

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)
NJPS: *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)

Final Generation

Do you believe we are the final generation?

It is commonly asserted among many Messianic Believers, and for that matter many evangelical Protestants also, that our generation living today in the early-to-mid Twenty-First Century, has to be the “final generation.” This is often based on the following statement by Yeshua delivered during His Olivet Discourse on the end-times:

“Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place” (Matthew 24:34, NASU; cf. Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32).

A common claim which is made—especially in some distinct Messianic circles—is that the “final generation” started in 1967 with the recapturing of the Old City of Jerusalem by Israeli forces. Given that the Exodus generation died out in forty years (Numbers 32:13; Psalm 95:10), it is assumed that within a period of about forty years that the end-times and Second Coming must be upon us. By the year 2007 or so, this spurred on a great deal of end-time speculation and prognostication, with many claiming that the world as we know it was coming to an end at breakneck speed. Certain teachers took advantage of the paranoia, and capitalized upon it in more ways than just drawing attention to themselves.

Interestingly enough, there are three major interpretations of Yeshua’s words which exist:

1. The Lord said “this generation will not pass away,” and was referring to the generation which lived during the time when He declared these words. Preterists who believe that the “end-times” actually took place during the First Century C.E., and consider the antimessiah/antichrist of Revelation to be Nero Caesar, are the most common advocates of this view.
2. The Lord said “this generation will not pass away,” and was speaking of a future group of people who would be those to witness all of the events prior to His return. While it is easy to associate “this generation” with those who have witnessed the rebirth of the State of Israel in the Middle East, there is no Scriptural indication to specifically pinpoint when “this generation” actually began. Yeshua’s two-verse parable of the fig tree is hardly enough to equate the reestablishment of Israel as being the catalyst which began the final generation (Matthew 24:32-33; Mark 13:28-29; Luke 21:29-30), especially when Israel in Scripture is more commonly associated with the olive tree.
3. When the Lord referred to what the Greek source text referred to as *hē genea autē*, which in most Bibles is rendered as “this generation,” He was referring to something else. As should be noted, *genea* has a variety of possible renderings, including “race, stock, family” and “a race, generation” (LS).¹ Yeshua’s words need not be interpreted regarding a specific “generation” in time, which He either spoke to in the past or would be speaking to in the future—but rather an ethnic group of people which will have survived long enough into the future to be present to experience the end-times.

Of the three options considered—that Yeshua was actually referring to “this race will not pass away”—is one which today’s Messianic community needs to take very seriously. The *Ryrie Study Bible* actually confirms these conclusions, remarking,

¹ H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 161.

“No one living when Jesus spoke these words lived to see ‘all these things’ come to pass. However, the Greek word can mean ‘race’ or ‘family,’ which makes good sense here; i.e., the Jewish race will be preserved, in spite of terrible persecution, until the Lord comes” (*Ryrie Study Bible*).²

The Complete Jewish Study Bible (2016), notably renders Matthew 24:34 along these lines:

“Yes! I tell you that this people will certainly not pass away before all these things happen” (Matthew 24:34, CJSB).

While many Messianic people today believe that they are the “final generation,” it seems very unlikely that Yeshua will be able to return soon given the current theological and spiritual condition of the Messianic movement. For a movement which often believes it has the answers—yet still largely does not even *have a basic theology about God* and matters of human existence (among other things)—much is going to have to improve. Likewise, if today’s Messianic movement truly did believe it were living in the “final generation,” then we would see far more attention dedicated to not only spreading the good news and seeing that people repent of their sins, but we would also be preparing people physically—and more importantly psychologically—for the effects of the Great Tribulation.

It seems that the arguments in favor of us living in the “final generation” are delivered more to draw attention to various “prophetic” ministries and sell products, than realistically developing a well reasoned eschatology. None of us should try to force God’s hand regarding the fulfillment of prophecy, but rather do all that we can do to provide for a sustainable future for today’s Messianic community. We should be about the Lord’s work truly equipping Messianic Believers *for the challenges of today*, so that they can be prepared for the challenges of tomorrow—which may include the Great Tribulation. But in order to be more prepared, there is an entire array of theological issues which needs to be considered—which most of the Messianic movement since 1967 has avoided (and whether these issues have been avoided *purposefully* or not is hard to determine). If anything, **it is time for us to no longer avoid these issues.**³

² Charles C. Ryrie, ed., *The Ryrie Study Bible*, New American Standard (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), 1490.

³ For a further review, consult the author’s Messianic Apologetics episode from 29 November 2021, “‘This Generation’: First Century; post-State of Israel; the Jewish Race” accessible via <youtube.com/MessianicApologetics>.