

FAQ

FROM THE MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS ARCHIVES (2000-2018)

J.K. McKee

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
messianicapologetics.net

Frequently Asked Questions

FROM THE MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS ARCHIVES

© 2021, 2024 John Kimball McKee

All rights reserved. With the exception of quotations for academic purposes, no part of this publication may be reproduced without prior permission of the publisher.

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 / outreachisrael.blog

messianicapologetics.net / messianicapologetics.blog

Fair Use Notice: This publication contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We make use of this material as a matter of teaching, scholarship, research, and commentary. We believe in good faith that this constitutes a “fair use” of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law, and is in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. For more information go to: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/17/107>

Outreach Israel Ministries is a non-profit 501(c)3. All prices listed on the publications of Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics are suggested donations.

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)

Jewish Marriage Analogy

As a Messianic ministry, how can you be post-tribulationists? Certainly you have heard about the Jewish Marriage Analogy! Believers as the Bride of Messiah are to be raptured up to Heaven prior to the Tribulation to experience the wedding feast.

adapted from *When Will the Messiah Return?*

The idea that the Body of Believers is the Bride of Messiah is usually based on the Apostle Paul's word in 2 Corinthians 11:2: "For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Messiah I might present you as a pure virgin" (NASU). This one verse of Scripture has been responsible for innumerable teachings in evangelical circles on how Believers are to be virtuous in their faith and devotion for God, and live as though they were virgins awaiting their future husband. Unfortunately, such teachings have also been a strong cause of passivity. Many in the faith have been taught to view themselves in a very pacifistic way, and simply wait for Yeshua to whisk them away on some random day. Somehow, for many, the admonitions to fight the good fight of faith are ignored (1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7).

It is important to note that when Paul told the Corinthians that he hoped to present them as a virtuous bride prepared for her husband, that he previously said in 2 Corinthians 11:1, "I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness" (NASU). The NLT has, "I hope you will be patient with me as I keep on talking like a fool. Please bear with me." What is this to mean? To what extent are we to interpret Paul's comments about Believers being as a "bride"? How literal did Paul intend his words to be interpreted?

The Prophet Isaiah also saw what might be considered "the Bride," and he gave a somewhat different description than the Apostle Paul:

"For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, and her salvation like a torch that is burning. The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name which the mouth of the LORD will designate. You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. It will no longer be said to you, 'Forsaken,' nor to your land will it any longer be said, 'Desolate'; but you will be called, 'My delight is in her,' and your land, 'Married'; for the LORD delights in you, and to *Him* your land will be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so your sons will marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you" (Isaiah 62:1-5, NASU).

If you read this prophecy closely, the city of Jerusalem was described as being "the Bride" as well. The text is quite clear that the children/sons of Israel will "marry" this Bride. But just like Paul emphasizing being a "betrothed virgin" in passing, so the Hebrew in Isaiah reveals something which should be taken metaphorically. The verb *baal* does mean "to **get married**" (*HALOT*),¹ but it appears in the Nifal stem, implying a passive action. Whenever these terms are used, important spiritual concepts are being communicated using the imagery of a human marriage.

¹ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, eds., *The Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 1:142.

Some may interpret this passage in the sense of Believers in Yeshua being “the city,” and that the Messiah will marry them. But the Hebrew *bachur* clearly means “young man” (BDB),² and the text says, as “a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you” (NIV). Others may try to say that this speaks of “the Father’s bride,” and Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 spoke of “the Son’s bride.” But Yeshua and the Father are One (John 10:30), and They will have only *one bride*. God is not divided and He cannot be a polygamist.

In both 2 Corinthians 11 and Isaiah 62, allegorical statements were made by both the Apostle Paul and Prophet Isaiah, detailing important spiritual truths. Paul spoke of Believers living as virgins, awaiting their coming husband and admonishes Messiah followers to be pure—set-apart from the world and holy unto God. Isaiah spoke of the future state of Jerusalem where the people of Israel will “marry her,” presumably at the inauguration of the Millennium. Interestingly enough, this imagery is confirmed by Paul in Galatians 4:26, where he said “the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother” (NASU). God, who is one, will marry this bride.

The importance of Jerusalem being the *ultimate Bride of Messiah* is emphasized in Revelation 21. Yeshua showed the Apostle John the city of New Jerusalem coming down to the Earth as a “bride”:

“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, ‘Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.’ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names *were* written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel” (Revelation 21:9-12, NASU).

Is the Bride of Messiah the Body of Messiah? To this, we must answer: **yes and no**. In one respect, Believers are to be “as a bride” in preparation for their coming husband. We are to be spiritual virgins and not adulterating ourselves with the world. Believers are certainly to seek a husband-wife typological intimacy with their Redeemer. Ultimately, however, the true Bride of the Messiah is going to ultimately be the Heavenly city of New Jerusalem. In the final equation, we as Believers are part of the Body of Messiah—but are not necessarily the “Bride of Messiah.”

