

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)

Least in the Kingdom

What does it mean to be “least in the Kingdom”?

There can be a variance of interpretations in the Messianic community regarding what being “least of the Kingdom” means. In Matthew 5:19, Yeshua the Messiah said, “Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (NASU). What may be assumed from these words, is that one’s status in the Kingdom of God can be determined by how one handles or approaches the Torah or Law of Moses. If one teaches the Torah, and encourages others to keep its commandments, that person will be considered great in the Kingdom. If one teaches against the Torah and its commandments, that person will be considered the least.

One of the most sobering words from our Lord came in Matthew 13:41-42, speaking of His return. Yeshua said that when He returns, “The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (NASU). He also said, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS [Psalm 6:8]’” (Matthew 7:21-23, NASU).

These references to lawlessness, or *anomia*, are references to those who deny the place of the God’s Torah in their lives. Some have interpreted being “least” in the Kingdom as not being in the Kingdom at all. Unfortunately, there are some in you are likely to encounter, who make it their job to judge the salvation of many who are not pursuing a Torah observant lifestyle as *they* are. **It is not our job as limited human beings to judge the eternal salvation of anyone.** But, it is our job to take the words of the Messiah very seriously. If we are not pursuing compliance with what He has said concerning the Torah, then what is going to happen? The Torah is God’s foundational standard of what He considers acceptable and unacceptable. If we are not pursuing an acceptable lifestyle, then are we in rebellion to God? Are we making ourselves out to be God?

The Messiah will attach rewards to those who keep the commandments of the Torah and teach them to others, and penalties to those who do not keep the commandments and teach others to break them. The word “least” or *elachistos* is of importance here, as it “**pert. to being considered of very little importance, insignificant, trivial**” (BDAG).¹ What does this mean? Does it mean that many who have taught that the Torah is no longer to be heeded or followed in any way, are going to be given few rewards in the Kingdom? Again, it is not *our place* to judge the status of anyone, but we must take the Lord’s words seriously and endeavor to follow His admonitions.

Being “least in the Kingdom” can definitely be taken as a word concerning one’s status in the Kingdom, in terms of being given few rewards and accolades. We each need to remember, though, how one’s status in the Kingdom of God is ultimately determined by only God Himself. He is the final Judge of all human beings.

¹ Frederick William Danker, ed., et. al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Third Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 314.