

WHAT'S IN A NAME ???

A STUDY ON THE NAME OF MESSIAH



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INTRODUCTION.

It might seem odd that someone would do a study on the name of the Messiah. After all, the name "Jesus" has been universally accepted by mainstream Christianity and almost every Bible, movie, and piece of Christian literature in the English language uses that name. It is spoken over Christian radio and television thousands of times per day and many millions of people have come to a saving knowledge of their Messiah in that name. Within the last several years, however, the use of the name "Jesus" has come under increased scrutiny due to a growing numbers of Christian groups which teach that the name "Jesus" is not the true name of the Messiah. Some of these groups do not stop there, but go on to teach that the name is pagan and an abomination to the Creator and to His Only Begotten Son. They insist that the Savior's name was originally Hebrew, and that only that original name should be used.

In response to the assertions of these groups, many mainstream Christian expositors teach that "Jesus" is simply the English translation of the Greek name "Ἰησοῦς" (Iesous), which is found in the early Greek New Testament manuscripts. And some teachers have even gone so far as to state that it does not really matter what one calls the Messiah as long as the Messiah is in one's heart. But just what is reality? Are literal names in fact important or does it not really matter? What do the Scriptures have to say about this issue?

This study will examine the issue from a non-denominational point of view. It will first determine whether the actual name of Messiah is in fact important for New Testament believers. It will then explore the historical roots of the name "Jesus" and its linguistic development. Finally, it will discuss the significance of Messiah's name and how it figures into the plan of salvation. The study proceeds upon the premise that the Bible is the inspired word of the Almighty and does not contradict itself. All Scripture verses will be quoted from the King James Version (KJV) unless otherwise specified. The English word "God" will be rendered throughout the study as "Elohim" from the original Hebrew. The author strongly recommends that the reader pause at this time to ask the Almighty Creator for wisdom, understanding, and discernment. May His truth, and not the author's opinion, be found by every reader.

AND IN HIS NAME SHALL THE GENTILES TRUST. (Matthew 12:21)

The question of whether Messiah's name is important evokes different responses from different people, even among mainstream Christians. Some say that the actual name is not important and that it is only necessary to have Him in one's heart. Many, on the other hand, are quite vocal about the importance of Messiah's name. "Unless you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord, you cannot be saved and risk everlasting damnation," as the saying goes. And then, there are a variety of opinions in the middle. But what do the Scriptures say about this issue?

The writers of Scripture seem to indicate that the name of Messiah is indeed important for several different reasons. First of all, His name is important when fellowshiping with other believers. In this context, Messiah made the promise that

where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.
(Matthew 18:20)

Consequently, many Christian groups acknowledge that promise whenever they come together for prayer or fellowship. Almost invariably, they claim it “in Jesus’ name.” From the Scriptures we find that on the physical level, there was power to heal and work other miracles in the name of Messiah. We find one example of this power in the book of Acts where Peter healed a man who had been "lame from his mother's womb" (Acts 3:2). Peter went on to explain that "by the name" of the Messiah (Acts 4:10), the lame man had been healed. On the spiritual level, the name of Messiah gave people power to cast out demons. We find in the book of Mark,

And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. (Mark 9:38)

When we look at Messiah’s response to John, we see that He acknowledged the power of His name to perform miracles.

Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. (Mark 9:39)

But Messiah's name, it seems, was not only important for physical and spiritual healing. In the book of Acts, Peter went on to explain that the name of Messiah has special importance with respect to our very salvation.

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

If the book of Acts is to be believed, this is a very powerful statement. Only through the name of Messiah will men be saved. But what was that name and why is it so important?

WAS THE NAME OF THE MESSIAH “JESUS?”

As pointed out at the front of this study, the name “Jesus” appears in almost every Bible, movie, and piece of Christian literature produced in the English language. It is spread across the globe on a daily basis by evangelical missionaries and a variety of Christian radio and television programs. And many millions of sincere believers have come to a saving knowledge of Messiah through that name.

The sad fact is, however, that the name “Jesus” could not possibly have been the powerful name which was invoked to heal the sick and to cast out demons. It is also impossible for it to have been declared by Peter as the one name “under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” In fact, the name “Jesus” did not even exist when Peter made his awesome proclamation. But how can this be?

It would probably surprise most people to find that the letter “J,” and its associated pronunciation, did not exist at the time of Messiah and did not come into the English language until a little over three centuries ago--some 1600 years after the Messiah walked the earth. Most reputable encyclopedias show this to be the case. The Encyclopedia Americana, for example, states

J, ja, is the 10th letter of the English and all other West European alphabets. It is one of the few permanent additions to those alphabets, made in medieval or modern times. More exactly, it was not an addition but a differentiation from an existing letter-- I, which in Latin, besides being a vowel (as in *index*), also had the consonantal value of y (as in *maior*, pronounced as “mayor”).

The form of J was unknown in any alphabet until the 14th century A.D., when it originated in the ornamental lengthening of the letter I in manuscripts, particularly when it was an initial letter...

At a later stage, the symbol J was used for distinctive purposes, particularly when the I had to be written initially (or in conjunction with another I). Either symbol used initially generally had the consonantal sound of y (as in *year*), so that the Latin, pronunciation of either *Ianuaris* or *Januaris* was as though the spelling was “*Yanuaris*.” Gradually, the two symbols were differentiated, the J usually acquiring consonantal force and thus coming to be regarded as a consonant, and the I becoming a vowel. But this process of differentiation was slow; it was not until 1630 that the differentiation became general in England...

While in some words of Hebrew and other origin (such as *hallelujah* or *Junker*) j has the phonetic value of y, its English phonetic value is usually *dzh* (the g of *gem*). This sound was taken into the English language through the French... [underlining added]¹

¹ Encyclopedia Americana, 1989 ed., “J,” by D. Diringer.

There are several key pieces of information contained in the above article. First, the derivation of the letter “J” originally came from Latin. This is an extremely important fact, which will be addressed later in this publication. Second, the letter “J” did not exist in any alphabet until the 14th century and did not come into the English language until 1630--1600 years after Messiah walked the earth. And finally, the pronunciation of the letter “J” (as in “gem” or “Jesus”) came even later as a migration from the French language. So the name “Jesus,” as currently written and pronounced by English-speaking Christians and taught by missionaries all over the earth, could not possibly be the one “name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12) because it did not exist 350 years ago, and certainly not at the time Messiah walked the earth.

While this may be difficult for many to accept, it is borne out by the fact that the name “Jesus” is nowhere to be found in the original King James Bible. This Bible was first printed in 1611—almost 20 years before the name “Jesus” came into being. But just how was Messiah’s name spelled in 1611? We look to a representative verse for the answer.

