

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Babylon: What do you think end-time Babylon is?

There are various views and opinions among prophecy teachers, and likewise among Messianics, concerning what end-time “Babylon” is. These range from believing that end-time Babylon is the Roman Catholic Church, mainstream Christianity or today’s “Church system,” the United States of America, or a rebuilt Babylon in the Middle East. Some believe that “Babylon” is purely a system, whereas others believe that it is “just this” or “just that.”

In Hebrew, the word translated “Babylon” is *Bavel* (בָּבֶל). *BDB* defines *Bavel* as “confuse, confound” (p 93). Consequently, it should not be surprising that the world was first confused at Babel (Genesis 11). At Ancient Babel, God confused the languages and humanity was forced to scatter across the face of the planet. It should also be noted that Ancient Babylon (and the surrounding region of Sumer) is the same location that some of the pagan sun worship and rituals originated that impacted the Ancient Israelites, the same being responsible for many of today’s errant influences in Roman Catholicism. It can easily be said that the paganism originating in Ancient Babylon has been permeated throughout the globe.

We tend to be more “open minded” about any specific identification of end-time Babylon, because the very nature of the Babylonian phenomenon is something that is opposed to the Creator God. Understanding that *Bavel* means “confuse” implies that this is something that is purposely going to be confusing. Therefore, we see legitimacy in identifying end-time Babylon as composing religious, political, and societal elements which all make up the world system that is opposed to the Lord.

updated 16 February, 2006

Beards: Do you believe that men should wear beards?

The Biblical commandment regarding beards appears in Leviticus 19:27, saying “You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads nor harm the edges of your beard.” There is a substantial debate within Judaism what “the side-growth of your beard” (NJPS) actually means. We see a great deal of interpretation of this commandment in Judaism today.

Some interpret this command as relating to a man’s full beard, others only his sideburns, and others the extremities of the beard. Some believe that a man’s facial hair has actual “boundaries,” more or less defined, and others believe that the hair on a man’s face should just grow without any type of grooming. Some believe that a man can trim and groom his beard. And, others believe that a man can shave his beard, provided it is with an electric razor. Consequently, the same interpretations have made their way into the Messianic movement, and one will see a wide variance of applications.

We recognize and respect the diversity of opinions within Judaism, and believe that whatever interpretation you hold to, that you respect others. It is notable that there is a distinct Messianic “subculture” that insists that all men have beards, and they will often be judgmental and quite harsh of men that do not have them. Having or not having a beard is not an issue of spirituality, as our relationship with the Lord is contingent on us having hearts and minds that are transformed by the Holy Spirit, as we demonstrate God’s love to others in the world. As God had to remind the Prophet Samuel, “for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7, NRSV).

Some men are incapable of growing beards, and that is the way God made them. Others have beards as a matter of personal preference. In some Messianic congregations, you will find that facial hair on men is not an issue, where in others it is an issue. We choose not to make it into an issue, although we do believe that men can wear beards so as to be easily distinguished from women. We choose to recognize that having a relationship with God is much, much more than how one looks.

updated 25 September, 2006

Bible Versions: Is there any specific Bible version that you recommend that I use? I am new to the Messianic movement.

Two valuable resources that we recommend if you are brand new to the Messianic movement, that you will probably find extremely helpful, are the *Complete Jewish Bible* translated by David H. Stern and the *Hebrew-Greek Key New American Standard* edited by Spiros Zodhiates. The CJB will familiarize you with many of the Hebrew words and Hebraic terms used in the Messianic community, and the *Hebrew-Greek Key NASB* has many words keyed to *Strong's Concordance*, with a Strong's dictionary in the Bible for easy reference.

Generally speaking, our ministry prefers the *New American Standard, Updated Edition* (1995), because it is widely considered to be the most literal version available on the market today, and it is theologically conservative and evangelical. You will find that many of the newer Christian Bibles that are marketed today are translated from the perspective of dynamic equivalence, whereby the original Hebrew or Greek is not rendered literally into English, but rather conceptually, like the *New International Version* or *New Living Translation*. These can be used as supplementary versions, but we do not recommend them as primary for detailed study. Furthermore, many of the newer translations, such as the *New Revised Standard Version*, have been produced by those who are theologically liberal and they employ inclusive and gender neutral language which may be foreign to the source text, i.e., using "brothers and sisters" instead of "brethren." These translations can be used, but you must keep in mind the theological bias(es) of the translators if you choose to use them.

