

A resource of Christian Witness to Israel (N. America) to challenge, assist and equip in local Jewish evangelism.

# THE AC COURSE



4. THE MANDATE
4A The Holy Hallelujahs

### COMPLETE COURSE OUTLINE

# The Biblical Burden for Jewish Mission The Hope throughout History for Jewish Redemption Contemporary Connections for Jewish Salvation

### THE BIBLICAL BURDEN

The MOTIVE	Psalm 67	The Praying patriarchs
	Romans 9-11	The Praying apostle
The METHODOLOGY	Isaiah 63	The Longing of the prophet
	Luke 4	The Liberation of The Prophet
The MISSIOLOGY	2Cor 3&4	The Ministry that is glorious
	Acts 20-22	The Ministry that is blessed
The MANDATE	Psalm 150	The Holy Hallelujahs
	Rev 4&5	The Cosmic Chorus

### **THE HOPE OF HISTORY**

PROTECTIVE PROVIDENCE	- Past, Present, Future
PIRATES OF PROVIDENCE	- Expulsion and Expansion
REPLACEMENT AND DEFACEMENT	- Forgotten and Forsaken
REFORMATION AND RE-EMBRACEMENT	- The Puritan Hope
The LIE OF THE LAND	- Too much love will kill you
REWRITING THE RAPTURE	- Confusion and correction

### **CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS**

The CHALLENGES TO CONNECTING  The FRAGRANCE OF FRIENDSHIP	The separated and the assimilated The atheist and the evangelical The aroma of Christ
The WISDOM OF WORDS	(Un)common language
RABBINIC REINTERPRETATIONS	Jewish objections Peter and Pentecost

#### **GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

- 1. As you begin each study, pray for the Lord's grace and wisdom.
- 2. Discipline yourself to set aside one hour for each paper.
- 3. Keep a personal 'physical' notebook.
- 4. Begin with the questions and in your own notebook, answer each question in one sentence, prior to engaging in the study.
- 5. Read through the paper in one sitting, with note-taking.
- 6. Answer the questions again; this time, a paragraph each.

Feel free to send your answers to me, ask further questions, or simply make appropriate comments.

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# THE BIBLICAL BURDEN THE MANDATE 4A The Holy Hallelujahs

### **QUESTIONS for CONSIDERATION:**

- 1. Have you heard of Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah? What do you understand of the song?
- 2. When you use the phrase 'Hallelujah' is it out of a situational sigh of relief? What should be the real reason for its use?
- 3. What aspects of the goodness of God draw forth your Hallelujah?
- 4. What aspects of the God-ness of God draw forth your Hallelujah?
- 5. Cohen spoke of a 'secular Hallelujah'. Why is a secular Hallelujah (Jewish or Gentile!) a contradiction in terms.

### THE MANDATE

We have sought to develop our Biblical Burden under the 4 headings of: Motive, Methodology, Missiology, and Mandate.

**Motive**: We considered the ancient people of God at prayer for the Gentiles (Psalm 67) and then the apostle's great angst for his own lost people until the Divine climactic redemption story was breathed into his pen (Romans 9-11).

**Method**: In these studies, Old Testament longings, met New Testament liberation as we thought about the holy desires of the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 63/64), and the Holy Desire of The Prophet, Christ, to bring saving liberty to captives (Luke 4).

**Missiology**: We were brought to think through the glorious nature of the Old Covenant and the Surpassing Glory of the New (2 Cor. 3&4), and we followed that by looking at how the Apostle applied this in his mission practice (Acts 20-22).

We come now to the final heading of our 'biblical burden' section: the **Mandate.** What are we 'mandated' to do?

A dictionary answer to that question will explain that a mandate is an official order by an assigned authority. So we further ask - what is the assigned authoritative official order of God?

In our final two 'Biblical Burden' studies, I want to suggest that all things; all ministries, all kingdom activities must return to the mandated order. I would summarize that as follows: our very breath 'sings' unto God. Everything we say, do and live for, ultimately must redound to the glory of God.

