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MINISTRIES

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Where Does the TANAKH Say We Must Believe in the Messiah?

Since believing in the Messiah is the foundation of Messianic and Christian faith, we should expect to find a basis for this doctrine in the *TANAKH*—that is, the Old Testament. But you’ll often hear the counter-missionaries claim that the *TANAKH* never tells us to believe in the Messiah.

The first step is to define what “*believing*” even means. So, before continuing this teaching, we would recommend watching our teaching titled “[Believing](#)”. Moving on.

According to the anti-missionaries, the New Testament’s emphasis on having faith in the Messiah is invalid and not in line with the *TANAKH*, and perhaps even contradictory.

“After all,” they will say, “the Messiah will arrive when He arrives. All the Messianic prophecies—including world peace—will be established at that point, so there’s really no need to wonder about the Messiah right now!” But is this perspective biblical?

First, as we’ve discussed in our teaching, “[Why Yeshua is the Messiah](#),” everything in the *TANAKH* seems to be culminating to the revelation of the Messiah. This is hinted at in the very beginning of the Bible, in Genesis 3:15, when a prophecy is given about a future son of Eve who will crush the head of the serpent, essentially conquering the very source of evil and death. Many rabbis along with Messianics and Christians see this as a Messianic prophecy. So, from the very beginning there is an anticipation for this Messianic figure to arrive on the scene.

Not only that, but the prophets certainly anticipate the revelation of the Messiah. Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, all prophesy of this anointed Son of David who will one day come, establish an eternal Kingdom, and usher in world peace. It’s simply undeniable that this is a major theme in the *TANAKH*. Again, for more information on this, watch our message, “[Why Yeshua is the Messiah](#).”

So it’s no wonder what we see when we get to the *Brit Chadashah*—the New Testament. When the original followers of Yeshua come to understand that he is the Messiah, there’s an excitement and urgency to reach everyone with the good news. How else could they have acted? The anointed Son of David of whom their Scriptures spoke had finally arrived! To treat such an occasion with indifference

would be utterly unreasonable. So, of course, the *Brit Chadashah* emphasizes believing in the Messiah, because it's the climax of what everyone has been waiting for in the *TANAKH*.

"That's all well and good," you might say, "But where in the *TANAKH* are we explicitly instructed to believe in the Messiah?"

If the entire logical flow of the *TANAKH* as it concerns the Messiah still isn't enough to convince someone of the importance to believe in the Messiah, there's another way we can approach this question.

First, the Torah instructs us to listen to the prophet who speaks in God's name:

Deuteronomy 18:15

"The Lord (YHWH) your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers. You must listen to him."

God promises that he will raise up a prophet like Moses from among Israel. In Judaism this is traditionally believed to refer to a succession of prophets, which started with Joshua. So, the command is that we are to listen to the prophets of the Lord. In fact, over and over again, we are told to heed the warnings of the prophets. Consider 2 Chronicles 20:20 in which King Jehoshaphat made such an exhortation:

2 Chronicles 20:20

"And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be established; **believe his prophets**, and you will succeed."

Indeed, not listening to the prophets was what led the people of Judah into exile:

2 Chronicles 36:15-17

"The Lord (YHWH), the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. But **they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets**, until the wrath of the Lord rose against his people, until there was no remedy. **Therefore** he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or aged. He gave them all into his hand."

So, as we can see, the Scriptures are quite clear about the importance of listening to the prophets of God. Not doing so has devastating consequences.

Having said that, the prophets spoke a lot about the Messiah, and they emphasized believing in Him. In Isaiah 52:13, the prophet speaks of a servant who will be lifted up and exalted, referring to the Messiah. (See our teaching, "[Affliction of the Messiah](#)," for more information on this passage.) Right after Isaiah makes reference to this coming Messianic figure, in the next verse he asks a question:

Isaiah 53:1

"**Who has believed** what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord (YHWH) been revealed?"

Isaiah is speaking rhetorically. So right here we have an explicit exhortation to the people of Israel to believe Isaiah's message about the Messiah who is revealed as a suffering servant. This same question can be asked today. Do you believe Isaiah's message or not? Do you heed Jehoshaphat's exhortation to "believe his prophets"?

But getting back to Deuteronomy 18:15, while it's true that God raised up many prophets and we are to listen to those prophets, we can look at this passage another way. The command in Deuteronomy 18:15 could refer to a specific prophet that God would raise up in the future.

The passage says that God will raise up a prophet "like Moses" from among the people of Israel. But later in the Torah we read that even after Moses laid hands on Joshua, a prophet like Moses had not yet arisen:

Deuteronomy 34:9-10

"And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses. **And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."**

So it could be argued that Deuteronomy 18:15 is talking about a unique prophet like Moses who would come in the future. With that in mind, it's worth noting that the apostles in the New Testament identified this prophet as Yeshua.

Acts 3:19-22

"Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you.'"

So if Deuteronomy 18:15 is speaking of a unique prophet like Moses who would come in the future, we have an explicit command to believe in the Messiah and follow Him because He is that prophet. Like Moses was a redeemer of Israel, Yeshua is the ultimate redeemer of Israel as the Messiah.

But if the passage is speaking of a succession of prophets, we still have an explicit command to believe in the Messiah. Why? Because Yeshua Himself was a prophet of the Lord. So, in either case, the Torah explicitly commands us to believe in the Messiah.

But wait! Not only do we have a biblical basis affirming the need to believe in the Messiah, but traditional Judaism likewise upholds this important doctrine. In his book, *The Wolf Shall Lie with the Lamb: The Messiah in Hasidic Thought*, respected Rabbi, Shmuley Boteach, says:

"The belief in the coming of the Messiah is more central to Judaism than even the observance of the Sabbath or Yom Kippur."

It really shouldn't surprise us that modern rabbis hold to this view. This doctrine has been central to Judaism for a long time. In fact, renowned Jewish teacher, Maimonides, or Rambam, lists the belief in the arrival of the Messiah as one of his 13 Principles of Faith, which are the minimum requirements of Jewish faith.

So not only is the idea that we don't have to believe in the Messiah contrary to Scripture, but it's contrary to established Jewish *Halakha* as well.

In conclusion, the *TANAKH*, the *Brit Hadasha*, and even Judaism all affirm the doctrine that we must believe in the Messiah. So there's no way out of it. We can't be indifferent. It's imperative to discover whether this person Yeshua is in fact the Messiah of Israel. And if he is, you must believe in him and dedicate your life to what he taught and practiced. What did he believe and practice? Yeshua taught to obey the Father and obey the Torah, offering a perfect interpretation and example of what that means.

We encourage you again to watch our teaching, "[Why Yeshua is the Messiah](#)." Another relevant teaching is titled the "[Return of Korah](#)." Consider watching the other teachings we offer in our Brit Hadasha series. We believe that the biblical and historical evidence is clear. Consider joining the countless Jews and Gentiles who have obeyed this biblical mandate to believe in the Messiah who has been revealed as Yeshua.

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching.

Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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