Now when Iesus was born in Bethlehem of Iudea, in the dayes of Herod the king, behold, there came Wise men from the East to Hierusalem, saying, Where is he that is borne King of the Iewes? (Matthew 2:1-2, 1611 KJV)²

We can see from this passage proof that the name of our Messiah was not “Jesus” in 1611 and earlier. But was “Iesus” the name in which our Messiah walked the earth?

As previously stated, many Bible scholars hold the belief that “Iesus” is merely the English transliteration of the Greek word “Ἰησοῦς” (Iesous), the name found in the early Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. But was this the name in which Messiah walked the earth and the one “name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12)? The answer to this question might appear at first to be somewhat complicated, but actually will turn out to be rather simple and quite exciting.

JUST WHAT WAS THE NAME OF MESSIAH?

Most Bible reference works state that the Messiah had the same name as the Joshua of the Old Testament. *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, for example, reflects the following:

2424. Ἰησοῦς **Iesous**, ee-ay-sooce; of Heb. or. [3091]; *Jesus* (i.e. *Jehoshua*). the name of our Lord and two (three) isr.:--Jesus.

² A word-for-word reprint of the original 1611 King James Bible is available from Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee. As of this writing, it is available through the Christian Book Distributors (CBD) catalog and many Christian bookstores.

We see here that the Messiah's name is of Hebrew origin and is in fact from the Hebrew name "Jehoshua," Strong's 3091. Strong's explains this Hebrew name as,

3091. [יְהוֹשֻׁעַ] Yehôwshûwa, yeh-ho-shooə-ah; or [יְהוֹשֻׁעַ] Yehôwshûa, yeh-ho-shooə-ah; from 3068 and 3467; Jehovah-saved; Jehoshua (i.e. Joshua), the Jewish leader:--Jehoshua, Jehoshuah, Joshua. Comp. 1954, 3442.

But is there any other evidence that the Messiah's name really was the Hebrew "[יְהוֹשֻׁעַ]" Was it ever recorded like that in the Scriptures?

Before making this determination, it is first necessary to point out that the early Greek manuscripts of the New Testament date only from the second century of the Common Era (C.E.),³ a fact which is known by most Bible scholars. Moreover, there are a growing number of Biblical experts who hold that the New Testament was originally written in Hebrew and later translated into Greek. While an in-depth discussion of this issue goes beyond the bounds of this study, we will look briefly to the writings of Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Cesarea in the 4th century C.E., and accepted by many as one of the early church fathers. His writings date back to the time of Constantine and encompass the first three centuries of church history. According to Eusebius,

Matthew also having first proclaimed the gospel in Hebrew, when on the point of going also to other nations, committed it to writing in his native tongue...

For as Paul had addressed the Hebrews in the language of his country; some say that the evangelist Luke, others that Clement, translated the epistle. Which also appears more like the truth, as the epistle of Clement and that to the Hebrews, preserve the same features of style and phraseology, and because the sentiments in both works are not very different.⁴

So we find that as late as the 4th century C.E., the book of Matthew--the first book of the New Testament--and the book of Hebrews, were acknowledged by one of the early church fathers as having been originally written in Hebrew. The name of Messiah, therefore, was first penned in the Hebrew language and only later was translated into Greek. With this understanding, let us then take a brief look

³ The terms "Common Era" (C.E.) and "Before the common Era" (B.C.E.) will be used in this publication in lieu of the more common terms "B.C." and "A.D." They are accepted by many scholars as being more precise because Messiah was born at least 3 years prior to 1 A.D. The designations "B.C." and "A.D." are therefore incorrect and of little use.

⁴ Eusebius Pamphilus, The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Cesarea, in Palestine, trans. Isaac Boyle (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), pp. 108, 124.

at Messiah's original Hebrew name before we continue our examination of the Greek rendering "Ιησους" (Iesous).

THE HEBREW NAME OF MESSIAH.

The first thing we notice from Dr. Strong's translation of the Messiah's Hebrew name as "Jehovah saved," is that it has the potential for a very deep spiritual significance. And, as we will soon see, Messiah's own words will give us an even deeper insight into the meaning and importance of His Hebrew name. But first, two points must be made.

First, the name "Jehovah," like the name "Jesus" is a linguistic impossibility because of the fact that the letter "J" is only a little over 300 years old in the English language and has never existed in the Hebrew language. The Almighty's name in the Hebrew Scriptures contains no written vowels and appears as "hwhy" (YHWH)⁵. There are conflicting opinions among Bible Scholars about whether the Almighty's name should be rendered as "YaHWeH" or "YaHoWaH." While "Yahweh" seems to be more widely accepted, there are many--the author included--who hold that "Yahowah" is more linguistically and Scripturally correct. As expressed by one Biblical scholar,

[Those who hold the name of the Almighty to be "Yahweh" have] overlooked some important primary data that negates the customary conjecture... Among the caves of Qumran was a Greek text that included a few Greek words of Leviticus (4QLXX Lev), one of which was the Tetragrammaton.⁶ It was spelled ??? (Ya-oh). This is apparently a two-syllable word, but the second syllable is only a vowel. There is no way it can be rendered "Yah-weh." This was a transliteration of the Hebrew Ya-ho (hwy). It is the same spelling given in the fifth century B.C. Aramaic papyri. From the Aramaic alone this word could be pronounced as Ya-hoo or Ya-hoh.

Some of the words in the Dead Sea scrolls were pronounced and spelled with an aspirant, ah, which is lacking in the Masoretic text.⁷ For example, Masoretic words like hoo (awh) and hee (ayh) are spelled hoo-ah (hawh) [and hee-ah (hayh)] in the scrolls. Arabs pronounce these words the same way that they are spelled in the scrolls, but Arabs do not spell the final aspirant with a consonant. They indicate the aspirant

⁵ In ancient Hebrew, the letter "W" had the "w" sound rather than the modern "v" sound. (See Biblical Hebrew Step by Step, by Menahem Mansoor, (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1980) p. 18.

⁶ The word "Tetragrammaton" describes the four Hebrew letters, "hwhy," which spell the name of the Almighty in the Hebrew Scriptures.

⁷ The Masoretic text was a rendering of the Old Testament Scriptures in which a system of vowel points was inserted into the Hebrew words. This was written by a group of rabbis (the Masoretes) in the fifth or sixth century of the Common Era (C.E.)

with only a vowel pointing, which was not used in early Biblical texts. The word spelled Ya-hoo or Ya-hoh may have been pronounced Yahowah or Yahoowah, but in no case is the vowel *oo* or *oh* omitted. The word was sometimes abbreviated as “Ya,” [see Psalms 68:4] but never as “Ya-weh.” This can be illustrated further by studying the proper names of the Bible that were based upon the Tetragrammaton.