The ultimate reality is clear. Heaven and earth will sing the praise of the Creator and Redeemer. Therefore the burden from the mandate is simple. Since the cosmos will ultimately chorus heaven with praise and hallelujah, then let us be about our Father's business.

### 4a The Holy Hallelujahs

(Please read Psalm 150)

I was approached by one of our church members who asked if I ever had heard of the 'Broken Hallelujah'. The point she made was that there can't be a 'broken hallelujah'; it is inconsistent. I then commented that unfortunately that is where most of our Jewish friends are. Their lives are broken; their history is one of brokenness, and yet they must of necessity sing Hallelujah. However, it is more often done with resignation, rather than exultation.

This pre-church conversation started me thinking that all too often in our regular Christian lives, 'Hallelujah' is said or sung with resignation rather than exultation. 'Well, that was close... Hallelujah'. 'Thankfully that didn't happen, praise the Lord'. 'The tests came back clear – Praise God, Hallelujah'.

But not only do Christians all too casually say, Hallelujah, the secular world also utilizes the word phrase in error, or in exasperation. Furthermore, the secular Jewish world, similarly brings the Lord's Name (Yah) into their expressions even of atheism. Jewish musician Leonard Cohen wrote a rather cryptic and ultimately very famous song called 'Hallelujah':

'Now I've heard there was a secret chord that David played that pleased the Lord – but you don't really care for music do ya.

It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth, the minor fall, the major lift, the baffled king composing Hallelujah... Hallelujah, Hallelujah...'

'There was a time you let me know what's really going on below, but now you never show it to me, do ya'.

'You say I took the name in vain. I didn't even know the name. But if I did, well really, what's it to ya.

There's a blaze of light in every word. It doesn't matter which you heard, the holy or the broken Hallelujah.'

Cohen wrote these words in 1984 at a low point in his career. The Columbia label didn't want to release it. Bob Dylan played it a few times in his concerts and saw it as gold. Since then many have sung and adapted it, sexualized it, even Christianized it! But Cohen's own words display something worth our consideration; reflecting something deep down in so many Jewish hearts today that I want to set it as the backdrop of our thoughts on Psalm 150.

Despite various views as to what it is about, Cohen himself writes of this song, 'Finally, I understood it was not necessary to refer to the bible anymore. And I rewrote this song; this is the secular Hallelujah'. He goes on to say, 'This world is full of conflicts and full of things that cannot be reconciled, but there are moments when we can transcend the dualistic system and reconcile and embrace the whole mess, and that's what I mean by Hallelujah.'

His solution was to 'embrace the mess', and sing a secular praise the Lord anyway. The song is both genius and yet very sad. The baffled king could refer to the baffled musical genius, Cohen himself. The broken Hallelujah could symbolize (his) Jewish life that is lived in the sad and incomplete minor key, longing for the 'major lift'. Isn't it the case that many Jewish songs are written in the minor key and yet played as a dance. So even musically, they display a broken Hallelujah.

What is it then, that brings the major lift? What is it that brings a blessed Hallelujah? – none other than the gospel of divine redemption through the Messiah. Into the baffled brokenness of Jewish life we must bring this message. This, is our mandate!

In response to Cohen's sad work, (like many) I wrote my own version. Indulge me and permit my poetic pen to run, though maybe not so cryptically!

'The minor fall, the major lift; modulation, music's gift – melodious resolution greatly moves ya.

But Adam's Fall, and Christ's success, as God himself embraced the mess – The Gospel. You say, this does nothing to ya?

There was a time I let you know what's really going on below.

The Law and Prophets wrote and gave it to ya.

The Writings too they spoke the word – and Word came fleshed, the Son of God, and Jewish crowds would sing their Hallelujahs.

So what today; to live to die, a piece of dirt, a piece of sky, and baffled rabbis leave the mystery to ya.

Yet now the sacred mystery's clear – a death for sin, the Savior's here. The broken, now the blessed, sing Hallelujah.

