

MODULE 2: SEVEN ESSAYS: THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL DIMENSION

(7 three-hour sessions in an onground seminar format)

1. Who is a Jew? & the Jewish Life Cycle – the question of what defines Jewish identity, and Jewish rites of passage over a lifetime.
2. Hebraic Worldview and Roots of Christianity – The theological and philosophical truths of the Hebrew Bible that undergird Christian theology. Remembering “that it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.” (Romans 11:18).
3. Israelology & the Meaning of the “Gospel is to the Jew first” – Every Christian tradition has an “Israelology,” but it is often not tested by Scripture. What does “to the Jew first...” (Romans 1:16) really mean? Let’s learn to articulate a Biblical Israelology; The Pauline Olive Tree metaphor is key (Romans 11).
4. Theology of the Land of Israel & the Peace Process: Whence Shalom? – What are the Biblical parameters and possibilities for peace, and what should be our posture regarding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the greater historical Jewish-Arab conflict?
5. If You Don’t Understand Eschatology, It’s Not the End of the World – What is a Biblical theology of the last days of This Age? Every Christian tradition has a view of the millennium; Pre-mill, A-mill, Post-mill. What are the consequences of each view? Does it matter?
6. The Seven Major Feasts: Including their Messianic and Prophetic Dimensions – These major feasts (Leviticus ch. 23) in the cycle of the Jewish year not only carry much meaning in their celebration, but carry typology that help confirm our Israelology and eschatology.
7. “sTORAHtelling” and Jewish Evangelism – The Bible is God’s Story, Yeshua/Jesus used stories to teach. Storytelling the stories of the Hebrew Bible is Jewish-friendly. People in our late modern digital age are conditioned to take in information by oral and visual media. This session advocates “sTORAHtelling” as an effective way to build bridges across barriers in engaging Jewish people with the Good News of Messiah.

WHAT THOSE WHO TOOK THE EJW COURSE ARE SAYING:

“Before taking this course, I already knew that Christianity is rooted in Judaism. I read about the priests, the prophets, and the kings in the Old Testament. I knew that Jesus came as a Jew. But what I failed to learn was the history of the Jewish people from the Old Testament era to today. The story of their struggles, persecutions, victories, and how their story impacts the world that we live in now.

If we believe that the foundations of America and the Western world is built on the principals of Christianity, then it only follows that we learn about the people who were the root of this belief system. In doing so, we will see anew the grand plan of God for His people and the rest of us who have been grafted into the root.



For more information or
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WHO?:

Bill Bjoraker, PhD, is the course developer, writer of the curriculum and text and instructor. Bill and his wife Diana served for eight years in pastoral and teaching ministry in Tel Aviv, Israel. He is a specialist in Jewish Studies and speaks modern Hebrew. He has taught courses in Messianic Jewish Studies in various seminaries and ministry schools. Bill’s burden is to address the need to equip more workers for the Jewish harvest, making such training more accessible to more people, to help fulfill the church’s mandate to the Jewish people, winning them to salvation through their own promised Messiah (Romans 11). He has been using oral strategies and storytelling in Jewish ministry and in academia since 2008.

