

# The Messiah's Name

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## Introduction

Jesus, Yehoshua, Yahshua, Yahushua, Yahoshua, Iahushuah, Yahusha, Yahuahshua...the list could go on and on. Yes, each and every one of these names are used by various groups as the Messiah's name. But which of them are correct? Can we really know? I believe that when it comes to the truth of the Messiah's name we can most definitely know the truth. Evidence will be provided below that will leave no doubt as to what the Messiah's true name is.

## Jesus

Jesus is by far the most widely used name for the Messiah of the New Testament. But there are several very simple and easy to find facts that exist that remove this name as a possibility for the true name of Messiah.

### *- The Letter "J" -*

The first and most glaringly obvious issue with the name "Jesus" for any people semi-familiar with the Hebrew or Greek text of the scriptures is that the letter "J" didn't exist in Messiah's day. A perfect example of this can be found in the original 1611 King James Bible.

[Matthew 1:1 \(KJV-1611\)](#) – "The booke of the generation of Iesus Christ, the sonne of Dauid, the sonne of Abraham."

Notice that the name typically translated as "Jesus" in modern English translations is here spelled with the Latin "I" at the beginning. But the more important question here is, "What did the 'I' sound like?" [Noah Webster](#)<sup>1</sup>, who is also known as the "Father of American Scholarship and Education," wrote the following about the letter "J".

"**J**[jā]. J is the tenth letter of the English alphabet. It is a later variant form of the Roman letter I, used to express a consonantal sound, that is, originally, the sound of

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<sup>1</sup> "Noah Webster." Wikimedia Foundation. 22 Sept. 2012 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah\\_Webster](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah_Webster)>.

English *y* in *yet*. The forms J and I have, until a recent time, been classed together, and they have been used interchangeably.”<sup>2</sup>

Originally the Roman (i.e. Latin) letter “i” represented a “y” sound, not the harder consonantal “j” or “g” (as in “gem”) sound that we are familiar with today. Given that the scriptures were penned hundreds of years before the English language even existed, it goes without saying that this fact alone disproves “Jesus” as a valid pronunciation of Messiah’s name.

## “Yah” Names

Due to the large number of variations that exist for names beginning with “Yah” I will just be addressing them in one main section.

- *“In the Name of”* -

It is extremely important to note that “Sacred Name” groups primarily base their use of “Yah”-names on one, and only one passage. It reads as follows.

John 5:43 (LITV) – “I have come in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me. If another comes in *his* own name, you will receive that one.”

Is this verse alone enough to prove that Messiah’s name must contain all or a portion of the Father’s name, יהוה (commonly pronounced “Yahweh,” “Yahuwah,” or “Yehowah,” with the shortened form Yah, יה)? The following verses prove that there is so much more meaning behind coming in someone’s name than having some letters in common.

Exodus 23:21 – “Be on guard from before him and listen to his voice. Do not rebel against him for he will not take away your transgression for My name is in the midst of him.”

Does this angel literally have יהוה’s name “in the midst” of him? Is not יהוה the only one that has the authority to forgive sins?<sup>3</sup> The fact is that this angel coming with יהוה’s name in him meant that he was coming with all the authority of יהוה.

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<sup>2</sup> Webster, Noah. “Entry for J.” International Dictionary of the English Language. Revised by Porter, Noah D.D., L.L.D. Massachusetts, US: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1907.

<sup>3</sup> Even Yeshua proclaimed that his authority to judge, which comes hand in hand with punishment or forgiveness, was given to him by the Father (John 5:22). He could do nothing of himself (John 5:19).

Numbers 6:27 – “And they will put my name upon the sons of Yisrael and I will bless them.”

This verse immediately follows the Aaronic blessing found in Numbers 6:24-26. One of the purposes of this blessing, beyond the obvious blessing of the people, is to put יהוה's name on them. Surely we aren't to interpret this as meaning that every child of Israel had a part of יהוה's name in their own name from that point forward. To put His name upon them meant that they were a people called by His name, unique, special, and called out. All the blessings and power that came along with the name of יהוה was to be a part of the children of Israel.

2 Samuel 7:13 – “He will build a house for My name and I will set up the throne of his kingdom unto eternity.”

Was Solomon to build a house for the appellation of יהוה to dwell in? How can a name, an inanimate thing in and of itself actually dwell in a house? This is actually referring to Solomon building a house to exhibit the power, strength, and reputation of יהוה, which comes along with His name.

