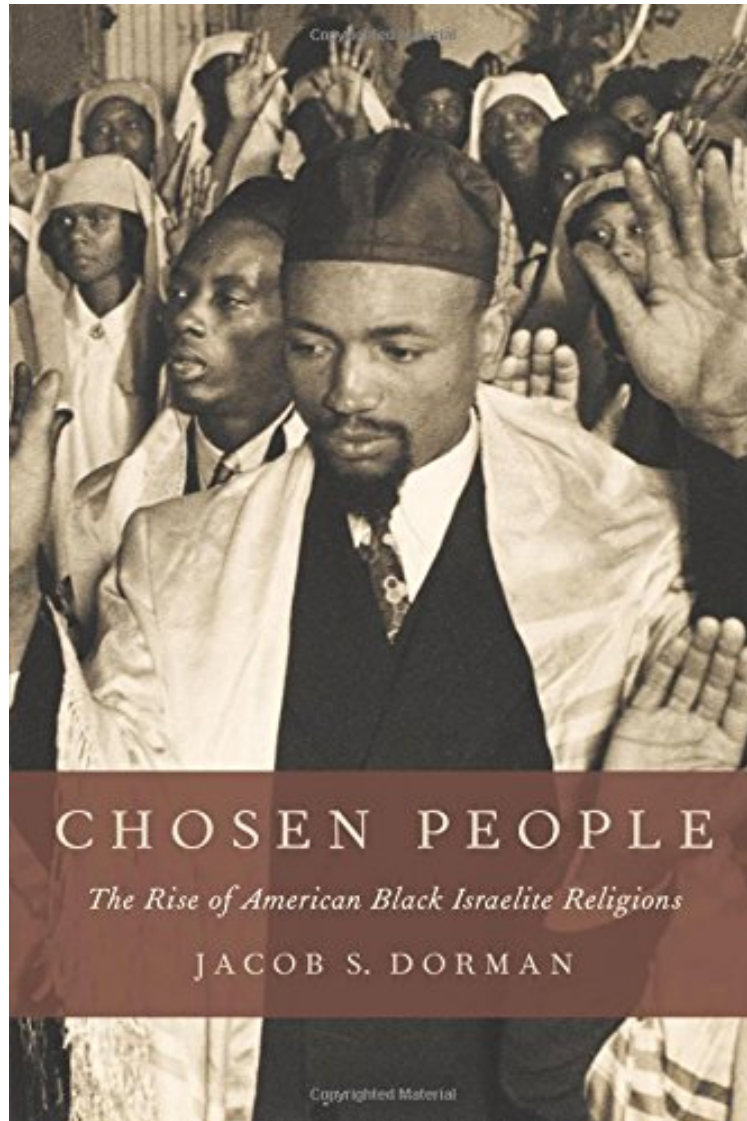


[Download] Chosen People: The Rise of American Black Israelite Religions

## Chosen People: The Rise of American Black Israelite Religions

*Jacob S. Dorman*

*ebooks | Download PDF | \*ePub | DOC | audiobook*



 Download

 Read Online

#650880 in Books 2016-03-01 2016-04-28Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 6.10 x .90 x 9.10l, .0 #File Name: 0190490098322 pages | File size: 54.Mb

**Jacob S. Dorman : Chosen People: The Rise of American Black Israelite Religions** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chosen People: The Rise of American Black Israelite Religions:

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. All-Around Excellence: Compelling Writing Important HistoryBy Vocab MaloneDorman's book is a must read for any student of the Hebrew-Israelite movement. Dorman uncovers important information related to the movement's history. He does a fine job of synthesizing the data into a coherent whole. He aptly demonstrates interwoven ideological strands and common points of contact, such as black Wesleyans,

