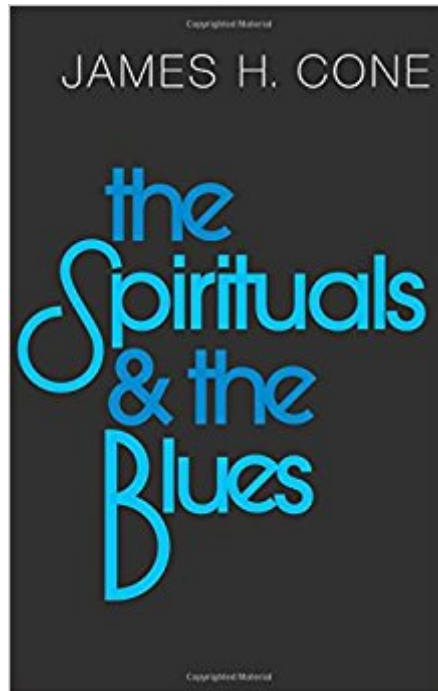




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# The Spirituals And The Blues: An Interpretation



## Synopsis

Cone explores two classic aspects of African-American culture--the spirituals and the blues. He tells the captivating story of how slaves and the children of slaves used this music to affirm their essential humanity in the face of oppression. The blues are shown to be a "this-worldly" expression of cultural and political rebellion. The spirituals tell about the "attempt to carve out a significant existence in a very trying situation."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Although this book is only slightly revised from its 1972 original ( LJ 5/15/72), it deserves special mention because it unites two distinctive African American musical forms--spirituals and the blues--in their concern for liberation from oppression. Cone sees the blues as "secular spirituals" and the spirituals as code language dealing with the meaning of daily existence and hope for present and future transcendence. Highly recommended for all libraries not owning the 1972 edition. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

James H. Cone, Bill and Judith Moyers Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary, is widely regarded as one of the most influential theologians in America. His books include *Black Theology & Black Power*, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, *The Spirituals & the Blues*, *God of the Oppressed*, *Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare* and *The Cross*

and the Lynching Tree.

Easily one of the most beautiful theological works that analyzes the black spirit in and through the spirituals and the blues. These musical outlets are more than ascetic get-aways under oppressive regimes, rather they embody the rhythmic sways and suaves of black hope and grit. Grounded in real history, the spirituals and the blues expose, reject, and recapitulate supremacists' definition of black nothingness/nobodiness into black somebodiness. For blacks, music is their authoritative medium for reshaping their narrative towards a redemptive and majestic eschatological hope: "My Lord! Po' mourner's got a home at las'. Mourner's got a home at las'."cf. sooholee.wordpress

If you are not black, this book will be especially eye-opening. We tend to downplay the psychological burdens and emotional suffering of others. This book corrects that for those of us who have not experienced the suffering imposed by racism. Cone's book can also open our eyes to other forms of suffering not related to race, even to understand better those other forms of suffering.

While the book itself is a good study on Black Theology, I cannot recommend the Kindle Version. The electronic version somehow was not subjected to any kind of proof editing and is chocked full of typos that sometimes even obscures the writer's meaning. Hopefully the print version is better!

This is a fascinating book. The comparison of the spiritual and blues is informative, thought provoking, and inspirational. I recommend this book to anyone interested in the spiritual.

A book I read many moons ago and have at last purchased. A fairly slim volume but packed with what the blues-and spirituals are all about-I am using it as a research tool for my book on Clara Smith and my 4-CD project on 'Protest in the Blues' on JSP Records in 2014.

Wonderful book

James Cone opens the deeper meaning of these religious spirituals for people who were oppressed and found consolation in God and each other through these beautiful expressions.

Phenomenal work. Takes us back to the origins of the blues and leaves us at the doorstep of hip hop, wondering what could be.

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