

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)

Jashar, Book of

What is your position on the Book of Jashar? I have seen that some Messianic people consider it to be legitimate, perhaps even Scripture. This disturbs me.

There are only two references to a Book of Jashar or *sefer haYashar* in the Tanach (Old Testament):

“So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day” (Joshua 10:13, NASU).

“[A]nd he told *them* to teach the sons of Judah *the song* of the bow; behold, it is written in the book of Jashar” (2 Samuel 1:18, NASU).

There is a wide variance of opinion regarding what this “book of Jashar” is. The Orthodox Jewish *ArtScroll Tanach* renders these verses with “the Book of the Upright” and “the Book of Uprightness,” respectively, explaining that “The Book of the Upright is the Torah, in which God told Moses (*Exodus* 34:10) that He would act in an unprecedented manner for the benefit of Israel (*Radak*),”¹ and how it is “The Torah, which alludes to Judah’s prowess in archery (*Genesis* 49:8).”²

ABD makes some important remarks regarding the various traditions for what the Book of Jashar is. It first says that it is “A lost source book of early Israelite poetry, quoted in Josh 10:12b–13a (Joshua’s command to the sun and moon) and 2 Sam 1:19–27 (David’s lament for Saul and Jonathan).” Noting on the Hebrew term *yashar*, its entry states “The term ‘Jashar’ is a common Hebrew word meaning ‘one who [or that which] is straight, honest, just, righteous, upright.’ Thus, it is commonly assumed that the title refers either to the heroic individuals who are the subjects of its contents or perhaps to all Israel as the upright people.”³ Reflecting on what the Book of Jashar is considered to be, it is seen how “The mysterious nature of the Book of Jashar has given rise to false identifications and imitations of the book. The Talmud (*Abod. Zar.* 25a) homiletically identifies the Book of Jashar with the ‘book of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob’ (i.e. Genesis), who were ‘upright.’ Certain ancient Jewish commentators considered the title to be a reference to the Torah” (*ABD*).⁴

Our ministry widely concurs with the traditional Jewish view that the Book of Jashar is actually a reference to either the Book of Genesis or the entire Torah—something which either directly refers to, or prophecies and promises, of mighty deeds relating to the people of Israel or Israel’s Patriarchs.

There are some who claim that there was a formal Book of Jashar which originally existed, and should be considered (semi-canonical) Scripture. However, there are no original texts of a Book of Jashar or proof that such a text ever existed. The same entry in *ABD* remarks,

¹ Nosson Scherman and Meir Zlotowitz, eds., *ArtScroll Tanach* (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications., 1996), 540.

² *Ibid.*, 724.

³ Duane L. Christensen, “Jashar, Book of,” in David Noel Freedman, ed., *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:647.

⁴ *Ibid.*

“An interesting example of a more recent forgery from Christian circles is associated with Alcuin, Bishop of Canterbury (d. a.d. 804), who is said to have discovered it in the city of Gazna on a ‘Pilgrimage into the Holy Land, and Persia.’ First published in 1829, it is reputed to have been the words of ‘Jashar, the son of Caleb’ rediscovered in England in 1721. The Rosicrucian Order published a 5th edition of this particular text in 1953.”⁵

It is likely that whatever text of the Book of Jashar you see published and touted as being “original,” is some (updated/redacted) edition of this text,⁶ identified by various Biblical scholars as being a recent forgery.

⁵ Ibid., 3:647.

⁶ *The Book of Jasher* (Heber City, UT: Archive Publishers, 2000); “Jasher,” in *The Complete Apocrypha With Enoch, Jasher, & Jubilees* (Covenant Press, 2018), pp 295-454.