as "God's Chosen People". The phenomenon of a "chosen people" is particularly common in the Israelite tradition, where it originally referred to the Israelites—in fact Jews refer to this as a burden to spread the message of one God. Some claims of chosenness are based on parallel claims of Israelite ancestry, as is the case for the Christian Identity and Black Hebrew sects—both which claim themselves (and not Jews) to be the "true Israel". Others claim a "spiritual" chosenness, including most Christian denominations, who traditionally believe the church has replaced Israel as the People of God.

Anthropologists commonly regard claims of chosenness as a form of ethnocentrism.^{[1][2]}

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Judaism

In Judaism, "chosenness" is the belief that the Jews, via descent from the ancient Israelites, are the chosen people, i.e. chosen to be in a covenant with God. The idea of the Israelites being chosen by God is found most directly in the Book of Deuteronomy^[3] as the verb 'bahar (בָּחַר Hebrew)), and is alluded to elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible using other terms such as "holy people".^[4] Much is written about these topics in rabbinic literature. The three largest Jewish denominations—Orthodox Judaism, Conservative Judaism and Reform Judaism—maintain the belief that the Jews have been chosen by God for a purpose. Sometimes this choice is seen as charging the Jewish people with a specific mission—to be a light unto the nations, and to exemplify the covenant with God as described in the Torah.

Christianity

Seventh-day Adventism

Mormonism

In Mormonism, all Latter Day Saints are viewed as covenant, or chosen, people because they have accepted the name of Jesus Christ through the ordinance of baptism. In contrast to supersessionism, Latter Day Saints do not dispute the "chosen" status of the Jewish people. Most practicing Mormons receive a patriarchal blessing that reveals their lineage in the House of Israel. This lineage may be

blood related or through "adoption;" therefore, a child may not necessarily share the lineage of her parents (but will still be a member of the tribes of Israel). It is a widely held belief^[5]^[6] that most members of the faith are in the tribe of Ephraim or the tribe of Manasseh.

Christian Identity

The Christian Identity movement sees the Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, Nordic and kindred peoples of the world as both the descendants of the ancient Israelites and the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Christian Identity, though not organized as a religion, comprises certain individuals, churches and some prison gangs^[7] such as the Aryan Brotherhood with a white supremacist theology^[8]^[9] that promotes a racial interpretation of Christianity. Christian Identity can be traced back to 1886 with the publication of the book *Lost Israel Found in the Anglo-Saxon Race* by E.P. Ingersoll. This was followed in the 1920s by the writings of Howard Rand (1889–1991) who regarded Europeans as the "chosen people" and Jews as the cursed offspring of Cain. White supremacist sects and gangs later adopted many of these teachings.

Rastafari

Based on Jewish biblical tradition and Ethiopian legend via Kebra Nagast, Rastas believe that Israel's King Solomon, together with Ethiopian Queen of Sheba, conceived a child which began the Solomonic line of kings in Ethiopia, rendering the Ethiopian people as the true children of Israel, and thereby chosen. Reinforcement of this belief occurred when Beta Israel, Ethiopia's ancient Israelite First Temple community, were rescued from Sudanese famine and brought to Israel during Operation Moses in 1985.

Unification Church

Sun Myung Moon taught that Korea is the chosen nation, selected to serve a divine mission and was "chosen by God to be the birthplace of the leading figure of the age"^[10] and was the birthplace of "Heavenly Tradition", ushering in God's kingdom.

Nation of Islam

The NOI teaches that black people constitute a nation and that through the institution of the Atlantic slave trade they were systematically denied knowledge of their history, language, culture, and religion and, in effect, lost control of their lives. Founder Elijah Muhammad called for the establishment of a separate nation for black Americans and the adoption of a religion based on the worship of Allah and on the belief that blacks were his chosen people.

See also

- 144,000
- Christ of Europe
- Exceptionalism
- Religiocentrism
- Theocracy

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Further reading

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