Pentecostalism, and even Anglo-Israelism. Dorman is clearly fascinated by the subject matter but still writes in a relatively objective manner. This helps the reader understand these movements with a certain level of empathy. Empathy is important, especially when dealing with fringe offshoots some people may causally write off as bizarre or "weird". This book will not give the reader much information into the current wave of BHIs, which began ascending over the past decade or so. It will give the reader insight into where these movements came from, but the current strand of BHI is less refined and more militant than the groups covered in this book. Still, this book can not be overlooked as a key piece in understanding the current crop of BHI groups. Hailing from the central corridor of Phoenix, Arizona, Vocab Malone Urban Theologian Radio, host Roosevelt Community Church, staff Talbot School of Theology, D. Min. Student 9 of 12 people found the following review helpful. A different subject matter By dominic A well written and passionately researched piece of history that is as interesting as it is unfamiliar. Black Jews. Kansas being a sort of Mecca. Another reason Blacks were so peripatetic. Who knew? 1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. We've been here before By Leib Gershon Mitchell I really was inclined to not like this book right from the verbose introduction. But, it got better as the pages went on. I think that the whole book could be synopsized in probably three points. 1. There are a whole bunch of ideas that exist somewhere at some point in time. There's no reason that ideas a, b, c exist as opposed to x, y, z. They just do. 2. Some enterprising black Minister-- who probably wants to get out of doing some type of daily job (old theme and present theme) - - repackages them in such a way that he gets some followers. In these particular cases, there are elements of Judaism involved. 3. There is a lot of the standard black affinity for the obsessive politicizing of E.V.E.R.Y.T.H.I.N.G., and so there is no surprise that these religious experiences have heavy political overtones. That's it. I just saved you several hours and a good chunk of change to buy this book. There was quite a bit in each chapter (and really more than necessary, given that I could just synopsize the whole book in less than one paragraph and the book itself could have said what it had to say in 50 pages). To recapitulate: Chapter 1. We are introduced to the figure William Saunders Crowdy, who existed during the unsettled days of the Reconstruction as a traveling soapbox preacher. Black people in those times were suffering, and they needed someone charismatic who had something to say that they wanted to hear, and Crowdy cut his teeth going around the country learning his trade. And he just happened to be there at the right time and in the right place. Both the circumstances of the Reconstruction and William Saunders Crowdy were necessary to explain the genesis (so to speak) of this movement. The author, Dorman, is unequivocal that these black Hebrews started out as Judaism-plaited Christianity, and they still might be this to this day. Chapter 2. There is quite a bit in this chapter: i. There were black Jewish couplings, but most of them happened in the Caribbean Islands and were between Sephardic Jews and their African slaves. And the number of these couplings were very small in number. (These total population numbers are between 105 families to 1500 Jews-- and of course not all of them were married inter-racially.) Not anything large enough in scale to account for the large number that these Black Hebrews are claiming. (That was not explicitly stated, but it was the subtext the numbers that Dorman gave us. p. 63 noted something like 17 black Jews found over some huge number of Caribbean islands.) ii. There were many fewer black Jewish couplings in the United States because Jews there behaved in the way of their host country and kept their distance from the slaves (when they were actually slaveholders, which was not often) and kept their distances from the blacks (when they were neighbors and customers). The author takes the trouble to note that about 25% of whites actually owned slaves-- which means that 75% did not. And so this is another way that there were even fewer chances to get Jewish blood into large numbers of blacks (again, as is claimed by the black Hebrews.) iii. It seems that \*everyone\* thinks that they are a Lost Tribe of Israel. Dorman spends quite a few pages talking about the Anglo Saxon notion of Divine Election and thinking of themselves as one of the Lost Tribes (and believe me, they aren't the first ones). He seems to be implying (but does not come right out and say) that these black Hebrews are just \*one more\* in a long line of people who think that they are A Lost Tribe. He even comes up with a nifty term for this: "ideational rhizomes" (p. 58). Here is one point where the book fails. There is all this citing of anecdotal and historical evidence-- and there is genetic and DNA evidence that could have established this more easily and cut the length of this book in half. Chapter 3. This chapter ends up being more like a history of movements within 19th and 20th Century Evangelical Christianity -- of which Israelism was but one. It's just that the first ones were white and latter ones were black. Was it really news that a religious movement can start as one thing and morph into something different to what it started from? Or that it can start as one thing and be re-purposed into something different at a later date for different people? Who \*wasn't\* an Israelite? Chapter 4. More discussion of the repackaging of Things That We've Seen Before (and would see again) i. Repackaging of the Jewish concept of Divine Election (except for black people here and white people there). Hebrews originated in Nigeria and then immigrated to Palestine. But then the cast of characters in this book refer to the "beauty of the Ethiopian woman" (p. 128), even though Ethiopia is about 3600 miles away from Nigeria. But why let a little bit of geography get in the way? This foreshadows something that we would see again several decades later with the Black Egypt movement. Nevermind that there were a couple of thousand miles of Sahara desert between Egypt and black Africa. It just had to be because it was needed to be. (Also in both of these cases, current genetic evidence could put these tired theories to rest-- but won't.) ii. Obsessively turning every issue into something political. (p. 126). Marcus Garvey set up a whole shipping company that employed every single type of person in the industry except logistics and shipping. These

