
FAQ

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
www.messianicapologetics.net

Alef-Tav, Yeshua as the

J.K. McKee revised 12 August, 2019

In what way is Yeshua the Messiah the Alef and the Tav? Some interesting teachings circulate around the Messianic movement about the first and last Hebrew letters, and their association with Yeshua.

For a great number of Messianic people, Yeshua the Messiah being associated as the Alef and the Tav, is no different than how Christians see Jesus Christ as the Alpha and the Omega. The first and last Hebrew letters are *alef* (א) and *tav* (ת), just as the first and last Greek letters are *alpha* (Α) and *ōmēga* (Ω). In a publication like the Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible, we see the rendering “I am the Alef and the Tav” employed in Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13. Surprisingly, though, the Complete Jewish Bible (1998) by David H. Stern actually has “I am the ‘A’ and the ‘Z’” in these verses. The purpose of this is to serve as an appropriate counterpart to “I am the first and the last” (Revelation 1:17; cf. 2:8; 22:13). That the LORD God is the only first and the last is something affirmed in Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12. Yeshua as the Divine Savior, being God the Son, is something realized in that He too is to be considered the first and the last.

It is not uncommon in various Messianic circles to hear that there might be some kind of a connection between Yeshua being the Alef and the Tav, and what is witnessed in the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (NASU), in Hebrew reads as *b’reisheet bara Elohim et ha’shamayim v’et ha’ereetz* (בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ). A non-translatable particle word, *et* (אֶת), appears in the Hebrew text, relating to the action of creation. Many of today’s Messianics, who rightly hold to a high Christology of Yeshua the Messiah being God, see this small word composed of *alef* and *tav*, and conclude that this is an indication of Yeshua being present at the Creation of the universe.

Does the presence of the *et* (אֶת) in Genesis 1:1, indicate that Yeshua the Messiah is intended to be identified as the Alef and the Tav/the Alpha and Omega/the A and the Z in this verse? The identification of Yeshua as the *et* (אֶת) in Genesis 1:1 can be disputed. This is because *et* (אֶת) in Hebrew grammar serves as the marker of a definite direct object, and it is used all throughout the Hebrew Tanach—in places that often have absolutely no direct or indirect Messianic significance. *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* by C.L. Seow informs us what the purpose of the *et* (אֶת) actually is:

“Almost always in Hebrew prose, and less commonly in poetry, an untranslatable particle אֶת/אֵת, is used to mark the definite object of the verb. A noun is said to be definite when it is a proper name, a noun with a definite article, or a noun with a suffixed pronoun.”¹

The examples given to explain this are *sholeiach et-Moshe* (שְׁלַח אֶת-מֹשֶׁה), “sending Moses”; *sholeiach et-ha’eved* (שְׁלַח אֶת-הָעֶבֶד), “sending the servant”; *sholeiach et-avdi* (שְׁלַח אֶת-עַבְדִּי), “sending my servant.”² Passages or verses in the Tanach which tend to have Messianic significance, usually have things detectable via connections made by the actions or sayings of particular Tanach figures, and things witnessed in the ministry and service of Yeshua in the Gospels.

¹ C.L. Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*, revised edition (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 98.

² Ibid.

It is most admirable for Messianic Believers today wanting to make a connection between the presence of the *et* (אֶת) in Genesis 1:1, in an effort to affirm the pre-existence and Divinity of Yeshua. However, what has probably not been probed enough are definite claims in the Apostolic Scriptures of Yeshua's pre-existence, and His role in creating and sustaining the universe:

- “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being” (John 1:1-3, NASU).
- “[Y]et for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Yeshua the Messiah, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him” (1 Corinthians 8:6, NASU; cf. Deuteronomy 6:4).
- “[W]ho, existing in the form of God³, did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage” (Philippians 2:6, HCSB).
- “[F]or in him all things were created⁴, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things [exists before everything, TLV]⁵, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:16-17, RSV).
- “[I]n these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:2-3, NASU).

The following five verses quoted above—**because of their undeniable ambiguity of Yeshua the Messiah being present at Creation and upholding Creation**—should be far more important for us to consider, than the presence of a common particle word like *et* appearing in the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1.

³ Grk. *en morphē Theou huparchōn* (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων); *huparchōn* is a present active participle, properly rendered as “existing” (HCSB/TLV).

⁴ Grk. *hoti en autō ektisthē ta panta* (ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα).

⁵ Grk. *estin pro pantōn* (ἔστιν πρὸ πάντων).