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Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity

Anthony D. Smith

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'Unto thy seed I have given this land.' From the moment of God's covenant with Abraham in the Old Testament, the idea that a people are chosen by God has had a central role in shaping national identity. *Chosen Peoples* argues powerfully that sacred belief remains central to national identity, even in an increasingly secular, globalized modern world. In this important new study, Anthony D. Smith goes in search of the deep Judeo-Christian roots of the many manifestations of national identity.
This rich and timely contribution to current debates about nationalism explains the complex historical reasons behind often violent modern conflicts around issues of land, culture, religion, and politics. Tracing the development of individual nations over many centuries, it offers fascinating insights into the religious and cultural foundations of countries such as Great Britain, the United States, Israel, France, and Germany. The argument draws on a wide range of examples from historic landscapes in Ireland, Switzerland and Egypt, myths of Arthurian Britain, Holy Russia, and Byzantium, through memories of a 'Golden Age', to the modern commemoration of the 'Glorious Dead', and of victims of war.

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