

**MEN AND WOMEN  
IN THE BODY OF  
MESSIAH**

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***Men and Women in the Body of Messiah: Answering Crucial Questions***

# **MEN AND WOMEN IN THE BODY OF MESSIAH**

**Answering Crucial Questions**

**J.K. McKee**

**MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS**

[messianicapologetics.net](http://messianicapologetics.net)

# MEN AND WOMEN IN THE BODY OF MESSIAH

## Answering Crucial Questions

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## Abbreviation Chart and Special Terms

The following is a chart of abbreviations for reference works and special terms that 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.

Special terms that may be used have been provided in this chart:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| ABD: <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>   | understand what a Biblical text means on its own   |
| AMG: <i>Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament</i>  | EXP: <i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>   |
| ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)   | Ger: German  |
| Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament  | GNT: Greek New Testament   |
| Ara: Aramaic  | Grk: Greek   |
| ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)  | <i>halachah</i> : lit. "the way to walk," how the Torah is lived out in an individual's life or faith community        |
| b. Babylonian Talmud ( <i>Talmud Bavli</i> )  | HALOT: <i>Hebrew &amp; Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Koehler and Baumgartner)                              |
| B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.   | HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)   |
| BDAG: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich) | Heb: Hebrew  |
| BDB: <i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>  | HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible   |
| BECNT: <i>Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament</i>  | ICC: <i>International Critical Commentary</i>  |
| BKCNT: <i>Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament</i>   | IDB: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>  |
| C.E.: Common Era or A.D.  | IDBSup: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement</i>  |
| CEV: Contemporary English Version (1995)  | ISBE: <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>   |
| CGEDNT: <i>Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words</i> (Barclay M. Newman)                                      | IVPBBC: <i>IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old &amp; New Testament)</i>   |
| CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>  | Jastrow: <i>Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature</i> (Marcus Jastrow) |
| CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)   | JBK: New Jerusalem Bible-Koren (2000)  |
| DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition  | JETS: <i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>  |
| DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls   | KJV: King James Version  |
| ECB: <i>Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible</i>  | Lattimore: <i>The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore</i> (1996)   |
| EDB: <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i>  | LITV: <i>Literal Translation of the Holy Bible</i> by Jay P. Green (1986)  |
| eisegesis: "reading meaning into," or interjecting a preconceived or foreign meaning into a Biblical text                       | LS: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Liddell & Scott)   |
| EJ: <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>  | LXE: <i>Septuagint with Apocrypha</i> by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)   |
| ESV: English Standard Version (2001)  |  |
| exegesis: "drawing meaning out of," or the process of trying to   |  |

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*  
NIGTC: *New International Greek Testament Commentary*  
NICNT: *New International Commentary on the New Testament*  
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*  
NIV: New International Version (1984)  
NJB: New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic (1985)  
NJPS: 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  
orthopraxy: lit. "the right action," how the Bible or one's theology is lived out in the world

OT: Old Testament  
PreachC: *The Preacher's Commentary*  
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*  
TEV: Today's English Version (1976)  
TLV: Tree of Life Messianic Family Bible—New Covenant (2011)  
TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)  
TNTC: *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*  
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  
WBC: *Word Biblical Commentary*  
Yid: Yiddish  
YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)



# Introduction

One of the things that I have highly regarded from the broad Jewish tradition, is that people are encouraged to ask questions. A significant virtue of the Jewish people, is that people not only talk, but they are encouraged to speak their minds and develop opinions about both God and the issues of the day. Being raised in an evangelical Protestant family, it was emphasized that each Believer can read the Bible for himself or herself, going to God with one's concerns. I was also raised where if there were any important topics facing us, our extended family, our local church, or society as a whole—such issues **were openly discussed**. It is witnessed in both Judaism and Protestantism, that issues facing one's community should not go unaddressed indefinitely, especially if inaction or avoidance of something could lead to generational harm.

People in today's broad Messianic movement, in a similar vein, tend to be open-minded when it comes to a variety of theological issues, particularly as it involves the centrality of Israel and the Jewish people in God's plan, the ongoing validity and relevance of the Torah for the post-resurrection era, and more generally the Hebraic and Jewish Roots of the faith. If you attend any Messianic congregation, Torah study, Bible study, home fellowship group, etc., you will certainly see a wide array of issues and topics addressed—which would scarcely be touched in your average evangelical Protestant church, to be sure. I have widely appreciated the openness of many people in today's Messianic movement, from both Jewish and Protestant backgrounds, to not only discuss various "inconvenient" issues, but to demonstrate an open-mindedness to (re)evaluate previously held beliefs and theologies, putting them to the touchstone of Holy Scripture.