And so the song continues on, in chorus with the ancient throng, the endless praises still ascending to Yah.

For everything that has a breath, responding to the death of death, forever sing eternal Hallelujahs... to Yeshua, Hallelujah.'

So now let us turn our thoughts to Psalm 150. This is not a resigned or reluctant 'praise the Lord anyway', but rather an imperative, a driven, 'must'. Yet the 'must' comes with reason and when by the Spirit of the Lord Jewish people and Gentiles are awakened to that 'reason', our lives become living sacrifices lived out not in broken but in blessed Hallelujahs. The Mandate of our ministry, is to seek to see a world in exultant praise. This we find in the final Psalm, 150.

We will split this Psalm into three:

- 1. The Place of Unadulterated Worship the sanctuary.
- 2. The Reason for the Imperative of Worship the Godness of God.
- 3. The Manner and Measure of Exuberant Worship A sanctified symphony.

## 1. The Place of Unadulterated Worship – The Sanctuary

'Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary. Praise him in his mighty heavens.' (v.1)

With Hebrew parallelism, verse 1 speaks of that place where He is purely worshipped; the Heavenlies.

### (a) The Holy Heavenlies

It is the place of Isaiah 6 where we read of seraphim covering their faces. It is the place of Daniel 7 where the Ancient of Days is seated on a throne of fire with ten thousand times ten thousand around him and judgement Books are opened! It is the place of Revelation 4 when that teasing open door in heaven permits John to see that cosmic control room, the living creatures, the elders, the myriads of angels, and every creature that has breath.

It is also the sanctuary of God of Hebrews 9 where Christ entered on our behalf; that tabernacle not made by human hands (not of this creation); that place where the Messiah of Israel through the eternal Ruach / Spirit, offered himself without blemish to God. Yes, it is this grace-laden sanctuary that messed up sinners may enter by the merit of His blood sacrifice; and only by the merit of such!

A Hallelujah is only unadulterated and pure when we are driven by this imperative: that we can come into the presence of God himself because of a historical sacrifice made in our time and history by the eternal covenant of the Triune Godhead. Without this, your life, and the life of all our Jewish friends, will be a broken Hallelujah or at best, a baffled Hallelujah.

This gives us a mandated imperative not only of worship but an imperative to tell of this God to Jewish people and to Gentiles. We want to bring them into this sanctuary. We want them to peek into the open door in heaven and see the cosmic control center.

Look up and see the stars, see the cosmos. Look down and see the complexity of life on this earth. Look into the micro and see the microscopic. Look out to the macro and see the majestic heavens and unnumbered galaxies staggeringly beyond human comprehension. Creation is screaming at us all! The heavens are declaring the glory of God. But of course this is just a tiny shadow of what is beyond, the heaven of heavens, the place where the Lord dwells.

Will you come with me into this sanctuary? Will you come see? Will you sing hallelujah with the ancient throng? Only, only, by the grace-given entrance through faith in the Messiah's blood sacrifice. Yes... 'Adam's Fall, and Christ's success, as God himself embraced the mess – The Gospel. You say, this does nothing to ya?'

### (b) Gospel Realities

Hebrews 10:19-22 'Therefore brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near...'

The sanctuary of God and the drawing near to God, through Christ, is the place of unadulterated worship. There we offer a blessed Hallelujah.

But... but I hear you ask – what if; what if I do not feel so? What if, the complexities of life, the unanswered questions of life... what if I'm baffled, even as a Christian? What about my broken Hallelujah there? Well, the Scripture says the Spirit perfects our sighs and groans.

Don't misunderstand me. It is true to say that there may be times (and you see it in other psalms) when the believer can

only cry, lament, in the brokenness. Yet Spurgeon is right to comment, that 'the book of Psalms instructs us in the use of wings as well as words; it sets us both mounting and singing'.

