

Defending Yeshua in Modern Culture

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In contemporary culture, skepticism toward Yeshua the Messiah is rising. Doubts over the New Covenant's claims are rampant, particularly concerning the historical accuracy of the Gospels, the nature of Yeshua's miracles, and His resurrection. Critics often argue that Yeshua's existence is nothing more than a subjective conception of morality and truth, questioning the reliability of the historical records, while threatening to undermine the faith of millions, as it challenges the core doctrines that have been believed for centuries.

However, despite these modern critiques, a strong body of historical documentation, scriptural prophecy, and philosophical reasoning affirms Yeshua's existence. This evidence demonstrates that belief in Yeshua remains credible and that these attacks on fundamental biblical truths fall apart under historical, textual, and logical examination.

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However, if the historical Yeshua did not exist, or if His identity as the Messiah were false, it would undermine the credibility of both the New Covenant and the message of the Good News. For this reason, this article explores three crucial dimensions validating Yeshua's existence: historical records, scriptural prophecies, and philosophical reasoning.

Numerous non-Christian sources corroborate Yeshua's existence and ministry. Two key accounts come from

Roman historian Tacitus and Jewish historian Josephus. Tacitus, in *The Annals*, writes that "Christus [Yeshua the Messiah], from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of Pontius Pilatus." Tacitus further details Yeshua's sacrificial death and the spread of the Good News, despite persecution, providing external validation of Yeshua's execution and influence outside of Judea.

Continuing, Josephus, in his work *Antiquities of the Jews*, mentions Yeshua in two separate references. In one passage, he refers to Jesus as the "so-called Christ," acknowledging Yeshua's existence without affirming His divinity. The second, more controversial passage, the *Testimonium Flavianum*, speaks more highly of Yeshua, suggesting He was a wise man and in fact the Jewish Messiah. While parts of this text may have been altered by later Christian scribes, Josephus remains a significant historical witness to Yeshua's life. These non-Christian records not only corroborate New Covenant accounts but also establish a firm historical basis for Yeshua's existence.

Yeshua's life and mission are the fulfillment of numerous prophecies in the Tanakh. Isaiah 53 speaks of a suffering servant who bears the sins of the people—a clear foreshadowing of Yeshua's death. Psalm 110:1 likewise highlights His divine nature stating, "The Lord says to my Lord," a passage pointing to Yeshua as both David's descendant and his Lord.

Additionally, Micah 5:2 foretells the Messiah's birth in Bethlehem, a prophecy fulfilled at Yeshua's birth.

The New Covenant is built on the foundation of the Old Covenant, and its writings have been proven as trustworthy, historical documents. It is also important to note that New Covenant authorship is reliable, and their testimony is confirmed by historical and archaeological studies. It is equally important for Messianic-believers to remember the New Covenant manuscripts had no motive to lie, that they suffered for their accounts, and they wrote while eyewitnesses were still alive.

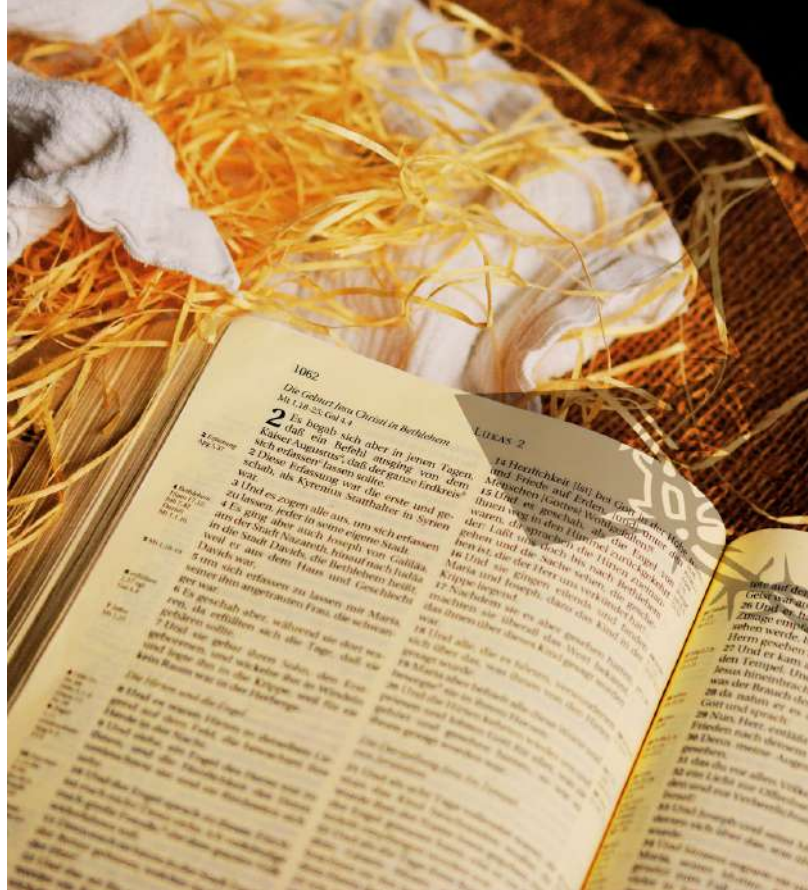
When we proclaim the Good News of Yeshua, it is important for us to remember the philosophical evidence of Yeshua's messiahship. Such epistemology derives from the idea of *sensus divinitatis* (sense of divinity), where believers affirm that belief in Yeshua is a natural and rational part of our own human experience. Calvin argued that all people have an innate sense of the divine, or in knowing that God exists (cf. Rom. 1:20-21). This is even further appreciated as we consider that Yeshua is consistent with this natural capacity, thus addressing modern cultural subjectivity while emphasizing that belief in Yeshua does not need external evidence to be rational or true!

