An Appeal for Mutual Understanding and Acceptance of Those With Differing Ideas

Name of the Messiah: יהוֹשע? יֹשוע?

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NAME OF THE MESSIAH

This is the name "Yehoshua" (rendered "Yahushua" or "Yahshua" by some), as inscribed on an ossuary found near Jerusalem in 1936. This name, in Hebrew, is spelled *yod, he, waw, shin, ayin.*

This is the name "Yeshua," as inscribed on another ossuary found near Jerusalem. This name, in Hebrew, is spelled *yod, shin, waw, ayin.*

This is "Yehuda, son of Yeshua," as inscribed on an ossuary found in an East Talpiyot, Jerusalem burial cave. Note that the first three letters of *Yehuda* are spelled *yod, he, waw,* forming the prefix "Yahu," the first three letters of the Tetragrammaton. The discovery of "Yah" in conjunction with "Yeshua" disproves the contention that the form "Yeshua" is the result of a Jewish conspiracy to remove "Yah" from the Messiah's name.

At top is an enlargement of the inscription reproduction found on page 92 of *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel* by L. Y. Rahmani, The Israel Antiquities Authority, Jerusalem, 1994. In the middle is an enlargement of the inscription reproduction found on p. 137 of *Jesus' Jewishness* by James H. Charlesworth, Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 1991. At bottom is an enlargement of the inscription reproduction found on page 223 of *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel* by L. Y. Rahmani.

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Introduction

This study is a revised and enhanced version of a presentation I gave at the Seventeenth Annual Unity Conference in Cisco, Texas on August 3, 2001. Having noticed a certain "spiritual intolerance" directed against those who do not spell or pronounce the Messiah's name in accordance with the prescribed manner commonly taught by Sacred Name Movement leaders, I felt the time was right to speak out. What better forum to express my concerns than at a Unity Conference?

I subtitled my presentation "*An Appeal for Mutual Understanding and Acceptance of Those With Differing Ideas*." For the *most* part, my appeal seems to have been ignored. Thankfully, I was able to reach a few individuals who had previously vehemently opposed referring to the Messiah by any name other than *Yahshua* or *Yahushua*. Some folks have suggested that we change the name of our study even further, explaining that we confuse people with the Hebrew spellings. For those who aren't already familiar with the Hebrew spellings **יהושע** and **ישוע**, I will here explain that **יהושע** is generally pronounced *Yahshua* or *Yahushua* by members of what is known as the "Sacred Name Movement." The Hebrew spelling **ישוע** is generally transliterated *Yeshua*. I prefer to leave the Hebrew spellings in the title because, to be quite frank, June and I are not fully persuaded that the generally accepted pronunciations of those spellings are correct.

When we first became persuaded that the actual Hebrew spelling of the Messiah's name is not *necessarily* the same spelling that the Sacred Name Movement upholds, our only aim was that of calling attention to the Hebrew spelling that is evident in most of the ancient writings (**ישוע**). The prevailing opposition subsequently elected to shift the focus from the Hebrew *spelling* to the *pronunciation*. We decided to not evade their counterpoints, while simultaneously seeking to retain the focus on the original Hebrew spelling of the Messiah's name. Nevertheless, since spelling and pronunciation go "hand in hand," we address both aspects of this controversy in our study. Despite what continues to be the unwavering, dogmatic position of the Sacred Name Movement, June and I choose to not be overly assertive with regard to either the spelling *or* the pronunciation of the Messiah's name. As we will see in this study, some members of the Sacred Name Movement go *beyond* being dogmatic on this topic; we have experienced *condemnation* of those who don't pronounce the Messiah's name the way they do. While that is the extreme, even the mildest form of this doctrinal stand upholds believing that unless you include "Yah" as the first syllable of the Messiah's name, you are guilty of either intentionally or ignorantly removing the Father's name from His Son's name.

June and I are dogmatic about some issues, so we do not object to those who are adamant about the way they believe the Messiah's name should be spelled or pronounced. The question is, "Is their cause justified?" This, then, may serve to explain our original subtitle, which truly was (and is) an appeal for acceptance and understanding of other views. We do not always encourage acceptance of differing views, but in this case we are willing to make an exception, and we hope you will see and understand *why* by the time you finish reading this study.