The Hebrew for the name “Jonathan” is Yah-ho-na-than (יְהוֹנָתָן), “Ya-ho or Yahowah has given.” When this name was abbreviated it became “Yo-na-than (יְנָתָן), preserving the vowel *oh*. John was spelled “Yaho-cha-nan” (יְהוֹחָנָן), “Yaho or Yahowah has been gracious.” Elijah’s name was Eli-yahoo (אֵלִיָּהוּ), “My [Elohim⁸] is Yahoo or Yahoo-wah.”... Anyone who cares to check the concordances will find that there is no name in the entire Scriptures that includes the Tetragrammaton and also omits the vowel that is left out of the two-syllable pronunciation [Yah-weh]...

When the Tetragrammaton was pronounced in one syllable it was “Yah” [see Psalms 68:4] or “Yo.” When it was pronounced in three syllables it would have been “Yahowah” or “Yahoowah.” If it was ever abbreviated to two syllables it would have “Yaho,” but even this spelling may have been pronounced with three syllables, including the final aspirant, because Hebrew had no vowel points in Biblical times. Biblical theologians should start with this data and reach their belief regarding the character of the deity from the descriptions given in the texts, rather than trying to deduce it from some possible etymology of the word...⁹

The name “Yahoshua,” therefore, carries the very deep spiritual meaning “Yahowah saves” and demonstrates that our Savior, Yahoshua, is indeed the salvation of our Heavenly Father. We see Matthew’s¹⁰ understanding of this deep spiritual significance in the following verse:

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Yahoshua [Yahowah saves] for he shall save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:20-21)

When we look again to the book of Acts, we see that the earlier-quoted verse takes on a much deeper meaning than before,

⁸ The Hebrew word “Elohim” (Strong’s #430) is usually translated into English as “God.”

⁹ George Wesley Buchanan, Professor Emeritus, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC., “The Tetragrammaton: How God’s Name Was Pronounced.” Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol 21, No. 2, March/April 1995, pp. 30-31, 100.

¹⁰ Hebrew: Mattityaho, “Gift of Yahowah.”

Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Yahoshua [Yahowah saves] Messiah of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom Elohim raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.
(Acts 4:10-12)

Thus, understanding the meaning of the Hebrew name conveys the very deep meaning that our Messiah is indeed the Salvation of our Heavenly Father. And we find that our Messiah gave us another clue as to the importance of His Hebrew name. When addressing a group of individuals who had criticized Him for healing on the Sabbath, He made the following statement:

I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. (John 5:43)

Messiah said here that He came in His Father's name. While many Bible scholars focus solely on the spiritual meaning of this verse, they overlook the literal meaning that the verse carries with it. Messiah Yahoshua quite literally came in the name of His Father because His name "Yahoshua" (Yahowah saves) literally contains the name of the Father, "Yahowah", and reflects that salvation comes from the Father. This is foretold in the book of Isaiah three chapters after the description of the crucifixion of the Messiah.

Thus saith Yahowah, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. (Isaiah 56:1)

John¹¹ the Baptizer also made the statement that Messiah was the salvation of the Father,

Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of Elohim.
(Luke 3:5-6)

And the prophet Isaiah gives us the following important proclamation of the Almighty:

I, even I, am Yahowah; and beside me there is no saviour. (Isaiah 43:11)

¹¹ Hebrew: Yahochanan, "Yahowah has been gracious."

So, we find that our Savior's given Hebrew name is indeed full of deep spiritual meaning. Not only does it show us that he literally came in the name of His Father, but it conveys the very important truth foretold by the prophets that Messiah Yahoshua was indeed the Salvation of the Father. But was this Hebrew name actually the name in which our Savior walked the earth?

As with so many other complicated Biblical issues, we should probably look to the Scriptures for our answer. In this case, we are blessed by having our Savior's own words to confirm that His real name is Hebrew. We get this unmistakable piece of information from the Apostle Paul as he related his own conversion experience on the road to Damascus.

Paul related this story on three different occasions in the book of Acts: Acts 9, Acts 22, and Acts 26. In all three instances, Paul tells us that he asked the question, "Who art thou, Lord?" And, although he describes the experience three times, only in his testimony before king Agrippa did Paul tell us the language in which Messiah answered him,

Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Yahoshua whom thou persecutest. (Acts 26:12-15)

The King James Bible, as well as the New American Standard Bible, tells us that Messiah gave His name to Paul in Hebrew.¹² He certainly could have used Greek or Latin to Paul, but He did not. He in fact used the language which best expresses His real Hebrew name. We have here our proof that Messiah's Hebrew name, Yahoshua, is the one "name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). But this being the case, what about the Greek name "Ἰησοῦς" (Iesus)?

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME...

As the old saying goes, "A rose by any other name is a rose." But the question is, "Does the same principle apply to the Messiah and His one "name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved?" Was there, contrary to the proclamation in Acts chapter 4, really more than one "name given

¹² It must be pointed out that the New International Version (NIV) Bible states the Messiah spoke to Paul in "Aramaic." Unknown to many Christians, the NIV relies on the "Codex Vaticanus" version of the New Testament Greek. The source of this version, reputed to be "older and more reliable" than the traditional KJV "received text," was the Vatican, where it was discovered.

under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved?" If so, is "Ἰησοῦς" (Iesous) among them? After all, it is found in the early Greek translations of the New Testament Scriptures. But the name "Ἰησοῦς" (Iesous) did not originate in the Greek of the New Testament. It appeared several centuries earlier in the first Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint¹³, where it was also substituted for the name "Yahoshua" [Joshua]. Therefore, one would assume that "Ἰησοῦς" (Iesous) must be a translation of the Hebrew "Yahoshua" and convey the same meaning: "Yahowah saves."

But the first question we must ask ourselves is, why was it translated at all? Why was it not simply transliterated into the Greek language? We transliterate names of important individuals all the time. For example, how is "Mikhail Gorbachev" translated into Greek, English, or any other language? The answer is that it is not translated. The sound of his name is simply spelled (transliterated) into Greek letters, English letters, or the letters of any other language. As a matter of fact, in languages all around the world, Mikhail Gorbachev gets to keep the name he was given at birth. The same goes for any world leader: "Boutros Boutros-Gali" is "Boutros Boutros-Gali" and "Ronald Reagan" is "Ronald Reagan" the world over.

Most Biblical names are also transliterated and not translated. For example, the name "Moses"¹⁴ means "drawn-out," because he was drawn out of the River Nile. But we do not say, "'Drawn out' went unto the King of Egypt." "Jacob"¹⁵ means "deceiver" and "Esau" means "rough." But we do not call the sons of Isaac, "Deceiver" and "Rough." And in fact, many Hebrew names are transliterated directly from Hebrew into Greek or English. Examples of such names include "Daniel," "Abraham," and "Ruth."

