

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

confronting issues series

MEN AND WOMEN IN THE BODY OF MESSIAH

Answering Crucial Questions

J.K. McKee



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 & 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 & New Testament)</i>
CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>	Jastrow: <i>Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Ba'ali, 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 be 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**.

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 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 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 for the past decade (2007-2017), 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, 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.

This publication, *Men and Women in the Body of Messiah: Answering Crucial Questions*, has been a long time coming for me. Up to this point, the bulk of my thoughts and conclusions on men and women have been constrained to passing remarks made in various articles, as well as detailed analyses in various commentary volumes in Messianic

Apologetics' for the Practical Messianic series (1 Corinthians, Ephesians, the Pastoral Epistles). Through a series of circumstances during this past year (2017), I got the distinct impression that now was the time to put onto paper many of my egalitarian ideas—especially given the overwhelming and unbalanced representation of complementarianism in the Messianic movement. I know in my many ministry interactions over the years, that 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 are often patronized, ignored, and silenced. A refusal to address the concerns of what is commonly labeled the “Millennial generation,” could very well lead to seeing many young people in today’s Messianic movement leave at a later time.

I want to see generational tensions significantly defused, but at the same time—as fairly as possible—present some points of view that you are not too likely to hear anytime soon, from that many leaders and teachers within the Messianic movement. 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.

*J.K. McKee, Editor
Messianic Apologetics*

Men and Women: Answering 50 Crucial 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 Christian denominations which support females serving alongside of males as co-leaders of the assembly, ordained as pastors, and there are other Christian denominations which strongly oppose females serving in such a capacity. When it comes to marital relationships, there are those who support marriages where husband and wife are co-leaders of the family, and there are others who believe that a husband leads the family while the wife follows.

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.

Evangelical Christian complementarianism is an ideology,¹ which on the whole, has been responsible for seeing many capable females being restricted from not only high leadership positions in the Body of Messiah, but also placed into a secondary role in the family. Evangelical Christian egalitarianism has helped to see many capable females raised up as leaders and teachers,² 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 their point of view is the one which is more Biblical. Certainly, there are many different interrelated topics and issues associated with males and females in the Body of Messiah, regarding sexual conduct, dating and courting, 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 the community of faith, or is an egalitarian ideology something especially worthy of consideration?

Why I Changed My Mind About Women

Within today's broad Messianic movement, there are generally two groups of people we encounter, who at one point in their lives made a significant change or alteration in their thinking. For Jewish Believers, they had to make a conscious decision that Yeshua of Nazareth was the prophesied Messiah of Israel, and that no matter what the potential repercussion might be from their Jewish family and peers of trusting in Him, that they had no choice but to receive Him into their lives. For many non-Jewish Believers in the Messianic movement, from evangelical Protestant backgrounds, they had to decide that God was not finished with Israel, that they needed to reconnect with their spiritual heritage in the Tanach or Old Testament, and that they needed to reevaluate many customary interpretations of the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament which were both anti-Torah and anti-Jewish. It is safe to say that a majority of people in today's Messianic community once believed things, that they have now changed their

¹ According to Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1238, **complementarian** is "The view that men and women are equal in value before God but that some governing and teaching roles in the church are reserved for men."

² According to *Ibid.*, 1240, **egalitarian** is "The view that all functions and roles in the church are open to men and women alike."

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mind about—especially when being presented some alternative points of view and perspectives, which they have had to review from Scripture and take before the Lord in prayer and contemplation.

One of the big issues that has changed much of evangelical Protestantism over the past three to four decades (1970s-present) has been the steady acceptance of ordained female clergy, namely as those designated to pastor local churches, with 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.³

Like everyone who has approached the issues of women in ministry or males and females in the home, I am affected by my experiences. Growing up in a professional, middle class, American family, I not only come from a long line of strong men and strong women—but most especially accomplished men and women. Going back to the late Nineteenth Century, all of my grandparents and great-grandparents attended college. My mother was raised being taught that she could do whatever she set her mind to, even though she was female. My parents, Kimball and Margaret McKee, had a marriage of not only continual communication, but shared responsibility, both as business owners and as co-leaders of the family, and they also served the Lord together in many of the activities and programs accessible via our local church in Northern Kentucky. At no time in my evangelical Protestant experience, was my mother ever held back or limited from doing something via our church, unless she did not want to do something.

³ 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).

