

FAQ

FROM THE MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS ARCHIVES (2000-2018)

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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)

Christian Scholars

Why does today's Messianic movement generally frown on the works of Christian Biblical scholarship?

Today's Messianic movement can have a significant challenge when it comes to considering the theological contributions made by Christian Biblical scholarship. The reasons for this are varied and complex, but a major factor, among others, relates to perceived Christian animosity toward the Torah. (Another major factor is supersessionism or replacement theology.) It is very true that many Christian theologians have a negative and pessimistic attitude when it comes to the Torah or Law of Moses, and how it is talked about in the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament). But this is certainly not all Christian theologians, and theological works and commentaries from the past half century or more (1960s-present) have become increasingly more Jewish-sensitive and cognizant of Jewish theological views of Scripture. The problem with this is not that there are theologians who are writing commentaries with more Jewish opinions in mind; it is that your average pastor and/or layperson is unaware or uninformed of these resources.

Ignorance of knowing about important trends such as the New Perspective in Pauline studies—a renaissance of understanding Paul as a First Century Jew—even carries over into parts of the Messianic movement. While it is true that New Perspective advocates are not going to teach that today's Christians should heed the Torah beyond basic moral matters, they will teach that Paul had a much more moderate view on the Torah than is perceived by much of today's Christianity. This is certainly a step in the right direction!

One of the things which Messianics today are often not aware of, is the fact that Jewish Biblical scholarship—which often is consulted by Messianic teachers—**is largely polarized between the extreme-Right and extreme-Left**. If one reads the Orthodox Jewish *ArtScroll Chumash*, and then compares it to the *Jewish Study Bible*, he or she will see two largely different points of view on an issue. One will advocate that Moses wrote every single letter of the Torah—and then the other will tell you that Moses may not have existed, with the Torah being a product of the JEDP Documentary Hypothesis. One will advocate that the Israelites' conquest of Canaan included more than is mentioned in the Biblical text, and the other will say that it probably never took place. Consequently, many Messianics today will only examine Orthodox and/or Chassidic Jewish opinions on certain subjects, which often disregard ancient history and criticism from skeptics.

Conservative, evangelical Protestant scholars often compose the middle position between the Right and the Left on these issues. While affirming the historicity of a key event like the Exodus, evangelicals are willing to place the Exodus in the context of Ancient Egypt. Evangelicals are willing to engage with liberal criticism, and place a much higher value on historical and linguistic studies of the Scriptures than most in the Orthodox Jewish community. Interestingly enough, there are far more Christian commentaries on the books of the Torah than there are Jewish commentaries. Casting these aside as though they have no value, is ill-advised in a movement which will have to increasingly deal with more criticism against the Scriptures—particularly the Torah or Pentateuch because of the pressures of the modern age in which we live.¹ Furthermore, Christian resources on the Old Testament will point out Messianic symbolism which is fulfilled in the life of Yeshua, whereas most Jewish commentaries—if not ignoring them—may actually make a point to discredit Jesus of Nazareth.

¹ Consider some of the complicated questions raised in Tremper Longman III, *Confronting Old Testament Controversies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2019).

Christian Scholars

Our ongoing challenge as the Messianic community, and our own Biblical scholarship, relates to how we can incorporate the best of Jewish and Protestant scholarship and make it our own. We have a shared theological heritage with both the Synagogue *and* the Church. We cannot disregard either one, but have to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of both. Doing this properly will admittedly take time.