Even when we look at the names of pagan deities, "Baal-zebub" gets to keep the name "Baal-zebub," "Zeus" is "Zeus," and "Krishna" remains "Krishna," to name a few. Why is it then that the Savior of the world is not good enough to keep the original Hebrew name that He was given at birth--a name which was announced to His parents by a Messenger of the Most High (Matthew 1:20-21)? Why was His name translated into Greek? But since our Savior's name does appear to have been translated into Greek, we must ask if this translation carries the same awesome meaning, "Yahowah saves."

As we have already seen, the first part of "Yahoshua" contains the name of the Creator of the universe. The first part of the Greek name "Ἰησοῦς" (Iesous), therefore, should likewise contain the name of our Creator. This necessity seems to be satisfied by the first two Greek letters "Ἰη" (Ie)--pronounced "Yeah" or "E-A." These letters appear to reflect the first part of the Creator's name as pronounced

¹³ The word Septuagint comes from the Latin "Septuagint" which means "seventy." The name of this translation comes from the 70 or 72 Jewish scholars who are said to have translated it in the third century before the Common Era (B.C.E.).

¹⁴ Hebrew: "Moshe."

¹⁵ Hebrew: "Yaakov."

under the pre-1630 spelling of the name of the Father (Iehovah). But what about the ending "σο?ς" (sous)--pronounced "sooce" according to Dr. Strong? Does this ending carry the meaning "saves?"

At first, the author found the sound of this Greek name "Ιησο?ς" (Iesous) (Iesus) to be quite disturbing. Linking the name of the Father to a suffix, which sounds almost identical to the name of the Greek god 'Zeus', was an unsettling prospect. After all, prayer is verbal. Since we do not pray by spelling letters, but with our pronounced words, whether "Zeus" is spelled "Z-e-u-s" or "S-o-o-c-e" is irrelevant. To illustrate this, consider the following example. Assume there are four people in the waiting room of a doctor's office. If the receptionist calls out "Mr. Jones," the man with that name will answer, whether his name is spelled "J-o-n-e-s," "J-o-a-n-s," or "J-o-n-z." But surely, the Greek suffix could not mean "Zeus." Or could it? After all, Zeus was the "father" for the Greeks. Was this then a deceptive attempt to draw glory away from the true Creator to Zeus, or could it be a simple quirk of Greek grammar?

A QUICK GREEK LESSON

As it turns out, the fact that "Ιησο?ς" (Iesous), seems to link the name of our Heavenly Father to Zeus may be a Greek grammatical glitch. There is a theory among some scholars that the Greeks tried to transliterate the Aramaic form of Yahoshua into Greek. This Aramaic name, "[WY]" (pronounced "Yeshua"¹⁶) was a popular variant of "Yahoshua" at the time the Messiah walked the earth. As the theory goes, the "Ye" of "Yeshua" becomes the Greek "Ιη", (Ie)--pronounced "Yeah" or "E-A." The "sh" sound in "Yeshua" does not exist in Greek so it became a simple "σ" (s). The "u" in "Yeshua" simply carried over as "ο?" (u). And finally, the "a"--pronounced "uh"--of "Yeshua" is a feminine ending in Greek so the nominative masculine singular ending "ς" (s) was added instead. Hence, the Greek spelling "Ιησο?ς" (Ie-s-ou-s).

While this theory may sound good, the fact is that "Ye-sooce" is a very poor transliteration of the Aramaic "Yeshua." The Greeks could have gotten quite a bit closer to the sound of the name "Yeshua" had they really wanted to. One possibility would have been "Ιησ?α" (Iesiua). The well-known historian, Flavius Josephus¹⁷ indicates that, rather than trying to be faithful to original pronunciations, the Greeks changed proper names to suit their own taste. We find an example of this in Josephus's description of the lands settled by the descendants of Noah. While the Bible tells us that these lands

¹⁶ The name "Yeshua" is sometimes spelled "Yahshua" or "Y'shua." Many modern believers in fact call the Messiah by that name. The name means "salvation" in noun form and "he will save" in the 3rd person singular future verb form.

¹⁷ Josephus was born in 37 C.E. His historical writings are an important source of information for understanding the interaction between the Roman Empire and the other religious and political entities of the Biblical period.

were named after Noah's descendants who settled them, Josephus relates that the Greeks changed these names when they came into power.

[T]hey were the Greeks who became the authors of such mutations; for when, in after-ages, they grew potent, they claimed to themselves the glory of antiquity,--giving names to the nations that sounded well (in Greek) that they might be better understood among themselves... [T]hey called nations by their own names... for Gomer founded those whom the Greeks now call Galatians [Galls], but were then called Gomerites. Magog founded those that from him were named Magogites, but who are by the Greeks called Scythians... [F]rom Madai came the Madeans, who are called the Medes by the Greeks... Elisa gave name to the Eliseans, who were his subjects; they are now the Aeolians... Cethimus possessed the island Cethima; it is now called Cyprus... for such names are pronounced after the manner of the Greeks. [underlining added]¹⁸

Based upon Josephus's observation, we see how the magnificent name "Yahoshua" could have become "Iesous"--as found in the Septuagint for Yahoshua son of Nun (Exodus 33:11) and in the New Testament for our Savior. After all, by Biblical standards the early Greeks were a pagan people who worshipped a myriad of gods including Zeus; hardly the type of people whose language we should trust for the name of our Savior. Did "Iesous" in fact refer back to Zeus because it "sounded well" to the Greeks?

It was with these disturbing thoughts that in 1995, the author approached a Greek expert¹⁹ in the Washington D.C. area with the following question:

"Since the Messiah's Hebrew name carries the meaning 'Yahowah saves,' then the Greek translation " Ἰησοῦς" (Iesous), should carry the same meaning. If the first part of the name 'ἰη' (Ie) comes from 'Iehovah', does the suffix 'σοῦς' (sous) mean 'saves' or 'salvation' in the Greek of the New Testament period?"

The response of the Greek expert came as quite a surprise:

"The ending 'σοῦς' (sous) is not a true classical Greek ending and came from Latin. During the classical Greek period, many names and other words, in fact, came into the Greek language from Latin. Find the Latin meaning of the word and you will have your answer."

¹⁸ Flavius Josephus, The Antiquities of the Jews (Book 1, chapters 5-6), contained in The Works of Flavius Josephus. Translated by William Whiston, (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), pp. 35-36.

¹⁹ Given this person's religious affiliation and potential associated difficulties, the name will remain undisclosed.