There are only a few Jewish translations of the Tanach available on the English market today. The *New Jewish Press Society* or NJPS (1999) is a compendium of Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox translators. It follows the dynamic equivalency style and reads very close to the Christian NIV. Another popular one is the *ArtScroll Tanach* (1996), which comes from an entirely Orthodox perspective. It is fairly literal, and reads very close to the Christian NASB, but is probably not as literal in comparison to it.

Ultimately, every English Bible translation has its limits. This is why we encourage everyone to have the proper tools to understanding Scripture, including Hebrew and Greek lexicons, Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias, and good commentaries.

updated 16 February, 2007

Bible Versions, Messianic: I have seen a variety of Messianic Bible versions on the market. Is there any particular one that you recommend? What is your opinion of them?

You are correct in stating that there are a wide variety of Messianic Bible versions available on the market. Some of them are good, and some of them are questionable, no different than the many Christian Bibles that are available today. Some of them represent a good, conservative theological position, and affirm foundational doctrines of the faith, and some of them skew foundational doctrines of the faith.

We advise that if you have seen any Messianic Bible version on the market that you exhibit some caution. Some of these Bible versions have no clear statement of belief or principles of translation behind them. Some of these Bible versions are nothing more than modified editions of the King James Version, with selective edits here and there with Hebraic terms subjectively inserted with no substantial theological justification. Furthermore, a few of those who produce Messianic Bible versions exhibit no training in the Biblical languages of Hebrew or Greek, and appear to be nothing more than eclectic re-writings of Scripture to fit some kind of (gross sectarian) bias.

Sometime in the future, we are planning to release an article that discusses the issue of Bible versions, which will include some reviews of Messianic versions on the market.

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Biblical Calendar: What is your opinion with the various calendar issues that seem to be dividing the Messianic community?

There are a few Messianic groups or individuals that claim to have produced “restored” or “corrected” Biblical Hebrew calendars, most of which differ substantially from the standard Jewish calendar employed today by Jews around the world.

We believe, as the Apostle Paul attests in Romans 3:2, that the Jewish people “were entrusted with the oracles of God.” They were also entrusted with the Temple service and all of the accoutrements of the protocol of proper worship and Biblical conduct. We believe that this means that the Jewish people get to determine (most of) the proper way of how the commandments of the Torah are to be interpreted, and because of Judah’s leadership (Genesis 49:10) we believe we should follow many of the Jewish interpretations of the Torah, provided they are spiritually edifying (Philippians 4:8), align with the ethos of the Word of God, and are compatible with God’s mandate of His people making a difference in the world (Genesis 12:2-3; Deuteronomy 4:5-8).

Part of following Judah’s leadership, and in an effort for us as mostly non-Jewish Believers in Messiah Yeshua to express unity and solidarity with our Jewish brothers and sisters, is to follow the same calendar that they do. It is our opinion that many of those who are developing their own “restored” calendars are causing, whether knowingly or not, disunity between Jews and non-Jews, and are certainly not helping the prophesied reunion of all Israel.

For the most part, we follow the Rabbinical calendar employed by most in Judaism today, perhaps with a few minor exceptions. We are extremely skeptical of any so-called “restored Biblical calendar,” either because those often putting together their own calendars are not qualified to do so in areas such as mathematics, science, astronomy, and chronology, or their motives are questionable. Many so-called “restored Biblical calendars” have been used by individuals to pinpoint a date for the Second Coming or other prophetic events, some of which have been adjusted when dates come and go and nothing happens.

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Biblical Festivals: Do you think that Christians should observe the feasts/appointed times, the *moedim*, of Leviticus 23?

We believe that Believers should keep the Biblical holidays that the Lord prescribed for His people in Leviticus 23, including: Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost/*Shavuot*, Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles. This would include the weekly seventh-day Sabbath, as it is listed as one of the appointed times.

Colossians 2:17 tells us that these appointed times of God are “a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ” (RSV), meaning that we are to see the Messiah in them. It is important to note that common Christian celebrations do not equal the number of holidays that God prescribed. Christmas, Easter, and short Sunday services are *less than* the at least six or seven Biblical appointments (the lowest number count of the *moedim*), the weekly Sabbath (which lasts an entire day), plus additional holidays like *Purim* and *Chanukah*. So, if people want to honor God *as much as possible*, His way obviously has advantages, as today’s traditional Christian holidays were not celebrated by the early Believers and were instead instituted centuries after the death of the Apostles by the Roman Catholic Church. (In saying this, please understand that we are not saying that the commemoration of Yeshua’s birth and resurrection are unimportant; we are only saying that they should be integrated into our celebration of the Biblical holidays.)

