

# 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)

# Sabbath Violation, Alleged by Yeshua

## How do you respond to the various claims that Yeshua broke the Sabbath?

This has been excerpted from the author's article  
"Is Sunday 'the Lord's Day'?" (appearing in *Introduction to Things Messianic*)

Some Christians are of the position that our Messiah Yeshua, the sinless Lamb of God and perfect sacrifice for sin, actually broke the Sabbath. This is a serious claim because if He broke the Sabbath and if He sinned, then perhaps Yeshua could not be the Messiah and His sacrifice could not atone for human sin—which 1 John 3:4 specifies is lawlessness or disobedience to God's Torah.

There are two specific instances to discuss which some Christians believe give reference to the Messiah breaking *Shabbat*.

The first claim usually given to prove that the Messiah "broke the Sabbath" is seen when His Disciples were plucking grain in the fields (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5):

"At that time Yeshua went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of *grain* and eat. But when the Pharisees saw *this*, they said to Him, 'Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath.' But He said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone?'" (Matthew 12:1-4, NASU).

Those who conclude from these verses that Yeshua broke the Sabbath usually quote the Pharisees who said, "Why are you doing what is not permitted to be done on the Sabbath days?" (Luke 6:2, Amplified Bible). The Complete Jewish Bible renders this as, "Why are you violating *Shabbat*?" While Yeshua was not picking heads of grain, His Disciples were picking heads of grain, and this reflected back on Him as their Teacher and Rabbi.

It is important to first note that there is no specific commandment in the Torah that forbade picking heads of grain on the Sabbath. The Greek *exesti* correctly means, "it is allowed, it is in one's power, is possible" (*LS*),<sup>1</sup> not always referring to something in the Pentateuch itself. The Mishnah included two types of work on the Sabbath which were prohibited by Rabbis in Yeshua's day, which He could have been accused of breaking: reaping and threshing (m.*Shabbat* 7:2). Those holding a rigid interpretation of the Oral Law would have immediately accused Yeshua of doing something that was not permitted on the Sabbath. However, Luke 6:2 notably recorded, "But some of the Pharisees said" (NASU).<sup>2</sup> The text does not indicate that this was a position held by *all* of the Pharisees. Placing this passage in its appropriate historical context is imperative.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, in His response to these Pharisees, Yeshua mentioned the example of David and his party eating the consecrated bread that was only reserved for the priests to be eaten. This is recorded in 1 Samuel 21:3-4, 6:

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<sup>1</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, eds., *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, abridged (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 273.

The full clause in Luke 6:2 is *ti poieite ho ouk exestin tois sabbasin*, also rendered as "Why do you do what is forbidden on the Sabbath?" (Lattimore).

<sup>2</sup> Grk. *tines de tôn Pharisaiōn eipan*.

<sup>3</sup> In all likelihood, the Pharisees Yeshua encountered here were of the more conservative and stringent School of Shammai.

“Now therefore, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be found.’ The priest answered David and said, ‘There is no ordinary bread on hand, but there is consecrated bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women’...So the priest gave him consecrated *bread*; for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence which was removed from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread *in its place* when it was taken away” (1 Samuel 1:3-4, 6, NASU).

In the example given from the Tanach regarding David and his party, it is important to recognize how the priest provided them with food from the Bread of the Presence, which was only permitted for the priests to eat. The Torah detailed that this bread “shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him from the LORD’s offerings by fire, *his portion forever*” (Leviticus 24:9, NASU). However, because they were hungry and required sustenance, the priest gave them this bread.

Eating something to provide sustenance and thus maintain one’s physical life falls into a category that the Rabbis of Judaism call *Pikku’ach Nefesh* or Regard for Human Life. It is based on Leviticus 19:16: “neither shalt thou stand idly by the blood of thy neighbour” (1917 JPS). The *ArtScroll Chumash* commentary asserts, “If someone’s life is in danger, you must try to save him.”<sup>4</sup> In regard to the Sabbath the principle of *Pikku’ach Nefesh* has often been taken to mean that any work that is required to save a person’s life takes precedence over the ritual *Shabbat* commandments of the Torah. (This is the reason why in the modern State of Israel today, doctors, police, and the military are permitted to work on *Shabbat*.)