Moreover, the concept of objective truth supports Yeshua's claims, and specifically, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life"* (John 14:6). This assertion by Yeshua is a statement of universal truth, refuting the idea of subjective or relative truth. The law of non-contradiction supports this by revealing that Yeshua's identity cannot be both true and false at the same time. Thus, Yeshua's claims must be judged by logical consistency and not personal preference, or opinion. In the end, Yeshua is who He claims to be!

For us as believers in Yeshua, it is both disturbing and clear how skepticism has blinded the eyes of many. As such, many claim that Yeshua's life and miracles were fabricated, and were even modeled after pagan myth. However, the New Covenant manuscripts, written within a generation of Yeshua's ministry, disprove this false theory. Early documentation, such as the John Rylands Papyrus, dated around 117-138 C.E.,



shows that Yeshua's life and teachings were widely circulated while eyewitnesses were still alive. Unlike mythical stories, the accounts of the New Covenant Scriptures are grounded in verifiable history and are confirmed by many external sources. Additionally, Yeshua's identity as God (John 1:1) cannot be easily dismissed. Critics face three possibilities: Yeshua was truly Adonai in the flesh, Yeshua was a liar, or He was a lunatic. Given Yeshua's profound moral teachings and the consensus that He was a wise and good man, the latter two options are implausible, leaving only the conclusion that Yeshua is indeed Lord. This should give every Messianic-believer even greater confidence as they share their faith with those who are doubting.



So, how can we as followers of Yeshua apply these teachings within our daily lives? First, we must remember that Messianic Judaism is a movement of Yeshua-believing Jews (and likeminded Gentile believers) who follow Torah, keep God's commandments, and worship the God of Israel. Our faith in Yeshua begins with Israel and the arrival of the Messiah, and this maintains continuity with biblical Judaism. As Dr. Rabbi Michael Schiffman points out, "Judaism is not a false religion; it is incomplete because it does not understand Yeshua as the Messiah."

There are several ways to apply these teachings in a Messianic Jewish context:

- **Strengthen Community Faith:** Regularly engage in discussions about Yeshua's fulfillment of the Tanakh with fellow believers.

- This can encourage deeper understanding and firm up the foundation of faith in both Jewish and Gentile followers of Yeshua.
- **Educate Others:** Many people in the broader Jewish community may have never encountered a detailed defense of Yeshua's existence. Through relationships, we can respectfully present historical and scriptural evidence that demonstrates Yeshua as the promised Messiah.
- **Personal Devotion:** In personal prayer and study, reflect on Yeshua's identity as both the suffering servant and reigning King. Reading passages like Isaiah 53 and Psalm 110 during daily devotions helps believers see the continuity between the Tanakh and the New Covenant.

- Live Out the Truth: In daily interactions, live out the truth of Yeshua's teachings by showing love, grace, and truth to others. Defending Yeshua's identity is not just an intellectual pursuit but a way of life that reflects His nature to the world. Messianic-believers have, since the first century, demonstrated continuity within Judaism.

Thus, Messianic Judaism stands as a valid expression of Judaism, affirming that Yeshua-believing Jews have always belonged within the Jewish community. It is important for us to remember that defending our faith and the identity of Yeshua is a calling for every believer, and not just for scholars or leaders. Every follower of Yeshua is called to know the truth of the Good News and to be prepared to explain, defend, and live out this truth in a world that increasingly challenges the core tenets of our faith.

Through such passages, we see that apologetics is deeply embedded in the life of every disciple of Yeshua, reflecting both our love for Him and our desire to share the truth with others. By integrating these teachings into daily life, Messianic-believers affirm the truth of Yeshua's identity and continue to uphold the message of His salvation, fulfilling our call to be a light to the nations. 



The background of the image is a close-up photograph of pink Grevillea flowers with long, thin, needle-like leaves. A large, semi-transparent dark grey circle is centered over the image, serving as a backdrop for the text.

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