Though surprised, the author was somewhat relieved by this answer. Since the suffix “sus” was from the Latin, maybe the Almighty was not being equated with Zeus! The next step, however, was to find out what the Latin equivalent was for the Greek "σοϛ" (sous). The Latin New Testament, known as the Vulgate, yielded the answer.

Cum ergo natus esset Iesus in Bethleem Iudaeae in diebus Herodis regis, ecce magi ab oriente uenerunt Hierosolymam, (Matthew 2:1)²⁰

So, the Latin nominative singular rendering for the name of Messiah was “Iesus”--identical to the form found in the 1611 King James Bible. The Greek ending "σοϛ" (sous) was therefore rendered in the Latin as “sus.” But did the Latin “sus” mean salvation?

The answer to this question also came as quite a shock. The Latin “sus” in fact has nothing to do with the idea of salvation. This word, which eventually made its way into the English language, is defined as follows:

sus \`s?s²¹ n, cap [NL, fr. L, swine, hog -- more at SOW]: a genus of mammals that is the type of the family Suidae and in former classifications comprised all or most of the swine but is usu. restricted to a few typical Eurasian and East Indian forms and the domestic breeds -- see BEARDED PIG, CRESTED PIG, WILD BOAR²²

We find here that the Latin “sus” means “swine,” and more specifically, the type of swine found in the Eurasian region--the land of the Bible. So the name “Iesus,” rather than proclaiming that the Almighty saves, refers to Him as a swine and is an abominable name. But, how could such a thing happen? This certainly must be a strange coincidence, or is it?

A FEW NEW TESTAMENT CLUES.

As it turns out, there are several clues in the New Testament which indicate that the name of our Savior would become perverted. We will cover the easier ones shortly, but first will deal with one which is a little more complex, but quite intriguing.

The New Testament contains the names of numerous people who were not Jewish by birth. For the most part, these people had names of Greek or Latin origin. Examples include Zenus, Apollos, Marcus,

²⁰ Nouum Testamentum Latine, New Testament in Latin, Vulgate, (Oxford University Press, American Branch), 1911.

²¹ As any English pronunciation guide will show, the sound of “?” is the same as the “a” in the word “about.” The sound is pronounced as “uh.”

²² Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged, (1968) s.v. “sus.”

Aristarchus, Demas, and Dorcas. And, except for a couple of instances, the New Testament writers do not give translations or meanings for these names. We find, however, a curious exception in the book of Acts.

And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of Elohim. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn them from the faith. (Acts 13:6-8)

These two verses contain a tremendous amount of information. First, the man in question is a false prophet who is obviously working against the Messiah and the spread of the Gospel. Second, he was not a Gentile by birth, but a Jew. And because he was a Jew, the writer of the book of Acts--under Divine inspiration--uncharacteristically provide us with the translation of his name. Third, the fact that his name was translated, and the way in which it was translated, provides us with a couple of key insights.

First, the name “Bar-Iesus” is a hybrid of Aramaic and Latin. “Bar” is simply the Aramaic form of the Hebrew word “Ben” and means “son of.” We see a similar use of this term in the book of Matthew:

And Yahoshua answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona [Son of Jonah]: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 16:17)

It would not be necessary to translate “Bar” for the benefit of Hebrew speaking readers, because they would all be very familiar with the word “Bar.” And we find that the writer of Acts, in fact, does not translate this word. However, the second part of the name, “Iesus,” is another matter altogether. Because of its Latin origin, the name “Iesus” might not be fully understood by the average Hebrew-speaking reader. And, in fact, the writer of Acts translates this Latin name. Under Divine inspiration, he tells us that the interpretation of the Latin name “Iesus” is “Elymas.” But what is the meaning of the name “Elymas?”

The word “Elymas” consists of two parts, “Ely” and “mas.” “Ely” (pronounced “El-ee”) is a Hebrew construct which means “my El is” or “my Elohim²³ is.” The name “Elymas²⁴,” therefore, means, “My Elohim is mas.” But what is the meaning of “mas?”

²³ The Hebrew word “Elohim” (Strong’s #430) is translated into English as “God.”

²⁴ Phonetically, the Greek spelling is “El-oo-mas.” However, since the stress is on the first syllable, the “oo” sound is minimized to a hybrid short vowel form during vocalization. The sound would resemble a short u or a short i.

This word has been the subject of some scholarly debate. The prevailing opinion holds that “mas” must be an Arabic derivation meaning “power.” But there is little precedent for the use of Arabic words in the New Testament Scriptures and to make that assumption here is without foundation. There is, however, solid precedent for the use of Greek and Latin in the New Testament Scriptures. If we examine the possibility of a Latin or Greek derivation, we get very interesting results. First the Latin...

As shown in Strong’s Concordance, the accent in the word “Elymas” is on the first syllable (el’ -i-mas). Consequently, the ending “mas” is not stressed and is pronounced as if it were “mus” (just like the pronunciation of “Christmas” is “criss-mus”). As it turns out, there is a Latin word “mus” which has the following meaning:

mus \’m?s\ n, cap [NL, fr. L, mouse -- more at MOUSE]: a genus of (the type of the family Muridae) of rodents including the common house mouse and a few related small forms distinguished by the square-notched tip of the upper incisors as seen in profile²⁵

We find here that the Latin “mus” means, “mouse.” So the name “Elymas,” when pronounced, means “My Elohim is a mouse” and is every bit a blasphemous as the name “Jesus.” Once again, the fact that “mas” and “mus” are spelled differently is of minimal importance because prayer is not written--it is verbal. Since the stress is on the first syllable, “Elymas” and “Elymus” both come out of a person’s mouth as “el’ -i-mus”--“My Elohim is a mouse.”

It is probably no coincidence that we would get the same result if we were to assume that the “mas” of “Elymas” were of classical Greek origin--the other common language found in the New Testament. The classical Greek expert referred to earlier related that, although the modern Greek word for “mouse” is pronounced “pôndicke,” the classical Greek for mouse was pronounced “meece” and spelled “μ?s” (mis). Once again, with the stress on the first syllable, “Elymis” would come out of a person’s mouth as “el’ -i-mus”--“My Elohim is a mouse.”

And we must remember that Acts 13:6 made the statement that “by interpretation” these two blasphemous names “Jesus” and “Elymas” are equivalent. It all begins to add up when we look to a verse from the book of Isaiah. Before examining this verse, we must remember that our Creator made a distinction for His people between clean and unclean animals. Of all the “unclean” creatures walking the earth, two are singled out by name as being particularly abominable:

For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

²⁵ Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged, (1968) s.v. “mus.”