various incarnations of Christianity morphing into some aberration of Judaism that were characterized in this book set up classes for (it seemed) everything EXCEPT skilled trades and job training. And we saw the same thing 30 years later with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. And then more of the same with the Nation of Islam. And then more of the same with a new incarnation of Islam. (Prislam.) Plus ca change..... Chapter 5. This is mostly a discussion of Wentworth Arthur Matthew, the huckster. If there was a first Black Hebrew Israelite, he was it. But he didn't start out that way. He started out as some type of boxer. And then a bishop. And then later on appointed himself a Rabbi. And then there's ample evidence that he borrowed - is that the word? - a lot of his theology from the Masons. They even show him borrowing a lot of his things from the "Table of Fire" that was written by a person named Delaurence - all the way down to the spelling mistakes. (This spelling mistake really is inexcusable, because it shows little understanding of even the Hebrew alphabet. Can you imagine someone ordaining himself as a "Rabbi" who does not even know the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet?) In short, Dorman - intentionally or not - does a very good job of making this Wentworth Arthur Miller and the entire movement look like just what they were (and are), which is a bunch of clowns with no serious intellectual foundation. Verdict: Not recommended at the price of more than \$1

Named Outstanding Academic Title by CHOICE Winner of the Wesley-Logan Prize of the American Historical Association Winner of the Byron Caldwell Smith Book Prize Winner of the 2014 Albert J. Raboteau Book Prize for the Best Book in Africana Religions Jacob S. Dorman offers new insights into the rise of Black Israelite religions in America, faiths ranging from Judaism to Islam to Rastafarianism all of which believe that the ancient Hebrew Israelites were Black and that contemporary African Americans are their descendants. Dorman traces the influence of Israelite practices and philosophies in the Holiness Christianity movement of the 1890s and the emergence of the Pentecostal movement in 1906. An examination of Black interactions with white Jews under slavery shows that the original impetus for Christian Israelite movements was not a desire to practice Judaism but rather a studied attempt to recreate the early Christian church, following the strictures of the Hebrew Scriptures. A second wave of Black Israelite synagogues arose during the Great Migration of African Americans and West Indians to cities in the North. One of the most fascinating of the Black Israelite pioneers was Arnold Josiah Ford, a Barbadian musician who moved to Harlem, joined Marcus Garvey's Black Nationalist movement, started his own synagogue, and led African Americans to resettle in Ethiopia in 1930. The effort failed, but the Black Israelite theology had captured the imagination of settlers who returned to Jamaica and transmitted it to Leonard Howell, one of the founders of Rastafarianism and himself a member of Harlem's religious subculture. After Ford's resettlement effort, the Black Israelite movement was carried forward in the U.S. by several Harlem rabbis, including Wentworth Arthur Matthew, another West Indian, who creatively combined elements of Judaism, Pentecostalism, Freemasonry, the British Anglo-Israelite movement, Afro-Caribbean faiths, and occult kabbalah. Drawing on interviews, newspapers, and a wealth of hitherto untapped archival sources, Dorman provides a vivid portrait of Black Israelites, showing them to be a transnational movement that fought racism and its erasure of people of color from European-derived religions. *Chosen People* argues for a new way of understanding cultural formation, not in terms of genealogical metaphors of "survivals," or syncretism, but rather as a "polycultural" cutting and pasting from a transnational array of ideas, books, rituals, and social networks.