From time to time there do arise various issues where those within today's broad Messianic movement, tend to be very close-minded, and even a bit rigid and controlling, when alternative points of view are mentioned. One of the biggest issues which has started to significantly stir—beneath the surface for sure—involves **men and women in the Body of Messiah**.

## Men and Women in the Body of Messiah

It is no secret that in both Conservative and Reform Judaism, as well as in many evangelical Protestant denominations, that both men and women can be ordained as either rabbis or pastors. For certain, both men and women can serve side-by-side within the leadership structure of various local synagogues and churches, as both facilitators and teachers. In stark contrast to this, most of today's Messianic congregations are led entirely by males, few females serve within the leadership structure of the assembly, and almost no females would be expected to give a teaching on *Shabbat*. This is then widely reflected in the marriages of many Messianic men and women, where the husband is the leader of the family, and the wife is expected to follow and defer to him, in most matters. In terms of congregational and familial leadership, the broad Messianic movement is a virtual carbon copy of complementarian Protestantism, where male leadership and authority is upheld as the ideal.

Anyone who has closely followed my teachings over the years, knows that I have taken a huge risk by openly identifying myself as an egalitarian. I believe that in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were created as co-equal partners, to be tending Creation together (Genesis 2:23), and that as a result of the Fall, a battle of the sexes erupted (Genesis 3:16). I believe that salvation history has been steadily returning humanity to what was lost in Eden, and that with the arrival of Yeshua the Messiah and His sacrifice, the equality of the sexes has been restored (Galatians 3:28). *Men and women are to serve as co-leaders of the assembly, and husbands and wives are to serve as co-leaders of the family—in mutual submission to each other as equal partners (Ephesians 5:21).* Instruction in either the Tanach or Apostolic Writings, which appears to be restrictive toward women (i.e., 1 Timothy 2:11-15), needs to be reevaluated for what it communicated to its ancient audience first *before* we begin deducing Twenty-First Century applications. And perhaps most important to consider, is that there are scores of intelligent and capable women in today's Messianic community—far more capable than many men—who are dismissed as potential leaders, teachers, and facilitators, precisely because of their gender. There are also many Messianic marriages I have directly encountered, where there is little love and respect, precisely because the husband has been encouraged to be an autocrat, and not approach his wife as an equal.

In my many ministry interactions with people over the years, the Messianic community is hardly one-hundred percent complementarian. There are many people who attend male-led and male-directed Messianic assemblies, who keep their opinions to themselves. More

frequently than not, those who are egalitarian leaning, are younger people. When such young men and young women ask legitimate questions from the Holy Scriptures, they often find themselves patronized, ignored, and silenced.

My simple, yet complicated goal in Messianic ministry, is to help facilitate stability across what I believe is *the* end-time move of God. I want to see each and every one of us, Jewish and non-Jewish, male and female, be encouraged to employ all of our gifts, talents, and skills in the Lord. I want an environment where men are encouraged to look at women with respect as their equals, and where women do not have to be in fear of being treated as second class or inferior any longer. And, if we truly are getting closer and closer to the Messiah's return, we are not going to be able to handle any of the difficulties of the Last Days too easily, if we are a faith community composed of strong men and weak women. We will only be able to achieve the Kingdom's objectives if we are a faith community composed of strong men *and* strong women.

It is my sincere hope that this resource, *Men and Women in the Body of Messiah*, raises the critical questions we need to be asking in a fair and reasonable way. I hope for you, that it leads to further investigations into one of the biggest theological issues and discussions facing the *ekklēsia* today.

J.K. McKee, Editor  
*Messianic Apologetics*

# Men and Women in the Body of Messiah

# Men and Women: Answering Evangelical Questions

Anyone who receives a broad-based theological education today, will quickly find that there are a number of issues upon which scholars, congregational leaders, and laypersons not only disagree about—but will starkly divide over. One of the biggest, divisive issues in contemporary evangelical Protestant theology, involves **women in ministry**. There are denominations which support females serving alongside of males as co-leaders of the assembly, ordained as pastors, and there are other denominations which strongly oppose females serving in such a capacity. When it comes to marital relationships, there are those who believe that a husband leads the family while the wife follows behind him, and there are others who support partnership marriages where husband and wife are co-leaders of the family.

More books, articles, analyses, refutations, counter-refutations, blogs, and op-ed pieces, have been composed on men and women in the Body of Messiah, than one frequently knows what to do with! Over the years, I have gathered and collected many pieces of information on debates over women in ministry, husbands and wives in marriage, and the differing and complex feelings of people involved—which have certainly overwhelmed me at times. As someone who likes to be well-informed and logically sort through the different perspectives involving a debate like how males and females should relate to one another in the community of God—I have had to definitely pace myself and choose my words carefully. Like many on both sides of the discussion, I have been affected by emotionalism, and cannot say that I have never been offended by some of the positions I have seen represented or opinions expressed. I have also wondered how in the world I should best present the relevant issues to those, who are not too familiar with the main components of the theological debate.

