

# FAQ

**FROM THE MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS ARCHIVES (2000-2018)**

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**MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS**  
messianicapologetics.net

# Frequently Asked Questions

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Cover Image: nullplus via Istockphoto

ISBN 979-8317009786 (paperback)

ASIN B09F1MWGB7 (eBook)

Published by Messianic Apologetics, a division of Outreach Israel Ministries

P.O. Box 516

McKinney, Texas 75070

(407) 933-2002

[outreachisrael.net](http://outreachisrael.net) / [outreachisrael.blog](http://outreachisrael.blog)

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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)

# Death, for Believers

## What do you believe happens when born again Believers die?

We believe that the disembodied consciousnesses of Believers, who die in the faith, are transported to Heaven to be with the Lord. This is fully consistent with what the Apostles write in the Messianic Scriptures and the beliefs of First Century Pharisaical Judaism, which largely advocated an intermediate afterlife prior to the resurrection. As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:8, “we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord” (NASU). The Greek verb Paul used for “be at home with,” *endēmeō*, actually means “To be at home, to be present in any place or with any person,” relating to “one who is at home with...or among his own people” (AMG).<sup>1</sup> Being separated from one’s physical body thus requires a Believer to be present with the Lord.

Paul also wrote in Philippians 1:23, “But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Messiah, for *that* is very much better” (NASU), but expressing his need to remain on Earth a little longer to perform the Lord’s work. Further on in this same epistle, Paul wrote that “our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Yeshua the Messiah” (Philippians 3:20, NASU). He wanted to actually die and be in the presence of His Savior, yet clearly recognized how Yeshua will ultimately come to restore the Earth. The Believer’s ultimate place of residence is not a Heaven far off in the sky, but in the restored Kingdom of God on Earth. Heaven is the intermediate place to be with the Lord prior to the resurrection of a Believer’s body.

As a ministry, we do not subscribe to a “soul sleep” for the righteous, as it is only the Believer’s dead body which is “asleep,” awaiting for reunification with the consciousness at the resurrection. **We fully affirm how the resurrection and permanent embodiment is the final focus of a Believer’s destiny in the Lord!** An intermediate afterlife, assures us beyond any doubt, that the person who will be resurrected, was the same authentic person who had lived a life on Earth—and not some replica or copy of the person.

Those in the Messianic community who believe in “soul sleep” often base it on half-verses such as Ecclesiastes 9:5b, which says “the dead do not know anything” (NASU). Yet this is not definitive evidence of no conscious afterlife, as the verse continues describing human life on Earth, and how the dead do not know of any Earth-bound things: “their memory is forgotten. Indeed their love, their hate and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 9:5c-6, NASU). Ecclesiastes 9:5-6 does not say anything about the condition of dead persons or where they are, but instead lists specific things that they cannot do because they are dead. These are things which these people had time to participate in on Earth or “under the sun” (Heb. *tachat ha’shamesh*), but cannot participate in beyond the veil of death, hence not “knowing” about them.

It is insufficient for any interpreter, as can be quite commonplace among Hebrew Roots advocates of “soul sleep,” to only consider references in the Tanach without also weighing them with statements in the Apostolic Scriptures. The Tanach really does not even ask the question about life after death, because it is more widely concerned with the *corporate* nature of God’s people and their conduct on Earth, whereas questions of an afterlife are widely *individualistic*. Because the Tanach does not really ask the question, it is not addressed to the same degree as it is later in the Apostolic Scriptures. But still, that does not mean that the Tanach is entirely silent about an afterlife. One cannot really “die,” and then be “gathered to his people” (Genesis 25:8; 35:29; 49:33; Numbers

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<sup>1</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, ed., *Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible*, NASB (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1994), 585.

20:24, 26; Deuteronomy 32:50), unless one is gathered *somewhere*. It by no means speaks exclusively of internment in a family tomb. When Jacob died, he “was gathered to his people” (Genesis 49:33), but he was not actually buried for quite some time (Genesis 50:2-14). Moses is said to have been “gathered to your people” (Deuteronomy 32:50), but he was interred in an unmarked gravesite (Deuteronomy 34:6), certainly not being united with his ancestors’ remains in a family tomb.

There are certainly strong clues given in the Tanach of a temporary, disembodied state, as one of the “shades” in Sheol or the netherworld (i.e., Isaiah 14:9).

The development of a theology of afterlife across the Biblical period is no more irregular or strange than the development of Messianism, which took multiple millennia (cf. Hebrews 1:1-2), or even the doctrine of resurrection itself which is scantily alluded to *directly* in the Tanach (Daniel 12:1-2). All three of these strata largely came to their peak in Pharisaic Judaism, which significantly affected the development of the early Messianic movement.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For a further discussion of this issue, consult the author’s book *Messianics and the Afterlife*.