They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind the one *tree* in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD. (Isaiah 66:15-17)

So what we possibly have here is either an unbelievable coincidence, or traces of a complex conspiracy to blaspheme our Creator and our Savior through the name “Jesus.” But why was a Latin name used? And isn’t there still the possibility that this could all be some strange coincidence?

THE LATIN CONNECTION.

Before we go on, we must understand that our discoveries thus far were not accomplished by examining “off the wall” languages which have nothing to do with the Bible. Had we found suffixes for “Jesus” and “Elymas” from Chinese and Urdu, for example, our conclusions would have little meaning. The fact that these words and suffixes are of Latin origin, however, is quite significant.

Latin, after all, was the official language for Christian religious observance throughout the Mediterranean world well into the middle ages. Under Roman mandate, the mass, songs, and related worship services were conducted in Latin and any attempt to deviate from this practice was met with stiff opposition and threat of death. It was only through a tremendous amount of pain and personal sacrifice that the Scriptures and liturgy finally came to be translated into the languages of the common people. The unfortunate history of this process is available in numerous historical works on the development of Christianity.

Had the reformers not endured the persecutions of Rome, and instead had given up their struggle, it is very likely that the worship of today might still be in conducted Latin. As a matter of fact, the author remembers certain church services in the 1960s that were still conducted in Latin. But this observation is in no way made to condemn any Christian denomination; the blasphemous name, “Jesus,” was used by a certain European people and their religious system several centuries before Christian churches ever came into being. And unbeknownst to many Christians, the religious system of this people, through the Roman Empire, has exerted a significant influence upon the development of modern Christian worship practices. This people were the Celts.

ROME'S MELTING POT AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE CELTS.

The Celts were “an Indo-European people who were at the height of their power numerically and geographically in 4th-century-BC Europe.”²⁶ Early on, they inhabited the region of Europe known as Gaul--an area comprising the territory of modern France and Belgium. They were later pushed off the main continent onto the British Isles, but not before the influence of their religious system was felt in the Roman Empire. This system was presided over by a priestly order known as the Druids. It was a mystery religion and presented

beliefs in various nature deities and certain ceremonies and practices that are similar to those in Indian religion. The insular Celts and the people of India also shared certain similarities of language and culture, thus indicating an ancient common heritage.²⁷

Some scholars believe that such cultural and religious similarities are not coincidental, but stem from the “common heritage” of ancient Babylon. These scholars trace what they believe to be the spread of Babylonian worship practices as they moved westward from Asia into Europe.²⁸ Though this process was quite complex, roughly speaking it went from Asia into Egypt, from Egypt into Greece, and from Greece into the Roman Empire. The influence of Greek religion, for example,

spread as far west as Spain, east to the Indus, and throughout the Mediterranean world. Its effect was the most marked on the Romans, who identified their deities with the Greek.²⁹

Not only did the Romans identify their own deities with those of Greek gods, but they made the same association with the deities of other peoples. During the invasion of Italy by Hannibal, for example, (c. 217 BCE),

Rome took precautions to secure the favor of all manner of gods. Among them, as a desperate attempt at novelty when appeals to the usual deities seemed stale, was the introduction of the Great Mother of Asia Minor, Cybele (204). Eighteen years later, the equally orgiastic worship of Dionysus (Bacchus) was coming in so rapidly and violently, by way of southern Italy, that the Senate, scenting subversion, repressed its practitioners. But these and other mystery religions, promising initiation, afterlife, and an excitement that Roman national cults could not provide, had come to stay and, although

²⁶ Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. “European Religions, Ancient” in Macropaedia, Vol 18.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ See, for example, Alexander Hislop, The Two Babylons, (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1959).

²⁹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. “European Religion, Ancient” in Macropaedia, Vol 18.

there were long periods of official disapproval before acclimatization was completed, they gradually played an immense part upon the religious scene.³⁰

Druidism, of course, was among these “other mystery religions,” and its influence was not minimal. As a matter of fact,

Roman writers such as Caesar made a great effort to syncretize the Gallic gods with their own.³¹

And the Latin poet Lucan, a contemporary of Caesar, recorded for us the names of three of the Celtic deities which Caesar tried to syncretize with those of Rome.

The 1st century AD Latin poet Lucan, in a passage of his *Pharsalia* describing various Gaulish tribes, named three of the Celtic gods--Teutates, Esus, and Taranis... An early commentator on Lucan’s work identified Teutates with Mars, Esus with Mercury, and Taranis with Jupiter, and thus later scholars have a working hypothesis from which to start their inquiries. [underlining added]³²

Lucan’s commentator indeed gives us an interesting hypothesis from which to continue our inquiry into the apparent paganization of the name of our Messiah. First, we see that there is a great similarity between the name of the Celtic deity “Esus” and the Latin name “Iesus;” phonetically they are almost identical. But Lucan and his commentator give us another key indication that “Iesus” and the pagan Druidic deity “Esus,” are one and the same. Lucan’s commentator identifies “Esus” with the Roman/Latin god Mercury. The pronunciation of Mercury’s Latin name, *Mercurius*, is “mer-kurios” and means that he was the messenger of “kurios” (“the lord”--Strong’s #2962). But *Mercurius*’s lord was not the LORD of heaven, but “lord” Zeus. This epithet as “messenger of the lord” is a very close parallel, albeit a counterfeit, to one of the chief functions of Messiah Yahoshua. Messiah Yahoshua was, and is, the Messenger of the real LORD, Yahowah. To see an example of this, we look in the book of Exodus to a prophetic statement about the coming of the Messiah,

Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. (Exodus 23:20-21)

³⁰ Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. “Celtic Religion” in *Micropaedia*, Vol 3.

³¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. “Celtic Religion” in *Micropaedia*, Vol 3. “Syncretism” is the process of blending the identification and functions one’s own deities’ with those of foreign gods. This process was common in the Roman Empire.

³² Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. “Ancient European Religion” in *Macropaedia*, Vol 18.

The Hebrew word for “angel” is ‘מַלְאָכִים’ (mal-awk’) which means “messenger.” Strong’s Concordance explains this word as,

4397. מַלְאָכִים **mal’ak**, mal-awk’; from an unused root mean. *to dispatch* as a deputy; a messenger; spec. of [Elohim], i.e. an angel (also a prophet, priest or teacher):-- ambassador, angel, king, messenger.

With this understanding, we can begin to see that the Angel (Messenger) spoken of in Exodus 23:20-21 was in fact Messiah Yahoshua. Remembering that Exodus 23 says this Messenger would have the power to pardon or “not pardon” transgressions, we find the following verse in the New Testament:

And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Yahoshua seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Yahoshua knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. (Matthew 9:2-7)

Secondly, as we have already seen, Messiah Yahoshua’s original Hebrew name literally contains the name of the Father and literally fulfills the Biblical statements, “my name is in him” (Exodus 23:21) and “I am come in my Father’s name”(John 5:43). He was, and is, the true “Messenger” of the true LORD. But the counterfeit “Esus/Iesus,” not only was the messenger of the false lord Zeus, but is himself a pagan god. But, is calling our Messiah by the name of a pagan god really so bad as long as He is in our heart?