1 Kings 18:32 – “And with the stones he built an altar in the name of יהוה and he made a channel as large as two measures of seed roundabout the altar.”

Did Elijah actually take the time to chisel the name of יהוה into the stones of this altar? If we follow the same line of thought, that Yeshua coming “in the name” of his Father means he has all or part of his Father's name in his name, it means that Elijah must have physically placed all or part of יהוה's name on this altar. But, this is not what happened. Realistically Elijah built the altar to יהוה, to proclaim that He was who it was dedicated to and He was who was in control of it.

Isaiah 48:9 – “For My name's sake I will defer My anger and my praise I will restrain for you so as not to cut you off.”

Is it really the name that is in question here? Or is it what comes along with the name? It is the reputation of יהוה, His treatment of His people and His grace that He is concerned about here. It is what people think about יהוה Himself through the hearing of His name, not simply the name itself.

Acts 8:16 (LITV) – “For He had not yet fallen on any one of them, but they were only being baptized in the name of the Master Yeshua.”

Yeshua says he came “in the name of” His Father and people take that to mean that all or part of the Father's name, יהוה, must be in Yeshua's name as well. Does that mean if people are baptized “in the name of” Yeshua that all or part of Yeshua's name must become part of the

name of the one who was baptized? Of course not! To be baptized in Yeshua's name means you are accepting his sacrifice, his mastership, and his messiahship over you; all of the authority and power that Yeshua had to forgive you for your sins and reconcile you with the Father is called upon in your baptism.

That is what Yeshua's "in the name of My Father" phrase really means. He is not saying that his name must contain all or some of the Hebrew letters of the Father's name. He is saying that he came in all the authority, power, reputation, and glory of his Father. There is more to a "name" in the scriptures than just an appellation. Yeshua doesn't have to have any letters in his name in common with his Father's name in order to have come "in the name of" his Father.

- *Yahshua* -

The form "Yahshua" is by far one of the most, if not the most widely used Yah-names used for the Messiah. Those who use it pronounce it as "Yah-shoo-ah" with the emphasis on the first syllable, "Yah." There significant issues with this form of the name which relate to Hebrew Grammar specifically. We need to see what this name looks like in Hebrew to properly understand the grammatical issues with it. Those who use the "Yahshua" pronunciation use the same Hebrew consonants found for Joshua the son of Nun.

יהושע

In the Masoretic Text Joshua's name is spelled as follows (with vowel points).

יְהוֹשֻׁעַ

This spelling would be pronounced Yehoshua (Ye-ho-shoo-ah). Yehoshua is a valid transliteration of that name because all of the letters in the name are pronounced. The problem with using "Yahshua" as a pronunciation of the Hebrew letters יהושע is that the neither of the letters *he* (ה) nor *waw* (ו), both underlined above, are pronounced. This is a critical infraction of Hebrew grammatical rules. The following image is an excerpt from Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar.

4. The ה is stronger and firmer than the א, and never loses its consonantal sound (i.e. quiesces) in the middle of a word<sup>1</sup> except in the cases noted below, in which it is completely elided by syncope. On the other hand, at the end of a word it is always a mere vowel letter, unless expressly marked by *Mappiq* as a strong consonant (§ 14 a). Yet at times the consonantal sound of ה at the end of a word is lost, and its place is taken by a simple ה or more correctly ה̄, with *Rāphè* as an indication of its non-consonantal character, e.g. לָהּ to her for לָהֶּ, Zc 5<sup>11</sup>, &c. (cf. § 103 g, and §§ 58 g, 91 e); cf. also יָהּ for יֵהּ (from יֵהֶּ) in proper names like יֵרֵמְיָהּ, &c.—Finally, in very many cases a complete elision of the consonantal ה takes place by *syncope*: (a) when its vowel is thrown back to the place of a preceding *Šewā nobile* (see above, c, with א), e.g. לְבָקֶר for לֵהֶבְקֶר (the ה of the article being syncopeated as it almost always is); כְּיִום for כְּהֵיִום [but see § 35 n], בְּשָׂמַיִם for בְּהֵשָׂמַיִם; יֵהוֹנָתָן for יֵהוֹנָתָן; perhaps also בְּנֵיהֶם for בְּנֵיהֶם Ez 27<sup>32</sup>. (b) By contraction of the vowels preceding and following the ה, e.g. סִיחוּ (also written סִיחָה) from *sūsahu* (a + u = ô).—A violent suppression of ה together with its vowel occurs in בָּם (from בָּהֶם), &c.