Psalm 73 deals with those times when we are baffled (in this case, with the apparent prospering of the wicked, v3). 'When I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, until I went into the sanctuary of God'. (Psalm 73:16,17)

Yes, indeed, there are times when things are not so clear, and life's situations and heavy providences bring a confusing complexity into the mix of our 'life-song'. Nonetheless, in this baffling life, we are still to bring our broken Hallelujahs into the sanctuary where Christ entered on our behalf. For it is there we find there 'shalom', wellness, even to the perfecting of our broken Hallelujah into a blessed one.

This is part of our mandate: that through gospel proclamation, and gospel reception, we bring Jew & Gentile to 'sing' an exultant, not reluctant, hallelujah.

### 2. The Reason for the Imperative of Worship – The God-ness of God.

'Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness'. (v2.)

Now in that place of sanctuary, of sanctified praise, we are further graced with 'reason'. We are graciously guided in through the open door. We're not really sure why we're there, how we got there. We know it is only through shed blood. But now the throne room of heaven comes into view and the history of redemption comes across the screen and the whole panorama of the scale of God as GOD hits us.

\We see the mighty deeds of God. We see something (so far as this frail flesh can behold it) of the excellencies of God. Praise Him: for His deeds and for His divinity!

### (a) The Deeds of God - His Goodness

Thanksgiving is an America holiday that I greatly enjoy, but not one I grew up with in my homeland of Northern Ireland. Many churches in farming communities did however host a Harvest Thanksgiving service. It is good, right, and even mandated, to remember the deeds of the Lord. I believe it is customary to go round the Thanksgiving table and reflect on what each one is thankful for. However, it is often said that the saddest thing for an atheist is having no-one to thank.

Leonard Cohen's secular Hallelujah is an empty flat praise to... nothing. Yet, one of the aspects of our evangelism of our Jewish friends is to remind them of His mighty deeds. (That's why part of this overall course is to learn something of Jewish history, and Jewish history in America). The sad reality is that much of this is forgotten – by both Jewish people and Gentiles!

Of course, Jewish people remember up to a point. They remember Passover when God delivered. Then they remember Auschwitz, when 'he didn't'. And it is baffling. But the solution to the baffling prosperity of the wicked as we noted in Psalm 73, is the sanctuary. It is not to run from God, but to run to God. God can't just die, in the 20th century.

The Jewish people's continued existence BC/AD and into the 21st century, is a baffling miracle. Without God's divine preservation, they should've been wiped out centuries ago. Hitler did nothing new; it was Haman before him. So we want to remind our Jewish friends of the deeds of the Lord.

The Jewish apostle Paul wrote, 'to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, the promises, the patriarchs, and yes – the Messiah... who is God!'The Jewish apostle Paul is saying, here are the deeds of the Lord I would recount to you!

No, God is not a divine clock maker that simply wound up the

world and left it alone. He is intimately involved in the death of a sparrow, in the number of hairs of your head (even my decreasing number!).

Your every breath is a divine gift. Your every life purpose and creative goal is a favor of grace for you to imitate your Creator and be creative! History truly is HIS-STORY. Hallelujah: praise him for his mighty deeds. We are mandated to tell this forth!

But further, we must think on the greatest 'mighty deed' of the Lord: the death of death in the death of the Jewish Messiah! When He cried out 'tetelestai', it is finished, the transaction was done. The Mighty Deed was done. Death could not hold him and thereby, death cannot hold you who believe in Him!

I can look into a grave, like Mary & Martha and even like Jesus, and I can weep, yes. But as He said to his dear friend: 'I AM the Resurrection and the Life – Do you believe this?' I can put a loved one in a grave. I can know I shall be there too one day and I can say – where is your sting?! Hallelujah. Praise Him for his mighty deeds, praise Him for THE mighty deed!

When we are drawn to consider all aspects of his 'carefull' providence; all aspects of his grace and graciousness, all aspects of his perfect governance and government, all aspects of 'let there be' creation, and 'let it become' redemption, praise Him - Hallelujah! O, how we have so many reasons! But there's more, for the eye has not seen nor the ear heard, what God has in store for those who love him. Send forth a holy Hallelujah in anticipation of deeds yet to come!