IS A LITTLE BLASPHEMY SO BAD?

If we assume, as our analysis seems to indicate, that Iesus (Jesus) is the name of a pagan deity, does it really matter if we continue to call our Savior, the true Messiah and only-begotten Son of Yahowah, by that pagan name? After all, isn’t the Messiah too big to worry about what one calls Him?

Many sincere Christians would tell us just that--that we can call Him anything we want as long as He is in our hearts. But is this really the case? Perhaps we would do well to look into the Scriptures to get our answer rather than relying on the opinions of well-meaning individuals. In the book of Exodus, the Almighty gives the following command to His people:

And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.
(Exodus 23:13)

But why is it so important that we do not call on, or even mention, the names of pagan deities?

First and foremost, the directive not to do so is a commandment of the Creator of the universe. Just as King Saul learned in the 15th chapter of 1 Samuel, the Almighty wants to be obeyed and there can be severe consequences for failing to do so. Our Savior also taught us that we should do what His Father says.

And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of Elohim, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Elohim.
(Matthew 4:3-4)

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
(Matthew 5:17-19)

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matthew 7:21-23)

In light of Messiah's statements, He probably takes little actual glory when we refer to Him by the name of a pagan deity in violation of His Father's commandment.

The Apostle Paul gives us another indication of why not calling our Messiah by the name of a pagan deity might be very important for us. While teaching on idols, and the pagan deities associated with them, Paul made the following statement:

What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils,

and not to Elohim: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. (1 Corinthians 10:19-20)

Paul shows us here that pagan deities are in fact demons--the fallen angels who work for Satan. Thus, we have our answer to why it is so important not to make mention of their names. Calling on demons is a dangerous proposition--especially since we have little understanding of the workings of the spiritual realm.

“But wait,” one might say, “could the name “Jesus” really be the name of a demon? Would our Heavenly Father have allowed so many good Christians to be fooled for so long?”

In the first place, it was not the Almighty who has fooled us; it was accomplished by the Satan, the “liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44). It was not our Heavenly Father who changed the Hebrew name that He commanded the Angel transmit to Yahoshua’s earthly parents (see Matthew 1:20-21). It was not our Creator who came up with the idea to “translate” that magnificent name into Greek and Latin. It was the agents of the enemy who slipped into the flock after the departure of Paul (see Acts 20:29-31).

After all, didn’t Satan have countless sincere Christians making, and bowing down to, idols (statues) in their churches for centuries in violation of the second commandment, until the reformers of the middle ages got them on to a more Scriptural path? Didn’t Satan likewise have countless well-intentioned Christians worshipping Mary under the title of “queen of heaven,” in direct contradiction to the Almighty’s prohibition found in the book of Deuteronomy?

If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and inquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel: Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die.

(Deuteronomy 17:2-5)

And even after the reformers of the middle ages, sadly many tens of thousands of Christians are still being deceived into lighting candles and burning incense to the “queen of heaven,” although we read in the book of Jeremiah that such practices are abominable to the Almighty.

Therefore now thus saith Yahowah the Elohim of hosts, the Elohim of Israel; Wherefore commit ye this great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain... Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem... (Jeremiah 44:7, 15-17)

Simply because Christianity has been doing something for a long time does not make it right. As a matter of fact, we are warned that in the very early days of the movement, false doctrines were already slipping in among the believers. Messiah warned us in the Gospel of Matthew to "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). The Apostle Paul likewise warned us that after his departure "grievous wolves" would enter the church "not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29). And indeed, while He was walking the earth Messiah indicated that individuals were already blaspheming His name:

The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? (Matthew 10:24-25)

The word "Beelzebub" is Hebrew for "Baal (lord) of the fly" and was the name of a pagan god of the Ekronites (see Strongs #1176). Messiah used the Hebrew word for the name of this deity, but He did not say in which language He was being blasphemed. While it would probably yield interesting results to research the Latin or Classical Greek rendering of the name of this pagan god, suffice it to say that Messiah was being called by the name of that deity in some language.

And later during the writing of the book of the Revelation, Messiah gives an indication that the subject of His name was an issue among the seven churches to whom the Revelation was written.

I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name... (Revelation 2:13)

While many of us might spiritualize this statement to mean that the church of Pergamum did not deny the person of Messiah, we must take note here that He did not say that the members of the church of

Pergamos were holding fast to Him, but to His name. Contrast this statement with the one Messiah made to Peter in the book of Matthew.

Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Yahoshua said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples. (Matthew 26:33-35)

Messiah could have said that Peter would have denied His name, but that would have made little sense. Peter had walked with Messiah and knew His name very well, having undoubtedly used it thousands of times in the three years they were together. Peter in fact denied the person of Messiah--not His name.

The church of Pergamum, on the other hand, was in a different situation altogether. As a Christian congregation, they would not deny the person of Messiah. The use of His actual Hebrew name, however, might have been another issue. The members of the body there had most likely never seen Messiah face to face and were operating much as believers today--from the Scriptures and word of mouth. Unlike Peter, they may very well have been under considerable pressure to begin calling the Messiah by what they believed to be a legitimate Greek translation of His name. But He commended them for holding fast to His real name. But again, why is the real name so important for us?

“TAKE HEED THAT YE BE NOT DECEIVED...” (Luke 21:8)

In speaking with His apostles about the end-times, Messiah gave them a very sobering prophecy,

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (Matthew 24:24)

Messiah was speaking here of an end-time, Satanic deception that will be so complete and believable, that even the elect will almost be deceived. The world, and possibly much of mainstream Christianity, will be fooled by the anti-christ when he comes onto the scene. And when he comes, what would be the most likely name in which to come?

Most Christians will declare, “The Father would never allow the anti-christ to come in the name of “Jesus,” his Son, would He?” While our Creator probably would not allow the anti-christ to come in the real name of His only-begotten Son, we have shown that the name “Jesus” could not possibly be that real name. So, what if the anti-christ does come in the name “Jesus?”

We find in the books of Daniel and Revelation that the anti-christ power will make many proclamations against the Creator.