<sup>1</sup> Only apparent exceptions are such *proper names* as עֲשָׂהֶאֱלֵךְ, פְּרָהֶצוּר, which are compounded of two words and hence are sometimes even divided. Cf. forms like חוֹאֵל for חוֹהֵאֵל. Another exception is יֵפֶה־פִּיָּהּ, the reading of many MSS. for the artificially divided form יֵפֶה־פִּיָּהּ in the printed texts, Je 46<sup>20</sup>.

In short, the letter *he* cannot be silent when it is found in the middle of a word. The first underlined section is most important. The *he* in the middle of a word never loses its consonantal value. The only exceptions to this are listed in the footnote, but Gesenius states that these two exceptions are only “apparent” exceptions.

The “elision by syncope” that he speaks of refers to the second underlined section where he shows the names “Yehonatan” and “Yonatan.” In this case the *he* is elided (removed completely), but the *waw* remains with its full vocalic value. How does this apply to the form “Yahshua?” If “Yahshua” were to be spelled in Hebrew it would look like this:

יְהוֹשֻׁעַ

This is problematic for a couple reasons. Firstly, the *he* is totally silent. Secondly, the *waw* is totally silent. This pronunciation could be spelled much simpler as:

## ישוע

But, as you can see, this doesn't resemble Messiah's or the son of Nun's name at all. Thirdly, the propretonic syllable prefers reduced vowels (i.e. simple or compound Shewas).<sup>4</sup> This can actually be seen in the two "exceptions" Gesenius gives in the footnote. Both of the proper name exceptions have reduced vowels as their first vowel due to where the tone would be placed in the name (on the third syllable).

Long story short, "Yahshua" is a grammatically impossible option for the pronunciation of the Messiah's name. Not only is this pronunciation grammatically impossible but there is no ancient evidence in existence that would suggest that this pronunciation was ever recognized and used.

### - Lack of Evidence -

Aside from the fact that the phrase "in the name of My Father" is grossly misinterpreted there is a significant lack of evidence to prove that Yeshua's name contained either the full or shortened form of the name of יהוה. In fact, we have no evidence to suggest that. All of the textual evidence we have suggests that his name did not contain the long or short form of יהוה's name. Here are the examples we have in the extant manuscripts.

- Aramaic (as found in the Peshitta, circa 5<sup>th</sup> century CE) – (w4y<sup>5</sup>). This form would be transliterated as "Yeshua." There are only four letters here so any long form of the name is impossible.
- Hebrew (as found in Shem Tov's Hebrew Matthew, circa 14<sup>th</sup> century CE likely copied from a much earlier version) – ישוע. This form would also be pronounced "Yeshua." As can be clearly seen this Hebrew name only has four letters as well. Neither the long nor short forms of יהוה's name can possibly be pronounced using this form.
- Latin (as found in the Vulgate, circa late 4<sup>th</sup> century, translated directly from the Hebrew and Greek texts by Jerome) – **Jesus**. This is the form of Messiah's name as found all throughout the Latin New Testament. It is pronounced "ee-ay-soos." It should be noted that the son of Nun's name as written in [Joshua 1:1](#) is **Iosue**. What is significant about this fact is that Jerome could have used a name for Messiah that was more reflective of the full Hebrew form "Yehoshua" but he didn't. If indeed Messiah's name contained

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<sup>4</sup> Pratico, Gary D. & Van Pelt, Miles V. [Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001. See Sections 3.4 and 3.14 for full information on propretonic reduction and vowel preference for syllables.

<sup>5</sup> For the forms of the letters in Estrangela Syriac see: McClean, Arthur John. "§1: The Letters." [Grammar of the Dialects of Vernacular Syriac](#). Cambridge: At the University Press, 1895.

either the long or short form of the name of יהוה Jerome could have transliterated it much differently into Latin.

