

FAQ VOL II

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Frequently Asked Questions

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<p><i>Frequently Asked Questions, Volume II is a multi-year work in progress. Please note how the text may be corrected, updated, or amended, before final publication. Page numbers are also likely to be altered.</i></p>
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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: <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>	IVPBBC: <i>IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)</i>
AMG: <i>Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament</i>	Jastrow: <i>Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature</i> (Marcus Jastrow)
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)	JBK: <i>New Jerusalem Bible-Koren</i> (2000)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament	JETS: <i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
Ara: Aramaic	KJV: King James Version
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)	Lattimore: <i>The New Testament</i> by Richmond Lattimore (1996)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)	LITV: <i>Literal Translation of the Holy Bible</i> by Jay P. Green (1986)
b. Babylonian Talmud (<i>Talmud Bavli</i>)	LES: <i>Lexham English Septuagint</i> (2019)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.	LS: <i>An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Liddell-Scott)
BDAG: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)	LSJM: <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)
BDB: <i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>	LXE: <i>Septuagint with Apocrypha</i> by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.	LXX: Septuagint
CGEDNT: <i>Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words</i> (Barclay M. Newman)	m. Mishnah
CGL: <i>Cambridge Greek Lexicon</i> (2021)	MT: Masoretic Text
CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Holladay)	NASB: <i>New American Standard Bible</i> (1977)
CJB: <i>Complete Jewish Bible</i> (1998)	NASU: <i>New American Standard Update</i> (1995)
CJSB: <i>Complete Jewish Study Bible</i> (2016)	NBCR: <i>New Bible Commentary: Revised</i>
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition	NEB: <i>New English Bible</i> (1970)
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls	Nelson: <i>Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words</i>
EDB: <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i>	NETS: <i>New English Translation of the Septuagint</i> (2007)
EJ: <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>	NIB: <i>New Interpreter's Bible</i>
ESV: <i>English Standard Version</i> (2001)	NIDB: <i>New International Dictionary of the Bible</i>
Ger: German	NIV: <i>New International Version</i> (1984)
GNT: <i>Greek New Testament</i>	NJB: <i>New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic</i> (1985)
Grk: Greek	NJPS: <i>Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures</i> (1999)
HALOT: <i>Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Koehler and Baumgartner)	NKJV: <i>New King James Version</i> (1982)
HCSB: <i>Holman Christian Standard Bible</i> (2004)	NRSV: <i>New Revised Standard Version</i> (1989)
Heb: Hebrew	NLT: <i>New Living Translation</i> (1996)
HNV: <i>Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible</i>	NT: <i>New Testament</i>
IDB: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>	
IDBSup: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement</i>	
ISBE: <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>	

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)

Matthew 19:16-26, Eternal Life

Does Matthew 19:16-26 at all teach that someone keeping Torah commandments, could earn eternal life?

Leviticus 18:5, “So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, which, if a person follows them, then he will live by them; I am the LORD” (2020 NASB), is referenced several times in the Apostolic Writings (Luke 10:28; Galatians 3:12; Romans 10:5). If kept in its correct context, Leviticus 18:5 did not pertain to people keeping Torah commandments to earn eternal life. Instead, Leviticus 18:5 involved people keeping Torah commandments, that they might experience a high quality of life lived on Earth.¹ But what about the questions posed by the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:16-26, which notably lack any quotation from Leviticus 18:5? Did Yeshua possibly agree with the idea that people could keep Torah commandments, in order to earn eternal life?

“And someone came to Him and said, ‘Teacher, what good thing shall I do so that I may obtain eternal life?’ And He said to him, ‘Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is *only* One who is good; but if you want to enter life, keep the commandments.’ *Then* he said to Him, ‘Which ones?’ And Yeshua said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY [Exodus 20:13-16; Deuteronomy 5:17-20]; HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER [Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16]; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF [Leviticus 19:18].’ The young man said to Him, ‘All these I have kept; what am I still lacking?’ Yeshua said to him, ‘If you want to be complete, go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’ But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property. And Yeshua said to His disciples, ‘Truly I say to you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.’ When the disciples heard *this*, they were very astonished and said, ‘Then who can be saved?’ And looking at *them*, Yeshua said to them, ‘With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible’” (Matthew 19:16-26, 2020 NASB).

¹ For a specific review, consult the Messianic Apologetics FAQ, “Leviticus 18:5.”

What was the question posed by the rich young ruler? “Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” (Matthew 19:16, American Standard Version), *hina schō zōēn aiōnion*. Yeshua did respond with why He was being asked about this (Matthew 19:17a), as though the rich young ruler had never probed His identity. Yeshua did speak to the rich young ruler about entering into life, *eis tēn zōēn eiselthein* (Matthew 19:17b). Is it at all important to see how Yeshua did not respond to the rich young ruler with the adjective “eternal”? Textually from Matthew 19:17b, it is most incorrect to render this with, “if you want to obtain eternal life, observe the *mitzvot*” (CJSB; also NLT). Yeshua’s response is better taken as, “If you want to enter into the Life, observe the orders” (The Second Testament).

Yeshua then detailed a list of important ethical directions from the Torah (Matthew 19:18-19; cf. Exodus 20:13-16; Deuteronomy 5:17-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; Leviticus 19:18). The rich young ruler told Him how he had kept all of these (Matthew 19:20). So Yeshua proceeded to ask him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” (Matthew 19:21, RSV). The key term to note here is *teleios*, “**pert. to being fully developed in a moral sense,**” “of humans **perfect, fully developed**” (BDAG),² notably appearing in the Messiah’s word of Matthew 5:48: “Therefore you shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (2020 NASB).

Yeshua admonished the rich young ruler about what a status of being perfect or complete would involve (Matthew 19:21a). For him, it would have required selling all of his possessions, giving them to the poor, and following the Lord (Matthew 19:21b). He was seen to be unable to do this (Matthew 19:22). Yeshua then made an observation to His disciples how difficult it is for the rich to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 19:23). Was His reference to the Kingdom of Heaven one involving eternal life, or instead an experiential quality of life lived out on Earth? The impossibility of the rich entering into the life of the Kingdom of Heaven is highlighted, as though it were a camel passing through the eye of a needle (Matthew 19:24).³

There is no textual requirement from Matthew 21:17, that Yeshua spoke of commandment keeping leading to eternal life; the adjective “eternal” (*ainos*) is lacking from His statement. Yet it is entirely true, that when the high ethical instructions of God’s Torah are followed, there will be a high quality of life experienced on Earth, representative of the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven. Life experienced on Earth, within the sphere of God’s Kingdom, is something which affects one’s eternal condition (Matthew 21:25). And a life lived on Earth, where the values of the Kingdom of Heaven are emphasized, can indeed see impossible things made possible with the help of God (Matthew 21:26).

² Frederick William Danker, ed., et. al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Third Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 996.

³ Various Rabbinical references, seen in the Talmud, note the impossibility of an elephant passing through the eye of a needle (b.*Berachot* 55b; b.*Bava Metzia* 38a).