

# 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)

# Concubines

## Can you explain to me what a “concubine” is in the Bible?

When your average person encounters the subject of concubines in the Tanach or Old Testament, it can be difficult if the reader is not informed as to what a concubine was in ancient times. The term *pilegish* “seems clearly to be a word of non-Semitic origin...The fact that there are clear cognates in Greek (*pallakis/pallekē*) and Latin (*paelex*) suggests that the word is Indo-European in origin, borrowed into all three languages” (*EDB*).<sup>1</sup>

Concubinage in the Tanach is often associated with some kind of slavery, as Bilhah was called both a slave (Genesis 29:29; 30:3) and a concubine (Genesis 35:22). Likewise, Gideon’s unnamed concubine (Judges 8:31) was also called his slave (Judges 19:19), with him actually being considered her “husband.” *TWOT* mainly explains, “A concubine was a true wife, though of secondary rank...the concubine was not a kept mistress, and did not cohabit with a man unless married to him. The institution itself is an offshoot of polygamy.”<sup>2</sup> Among those who practiced concubinage, the concubine was “A female slave regarded as part of the Israelite family, generally designated as bearing children...In addition to providing offspring and sexual activity (Eccl. 2:8), concubines were responsible for care of the those (2 S. 15:16; 16:21; 20:3...)” (*ISBE*).<sup>3</sup>

As concubinage is connected to polygamy, it was often only the rich and/or powerful who were able to afford concubines, as most of those who had concubines were kings (i.e., Esther 2:17; Song of Songs 6:8; Daniel 5:3, 23). Keturah, taken as Abraham’s wife after Sarah’s death, was considered both his wife (Genesis 25:1) and concubine (1 Chronicles 1:32), perhaps as a way to honor Sarah as Israel’s matriarch with Keturah being considered of lesser status. Unlike those women who would have been considered wives, “concubines were of a lower status than primary wives because no brideprice (*mōhar*) was paid for them, or they brought no dowry (*šillūhīm*), or both” (*EDB*).<sup>4</sup> As a result, any children born of concubines only inherited land at their father’s discretion (i.e., Genesis 25:6), rather than those children born of actual “wives.”

The Torah’s legislation is mute on regulating the practice of concubinage, as “Concubines are mentioned almost exclusively in the patriarchal period and early monarchy” (*ISBE*).<sup>5</sup> “The fact that the word *pilegēš* is nowhere mentioned in the legal collections of Exodus and Deuteronomy, nor in the lists of proscribed sexual relationships in Lev. 18, 20, should further caution against too quickly positing that this form of connubial arrangement was widely practiced” (*EDB*).<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the fact that the families of Israel’s kings suffered from polygamy—with concubinage as an extended form of this practice, with added “lesser-wives”—demonstrates how it was indeed a practice never blessed or sanctioned by God.

With the unfortunate rise of a sector of polygamist men within some parts of the Hebrew Roots movement, it should not be surprising that some have indeed discussed whether or not concubinage is also acceptable. If polygamy is unacceptable given the Genesis ideal of marriage being between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24), a principle upheld by Yeshua and His Apostles (Mark 10:7-8; Matthew 19:5; 1 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 5:31)—then just as polygamy would be absolutely unacceptable in view of the equality of the genders He has

<sup>1</sup> Peggy L. Day, “Concubine,” in David Noel Freedman, ed., *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 273.

<sup>2</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, “pilegēsh,” in R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:724.

<sup>3</sup> Allen C. Myers, “concubine,” in Geoffrey Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 1:758.

<sup>4</sup> Day, “Concubine,” in *EDB*, 273.

<sup>5</sup> Meyers, “Concubine,” in *ISBE*, 1:758.

<sup>6</sup> Day, “Concubine,” in *EDB*, 273.

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## Concubines

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restored (Galatians 3:28), **so would concubinage be even more unacceptable!** Various men in Hebrew Roots today, wanting to take concubines to themselves or “lesser-wives” into their homes, would be doing so only for the purpose of having a sexual outlet. They forget the fact that the Hebrew Tanach depicts both the ups *and the downs* of its chosen people, and simply practicing polygamy or concubinage because the Patriarchs or kings of Israel did it—fails to consider the severe negative consequences it brought upon their households and the Kingdom of Israel as a whole.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For a further discussion, consult the author’s articles “Is Polygamy for Today?” (appearing in *Men and Women in the Body of Messiah: Answering Crucial Questions*) and “Addressing the Frequently Avoided Issues Messianics Encounter in the Torah” (appearing in the *Messianic Torah Helper*).