In conducting this type of research, it is virtually impossible to not lean towards a certain view, but that doesn't mean we need to assert our position in rigid fashion while vilifying another one, especially when there is no justifiable rationale for doing so. Our primary goal must be to please our Heavenly Father and His Son above all else. Pleasing Them involves more than just knowing Their names, as we all hopefully understand. It also involves knowing Them intimately through our daily service, conduct and prayer. Such a lifestyle should in no way detract from the importance of knowing and reverently

using the names of our Creator and His Son Who so willingly offered His life, not only for an example of how we should walk before our Creator, but also as the supreme sacrifice for our sins.

It is in this spirit that June and I, together, have written this study. It is for those of you out there who are not willing to jump to conclusions, and especially for those of you who are willing to examine teachings from other perspectives. After giving my lengthy presentation at the 2001 Unity Conference, a few individuals approached me to make sure I knew they appreciated it, despite its length, because it had given them something to think about – another angle from which to consider the name we use in reference to the Messiah. Others were not so appreciative. One individual, a well-known leader of a Sacred Name assembly, angrily thundered that I have an underlying "agenda"—that I am in fact really out to promote the form of the name I personally believe was given to the Messiah while *subverting* the name of the Father. I'm not sure if I ever succeeded in persuading him otherwise, even though I explained that I have no problem with those who prefer the pronunciation he uses. Still other individuals expressed downright outrage to the name I presented as being my personal preference. (They didn't mention whether or not they support my plea for acceptance and understanding of other positions, so I presume they do not). Of course, many others have not shared their reactions at all, positive or negative. Of course, that is their right!

One of the more puzzling reactions to our having written this study is that of pointing the finger back at us and stating that *we* are the ones causing the problem. One individual, upon reading our study, wrote, "Concerning the study on the Name which you included with your letter I would like to say thank you. I welcome dialogue. It was interesting. However, to see someone go to such extremes to make something so plain and simple into something so difficult and complicated makes me wonder if they themselves are not part of the 'conspiracy'?"[1] He never offered any corrections, nor did he give any indication that he had actually read it, so I am left with no choice but to regard his brief summary as a classic example of what we read in Proverbs 18:13.

We welcome feedback regarding the contents and overall accuracy of our study, but informing us that we turned something "plain and simple" into something difficult and complicated doesn't help to resolve the issue. Moreover, since he has yet to respond to our answers to his questions after 20 years, we're unsure of the sincerity of his statement that he welcomes dialogue. The above gentleman did not provide details of how we made this issue "difficult and complicated," and we are still waiting for his clarification. Indeed, the Hebrew spelling that we personally regard as a very likely candidate for the name given to the Messiah is the same spelling found in the most ancient of documents, so it would seem that those who reject this spelling are the ones complicating the issue. The pronunciation of this spelling is practically undisputed by scholars, though many Sacred Name Movement advocates do their best to attempt to *dis*qualify it in favor of the one they come up with, most notably in a 2014 Unity Conference presentation, where a gentleman attempted to validate his premise that the "e" in *Yeshua* was anciently pronounced as "ah," hence *Yahshua*. The man who delivered the "unity" presentation would later remark, "I don't suppose I was ever trying to unify brethren on pronunciations."[2]

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[1] Excerpt from a letter we received from a man named Douglas, dated 12/29/2002.

[2] From an e-mail received from Michael Banak on 02/04/2015. A more complete excerpt from his comment is as follows: "I have failed to clarify my objectives. My initial approach bears repeating. I don't suppose I was ever trying to unify brethren on pronunciations. I wanted to equip THE SHEPHERDS on how to do that. Hope you discern the difference. Guys like you and me are supposed to find a ministry we can work with, and then use the pronunciations they use." Note: I disagree with

When it comes to complicating matters, it seems to us that we make this issue more complicated when we teach others that the spelling found in the most ancient of documents is a fabrication—without supplying evidence of the same. It also seems to us that we complicate matters when we assert ourselves as those who know more about Hebrew or Greek than acclaimed scholars, even though we ourselves are lacking in credentials. Regrettably, however, this is the approach that we have found to be used by many within the Sacred Name Movement. Rather than promoting one pronunciation above another one, shouldn't our focus be on the realization that our Heavenly Father and His Son have original Hebrew names and we are all doing our best to respectfully use them? If we count ourselves among those who cherish the undeserved grace and mercy extended to us by our loving Heavenly Father, shouldn't we be willing to extend that same grace and mercy to others? If not, what does this say about us and our faith?

