

FAQ

FROM THE MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS ARCHIVES (2000-2018)

J.K. McKee

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
messianicapologetics.net

Frequently Asked Questions

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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)
NJSB: *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)

Alef-Tav, Yeshua as the

In what way is Yeshua the Messiah the Alef and the Tav? Some interesting teachings circulate around the Messianic movement about the first and last Hebrew letters, and their association with Yeshua.

For a great number of Messianic people, Yeshua the Messiah being associated as the Alef and the Tav, is no different than how Christians see Jesus Christ as the Alpha and the Omega. The first and last Hebrew letters are *alef* and *tav*, just as the first and last Greek letters are *alpha* and *ōmēga*. In a publication like the Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible, the rendering “I am the Alef and the Tav” was employed in Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13. Surprisingly, though, the Complete Jewish Bible (1998) by David H. Stern actually has “I am the ‘A’ and the ‘Z’” in these verses. The purpose of this was to serve as an appropriate counterpart to “I am the first and the last” (Revelation 1:17; cf. 2:8; 22:13). That the LORD God is the only first and the last is something affirmed in Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12. Yeshua as the Divine Savior, being God the Son, is something realized in that He too is to be considered the first and the last.

It is not uncommon in various Messianic circles to hear that there might be some kind of a connection between Yeshua being the Alef and the Tav, and what is witnessed in the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (NASU), which in Hebrew reads as *b’reisheet bara Elohim et ha’shamayim v’et ha’arets*. A non-translatable particle word, *et*, appears in the Hebrew text, relating to the action of creation. Many of today’s Messianic people, who rightly hold to a high Christology of Yeshua the Messiah being God, see this small word composed of *alef* and *tav*, and conclude that this is an indication of Yeshua being present at the Creation of the universe.

Does the presence of the *et* in Genesis 1:1, indicate that Yeshua the Messiah is intended to be identified as the Alef and the Tav/the Alpha and Omega/the A and the Z in this verse? The identification of Yeshua as the *et* in Genesis 1:1 can be disputed. This is because *et* in Hebrew grammar serves as the marker of a definite direct object, and it is used all throughout the Hebrew Tanach (OT)—in places which often have absolutely no direct or indirect Messianic significance. *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* by C.L. Seow informs students what the purpose of the *et* actually is:

“Almost always in Hebrew prose, and less commonly in poetry, an untranslatable particle [*et*], is used to mark the definite object of the verb. A noun is said to be definite when it is a proper name, a noun with a definite article, or a noun with a suffixed pronoun” (*A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*).¹

The examples given to explain this are *sholeiach et-Moshe*, “sending Moses”; *sholeiach et-ha’eved*, “sending the servant”; *sholeiach et-avdi*, “sending my servant.”² Passages or verses in the Tanach which tend to have Messianic significance, usually have things detectable via connections made by the actions or sayings of particular Tanach figures, and matters witnessed in the ministry and service of Yeshua in the Gospels.

It is appreciable for Messianic people today wanting to make a connection between the presence of the *et* in Genesis 1:1, in an effort to affirm the pre-existence and Divinity of Yeshua. However, what has probably not been

¹ C.L. Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*, revised edition (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 98.

² *Ibid*.

probed enough, are definite claims in the Apostolic Scriptures of Yeshua's pre-existence, and His role in creating and sustaining the universe:

- “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being” (John 1:1-3, NASU).
- “[Y]et for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Yeshua the Messiah, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him” (1 Corinthians 8:6, NASU; cf. Deuteronomy 6:4).
- “[W]ho, existing in the form of God³, did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage” (Philippians 2:6, HCSB).
- “[F]or in him all things were created⁴, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things [exists before everything, TLV]⁵, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:16-17, RSV).
- “[I]n these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:2-3, NASU).

The following five verses quoted above—**because of their undeniable lack of ambiguity of Yeshua the Messiah being present at Creation and upholding Creation**—should be far more important for examiners to consider, than the presence of a common particle word like *et* appearing in the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1.

³ Grk. *en morphē Theou huparchōn*; *huparchōn* is a present active participle, properly rendered as “existing” (HCSB/TLV).

⁴ Grk. *hoti en autō ektisthē ta panta*.

⁵ Grk. *estin pro pantōn*.