But we must further point out that a hallelujah goes forth not just for the deeds. Don't just love the gift; love the Giver. Isn't it the case that when kids get their Christmas presents, often are they more interested in the gift than the giver? We have 11 grandkids (- two more in the womb!), and sometimes we are all together at Christmas. Unless it is carefully ordered,

Christmas gift giving can be a lttle chaotic! Sometimes very little acknowledgment is given from whom that specific gift came! Maybe we shouldn't but sometimes we allow kids that chaos when they're very little, but they are soon taught to appreciate the giver. 'That was from Nanny! Thank you Nanny!'

Is the Christianity we live by and proclaim also so infantile? Are we speaking of Him to our Jewish friends as One who gives us good things, or God-things? Yes, praise Him for the things done for you. (Deeds). But what about praise for things not done for you? Just praise Him for who He is. (Divinity). Praise the Giver.

### (b) The Divinity of God - His GOD-ness.

So many of the great writers of Church history wrote on the Attributes of God, or the Doctrine of God, or the Character of God. Why? Because it was praising Him for his excellent greatness. Spurgeon said, 'there is nothing little about God, and there is nothing great apart from Him'. (Take note those who would 'Make America great again' or 'Build back better.')

The Holy Hallelujah, the mandated goal of all, the 'praise the Lord' that comes from entering into the sanctuary, from entering into that throne room of heaven, is to gasp and then exult. This is not a resigned Hallelujah. Instead, as God has embraced the mess, so we embrace Him... for He truly is AWE-some.

Let's talk further about the nature of our evangelism? Who is the God we present to our Jewish friends? Is He someone who gives you your best life now? Is he even simply your life coach, or the genie of the lamp of life? The God of Israel is so much more...

If, in our mandated mission (to the Jew first and also to the Gentile), we are to see a holy contagion of real hallelujahs, we need this in our Christian lives. This unusual recognition

of gift and giver will be to the making jealous our Jewish friends, and a few Gentile ones too!

Our God's not dead, He's truly alive. Consider, look at His deeds and His divinity, His holy awesomeness, His wholly otherness. Consider what a privilege, that little ol' me, may, by the blood of the Promised Messiah, enter the sanctuary, glimpse some glory and may utter even this side of the grave, a divinely pleasing Holy Hallelujah!

We have every reason to do so. It is mandated. But it is not to be done in a resigned manner, but a very deed and divinity driven reasoned manner! Not resignation, exultation!

## 3. The Manner and the Measure of Exuberant Worship – A Sanctified Symphony

(Please Read Ps 150:3-6)

As we conclude I simply want to point out briefly that this holy hallelujah is symphonic and sanctified. There is a togetherness... and a toGod-ness!

### (a) Symphonic togetherness.

Some of this course has been compiled during the Covid year 2020, and recorded and edited in 2021. During these times churches have particularly recognised the importance of 'togetherness' and keenly felt its loss during the shutdowns There is something special about togetherness in worship.

Consider the cheers of crowds in sports events. During 2020 many of those events were held behind closed doors. Playing crowd noise over the speakers just doesn't cut it for me! Hearing (at least on TV) some 70,000 soccer fans singing 'You'll never walk alone', or a packed Dublin stadium full of rugby fans (somewhat symphonically!) singing 'Ireland's call'; this is 'togetherness'.

So here in Psalm 150 we read of brass, strings, woodwind,

and percussion to accompany the Holy Hallelujah. We have here a whole symphonic orchestra! So let the Christian Church symphonically SING its Hallelujahs together!

May the gospel excellencies be made known; may our hallelujahs, blessed hallelujahs, be made known. May the reason be made known. May the manner of our worship be audible and visible. Let us make some noise pollution about Jesus! Let us make our blessed hallelujah before a baffled world of Jew and Gentile.

### (b) Sanctified 'toGodness'.

We may not be able to sing well but sing nonetheless from a sanctified heart. This is what is mandated.