And he shall speake great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (Daniel 7:25)

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against Elohim, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. (Revelation 13:5-9)

We have seen that the very name “Jesus”/“Jesus” is itself a proclamation against the Most High because it declares Him to be a swine in the Latin tongue. Its equivalent “Elymas” declares Him to be a mouse in both the Latin and Greek tongues. The Latin name “Jesus”, which could not possibly have been the name of our Hebrew Messiah, was forced by Rome upon the early mainstream Christian church by doing away with anything Hebrew and mandating that all religious worship be conducted in Latin. And, as we will see in subsequent chapters, the name of “Jesus” has been used by Rome to “change times and laws” (Daniel 7:25) applicable to the followers of the Most High and His only begotten Son.

I COME IN MY FATHER’S NAME. (John 5:43)

In the fifth chapter of the book of John, Messiah made it very clear that all His capacity as Savior of the world comes from the His Father in heaven,

Then answered Yahoshua and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son... Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and

believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. (John 5:19-22, 24)

Our Savior lifted up His Father in everything He did. He made it abundantly clear that the salvation of men comes from the Father in fulfillment of the Scriptures,

Behold, Elohim is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for Yahowah Yah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise Yahowah, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. (Isaiah 12:2-4)

And in fact, Messiah Yahoshua did ensure that the name of His Father, “Yahowah,” was proclaimed and exalted as the Salvation of mankind. Messiah declared,

O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:25-26)

Truly Messiah Yahoshua proclaimed His Father’s name, not only with His lips, but with the very name in which He walked the earth—“Yahoshua.”

MISDIRECTED PRAYERS?

It is not the purpose or intent of this writing to condemn anyone who calls the Messiah by the name “Jesus.” The author does not have, and would not want, that grave responsibility. After all, it was not too long ago that the author knew the Messiah by the same anglicized Latin name. It is, however, the purpose of the author to direct others to the Scriptures and to very deep prayer on the issue. The fact of the matter is that, if the anti-christ indeed comes in the name of “Jesus,” much of mainstream Christianity stands in danger of accepting him. Not only do we pray in the name of this pagan deity every time we pray “in Jesus’ name,” but, contrary to Scripture, we even pray with our lips to this pagan deity.

How many of us begin each prayer with the words, “Dear Jesus?” Assuming that were the actual name of our Savior, it might not technically be all-bad. When we realize that this is not the name of our Savior, however, we really put ourselves on shaky ground. This is especially true since when we pray

to “Jesus,” we are violating the instructions given by our Messiah in response to the Apostles’ request, “Lord teach us to pray.”

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be **thy** name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth... (Luke 11:1-2)

The context of this verse clearly shows that this was a lesson on *HOW* we are to pray. And Messiah very clearly said that we are to direct our prayers to the Father. Although we do indeed ask things of the Father, in the name of the Savior, we are to still ask the Father.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the **Father** in my name, he may give it you. (John 15:16)

So prayers directed directly to the Son or directly to the Holy Spirit, are prayed contrary to our Savior’s instructions. Using our finite human brains to try to figure out “why” usually leads us into unscriptural practices. If we say, for example, that the Father and the Son are one, so we can pray to the Son, we are still in violation of the instructions of Messiah. And the danger of such violation becomes extremely apparent when we are actually praying to a pagan deity by the name of “Jesus” or “Iesus.” Should this pagan deity actually come as anti-christ one day demanding prayer from Christians, will he receive it?

GO AND SIN NO MORE (John 8:11).

We have seen thus far that the name “Jesus” could not possibly be the name of our Savior and the one “name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” We have also seen that this name is of Latin origin and blasphemes our Heavenly Father and His only-begotten Son. Moreover, we have seen the very deep meaning and importance of using the Messiah’s true Hebrew name. But what about our past usage of the name “Jesus?” What about the countless good Christians who have gone before and never known the real name of the Messiah? Our Savior makes a very interesting statement concerning blasphemy against Him in the book of Matthew.

And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. (Matthew 12:32)

But why would Messiah forgive those blaspheming Him? While He would very likely not forgive someone who knowingly blasphemes Him with no desire to repent, He most likely would forgive blasphemy committed in ignorance and later repented of. Notice that the other six churches mentioned in the book of Revelation were not commended for holding fast to His name. So, all those that went before will probably be forgiven of any blasphemy of Messiah committed in ignorance.

We must note, however, the second part of Messiah's statement on blasphemy in the book of Matthew.

And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. (Matthew 12:32)

When we look at the mission of the Holy Spirit, we find that He is called the "Spirit of truth" numerous times in the Scriptures (see, for example, John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13). The implication of Messiah's statement is that, once we know the truth, we are to live and teach the truth--the truth that will set us free from the snares of Satan. To do otherwise, blasphemes the "Spirit of truth." Undoubtedly, this also applies to the real name of our Messiah.

This message of Messiah's real name will not be popular among many of our brethren who are closely wedded to the tradition of calling the Savior by the name "Jesus." After all, Rome has taught us only too well to shun all things Jewish--to include the true Hebrew name of our Savior. While we should be very loving and tolerant toward those who might want us to continue to use the name "Jesus," we should not allow their opinions to sway us from the truth. Messiah tells us that we are to put Him and His truth above even family and friends.

And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:25-27)

Like all spiritual issues, the decision about what one calls his/her Savior is ultimately a matter of personal choice. But, following verse indicates that the subject of Messiah's true name might be one part of the great end-time scenario of this world,

But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the

brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. (Matthew 10:19-22)

So, how should we react? We can react with frustration and indignation out of a sense of wounded pride because we have been wrong for so long. Or, we can rejoice that we now have been blessed by the truth of our Savior's real name. We can also rejoice that our Father and His truth do not change, as spoken by the prophet Malachi: "For I am Yahowah, I change not..." (Malachi 3:6).

Ultimately, the question must be decided through very fervent prayer and a close study of the Scriptures. If our Messiah, Himself, proclaimed His name to Paul "in the Hebrew tongue" (Acts 26:14), should we do any less? Probably Peter sums it up best:

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be? (2 Peter 3:11)

May the Almighty bless and keep you as you study and pray about the name of His only begotten Son!

ENDNOTE

As mentioned earlier, the name, “[WY]” (pronounced “Yeshua”³³) was a popular variant of “Yahoshua” at the time the Messiah walked the earth. Many Believers, especially Messianic Jews, strongly believe this to be His name. The author would advise the reader not to get into disputations over this issue because the name “[WY]” is actually a beautiful variant of “Yahoshua.” In the noun form, it means “salvation.” In the verb form, it is the third person future singular form meaning “He will save.” The deep spiritual meaning of this name is also shown in the quote from the book of Matthew cited earlier:

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Yeshua [Salvation] for he shall save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

In either case, the salvation spoken of is the Salvation coming from our Heavenly Father through the person of His only-begotten Son.

³³ As explained earlier, alternate spellings of this name in English are “Y’shua” and “Yahshua.” The pronunciation, however, is the same.