Yeshua’s example of David being fed by the Bread of the Presence was poignant in that the priest followed Leviticus 19:16 by providing needed sustenance to David and his party. And, Yeshua’s own Disciples were likewise only providing for themselves the necessary food for survival. Yeshua’s Disciples plucking heads of grain on the Sabbath was well-permitted within the larger theological construct of Second Temple Judaism, but was probably not liked by a few.

Another example often used by those who say that Yeshua broke *Shabbat* comes from John 5:6-18, where He healed a sick man on the Sabbath. Yeshua then commanded him to pick up his pallet and walk:

“When Yeshua saw him lying *there*, and knew that he had already been a long time *in that condition*, He said to him, ‘Do you wish to get well?’ The sick man answered Him, ‘Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me.’ Yeshua said to him, ‘Get up, pick up your pallet and walk.’ Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and *began* to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day” (John 5:6-9, NASU).

In these verses, we can most certainly see application of *Pikku’ach Nefesh*. Yeshua was saving the life of a person by healing him on the Sabbath. The reaction of some of the Jews watching this was, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet” (John 5:10, NASU). These Pharisees were dismayed that the man would carry his pallet on *Shabbat*, because they probably believed that it was in violation of Nehemiah 13:19-20:

“It came about that just as it grew dark at the gates of Jerusalem before the sabbath, I commanded that the doors should be shut and that they should not open them until after the sabbath. Then I stationed some of my servants at the gates so *that* no load would enter on the sabbath day. Once or twice the traders and merchants of every kind of merchandise spent the night outside Jerusalem” (Nehemiah 13:19-20, NASU).

These verses indicate that it was prohibited for loads to be carried on the Sabbath, but most especially loads relating to business and commerce. These loads were being carried into Jerusalem for buying and selling on *Shabbat*, which is why Jerusalem’s gates were closed. Without a doubt, many Pharisees considered this to be a “burden” or *massa*, which means “load, burden, lifting, bearing, tribute” (*BDB*),<sup>5</sup> including pallets. The Septuagint

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<sup>4</sup> Nossou Scherman, ed., et. al., *The ArtScroll Chumash, Stone Edition*, 5th ed. (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2000), 661.

<sup>5</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 672.

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## Sabbath Violation, Alleged by Yeshua

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translates *massa* as *bastagma*, something specifically meaning “*that which is borne, a burden*” (LS),<sup>6</sup> but it is not used in the Greek Apostolic Scriptures.

What the healed man specifically carried was a *krabbatos*, or “*a pallet, camp bed*” (Thayer).<sup>7</sup> UBSHNT renders *krabbatos* as *mishkav*, or simply “bed.” While sizes of beds no doubt differed, it is doubtful that this invalid’s pallet was something large and heavy. AMG offers the following description of a *krabbatos*: “A small couch used by the poor. It denotes a simple kind of bed...[which] usually consisted of a padded quilt or thin mattress to be used according to the season or the condition of the owner with or without covering.”<sup>8</sup>

With a proper understanding of *Pikku’ach Nefesh*, Yeshua did not violate the Sabbath at all by telling the healed man to pick up his pallet that was a light bed, which likely only weighed a few pounds. Yeshua did, however, no doubt “violate” the theological opinions of the group or sect of Pharisees who watched Him. David H. Stern observes in his *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, “they could not see that the formerly crippled man’s ability to carry his mat attested to God’s glory.”<sup>9</sup>

The arguments from those who do not want to keep *Shabbat* will go on and on. Many people will try to present cases that seemingly prove that Messiah Yeshua—the sinless Lamb of God and who is of one accord with His Father (cf. John 10:30)—violated the Sabbath and broke His own commandments. Sadly, these arguments are often not placed within the framework of Second Temple Judaism, and often relate to Christians’ ignorance of the historical occurrence of Biblical events.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> LS, 148.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 358.

<sup>8</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, ed., *Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), 883.

<sup>9</sup> David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary* (Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1995), 168.

<sup>10</sup> D.J. Moo, “Law,” in Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), pp 454-455, who does not have a particularly high view of the Mosaic Torah for God’s people today, does admit how Yeshua did not break the Sabbath:

“Certainly Jesus and his disciples violated the scribal Sabbath regulations...these activities [were not] a clear violation of the Mosaic Sabbath rules...The most that can be said is that his initiative in healing on the Sabbath, rooted in theological conviction—‘it was necessary’ for Jesus to heal on the Sabbath (Lk 13:16)—stretches the Sabbath commandment. But we have no evidence that Jesus ever himself violated, or approved of his disciples violating, the written Sabbath commandment.”