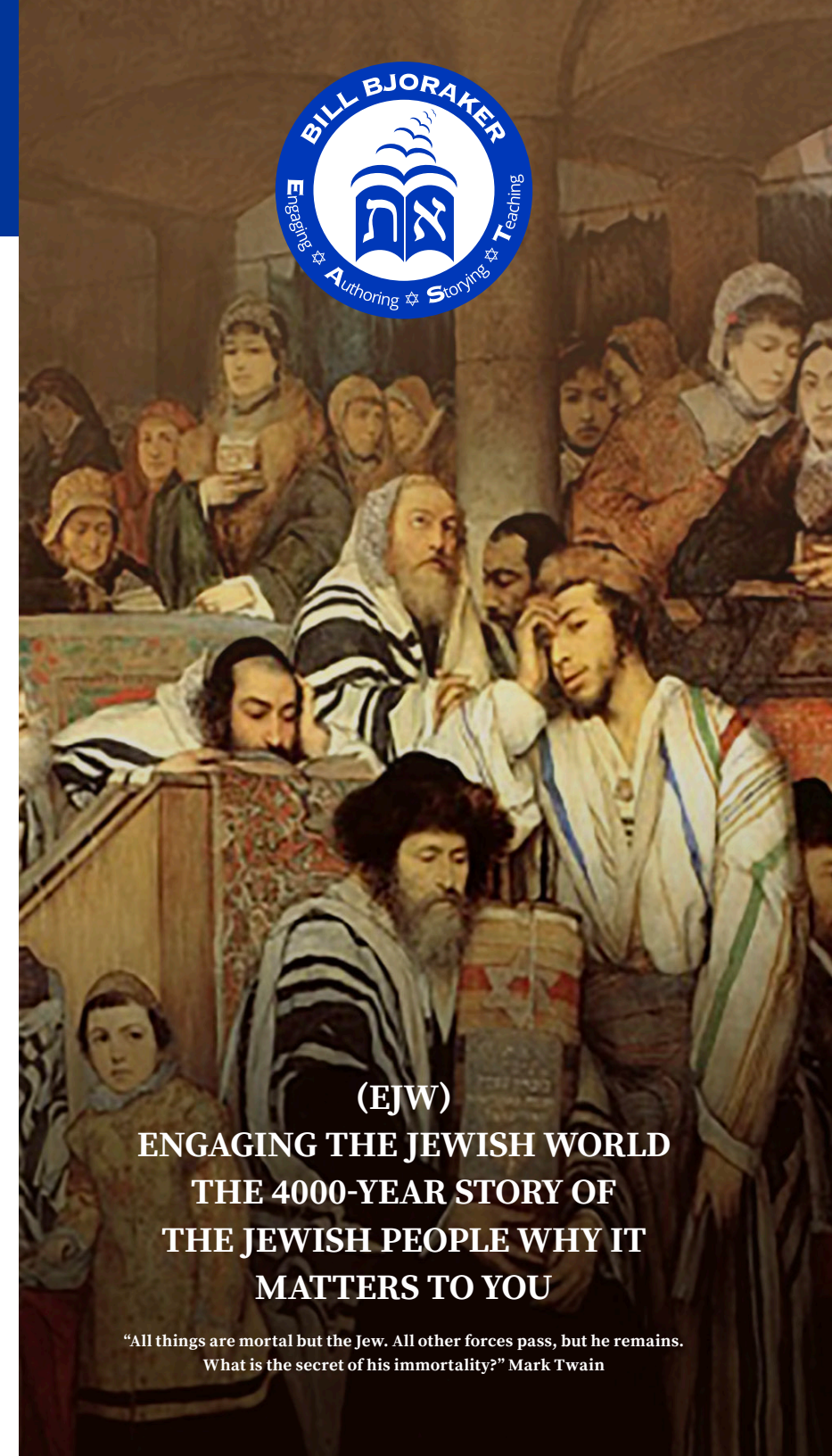
The true and living God chose to identify himself with this people, as “the God of Israel.” Given the God of Israel’s everlasting covenants with the people Israel, can history possibly come to closure without the Jewish people playing a role? The Apostle Paul tells us that we, the broader Body of Messiah will be instrumental in facilitating the Jewish role. “...if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!” (Romans 11:12 ESV)

“Are they [the Jewish People] down for the count? Are they out of this for good? And the answer is a clear-cut No. Ironically when they walked out, they left the door open and the outsiders walked in. But the next thing you know, the Jews were starting to wonder if perhaps they had walked out on a good thing. Now, if their leaving triggered this worldwide coming of non-Jewish outsiders to God’s kingdom, just imagine the effect of their coming back! What a homecoming! (Romans 11:11-12 The Message)

We owe to the Jews a system of ethics which, even if it were entirely separated from the supernatural, would be the most precious possession of mankind, worth, in fact, the fruit of all other wisdom and learning together.”

—Winston Churchill

“How odd of God to choose the Jews,
But not so odd as those who choose
The Jewish God and spurn the Jews.” –Paul Carlson



(EJW)
ENGAGING THE JEWISH WORLD
THE 4000-YEAR STORY OF
THE JEWISH PEOPLE WHY IT
MATTERS TO YOU

“All things are mortal but the Jew. All other forces pass, but he remains.
What is the secret of his immortality?” Mark Twain

WHY?:

Who are the Jewish people? They wrote virtually all of the Bible, the most influential book of all time. They feature as the majority of the characters in this Master Story. Think of their contribution to civilization after Bible times— Jewish people constitute over 20% of all Nobel laureates despite being but 0.2% of the world population.

Consider this fact —Jesus of Nazareth was not a Christian; he was a Jew. All the first “Christians” were Jewish. Christians have roots that run deep into Hebrew soil. Do we know these roots that support us?

Do those of us who are not Jewish really understand the significance of the Jewish people? Their long saga of thriving against fearsome adversity? And how The Jewish story affects us all?

Paul’s Letter to the Romans, chapter 11, makes clear there is future for Israel, and that the followers of Jesus have a role in that future.

WHAT/FOR WHOM?:

EJW is a non-formal, flexibly delivered course in two seven-part modules whose purpose is to inform and inspire non-Jewish followers of Jesus to engage the Jewish world for Messiah and in the process to spiritually enrich their own lives with deeper significance, and a more profound connection to the Master Story of the World. EJW is also relevant to Messianic Jewish believers who lack a solid grounding in their heritage.