Many Christians quote Colossians 2:16, “Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day,” as meaning that Believers should not honor these things. But in order to come to this conclusion we must conclude that these things are “empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the

elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Messiah" (Colossians 2:8), which is what the Apostle Paul warns us about. Surely, the Lord's festivals are not vain human traditions or deception. Colossians 2:16 must be taken as meaning that we should not allow others to judge us *for* celebrating His feasts and obeying His commandments, as opposed to not let them judge us *for not* celebrating them.

Consult the editor's article "**Does the New Testament Annul the Biblical Appointments?**" for a further discussion of this issue.

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Birth Control: Do you believe it is wrong for Messianic Believers to practice birth control?

Among some sectors of Messianic Believers are those who believe that it is Biblical for a husband and wife to have large families, beyond the average family size of 3-4 children. Scriptural support that is frequently given for this may include God's command to Adam and Eve to "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). While the Scriptures do encourage human beings to be fruitful, and for married couples to procreate, do they encourage procreation beyond one's means? Many of those who have large families beyond the average size look down upon those who only have 3-4 children. Do the Scriptures prohibit any kind of birth control or family planning?

This has certainly been a debated issue for many centuries, and is not limited to the Messianic movement by any means. The official dogma of Roman Catholicism, for example, prohibits any form of birth control. Liberal Christians and Jews, in stark contrast, believe that any form of birth control, *including abortion*, is acceptable. Many Conservative and Reform Jews, and evangelical Christians, take a middle position on birth control, advocating that some forms of it are acceptable, while other forms are unacceptable. Aside from a belief that abortion is unacceptable, the Messianic world has those who favor forms of birth control, every bit as much as it has those who disfavor forms of birth control.

Those against birth control, in addition to arguing against it on the basis that God expects human beings to be fruitful, may argue against it from Genesis 38:8-10:

"Then Judah said to Onan, 'Go in to your brother's wife, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother.' Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground in order not to give offspring to his brother. But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the LORD; so He took his life also."

Those against any form of birth control will often make serious light of the fact that Onan "spilled his semen on the ground to keep from producing offspring" (NIV) and was killed by the hand of God for it. However, the context of this happening is very important so we do not make the automatic assumption that all forms of birth control are wrong. According to Deuteronomy 25:5, "When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be *married* outside *the family* to a strange man. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her." "This institution is known in Hebrew as *yibbum*. In English it is called 'levirate marriage' (from Latin *levir*, 'a husband's brother')" (Nahum M. Sarna, in *Etz Hayim*, p 234).

In early Biblical times, because marriages were property contracts every bit as much as individual bonds, for a woman not to produce an heir meant that the inheritance a deceased husband left would have to be divided, possibly weakening the family. Onan agreed to impregnate his sister-in-law in accordance with the custom of levirate marriage at the command of Judah. If he had not done this, then the portion of property he would have inherited from his brother would have been considerably more than if Tamar had not gotten pregnant and had given birth to a son. Onan begins the sexual act with Tamar, but withdraws at the last minute. God struck him down for not performing the proper act that he agreed to do.

We have to consider the fact that this was an isolated incident, and is not a blanket event condemning all birth control for all generations to come. Further instruction in Deuteronomy allows for a voluntary renunciation of the practice of levirate marriage:

“But if the man does not desire to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, ‘My husband's brother refuses to establish a name for his brother in Israel; he is not willing to perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.’ Then the elders of his city shall summon him and speak to him. And *if* he persists and says, ‘I do not desire to take her,’ then his brother's wife shall come to him in the sight of the elders, and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face; and she shall declare, ‘Thus it is done to the man who does not build up his brother's house’” (Deuteronomy 25:7-9).

Onan did not tell Judah that he would renounce Tamar, but instead agrees to go through with the sexual act. However, instead of performing the act of the levirate, Onan withdraws at the point of climax, ejaculating on the ground. It was for not performing his duty through to the end that Onan was killed—not that he withdrew.

