

FAQ

FROM THE MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS ARCHIVES (2000-2018)

J.K. McKee

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)

Niddah, Laws of

Can you tell me anything about the laws of *niddah*?

The laws of *niddah* in the Torah relate to a person's sexual purity and proper cleanness, and among the commandments relating to sexuality, the bulk of them relate to women. This is an area which for obvious reasons, can be embarrassing to many, and as such often goes unaddressed in the Messianic community. But, if there is anything which is absolutely imperative for Believers to understand in today's world, it is proper sexuality according to the Bible, as Satan has done his best to pervert something God gave to a husband and wife.

One of the commandments related to *niddah* is in Leviticus 12:2-4:

“Speak to the sons of Israel, saying: ‘When a woman gives birth and bears a male *child*, then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean. On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. Then she shall remain in the blood of *her* purification for thirty-three days; she shall not touch any consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed’” (Leviticus 12:2-4, NASU).

During a period of uncleanness for a woman, which specified here would include the time after a woman has given birth, or during her menstrual cycle, no sexual contact with a man is to take place. When a woman is not pregnant, after her menstrual cycle she must wait seven days before she can have sexual contact with her husband (cf. Leviticus 15:19).

One thing which should be noted about the laws of ritual purity, relating to both men and women, is that they widely pertained to one entering the Sanctuary or Temple. There is no Temple presently to go to in Jerusalem, so there should be no worry about being unclean in this regard. However, simply because those who were ritually unclean were not permitted to go into the Temple complex, does not all of a sudden mean that a ritually unclean person cannot go anywhere. It is notable that there are many other things given in the Scriptures which can make a person unclean. If a man and a woman have intercourse in the confines of marriage, they are considered unclean (Leviticus 15:18). All this means is that until they bathe in water they are not permitted to go to the Tabernacle or Temple. There is no Temple to go to today, so there is nothing one can do about entering/not entering into it. God's people should do the best they can to stay proper in regard to sexuality. This includes unmarried persons as well, as they can also make themselves ritually unclean (cf. Leviticus 15:16-17).

Many of the commandments relating to sexual purity and uncleanness do involve a degree of proper bathing. During the Middle Ages in Europe, bathing was widely considered something to be looked down upon and unnecessary. It is said that Queen Elizabeth I of England only took three baths in her entire lifetime. It is no surprise why disease was rampant in many parts of Europe. The Jews of Europe, in contrast, maintained basic cleanliness, and did not have many of the diseases of their non-Jewish neighbors.

In traditional Judaism, the belief is that because there is no Temple, and that no one can be fully cleansed, has often resulted in the premise that by default all are unclean. Just by touching something, which was touched by a ritually unclean person, can render someone unclean. This means that if a person boards an airplane, and a woman going through her menstrual cycle had previously sat down in your seat, you become unclean by sitting there. Orthodox Judaism has made the laws of *niddah* very complicated when you read the Mishnah and the Talmud, which adds many things to the basic Scriptural instructions—and then among those extra-Biblical regulations, there are differing and contradicting opinions. One thing we need to understand as Believers, is that Yeshua's sacrifice indeed covers us from any ritual uncleanness, which prior to His sacrifice could have limited

individuals' contacts with God in the Temple. Most of the basic instructions on ritual uncleanness which can be followed in the Diaspora pertain to married men and women, appropriate sexuality, and bathing.

Obviously, as the Messianic movement grows and refines its *halachic* orthopraxy, so will our knowledge, understanding, and application of these commandments (and the whole subject of sexuality) be improved.