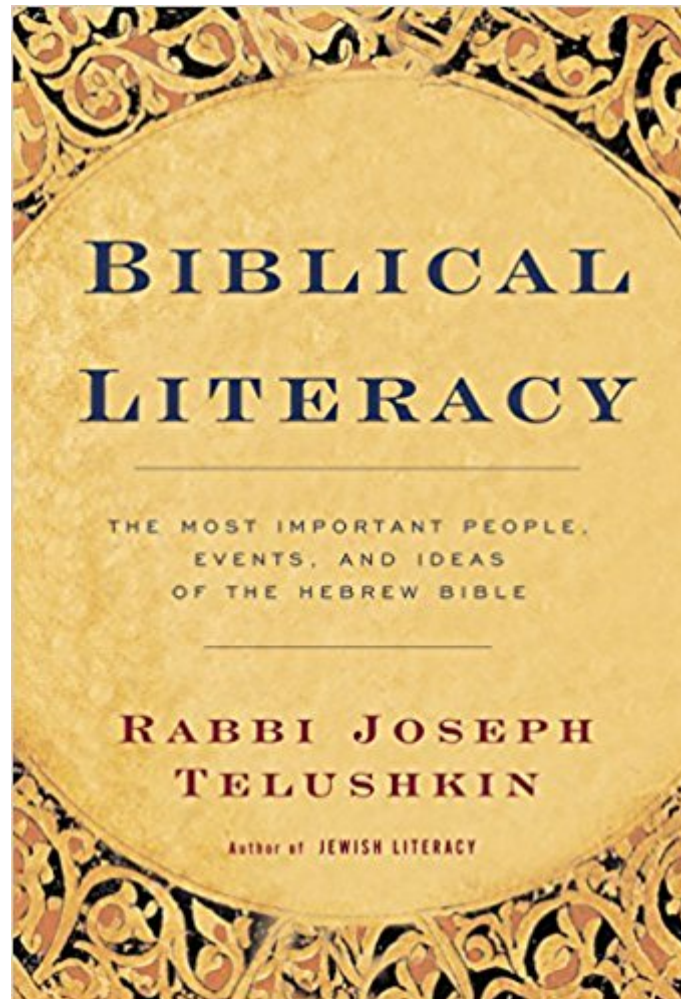


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Biblical Literacy: The Most Important People, Events, And Ideas Of The Hebrew Bible



Synopsis

In the tradition of Stephen Prothero's Religious Literacy and Ken Davis's Don't Know Much About the Bible, Biblical Literacy is a one-stop course on the Bible that offers readers "whether religious or not" every Bible story and passage they need to know. Professor Tim Beal has selected the Bible stories that have shaped history and our world and provides the key information we need to understand their significance and meaning. Whether atheist or believer, readers will benefit from this entry-level course into the heart of the most influential book ever written.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you ever wondered what the Old Testament is all about, this book is for you. With all the respect to Christianity, there is nothing like going back to basics, which in this case means returning to the Jewish heritage and the essence of human experience. Highly recommended for anyone interested in the origin of our Western culture, ethics and the way of thinking in general.

I first became interested in the Bible as a child. It began after watching the movie The Ten Commandments. I loved this larger than life epic and I started reading the Bible. I have discovered that the Bible does not have the razzle dazzle special effects of a Cecil B. De Mille film, but when a person carefully watches the Ten Commandments, one can see it's all hype. The Bible, on the other hand, is not hype, and for many people, can be life sustaining. Both Jewish and Christian

lovers of scripture who want an aid to help the Bible become a little easier to understand will more than likely find Biblical Literacy by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin very helpful. Rabbi Telushkin's book is basically a Cliffs Notes summary of the Hebrew Scriptures, filled with all sorts of anecdotes, commentary, and rabbinic interpretation, compiled by a person of faith. It is elementary enough for people who may be new to these texts, but profound enough for people who know these passages rather well. Personally, I found the book helpful for two reasons. As a person involved in religious education for a number of years, I appreciate his approach for people who may be searching for something in life. His writing is inviting and compassionate. If his writing is any sign of the vitality of his congregation, it must be flourishing and thriving. As a Christian, the book helped me see the Hebrew Scriptures on their own rather than from the point of view of 2,000 years of Christian tradition. This book can help a Christian view scripture as Jesus did, and help fill in gaps caused by misunderstanding. I actually used this book in my Bible study and nearly all the participants who read the book found it both helpful and insightful.

Although I have read the Tanakh, this book really opened my eyes to things I have never seen before! I was delighted to read this overview of all important events in the Tanakh, in fact it has inspired me to go back and re-read what I have already read to find new things!

I bought this book in preparation for my class on the Hebrew Bible at Seattle University. It has not only been an immense help, but has allowed me to participate in class discussions like never before. Never have I been able to find such insight in the Old Testament, nor have I been able to defend my findings so clearly. Telushkin has done a simply wonderful job of bringing out those things one needs to grasp in order to go back and read the Good Book with a renewed sense of purpose. This truly is a must read for anyone who THINKS they know about the Old Testament.

I am halfway through this book, and I must say, it is one of the greatest explorations of the characters and events in the Hebrew Bible I have ever had the pleasure to read. Mixing a summary of the basic story with traditional Rabbinical teachings on the significance and reason for the events and characters, along with answers to questions readers may face about certain Biblical texts, Rabbi Telushkin provides an excellent guide to the Old Testament.

Other than the Christian Bible (until I read this book, I only thought of THE Bible as exclusively Christian), this is the only book about scripture that I've read written by a Jew. I've read agnostics,

atheists, and Christians views on the Bible, but never the Jewish perspective outside of scripture itself--this was a mistake. Understanding from this perspective has opened my eyes to so many things I found confusing about the Christianity. So many Christians believe that the Old Testament is negligible in its importance, yet Christ reaffirmed the Old Testament teachings again and again. As for the reviewer that faulted the author in his interpretation of Christian theologies like the godhood of Christ or the Virgin Birth, Christians reading this book need to remember that Rabbi Telushkin is NOT A CHRISTIAN. He is Jewish. He would no more defend the truth of Christianity than Christians would Islam. Yes, we have some common beliefs, but each religion is unique and separated from theological unity by critical, fundamental differences. Understanding this, the rabbi is actually not as harsh about Christianity as he could have been--he simply does not share our beliefs about Christ's deity, and the book reflects this. Don't fault him because he's true to his faith. I'm sure as with Christian authors, there are Jewish authors who disagree with Rabbi Telushkin. I don't know if his are the accepted interpretations of Jewish scripture or just personal opinion. Still, I found much of what he had to say so very enlightening that I would not hesitate to recommend this book to Christians and non-Christians. It clarified so many issues for me and did nothing but strengthen my faith in Jesus. I look forward to reading other Jewish authors so that my relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ will be even stronger. Shalom, Rabbi Teluskin, and thanks.

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