

# 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)

# Paul, Tentmaker

**I heard a Hebrew Roots teacher say that Paul was not a “tentmaker,” but instead fashioned *tallits* or prayer shawls. Is there any proof of this?**

It was not uncommon at all for religious Jews in the First Century to have a trade in which they were actively involved. Paul, in addition to his religious training, was likely trained in some kind of art. Jews who were mobile were often able to practice their trade in whatever community or city they stayed, so they could support themselves. The reference to Paul as a “tentmaker” (Grk. *skēnopoios*) appears in Acts 18:1-3:

“After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they **were tent-makers**” (Acts 18:1-3, NASU).

Notice how the text described Paul, and the Roman Jews Priscilla and Aquila, as “tentmakers by trade” (ESV). This indicates that to some degree, the trade they practiced was one which could bring them a reasonable living. Would this living be made by making some kind of prayer shawl for members of the local Jewish community—or in a field which could service a larger clientele?

David Stern’s *Jewish New Testament Commentary* remarks on Acts 18:2, 3 are completely mute about “tentmakers” being synonymous to “*tallit* makers.”<sup>1</sup> However, the Power New Testament (Lexington, SC: Author, 2003) by William J. Morford, a specialty version, does actually render Acts 18:3 with “they *all* were prayer shawl makers by trade.” Justifying this translation, a footnote reads:

“Prayer shawl making required rabbinic training that all three had. The word *skenopoioi*, translated prayer shawl makers or tent makers, is not found anywhere else in Scripture or secular Greek writing. Jewish men referred to the prayer shawl as a tent or prayer closet because it was placed over the head to shield the eyes while praying.”<sup>2</sup>

While this is an interesting conclusion as to what “tentmaker” may be, Hebrew Roots teachers are often left on their own making it. Objections should be made to the assumption that a “tentmaker” must be a *tallit* maker because, (1) the *tallit* in its present form is a relatively newer application of the Troah command to wear *tzitzits* or fringes, coming in the last millennia of Jewish history; and (2) no current scholarship in the New Testament confirms that *skēnopoios* means “*tallit* maker.” In fact, there is some disagreement as to whether even “tentmaker” is the best approach, though. *TDNT* indicates,

“If the trade is that of making tents of goat’s hair, Paul is perhaps weaving fabric. But rabbinic scholars do not favor weaving, and it is thus more likely that Paul is a ‘leather worker,’ and that as such he is a ‘tent maker’” (*TDNT*).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary* (Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1992), 289.

<sup>2</sup> William J. Morford, trans., *Power New Testament* (Lexington, SC: Author, 2003), 192 fn #3.

<sup>3</sup> W. Michaelis, “pitching tents, Tabernacles,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 1044.

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## Paul, Opposed or Not Opposed to the Torah (Law)

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Acts 18:3 in the Moffatt New Testament actually does have, “They were workers in leather by trade.”<sup>4</sup>

The question of how Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla were “tentmakers,” is ultimately going to be determined whether or not making some kind of prayer shawls, working with actual tents, or even some sort of leather working, brought them a substantial income. Logically speaking, manufacturing *tallits*, or any kind of religious items for that matter, would hardly have enabled them to incur significant monies to live. Their market for work would have been limited to solely the Jewish community, and Diaspora Jews did not live in the Diaspora solely to do business among themselves—but also with the Gentiles around them. The understanding of Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla as being involved with the tent making process, perhaps involving leather, seems best.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For a further review, consult P.W. Barnett, “Tentmaking,” in Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), pp 925-926.

<sup>5</sup> For a further discussion, consult “Paul Was a Tent Maker,” in David A. Croteau, *Urban Legends of the New Testament* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015), pp 111-115, which actually referenced the original edition of this FAQ entry from the old TNN Online website.