- Greek (as found in the Septuagint [LXX], circa 4<sup>th</sup> century CE) – Ἰησοῦς. This form of the name is found throughout the Greek New Testament manuscripts that we have and is pronounced exactly as the Latin version above is. It is important to note that the son of Nun's name is spelled exactly the same in Hebrews 4:8. Whether this form of the son of Nun's name was intended to represent the long Hebrew form as found in Joshua 1:1 or the shortened form as found in Nehemiah 8:17 cannot be determined with 100% certainty since both are translated as Ἰησοῦς in the LXX.

There we have all the witnesses from the various manuscripts of the New Testament in different early languages. None of them provide any evidence that the long form of the name יהושע was used for Messiah. All textual evidence we currently have available to us tells us that Messiah's name did not contain either the long or short forms of the Father's name, יהוה or יה, respectively.

Believe it or not the most telling and compelling textual evidence we have is that which comes from the Latin Vulgate above. Jerome translated the Vulgate directly from a Hebrew text extant in his day. These Hebrew manuscripts would have been more ancient than any full Old Testament manuscripts we have available to us today, specifically the Aleppo and Leningrad Codices. Since Jerome was able to transliterate the full form of the son of Nun's name as Iosue for the Hebrew Yehoshua, we know he could have done the same for Messiah's name if indeed his name was the same as the son of Nun's.

### - *Motives* -

It is beyond dispute that the Jews from the last few centuries BCE through today have refrained (wrongfully) from pronouncing the name of the Father.<sup>6</sup> This was done out of fear of blasphemy. But did the followers of Messiah have the same fears regarding Messiah's name? In other words, if the early followers of Yeshua didn't maintain the unfounded superstitions of the Jews, what motives would they have to hide the name in their various gospels and letters?

For those who believe that the gospels contain the inspired words of יהוה and the truth about the life and person of Yeshua, as I do, they must also maintain that the authors of those gospels told the truth about Messiah's name. They would have no motives to hide his name for fear of blasphemy since their own master declared the Father's name to them.<sup>7</sup> Because of this fact

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<sup>6</sup> See various versions of the LXX where "יהוה" was regularly replaced with the Greek "Κύριος". See also: Tractate Sanhedrin. "Mishnah, Chapter X." Babylonian Talmud. 29 Sep. 2012. <<http://halakhah.com/pdf/nezikin/Sanhedrin.pdf>>

<sup>7</sup> John 17:6, 26.

we should take the testimonies in the manuscripts we have available to us as accurate representations of his name.

## **Conclusion**

Speculation abounds in the “Sacred Name” assemblies as to what the true name of the Messiah really is. But those who are diligent students of the scriptures must stick to the evidence that we currently have available to us. We have absolutely no evidence available at this time that can prove that the Messiah’s name was originally “Jesus” or any “Yah” name. Allusions can be drawn from the prophecies concerning him in the prophecies of Zechariah, where Joshua the son of Jehozadak is a type of Messiah. Joshua’s name in the Hebrew is Yehoshua, which contains the shortened form of יהוה’s name. But even this allusion is invalid given the fact that this same Biblical character is called Yeshua in [Ezra 3:2](#).

Based on the evidence that we currently have available to us the name of the Messiah should rightly be spelled יֵשׁוּעַ *Yeshua* and pronounced “Yay-shoo-ah” with the emphasis on the “shoo” syllable.

As a final comment I believe it is important to note that I am not overly dogmatic or Pharisaical about the Messiah’s name even though I strongly believe it is Yeshua. I believe that salvation comes to those who call on the Messiah prophesied in the Hebrew scriptures and confirmed in the words of יהוה contained in the New Testament. Yes, this means that I do believe that believers in an followers of Yeshua who, in their ignorance, currently call him “Jesus,” can still receive eternal salvation. I do not believe that the scriptural evidence, when weighed justly in the balances, proves that one’s specific pronunciation of Messiah’s name affects their salvation. The important aspect is who they are calling upon for their salvation. If an exact pronunciation was what יהוה is concerned about, then those who speak with any linguistic accents, whether based on global location or otherwise, better pray that their pronunciation is the correct one.

It is best that we all strive to know the truth about Yeshua’s name using the evidence provided to us. But, at the same time, it is important that we be merciful and patient with those who do not yet know the true name. We must understand and profess that salvation came from Yahweh in the person and sacrifice of Yeshua, not strictly the pronunciation of his name.

HalleluYah!