

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)

Karaites, Karaite Judaism

What is your opinion of Karaite Judaism?

The *Jewish Study Bible* states the following concerning who the Karaites are:

“[T]he theological movement in Judaism dating from Babylonia in the 8th century C.E. Karaites claimed to be restoring an original form of Judaism from the Second Temple period, and were opposed by the rabbis of their time...Karaite calendars, festivals, dietary restrictions, and other practices differed in various ways from rabbinic norms. The movement reached its height around the 11th century though a small Karaite community is still in existence today” (*Jewish Study Bible*).¹

Throughout a great deal of the independent Hebrew/Hebraic Roots movement—which tends to not often want to consider the factor of tradition, as playing any role in an individual’s or a community’s application of Scripture—one will encounter a Karaite-style of approach to interpreting the Bible. Those who tend to accept Karaite interpretations of the Tanach, do so because the Karaites largely reject the Oral Torah or Oral Law, as largely contained in materials like the Mishnah and Talmud. They see Karaite Judaism as a more “pure” form of the original faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and perhaps even conclude that Yeshua Himself was a Karaite.² The most notable of the Karaite practices which is detectable among Hebrew Rooters, is the considerable variance seen over the issue of the Biblical calendar. The Karaites have their own calendar, which employs different dates for the appointed times, than the mainline Jewish calendar observed by the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform movements.³

The abbreviated history of Karaite Judaism shows that it was a rather late movement, and developed in opposition to the wider Rabbinical Judaism of the Eighth Century C.E. The theology of the Karaites has many parallels to that of the ancient Sadducees. While it can probably be debated or wondered what the position of individual Karaite Jews is regarding angels, demons, an afterlife, or a resurrection—which the ancient Sadducees all denied (Acts 23:8)—what cannot be debated is that a Karaite approach to the Bible has contributed to a considerable problem of **over-simplification** among those in Hebrew Roots. Such an over-simplification is manifested in failing to do enough adequate study on key theological or spiritual issues.

When a Torah observant person follows a Karaite approach to the Bible, he or she will often not be too interested in the exegetical process of probing the source text’s transmission into English (from either Hebrew or Greek), trying to place a Biblical text in some kind of ancient setting,⁴ or consult with either ancient opinions (from relevant secondary or tertiary literature) about a theological idea or with modern technical commentaries. A Karaite hermeneutic has helped many people think that all they need to understand Scripture is their English Bible version, a Strong’s Concordance,⁵ a Webster’s English dictionary, and of course literature from the Karaite movement in Israel.

A Karaite style of approaching the Bible has had some devastating effects when it comes to Hebrew Rooters approaching parts of Scripture like the Pauline Epistles, and readers failing to do some worthwhile studies in the

¹ Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2132.

² For some associated discussions, consult the author’s articles “You Want to be a Pharisee” and “Matthew 23:2-3: Who Sits in the Seat of Moses?” (appearing in the *Messianic Torah Helper*).

³ Consult the Messianic Apologetics FAQ, “Biblical Calendar.”

⁴ Consult the author’s article “The Role of History in Messianic Biblical Interpretation” (appearing in *Confronting Critical Issues*).

⁵ Consult the author’s article “Getting Beyond Strong’s Concordance” (appearing in *Confronting Critical Issues*).

Pauline materials, because no investigation into ancient setting or context is believed to be that important. Much more disturbing and insidious, though, is how the Karaite movement is the sole originator of the classic anti-missionary work *Faith Strengthened* by Isaac Trotki,⁶ which refutes the Messianic claims of Yeshua of Nazareth. Those who embrace a Karaite approach to interpreting the Bible, and are highly influenced by Karaite literature, have been known to eventually deny faith in Yeshua the Messiah.

For the future, as it relates to the possible influence of the Karaite movement, on parts of the Messianic community, teachers and leaders will have to redouble their efforts to stress the need to understand the Scriptures in their ancient context. People being over-simplistic about difficult and disputed passages, will not help them find God's truth.

⁶ Isaac Trotki, *Faith Strengthened: The Jewish Response to Christian Missionaries* (Jerusalem: The Kest-Lebovits Jewish Heritage and Roots Library, 1999).