Regardless of where you stand on this issue, we want you to know that we do welcome your constructive feedback on the contents of this study. Together we will accomplish more if we determine to relentlessly pursue the quest for wisdom and service to our Heavenly Father and His Son in the spirit of brotherly love. May Yahweh bless you and thank you for taking the time to consider our findings.

Michael's proposal. June and I aren't interested in any *ministry's* pronunciation of the Messiah's name. Rather, we are interested in the pronunciation of the Messiah's name.

Name of the Messiah: יהוֹשע? יֹשוע?

An Appeal for Mutual Understanding and Acceptance of Those With Differing Ideas

by Larry and June Acheson

1. The Case for Joshua

There are some very sensitive topics within the Sacred Name Movement, but few are as controversial as this one: the name of the Messiah. Let's face it: How we pronounce His name is important! Hopefully, we are all putting forth our best efforts to correctly pronounce the name of the Man Who gave His life for us and Who has also given us the hope of a new life beyond this one. As serious as this topic is, when the topic of the Messiah's name arises, I am reminded of a humorous anecdote on His name that was presented during an episode of a TV show called *The King of Queens*. During one segment of the show, the father, while looking at a "sticky note" on his daughter's refrigerator, turned to her with a bewildered look and said, "According to this note on your refrigerator, Jesus is coming tomorrow!"

His daughter gave him a startled glance, then quickly replied, "Oh, that's Jesús, the furnace guy!"

In the area where we live, we are acquainted with several Hispanics, and I've met several who go by the name ***Jesús*** (pronounced *hey-SOOS*). In our English-speaking culture, how that particular name is pronounced can make a huge difference. If it's pronounced *GEEZ-us*, it's a reference to the Messiah. When it's pronounced *Hey-SOOS*, it's often a reference to an Hispanic male. One thing any of us can quickly verify with just a small amount of research is that the Messiah's name was never pronounced with ***either*** of the above pronunciation options, at least not while He walked this earth as a flesh and blood human. Verifying how the Messiah's name *isn't* pronounced, then, is the easy part. Once we overcome that hurdle, things become a bit more challenging, for determining how His name ***is*** pronounced is controversial. Not only is there a debate as to how His name is pronounced, but there is also disagreement with regard to how it is *spelled*. June and I address both controversies in this study.

When June and I were first exposed to the Sacred Name Movement, our primary focus was on the name of our Heavenly Father. The Messiah's name was simply presented to us as being *Yahshua*, the reasoning being as follows: His name is the same as that of Joshua the son of Nun, and since the "J" is of relatively modern contrivance, having originally been pronounced as a "Y," the more correct pronunciation is *Yoshua*, but the better spelling is *Yahshua*, so as to ensure our conveying to all that his name means *Yahweh is Salvation* and is a combination of "YAH" + "SHUA," *Yah* representing the prefix of our Heavenly Father's name and *shua* representing the Hebrew word for "salvation."

June and I appreciate the above logic very much. Truly, Yahweh <u>is</u> the ultimate savior, but He chose to send His Son to be the vessel through Whom all of mankind would in the end be redeemed from the slavery to sin into which all of us were once sold. As we read in I Peter 1:18-19,

> [18] For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, [19] but with the precious blood of Messiah, a lamb without blemish or defect. (NIV)

It truly is the Messiah through whom Yahweh saves us from our corrupted state, not only rescuing us from the impending destruction caused by the downward spiral all of mankind has been on, but also setting the example for how we are to live once we completely surrender our lives to Him.

The idea of the Messiah being the instrument of Yahweh's salvation, then, is a teaching that June and I embrace. If this means His name is *Yahshua*, then we want to refer to Him as *Yahshua*!

What really made accepting this teaching so easy was the fact that we would often read from the *New International Version* of the Bible, and if you read the footnote listed for Matthew 1:21, it says this:

"*Jesus* is the Greek form of *Joshua*, which means *the LORD saves.*"

Equipped with the above summary of the Messiah's name, it was easy for us to believe and accept the forms *Yoshua* and *Yahshua*.