Following my father's death in 1992, my mother's marriage to Mark Huey in 1994, and our new family's involvement in the Messianic movement in 1995—that my mother would no longer have the opportunities that our previous evangelical Protestant experience afforded her, has been a reality to the present day in 2017-2018. On the whole, today's Messianic movement does not have that many opportunities for women to serve beyond various helps ministries. And, today's Messianic movement is complementarian in terms of marital relationships, as it widely upholds an ideology of husbands being the leader of their families, with their wives in submission to following such leaders. In my Messianic experience of 1995-2004, being involved with various congregations and exposed to different leaders and their ministries, I certainly saw a faith community almost entirely led by males.

When Outreach Israel Ministries started in 2003, issues involving men and women in the Body of Messiah were not very high on our list of things to address. On the contrary, most of the things we were eager to write and speak about involved our family's transition from evangelical Protestantism into the Messianic movement, and our adoption of a Torah obedient lifestyle—especially in terms of observing things like the seventh-day Sabbath/*Shabbat*, appointed times or *moedim*, and a kosher-style of diet. We were asked far more questions about the Apostle Paul's teachings on the Law of Moses, than we were about his teachings on women in the assembly. Very early on in Messianic ministry, I honestly would not have foreseen ever really having to address issues involving men and women in the Body of Messiah.

As an aspiring teacher, things definitely shifted for me when I started attending Asbury Theological Seminary in January 2005. I did not attend seminary with the intention of permitting myself to be “indoctrinated” by the proverbial “establishment,” nor did I make it my purpose to force some of my distinct Messianic positions and viewpoints onto the faculty. *I attended seminary to acquire skills to interpret and analyze the Holy Scriptures.* While these skills certainly involved original language studies and becoming familiar with a wide array of exegetical tools, it also concerned becoming informed of discussions and debates **which were not present in most Messianic Bible studies, Torah studies, or congregational messages.**

From 2003-2005, I would be best described as holding to a minimalist complementarian model involving men and women in the Body of Messiah. I certainly believed that my mother and sisters could be used far more than they were, in the Messianic community. I

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certainly saw Mark and Margaret Huey function as effective equals in their marriage, although I would have conceded that the final say on a small handful of issues would probably be best left to the husband. In 2006, as I continued in my seminary studies—at what was an egalitarian institution, which openly supported ordination of females—I realized that in order to be fair, I would need to hear out their position, and that I should not just haphazardly disregard my instructors. *I was open to hearing other options.* In 2007, as a direct result of taking New Testament Introduction—and hearing a perspective of 1 Timothy 2 that I had never encountered before—I crossed the aisle from being a minimalist complementarian, to being egalitarian. In early 2008, I started acquiring a wide number of evangelical egalitarian books and resources, and from that time to the present, have been open and transparent about my views on men and women in the Body of Messiah.

I believe that males and females should serve as co-leaders and teachers of the assembly, and that husbands and wives should serve as co-leaders of the family in submission to each other.

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. While we are all influenced by our different experiences, so it is also important that we examine the different theological and spiritual factors at work within the hearts and minds of those within the faith community. For the most part, my transition from being a minimalist complementarian to an egalitarian in 2007 was due to theology and exegesis. My hesitation in waiting a full decade to address this formally, now in 2017-2018, was in realizing that I would have to counter a huge number of overly-inflated emotional arguments—and I would need to do this as rationally as possible.

The most frequent claim that I have heard over the years, against females serving as pastors, teachers, or leaders within the assembly, is that it means that *liberals* will be appointed to leadership. *The fact on the ground is that there are more liberal males serving as rabbis, pastors, or professors of religion than anyone else in Judaism or Protestantism.* It is true that female rabbis or 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 open up the floodgates to an acceptance of homosexuality and that we might as well

just tear the Bible to shreds.⁴ The female Priscilla was used to help mentor the male Apollos (Acts 18:26), and while 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, for the better part of the past decade, I have become innately familiar with how many egalitarians have over-reacted, 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 (and this can include egalitarian men, as well as women), organizations such as the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood are hardly a cabal of spiritual fascists. 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.⁵

My own personal decision of identifying and adhering to an egalitarian reading of Scripture, is principally guided by my wanting to see all men and women in the Body of Messiah, be all they can be in the Lord. I believe quite strongly in “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Ephesians 1:18), and that every man and woman, created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), has particular gifts, talents, and skills to contribute to the well being of all within the faith community. I want today’s Messianic movement, in particular, to be *beyond one-hundred percent effective*, as we approach the final stretch of history before Yeshua’s return.

⁴ 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 Rachel Held Evans, author of *A Year of Biblical Womanhood* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012).

⁵ 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).