

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)

Church, missing after Revelation 4:1

As post-tribulationists, how do you respond to the fact that the word “church” does not appear after Revelation 4:1? This means that the Church is missing and has been raptured to Heaven.

In the opening chapters of Revelation (chs. 1-3), the Apostle John was given specific instruction by Yeshua the Messiah which he was to deliver to the seven assemblies of Asia Minor (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea). After John relayed Yeshua’s messages to these congregations, John was told by the Lord, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things” (Revelation 4:1b, NASU). Notice what John said as this command was given to him: “After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me” (Revelation 4:1a, NASU). This was a directive which is given only to the Apostle John, as he was called to step into the Heavenly realm, and be shown a vision of the future which, as far as Yeshua and those assembled were concerned, had already taken place. John was asked to step forward in time and be shown things which he did not know about.¹

This was not some command given to “the Church.” To be sure, as Messianics are often keen to emphasize, the Greek word *ekklēsia* should be properly translated as either “assembly” or “congregation” in our English Bibles, as opposed to the anachronistic term “church.” Likewise, *ekklēsia* was used in the Greek Septuagint to render the Hebrew word *qahal*, referring to the congregation or assembly of Israel, and the Apostolic writers most often use *ekklēsia* with this understanding in mind.

In Johannine literature (John, 1-3 John, Revelation) ***ekklēsia* is never used to refer to the Body of Messiah at large, but instead the localized assembly.** Douglas J. Moo poignantly remarks in *Three Views on the Rapture*, “John, himself, never uses [*ekklēsia*] other than as a designation of a local body of believers. Moreover, it is important to note that John never in chapters 4-19 calls any group in *heaven* the church.”² The reason why *ekklēsia* does not appear after Revelation 4:1, is because the letters Yeshua had John write to the seven, localized assemblies of Asia Minor were complete. It was not because “the Church” had somehow been raptured up into Heaven. In fact, at the end of Revelation, readers witness how the apocalyptic revealing of Yeshua to John was for the *ekklēsia*, indeed implying that the Body of Messiah will be on Earth when these events take place:

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star” (Revelation 22:16, ESV).

It is notable that there is an urban myth which frequently circulates among various Hebrew Roots post-tribulationists, relating to Revelation 4:1. It often goes along the lines of, “The Church is mentioned after Revelation 4:1—and it is the whore of Babylon!” Unfortunately for those who adhere to this line of reasoning, it is

¹ For a further review, consult the McKee Moment from 24 June 2024, “Many Cannot Think Multi-Dimensionally,” accessible via <youtube.com/MessianicApologetics>.

² Douglas J. Moo, “The Case for the Posttribulation Rapture Position,” in Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Paul D. Feinberg, Douglas J. Moo, Richard R. Reiter, *Three Views on the Rapture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 201.

Church, missing after Revelation 4:1

not based in a sound exegesis of the text, neither in a sound examination of what end-time Babylon actually is. While there are religious elements of the end-time Babylonian system, there are also political and economic elements. To simply say that that end-time Babylon is “the Church,” is to misidentify end-time Babylon, which is ultimately a multifaceted, anti-God world system.