EJ largely summarizes the viewpoints of the Orthodox Jewish community today, which is largely against birth control:

“It is in the rabbinic responsa, especially those of the past 200 years, that the attitude of Jewish law to birth control is defined and discussed in great detail. The many hundreds of rulings recorded in these responsa consider urgent medical reasons as the only valid justification for certain contraceptive precautions. Jewish law regards such decisions as capital judgments and it would, therefore, insist on dealing with each case on its individual merits and on the evidence of competent medical opinion. Where some grave hazard to the mother, however remote, is feared, as a result of pregnancy, the rabbinic attitude is usually quite liberal, all the more readily if the commandment of procreation (which technically requires having a son and a daughter) has already been fulfilled. Under no circumstances, however, does Jewish law sanction any contraceptive acts or safeguards on the part of the male, nor does it ever tolerate the use or distribution of birth control devices outside marriage” (Immanuel Jakobovits, “Birth Control,” in *EJ*).

The key to note here is that while Orthodox Judaism is largely against the practice of a couple not having any children, “**Jewish law regards such decisions as capital judgments and it would, therefore, insist on dealing with each case on its individual merits and on the evidence of competent medical opinion.**” While dealing with each couple on a case-by-case basis, the Jewish community as a whole, including Conservative and Reform Judaism, has largely liberalized its stand on birth control due to the population explosion of the last century. “In common with the attitude of most Protestant denominations, Reform Judaism would generally leave the decision on birth control to the individual conscience, recognizing social and economic factors no less than the medical motivation” (Ibid).

It is important to note that on the whole “Jewish law permits various forms of contraception for medical and other reasons but prefers methods that do not destroy the generative seed” (Sarna, in *Etz Hayim*, p 234), although there are certainly various opinions among the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform communities. Accepted forms of birth control that would be used today among the Conservative and Reform Jewish communities include the usage of vaginal sponges, the diaphragm, condoms, and the birth control pill. Preferred forms are those used by the woman that prevent the union of egg and sperm. In some cases withdrawal is permitted. Spermicide, because it kills sperm, is largely not permitted. There is also debate over forms of birth control that one has definite control over, such as the sponge, diaphragm, or condom, and those that alter the chemical and hormonal balance of a woman such as the pill. Likewise, vasectomy on a male is considered an unacceptable form of birth control, as is tubal ligation on a woman, except in extreme medical cases.

The issue of birth control is not frequently debated in the evangelical Protestant community. Not all evangelicals are in favor of birth control, even though some favor forms of it. Beliefs vary among denominations, although most conservative denominations encourage married couples to have children, but not at the expense of their own marriage. In other words, children

are encouraged to come forth out of a love that a husband and wife have toward one another, not because they should feel obligated to have children and simply procreate for the sake of procreating.

The primary debate among Protestants often regards the morality of abortion, with many being against it *in any form*. While abortion-on-demand is an ungodly and horrific procedure, moderates on the issue do concede that there are exceptions. When a woman's life is in danger, abortion may be necessary. Likewise, a pregnancy involving gross psychological trauma, such as rape or incest, may require an abortion. These issues, of course, must be considered on a case-by-case basis and must involve the pregnant woman consulting her husband or father, as well as a pastor and/or doctor. This is consistent with much of the Jewish community, which also recognizes that there can be exceptions regarding abortion.

On the whole, our ministry adheres to the basic views of Conservative and Reform Judaism, as well as evangelical Christianity, when it comes to birth control. **We do not believe that all forms of birth control are prohibited by the Scriptures**, but we certainly encourage married couples to have children as a result of their love. However, a couple with children needs to be able to have them within their means. For some, having multiple children all at once can be a great physical and psychological strain—not to mention a financial burden. In Biblical times, having large families was every bit as much as an economic decision as it was procreative. One needed many children to perform household and agricultural tasks. Today, in strong contrast, having smaller families is often an economic decision.

The decision how to have children ultimately involves a husband and wife and what they prayerfully decide between themselves and the Lord. It is not anyone's place to judge a couple for not having more than the average 3-4 children, any more than it is anyone's place to judge a couple for not being able to have children, or even to judge an unmarried man or woman who cannot find the proper spouse. This issue is one where a couple has to decide for themselves, based on what they read in Scripture, whether or not their marriage relationship is mature enough to allow for children, and the cultural and economic considerations that must be made. More than anything else, this is something that couples should not have outsiders unnecessarily interfering with.

posted 27 February, 2006

Birth of Yeshua: When should Messianic Believers remember Yeshua's birth?