UNIQUE FEATURES OF EJW:

Special Learning Components: Seven mind-easy era divisions, with three legacy or lasting effects features derived from each era, and other mnemonic memory aids for learning.

Structured for Levels of Learning – A learner may skim the surface by the overview articles, or go deeper in the in the additional article for each of the seven eras.

Quotes -Some of the best about the Jewish people, giving memorable insights that encapsulate truth about the Jewish story.

Jewish Humor- is some of the best and funniest in the world! Each session has appropriately chosen humor giving key insights into Jewish the Jewish Story and culture and about us all, as humans. Laughter aids memory and moves us to share with others.

MODULE 1: SEVEN ERAS: THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

(7 three-hour sessions in an onground seminar format)

1. The Biblical Era - from the birth of the Jewish people to the rise of Hellenism (2000 BC- 300 BC). The calling and formation of the Jewish people, as the bearers of God’s revelation to the world. The end of the First Jewish Commonwealth in the land, and the first Return to Zion.
2. The Hellenistic Era - from the rise of Hellenism to the rise of Rabbinic Judaism (300 BC – 100 AD). Major crises propelled the Jewish people through major changes. The true Jewish Messiah appeared and most of the Jewish people missed him. The massive losses of the Temple, of the Second Jewish Commonwealth in the land and the beginning of the Great Diaspora.
3. The Rabbinic Era - from the rise of Rabbinic Judaism to the rise of Islam (100-700 AD). The Jewish people now located mostly outside the land of Israel, encountering various Gentile cultures. The most religiously formative era as Rabbinic Judaism develops and evolves.
4. The Islamic Era - from the rise of Islam to the close of the Spanish “Golden Age” (700-1400 AD). The encounter with the Arab and Muslim world and the rise of the Sephardic Jewish civilization. This encounter is still ongoing as it plays out in in the Middle East today.
5. The European Era - from the end of the Spanish Golden Age to the rise of the Modern Age in Europe (1400-1700). The early modern period catalyzed by the Renaissance and the scientific revolution, this is the era of the rise of Ashkenazi Jewish civilization, and Hasidic movement. Ironically, it was here in “Christendom” where the Jewish experience was the darkest in their history. Deadly antisemitism persisted, culminating in the Holocaust of the next era.
6. The Modern Era – from the rise of Modernity in Europe to the rebirth of a Jewish State in “Eretz Israel” (1700-1948). The astounding story of the triumph of Jewish emancipation, the tragedy of the Holocaust, yet how out of the embers the Jewish peoplehood is reborn in the land of their forefathers. This era is ongoing in the late modern period, as world Jewish immigration to Israel (“aliyah”) continues apace, as does secularism of the modern age.
7. The Return to Zion Era – from the birth of the Zionist movement in the Modern Era to the successful establishment of the State of Israel (1900-the present). The story of the Zionist movement and its successful “ingathering of exiles” in the face of formidable adversity. The story of its heroes—Herzl, Ben-Yehudah, & Ben Gurion. The continued contest for her existence in the Arab world, and in the theology of Christianity.

HERE ARE THE SEVEN ERAS SUMMARIZED DIFFERENTLY:

1. Biblical -1700 yrs. foundational, over three times as long as the other eras.
2. Hellenistic - 400 yrs. climactic, pivotal shifts: Messiah comes, Temple destroyed.
3. Rabbinic - 600 yrs. religiously formative for ongoing Judaism.
4. Islamic - 700 yrs. cultural shaping, Sephardic identity, vis-à-vis Islam/Arabs.
5. European - 300 yrs. cultural shaping, Ashkenazi identity, vis-à-vis anti-Semitism.
6. Modern – 300+ yrs. cultural shaping, secular modernity: triumph and tragedy.
7. Return to Zion- 100+ yrs. and counting... spiritually restoring, reviving ethnic and national and spiritual identity, moving toward divine destiny fulfillment via the Zionist and Messianic Jewish movements.

FORMAT:

In the curriculum of the course, each of the seven sessions comprises an Overview lecture or article describing that Era. If you have limited time and want to “Skim the Surface” of the 4000-year-long Jewish story, you can read the opening essay of each of the seven sections. This is preceded by a waterski icon:

Overview, with Quotes, Jewish Humor, & Questions for Reflection and Discussion follow at the end of Overview, to reinforce the learner’s knowledge of that period, how it shaped the Jewish experience, that period’s contributions to civilization.

Going Deeper: Accompanying each Overview are five additional articles that dive deeper into that era, discussing key people, events and themes. These articles are preceded by a scuba diving icon. These articles include additional stories, exercises, or insights for witness among Jewish people. Finally a Recommended Reading List for going deeper still into the subjects of each article.



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