Evangelical Christian complementarianism (equal in value, separate in roles) is an ideology which on the whole, has been responsible for

## Men and Women in the Body of Messiah

seeing many capable females being restricted from not only high leadership positions in the Body of Messiah, but also placed into a distant, secondary role in the family. Evangelical Christian egalitarianism (equal in value, open in opportunities) has helped to see many capable females raised up as leaders and teachers, and has also greatly enhanced the effectiveness of many marriages, where husbands and wives share leadership responsibilities, and look out for each other as equal partners. Each position, for sure, thinks that its point of view is the one which is more Biblical and edifying. Certainly, there are many different interrelated topics and issues associated with males and females in the Body of Messiah, regarding sexual conduct, dating and courtship, as well as divorce and remarriage. However, the considerable bulk of discussions involving men and women concern leadership and teaching within the *ekklēsia*, and how husbands and wives are to relate to one another within the family. Has a complementarian ideology truly aided contemporary evangelicalism, or is an egalitarian ideology something especially worthy of consideration?

## Answering Evangelical Questions

One of the biggest issues that has changed much of evangelical Protestantism over the past four to five decades (1970s-present) has been the steady acceptance of ordained female clergy, namely as those designated to pastor local churches, within a variety of denominations. While questions will always abound as to the quality and temperament of such female pastors—the same as they should for male pastors—it is witnessed from a panoply of perspectives, how various theologians and evangelical leaders of note, have transitioned from a complementarian perspective to an egalitarian perspective. Having been either reared in a spiritual tradition where males exclusively led and taught the people of God, and/or having once theologically defended a complementarian perspective which limited the role of females both in the assembly and in the home, there are prominent, broadly conservative theologians, who were steadily led to consider an egalitarian, inclusive perspective from the Holy Scriptures. Some of this came from diligent study and review of God's Word, some of this came from seeing capable females dismissed when their talents should have been utilized, and some of this even came out of various marital experiences.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a review of some of this, consult Alan F. Johnson, ed., *How I Changed My Mind About Women in Leadership: Compelling Stories from Prominent Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).

## Men and Women: Answering Evangelical Questions

I recognize that for many who are complementarian, their immediate objection to using females in a greater capacity within the *ekklēsia*, is often based on bad experiences that many male leaders have had with females. The most frequent claim that tends to be issued against female leaders, though, is that it will mean that *liberals* will be appointed to leadership. But, the fact on the ground is that there are more liberal males serving as pastors, teachers, or professors of religion than anyone else in Protestantism. It is true that female pastors are going to be far more welcomed in liberal than conservative sectors, but it is hardly appropriate to stoke the fires of fearmongering, by suggesting that having women in positions of leadership and teaching in the local assembly will just open up the floodgates to an acceptance of homosexuality, LGBTQ, and that we might as well just tear the Bible to shreds.<sup>2</sup> The female Priscilla was used to help mentor the male Apollos (Acts 18:26), and as a First Century businesswoman was doubtlessly someone who embodied many of the characteristics complementarians like to laud from the Proverbs 31 woman.

Having had to wade through a great deal of data and “talk” over the debates involving women in ministry since the late 2000s, I have become innately familiar with how many egalitarians have overreacted, and have failed to be even-handed, in their interactions with complementarians. While egalitarians may rightly believe that they have been discriminated against by complementarians, I have not found your average evangelical complementarian man to be some kind of spiritual fascist. Many complementarian theologians and pastors believe in respecting and looking out for women. It is entirely unfair and unreasonable to stoke the fires of fearmongering, by automatically assuming that an acceptance of a complementarian ideology where males lead the assembly and husbands lead the home—with females in a secondary capacity—automatically means the widescale practice by husbands and fathers of wife beatings and daughter rapings.<sup>3</sup>

Males and females have anatomical differences in their reproductive anatomy, to be sure. But, do the differences between men and women relate to intellectual capacity? Are women more easily

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<sup>2</sup> It is true that there are those who have moved from complementarianism to egalitarianism, who then have later embraced acceptance of homosexual marriage. A significant example of this would be the late Rachel Held Evans, author of *A Year of Biblical Womanhood* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> It is true, however, that various persons who have held to a complementarian theology have been responsible for physical abuse of females. Consult Ruth A. Tucker, *Black and White Bible, Black and Blue Wife: My Story of Finding Hope after Domestic Abuse* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016).