Almost all authorities are agreed that Yeshua the Messiah was not born on December 25, and that the choice of December 25 for Christmas was an arbitrary date in ancient history, giving former pagans an opportunity to remember something different than what they had previously observed. Today's Messianics, recognizing the questionable origins and traditions associated with Christmas on December 25, will still often recognize that the birth of Yeshua, as principally recorded in Luke 2, is still an event worthy of remembering. But when should it be done? What would be a date or season that is much more appropriate for us considering the entry of the Messiah into the world at Bethlehem?

Many of today's Messianic Believers are of the conviction that Yeshua the Messiah was born in conjunction with the Feast of Tabernacles. This is primarily based on passages such as John 1:14, which speak of how "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." The Greek verb *skēnoō* (σκηνώω) is employed in this verse, with its noun form *skēnē* (σκηνή) frequently used in the Torah (i.e., Leviticus 23:34, 42-43) to render the Hebrew *sukkah* (סֻכָּה). YLT actually renders John 1:14 with "the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us." It is not at all inappropriate to connect the typology of *Sukkot* to the Incarnation of Yeshua. Yet, just like with those ancient Christian leaders who arbitrarily chose December 25 to remember Yeshua's birth, so might concluding that Yeshua was born during the Feast of Tabernacles also be a bit arbitrary. There is simply no way for us to know for certain.

It is sad, though, that those who are of the opinion that Yeshua might have been born during Tabernacles, have usually been met with varying degrees of resistance when they have tried

to integrate this into their *Sukkot* festivities. Attacks along the lines of “We should not be remembering anyone’s birth!” are usually issued. The actual, Biblical record of Yeshua’s birth can be literally ripped to shreds. A few contentious people who will without hesitation claim that “Christmas is pagan!” now want nothing to do with what the Gospels tell us about the birth of the King of Kings, and prefer to excise it from their Bibles. So to avoid controversy and encourage unity during the *Sukkot* season, those who believe that Yeshua was born during this time often never bring it up, and keep their thoughts to themselves.

Certainly, it is justified to question the spiritual maturity (and even salvation) of those who will not even read passages like Luke 2 or Matthew 1-2 that detail the nativity, and what took place during the early years of Yeshua’s life, yet claim Him as their Savior. **Anyone who has placed his or her trust in Yeshua still has to deal with the Biblical text.** Disregarding it completely, as though it does not exist or that it is too “Churchy” for us to consider—even when not celebrating Christmas—is sad evidence of how a few of today’s Messianics are utter neophytes when it comes to reading Scriptures about Yeshua’s life and ministry.

Not all are convinced that Yeshua was born during the season of *Sukkot*, or are at least skeptical of this proposal and think it needs more research. Yet, it is clear that because the birth of Yeshua is a part not only of Scripture—but also our faith—that we should find *a time* to consider what its message means for us. Aside from celebrating Christmas, or trying to remember the nativity during the Feast of Tabernacles, **it might be that the “safest” time to address the birth of Yeshua is when *Shemot* (Exodus 1:1-6:1) appears in the yearly Torah cycle.** What makes this an appropriate time to consider the message of Yeshua’s birth, is that parallels between the birth of Moses and the birth of the Messiah—who came as a “second Moses”—can be considered.

Of course, even if we choose to examine the birth of Yeshua when *Shemot* appears in the Torah cycle, there will still be those few who will oppose it, because they have adopted a very immature and ungodly attitude toward Christmas and their Christian brethren. Unfortunately, there is nothing that can really be done with this kind of people, other than to ask them whether they think the Biblical account of Yeshua’s birth should be removed from the Holy Scriptures. And if they actually say yes—then we should wonder whether or not 2 John 7 applies concerning such people:

“For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Yeshua the Messiah *as* coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antimesiah.”

posted 09 December, 2009

B’rit Chadashah: Why do you not call the New Testament the B’rit Chadashah as some other Messianics do?

There are several reasons why we as a ministry do not refer to the “New Testament” as the *B’rit Chadashah*, unlike many in the Messianic movement. First of all, the *b’rit chadashah* (בְּרִית הַדָּשָׁה) or “new covenant” is promised to the House of Judah and the House of Israel in Jeremiah 31. The text says,

“Behold, days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,’ declares the LORD. ‘But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,’ declares the LORD, ‘I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people’” (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

The *b’rit chadashah* is actually a covenant that the Lord has made with both the Houses of Israel to be fully realized in the end-times. This is what the author of Hebrews talks about in Hebrews 8:8-12:

“For finding fault with them, He says, ‘BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF

JUDAH; NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD. FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, "KNOW THE LORD," FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE."