"*Chosen People* is a bold, compelling history of Black 'Israelite' religions among African-descended people in places as far afield as Kansas, Harlem, and Ethiopia. Highlighting Jewish, Christian, and Muslim ideas and practices, the book explores the dynamic, historically specific 'bricolage' that made Black Israelite religions. It is a novel intervention in scholarly debates of cultural change in the African diaspora, a must-read for scholars of the African diaspora, religious studies, and cultural production." --Edda Fields-Black, American Historical Association "*Chosen People* is unique in placing Black Israelite religions in the complex context of American history and is the most comprehensive work of scholarship on this topic...No one attempting to understand the rise of Black Israelite religions in America can afford to do without *Chosen People*." --Jewish of Books "*Chosen People* offers a fascinating look at Black Israelites, people who resided in the interstices of groups and ideas we commonly separate--Blacks and Jews, religion and politics, history and identity, cultural theory and historical documentation, Christians and Jews. Dorman situates his subjects in an incredibly rich context, illuminating not only those African Americans who believed in the blackness of the ancient Hebrews, but also the many social, political, and cultural forces operating in post-emancipation African American history. It is fascinating reading for anyone interested in American religion, history, or culture." --Cheryl Greenberg, Paul E. Raether Distinguished Professor of History, Trinity College "*Jacob Dorman* has written a masterful (even paradigm-shifting) book on Black Judaism, a genuine tour de force. Carefully combining a close reading of primary artifacts/evidence with substantive life-history interviews, critiques/re-readings of various secondary literatures, and even a healthy dash of what I'd call a decidedly ethnographic sensibility, Dorman has crafted a powerful and meticulous portrait of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Black Jewish leaders who institutionalized versions of Black Judaic subjectivity in the United States that can still boast many adherents all around the country and the world today. *Chosen People* is an engaging and thoughtful read for students and scholars of Jewish studies,

Africana studies, religious studies, and American history."--John L. Jackson, Jr., Richard Perry University Professor of Communication and Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania "Jacob Dorman has not only established himself as the leading historian on Black Israelites, but has made an immense contribution to our understanding of the African Diaspora, religion and modernity, and the vexing problem of cultural identity. The research is prodigious, the scope impressive, and his telling of how African-descended people embraced and transformed Judaism is truly dynamic. Most importantly, *Chosen People* reminds us that people are not merely inheritors of tradition but its creators."--Robin D. G. Kelley, author of *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* "Jacob Dorman extends historical narratives of African American religion beyond 'Black Jews' to the kinship between Black Israelites, Ethiopians, Rastafarians, and Holiness-Pentecostal Christians, with Freemasons, Conjurers and Mystic Scientists forming a bricolage of ideational, rather than hereditary, traditions. This is a fascinating study that shifts models of African American cultural transmission and religious innovation from 'roots' to 'rhizomes,' and from 'syncretism' to 'polyculturalism.'" --Yvonne Chireau, co-editor of *Black Zion: African American Religious Encounters with Judaism* "Dorman's book draws an intricate web of connections between Israelites, black Jews, Holiness, Pentecostal, and Anglo-Israelite groups, all with a skilled reading of the meaning of religious symbols." --*Religion in American History* "Dorman provides an engaging study of the complex nature of the creation and evolution of Black Israelite religions on the Great Plains, in the great cities of all regions of the United States, and as a result of the great migrations that carried practitioners of these religions to other parts of the world. This significant book makes a valuable contribution to the literature on cultural synthesis and African American history." --*The Journal of American History* "*Chosen People: The Rise of the American Black Israelite Religions* is a refreshing shift in studies on the early formations of Black religious life in the United States... By situating his study in the thickness of American inequality and black peoples' of faith search for meaning, Dorman offers readers a viewpoint of the complex richness of Black religious experience and group formation in the U.S. ... For that and many other reasons, Dorman's work is a must-read." --*Pneuma* "Dorman's book is an impressive effort to write persuasively and clearly about this complexity, to convey in historical language a cultural process that is not rightly rendered through a sequential chronology but is more accurately conveyed through the accrued effect of whispers, images, metaphors, rites, and sermonical dreams."--*The Journal of Religion*

About the Author Jacob S. Dorman is an assistant professor in the Department of History and Department of American Studies at the University of Kansas.