

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)

Tradition, Role that it plays

What role, if any, do you believe tradition should play in our examination and application of Scripture, particularly the Torah?

There is a wide variance of opinion, in the Messianic sphere of influence, relating to what role, if any, tradition should play as we study and apply the Bible in our daily lives. This is particularly true regarding one's pursuit of a Torah obedient lifestyle. How one follows the commandments of the Torah is a huge issue, and often the Torah itself provides no explanation(s) of how various commandments are to be kept. The two basic options available at one's disposal are to: (1) develop one's own opinions and applications of commandments, or (2) consult traditional opinions and applications of commandments as developed by Judaism.

The classification of how much tradition should be followed by Messianics today can probably be listed under three broad categories: (1) staunch traditionalists, (2) anti-traditionalists, and (3) philo-traditionalists. **Staunch traditionalists** would be those who follow Jewish tradition without any hesitation, and who may consider extra-Biblical works like the Mishnah and Talmud to be at the authoritative level of inspired Scripture. This would include those trying to emulate an Orthodox Jewish and/or Chassidic style of *halachah* in the Messianic community. **Anti-traditionalists**, in stark contrast, are those who want nothing to do with any kind of mainline Jewish tradition. This could include those who believe in following the Karaites, and/or insist on usage of the Divine Name. Anti-traditionalists are often against practices like men wearing the *tallit* and *kippah* (*yarmulke*), wrapping *tefillin*, and celebrating holidays like *Chanukah* or *Purim*, and while promoting forms of "Torah observance" which may actually appear to be anti-Semitic. **Philo-traditionalists** make up the centrist view between the two. This would include those who have a high respect for Jewish culture and tradition, and generally follow a Torah observant lifestyle quite consistent with Conservative to Reform Judaism, tempered by the fact that we live in a modern world. Philo-traditionalists value works like the Mishnah and Talmud, but do not consider them superior to the Tanach or Apostolic Scriptures. **Our ministry very definitely falls into the philo-traditionalist camp.**

The debate over "tradition" in the Messianic movement today is not going away. A frequent argument against employing Jewish tradition and culture in one's personal *halachah*, is going to come in the form of statements like, "You don't want to trade Church traditions in for Synagogue traditions." While it is absolutely true that we want to have a Scripturally sound faith, based on the Bible first—the fact of the matter remains that the Bible does not often tell one *how* to apply commandments in our actual lives, and people will face life situations the Biblical text does not directly or indirectly address. Many hermeneutical systems employ tradition and history to be used, when it is clear that Scripture does not address something.

It is very true that Yeshua the Messiah spoke against tradition when it invalidated the Word of God, and took people away from weightier matters of the Torah like love, mercy, and respect for others. Yet at the same time, socio-historical studies in the Gospels are revealing more and more that Yeshua's theology was closer to the Pharisees than any of the other sects of First Century Judaism, and that He indeed kept many of the traditions and customs extant in the culture of His day. The Apostle Paul urged the Corinthians to "maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you" (1 Corinthians 11:2, NRSV), and studies in the Jewish background of his teachings are likewise revealing more and more that he continued to be a Pharisee long after his coming to Messiah faith (Acts 23:6). We cannot dispense with the reality that while speaking against tradition when it annulled Scripture, Yeshua nevertheless lived out and followed much of the tradition of His time. This speaks to our ever-present need

Tradition, Role that it plays

to be studying the Gospels and examining each event of His life on a case-by-case basis, employing the right background information.