As a ministry we believe that it is a misnomer to call the Hebrew Scriptures the "Old Testament." The more correct term to use is Tanach/Tanakh (תנ"ך), an acronym for *Torah* (Law), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Writings). We certainly will use the term "Old Testament" in passing for those who are unfamiliar with the term "Tanach," but Tanach by far is the preferred term.

The same is the case when we consider the "New Testament." There is nothing "new" about these Scriptures other than the fact that they are the continual progressive revelation of God that attest to the work of Messiah Yeshua and His early followers. These are the Divinely inspired works of the early Disciples and Apostles. Messianics often compound the confusion that exists among many Christians regarding the "New Testament" by using terms such as New Covenant or *B'rit Chadashah*. More correct terms to use in reference to the "New Testament" would be the Apostolic Scriptures or Apostolic Writings, or Messianic Scriptures or Messianic Writings. The New Covenant or *b'rit chadashah* in actuality is the prophesied promise of God to write His Torah on our hearts. The Apostolic Scriptures do not make up a covenant but rather record the works of God in the period of the Messiah's time on Earth and immediately following.

updated 26 June, 2006

British-Israelism: Do you believe in British-Israelism?

While we believe that the physical descendants of Abraham are, as the Lord promised, "as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore" (Genesis 22:17), **we do not believe in British-Israelism, nor advocate its theology.** The Lord Promised Jacob that "Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 28:14). This means that the seed of Jacob/Israel went to all four corners of the Earth, not just to the British Isles, which is advocated by British-Israel proponents.

Because we believe that in the Last Days the Two Houses of Israel, Judah and scattered Israel/Ephraim, will be reunited before Messiah Yeshua will return (Ezekiel 37:15-28), we believe that Israel will be gathered back to the Promised Land from all over the world. This includes, but it is not limited to, the British Isles.

British-Israelism is the belief system that primarily advocates that *only* those descended from Britons (English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh) are those of the Lost Tribes of Israel from the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim. British-Israelism also advocates that the throne of Great Britain is also the throne of David, and frequently is connected with anti-Semitism and white supremacism. **We firmly reject all of these concepts.** We *completely disavow* all of the pseudo-history associated with it. We do not believe that it can be theologically or historically proven where the scattered seed of Israel has gone. We believe, as the Lord promised, that it went all over the Earth. Obviously, Britain could be one of those places, but certainly not the only place.

updated 16 February, 2007

British, word of Hebrew origin: I have heard it said that the word "British" is a word of Hebrew origin. Is there any validity to this claim?

British-Israel proponents claim that “British” is a combination of the Hebrew words *b'rit* (בְּרִית) or “covenant” and *ish* (אִישׁ) meaning “man,” implying that God’s covenant is with those of British ancestry. Such an equation of *b'rit* and *ish* to “British” reduces the validity of the promises of multiplicity given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, limiting it to those of solely of British ancestry. As Dr. Walter Martin notes in his classic work *Kingdom of the Cults*,

“It is sufficient to point out...that the Hebrew words *berith* [*b'rit*] and *ish* literally mean ‘covenant and man,’ not, ‘men of the covenant,’ as...Anglo-Israelites maintain. When to this is added the unbiased and impeccably researched conclusions of the venerable *Oxford English Dictionary* and every other major English work on etymology, there is absolutely no connection between the Anglo-Saxon tongue and the Hebrew language...” (p 309).

It is notable, in response to Martin’s comments that English and Hebrew are unrelated, that a work by the Jewish scholar and linguist Isaac E. Mozeson, author of *The Word: The Dictionary That Reveals The Hebrew Source Of English*, proposes there may be connections between English via Greek and Latin to Hebrew. (Whether there are or not can probably be vigorously debated, and the editor is currently not convinced of the “validity” of his research). Mozeson states, “Greek and Latin are merely grandfathers, while Hebrew is the patriarch” (p 5). However, it is important that we point out that *nowhere* in Mozeson’s book does he make a connection between “British” and the words *b'rit* and *ish*. The modern Hebrew term for “British” is *Britee* (בריטי), which is hardly what one would expect if “British” were indeed a Hebrew word.

There is no legitimate linguistic basis to say that the English word “British” is of Hebrew origins. This is a claim that is often made by those who advocate British-Israel theology, many of whom are notably untrained in the Hebrew language and are making conclusions based on what they “see” or “hear,” not on Hebrew linguistics.

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