

FAQ VOL II

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Frequently Asked Questions

VOLUME II

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Frequently Asked Questions, Volume II is a multi-year work in progress. Please note how the text may be corrected, updated, or amended, before final publication. Page numbers are also likely to be altered.

Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

- ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament
Ara: Aramaic
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)
CJB: *Complete Jewish Bible* (1998)
CJSB: *Complete Jewish Study Bible* (2016)
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*
EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*
ESV: English Standard Version (2001)
Ger: German
GNT: Greek New Testament
Grk: Greek
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)
HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)
Heb: Hebrew
HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)
JBK: *New Jerusalem Bible-Koren* (2000)
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
KJV: King James Version
Lattimore: *The New Testament* by Richmond Lattimore (1996)
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)
LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)
LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
LXX: Septuagint
m. Mishnah
MT: Masoretic Text
NASB: *New American Standard Bible* (1977)
NASU: *New American Standard Update* (1995)
NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*
NEB: *New English Bible* (1970)
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*
NETS: *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (2007)
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*
NIV: *New International Version* (1984)
NJB: *New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic* (1985)
NJPS: *Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (1999)
NKJV: *New King James Version* (1982)
NRSV: *New Revised Standard Version* (1989)
NLT: *New Living Translation* (1996)
NT: *New Testament*

OT: Old Testament
REB: Revised English Bible (1989)
RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)
t. Tosefta
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TLV: Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version (2014)
TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)

TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition
v(s). verse(s)
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
Vul: Latin Vulgate
YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)
WMB: World Messianic Bible (2020)

Tradition, Role/Place for Non-Jewish Messianics

There are differing approaches witnessed in the Messianic community, regarding non-Jewish Believers and Jewish tradition. I have encountered mixed signals. Can you please help me sort through some of this?

Tradition should have a *place*, in the Torah application of today's Messianic movement and Messianic people. Today's Messianic movement has a mandate to reach the Jewish people with the good news of Israel's Messiah, but this will never happen if we have an overly-negative view toward mainline Jewish traditions and customs. There are surely details to be sorted through, though, and many of them involve case-by-case, and local congregational matters. Everyone's experience in Messianic Judaism is going to be different. What are non-Jewish Believers, in today's Messianic movement, to do about the issue of Jewish tradition and custom?

There are Messianic Jewish congregations and synagogues which are welcoming of non-Jewish Believers, and others not so much. Messianic settings where non-Jewish Believers are generally welcome, are likely to see them experiment with various Jewish traditions and customs, as they sort through various external matters of Torah and the Messianic lifestyle. This can provoke a number of responses, from both congregational leaders and Messianic Jewish Believers. A number of people will experiment with various forms of *halachah*, and will make a few mistakes along the way. Some will, unfortunately, go through a season of being legalistic and rigid about various external observances.

Most Messianic Jewish leaders, seeing non-Jews come into their congregations, do not want to see them dressing up and thinking they are Jewish, when they are not. This does not automatically mean, for example, that outward elements such as the *kippah* and *tallit* are totally off limits for non-Jewish Believers to employ. Nor does it mean that non-Jewish Believers will be prohibited from public (liturgical) readings, or prayers before the congregation. However, if a non-Jewish family dresses and acts as though they are Orthodox Jews—adhering to a level of *halachah* which most of today's Messianic Jews are not interested in—this may provoke some kind of response from congregational leadership. It may indicate that various persons are sorting through various identity matters (with difficulty).

Tradition, Role/Place for Non-Jewish Messianics

On various wide congregational matters, such as the weekly *Shabbat* or various holidays, there is likely to be a wide amount of similarity with what Jewish and non-Jewish Messianics will do. This is because the majority of one's commemoration will be observed in the venue of the corporate assembly or synagogue. Non-Jewish Believers will be seen to be co-participants in a Messianic Jewish congregation's community norms, and with that the amount of Jewish tradition and custom the local assembly has chosen to incorporate.

Yet, on more personal or familial matters, it may be seen that one's adherence to Jewish customs and tradition varies, perhaps significantly. It is natural for Messianic Jewish individuals and families, to observe a great deal more of Jewish tradition and custom, than non-Jewish Believers involved in the Messianic movement. Consider how when I had one sister marry (2015), she had a Messianic-styled service, which the local Messianic Jewish rabbi performed, even though the bride and groom were non-Jewish. When I had another sister marry (2024), even with her having been Messianic since 1995, she had a Scottish wedding, with "Jesus the Messiah" being as Messianic Jewish as it got.¹

Non-Jewish Believers in the Messianic movement, should not have to think that Jewish tradition and custom, as edifying as useful as much of it can be, should permeate every aspect of their lives.

¹ For another example, consult the Messianic Apologetics FAQ, "Funeral Customs, Messianic."