Using some of these themes, many pre-tribulationists believe in what is commonly called the “Jewish Marriage Analogy.” In his book *The Great Escape*, Jack Van Impe says, “According to Oriental marriage customs, we are now in the *etrothal* stage—promised to Jesus Christ....[I] believe we are about to be called into the heavenlies for that great marriage ceremony...”³ Van Impe, and many other pre-tribulationists like him, do not consider the involvement in the Jewish Roots of our faith, and participation in the Messianic movement, to be that important for spiritual growth and maturation. They do not embrace a Messianic lifestyle with a Torah foundation. Yet, they will accept what is purported to be a “Jewish teaching” on marriage, which seems to support their pre-tribulational beliefs.

It is very important to note how this “Jewish Marriage Analogy” is not readily attested to anywhere in the Bible. Post-tribulational scholar Robert H. Gundry offers the following remarks in his book *First the Antichrist*:

“[I]f a purported pretrib coming to fetch the church to heaven is supposed to reflect the ancient Semitic custom of a groom’s fetching the bride to his home, what is Jesus’ taking the church with Him back to earth right after the marriage supper, and for a thousand years, supposed to reflect? An ancient Semitic custom of the groom’s taking his bride back to *her* home to live with her for a long time? The pretrib reasoning here gets itself into a pickle by injecting a marriage custom that isn’t even mentioned in the biblical text at hand, and then giving that custom argumentative weight of an allegorical sort but not carrying out the allegory consistently. In fact, our ignorance of ancient Semitic marriage customs exceeds our knowledge. **And what knowledge we do have shows considerable variation in these customs.**”⁴

² Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 104.

³ Jack Van Impe, *The Great Escape* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 69.

⁴ Bob Gundry, *First the Antichrist* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), pp 94-95.

Jewish Marriage Analogy

These statements should signify that the so-called “Jewish Marriage Analogy” may have a shaky Scriptural basis. Is it attested anywhere in the Gospels by Yeshua?

A common passage often quoted in reference to this “marriage analogy” is John 14:2-3: “In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also” (NASU). By quoting this, pre-tribulationists often conclude that Yeshua is presently in Heaven preparing a marriage residence for His own, and one day the Father will tell Him to gather the holy ones or saints to “consummate the marriage” prior to the Tribulation period. But was this really what He was saying?

First of all, Yeshua said that in His “Father’s house **are** many dwelling places” or “many mansions” (KJV) or “rooms” (RSV, ESV; Grk. sing. *monē*). The verb *eisin* appears in the present active indicative tense in John’s Greek, indicating that these dwelling places presently are in Heaven. This implies that if any of us die in the faith, we have some kind of a dwelling waiting for us in Heaven. Yeshua does not need to go and “create them.”

Secondly, can we assume that the Father’s house is *exclusively Heaven*? The Messiah referred to His “Father’s house” as the Temple in John 2:15-17. Throughout the Tanach there are passages which refer to this house, “the house of the LORD” or *beit YHWH*. It includes the Tabernacle in the wilderness (1 Samuel 1:24), Solomon’s Temple (2 Chronicles 2:1; 7:16), and the future Millennial Temple (Isaiah 2:2-4; Joel 3:18). Furthermore, the *ekklēsia* or assembly of called out ones is allegorically understood to be “the Temple” (Ephesians 2:19-22).

But what of the “place” which the Messiah is apparently “preparing” for His own? If it is not a “marriage residence,” then what is it?

The Greek term translated “place” in John 14:2-3 is *topos*. While generally used in the Apostolic Scriptures to refer to a physical location, it nevertheless has a variety of additional usages. In usages outside of the Bible “*tópos* sometimes means ‘sanctuary’ (the holy place)...Another use is for ‘someone’s place,’ e.g., a senator’s seat, a place at school, one’s place in the world” (TDNT).⁵ Is the place Yeshua is preparing a “marriage chamber”? Or, is the Messiah **preparing a place of authority for the redeemed in His Father’s Kingdom**? After all, is it not true how “we will be *cohanim* [priests] of God and of the Messiah, and...will rule with him for the thousand years” (Revelation 20:6, CJSB)? What is the “place” which Yeshua is preparing for us?

It is important that we make the correlation between Yeshua’s preparing a place or position of authority for the redeemed in the Kingdom and His Father’s house, the Temple. In Yeshua’s day there were many apartments designed for the priests as part of the Temple complex (1 Kings 6:5-10; 1 Chronicles 9:26-27). This complex, no doubt, symbolizes the positions which born again Believers will have when they reign with Messiah from Jerusalem (Ezekiel chs. 40-44).

The Messiah is presently not in Heaven preparing a marriage residence for us as pre-tribulationists commonly conclude. He is, however, in Heaven readying stations or places of authority, for the redeemed, in His Kingdom coming to the Earth. The Holy Scriptures are replete with admonitions how the redeemed are to be responsible Believers here in this world, so that the Lord can reward us in His future Kingdom in the world to come.

⁵ H. Köster, “*tópos*,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 1184.