What do we read of here? The trumpet was loud and a summons. The strings were melodic and sensitive. The percussion was exciting and stimulating. Put this all together and the simple message is that our gospel breathing of Hallelujahs, should summon people, sensitively, with a manner that is contagiously stimulating!

Wouldn't that make people jealous? Wouldn't that make people say – 'I want to sing this kind of hallelujah'?

Our Biblical Burden so shared, must be diffused with holy hallelujahs. This is the Mandate of God. This will not only meet with the smile of God but will enjoy the desired kingdom success.

### **Conclusion:**

Our world is lost, lonely, and crying out for answers. Secularism, and agnostic Judaism, even rabbinic Judaism, however orthodox, has no answer. It is often said that most Jewish people don't believe in God; except that if something goes wrong, they'll blame God. Well of course it's not just Jewish people who do that.

Let's conclude by returning to Leonard Cohen's song. It is deeply sad but also very true. It has a measure of honesty. He said it was a secular hallelujah but the final verse reads thus:

'I did my best, it wasn't much. I couldn't feel, I tried to touch. I've told the truth, I didn't come to fool ya.

And even tho it all went wrong, I'll stand before the lord of song with nothing on my tongue but Hallelujah.'

Sorry, Leonard, your best is not enough. The Scriptures are clear that truth and sincerity are not enough. The thousands of years of sacrifices cannot be forgotten or insignificant. Remember those deeds and even those demands of the Lord! The Jewish Scriptures clearly declare that 'without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin'.

A secular hallelujah is not enough. It is an empty praise to... nothing. You have no-one to thank! Why write a Hallelujah song anyway? A secular Hallelujah is an oxymoron or just simply moronic!

The Hallelujah must be to Yeshua, for only He is worthy of it. Isn't it wonderful even to contemplate that the name Yehoshua means the Lord saves! Hallelu-Yah.

Indulge me a little further as I repeat my version of the song:

And so the song continues on, in chorus with the ancient throng, the endless praises still ascending to Yah.

For everything that has a breath, responding to the death of death, forever sing eternal Hallelujahs... to Yeshua, Hallelujah.

I began this study by referencing the 'sanctuary of God' as depicted in Revelation 4 & 5. It is to these chapters we turn in our next study concluding our Biblical Burden section.

But here is just a taste of that as we finish our thoughts on Psalm 150 and the Holy Hallelujah. In Revelation 4 we have an image of a teasing 'open door', and a grace-filled summons to enter in. There we find the heavenly throne room. These ultimate and climactic visions continue into chapter 5 with the Lamb opening the scroll of God. The Lamb is Jesus. He is indeed the only One worthy, and thus we find a cosmic chorus sings His praise:

'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!' And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, 'To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and might, for ever and ever'. (Rev 5:12-13)

Now that is a holy hallelujah! What a glorious mandated purpose we labor for! This is what we seek for you. That your Biblical Burden will bring you through motive, method, mission, to the ultimate end – the mandate of the Messiah: a cosmic charus!

This... we turn to next time.

# WHO ARE WE? WHAT DO WE DO?

### **DIRECTOR: STEPHEN ATKINSON**

As **Director of Ministry** and 35 years of preaching experience, Stephen has been engaging with churches on behalf of CWI since 2004. With a Biblical mandate, historical reasoning, and present day missionary urgency, Stephen makes the case that every Church must have Jewish mission on its agenda!



### MISSIONARY: MITCH TEPPER

As a **Jewish believer** Mitch has the apostle's burden for his own 'kindred after the flesh'. A graduate of Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, his Scriptural knowledge and personal passion drive him in his street evangelism, one on one relationships, and household bible studies, with the singular purpose of 'Telling Jewish people about Jesus'.



### CWI International

Christian Witness to Israel has been sharing Jesus with Jewish people for almost 180 years. Today we have missionaries in the USA, UK, Israel, France, Holland, Hungary, Australia, all faithfully witnessing to Jewish communities across the world.



## CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO ISRAEL (N America) 6401 S. 50th St, Rogers AR 72758 USA

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