June and I knew *Jesus* never was the Messiah's name, or we at least understood that this form does not very closely parallel the proper transliteration of His original name. As stated in the above footnote, *Jesus* is the Greek form. Another way of stating this is to point out that *Jesus* is the *Hellenized* form of the Messiah's given name. We know, however, that the Messiah was not a Greek, nor was He ever given a *Greek name*: He was Jewish, He spoke the Hebrew language, and He was given a Hebrew name at birth. *If*, as stated by the NIV footnote, that Hebrew name was *Joshua*, and *if* the first letter of that name didn't carry the "J" sound until relatively recently, then His name would have been pronounced *Yoshua*. Knowing that their rendering of "*the LORD saves"* should have been "*Yahweh saves,"* we definitely agreed and accepted that YAHSHUA makes more sense. We were sold on this concept, which is a summary of the Sacred Name Movement's doctrinal position on the pronunciation of the first syllable ("Yah") of the Messiah's name.

Not only did the above reasoning make sense, but other references influenced us, solidifying our view regarding the name *Yahshua*. Here are a few:

From *The Layman's Bible Encyclopedia*: "The personal name of Christ. The name means 'Yahweh (Jehovah) is salvation' and was a common name in New Testament times."[3]

From *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible:* "*Jesus.* The same as Joshua, *Yehoshua*, from *yasha*, 'he saved, delivered, put to a state of safety.'"[4]

From *The Expositor's Bible Commentary:* "'Jesus' (*Iēsous*) is the Greek form of 'Joshua' (cf. Gr. of Acts 7:45, Heb. 4:8), which, whether in the long form *y^{e}hôšua'* ('Yahweh is salvation,' Exod 24:13) or in one of the short forms, e.g., *yēšûa'* ("Yahweh saves,' Neh. 7:7), identifies Mary's Son as the one who brings Yahweh's promised eschatological salvation."[5]

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[3] From *The Layman's Bible Encyclopedia*, by William C. Martin, M.A., B.D., The Southwestern Company, Nashville, TN, 1964, p. 393.
[4] From *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*, Abridged by Ralph Earle, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, Kansas City, MO, 1985 (originally published in 1832), p. 766.
[5] From *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 8, Frank E. Gaebelein, General Editor, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1984, p. 76.

From Matthew Henry's *Commentary on the Whole Bible:* "Jesus is the same name with Joshua, the termination only being changed, for the sake of conforming it to the Greek."[6]

From the *New Bible Dictionary*: "The name *Jesus* is not strictly a title for the person who bore it. It is, however, a name with a meaning, being a Greek form of 'Joshua', i.e. 'Yahweh is salvation.'"[7]

From *All the Divine Names and Titles in the Bible*: "Jesus is the Greek form of *Joshua*, which itself is a contraction of *Jehoshua*."[8]

From the *Encyclopedia International*: "The name Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name *Joshua*, which means 'Yahweh is Salvation.'"[9]

My personal favorite justification for referring to the Messiah as *Yahshua* comes from a book written back in 1905 titled *Story of the Letters and Figures* by Hubert M. Skinner. Here's what he wrote: "*Yod* is the initial of the name *Jesus*. It is unfortunate that a name so dear and so sacred is pronounced in a manner so different from that of the original word. The latter sounded very much as if it were Ya'shoo-ah, and was agreeable to the ear."[10]

The above quote is quite an admission, coming from an unbiased scholar who penned those words well over a century ago, years before the existence of what is commonly known as *The Sacred Name Movement*. The testimony of all these scholars, then, would seem to support rendering the Messiah's name either as *Yahshua*, *Yehoshua*, or perhaps even *Yahushua*.

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[6] From *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, (New One Volume Edition), by Matthew Henry, Port City Bible Company, Tulsa, OK, p. 1,205.

[7] From the *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd edition, J.D. Douglas, Organizing Editor, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL, 1982, p. 584.

[8] From *All the Divine Names and Titles in the Bible*, by Herbert Lockyer, D.D., Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1975, p. 174.

[9] From the *Encyclopedia International*, Vol. 10, Grolier, Incorporated, New York, NY, 1972, p. 9.

[10] From *Story of the Letters and Figures*, by Hubert M. Skinner, Ph.D., Orville Brewer Publishing Co., Chicago, IL, 1905; republished in 1971; p. 122 (see scanned copy of this page in the Appendix).

2. Where Do Scholars Obtain Their Information?

Interestingly, out of all the references from which the foregoing information was obtained, *none* of them share just exactly how it is they know the Messiah's name is spelled or even pronounced exactly the same way as Joshua son of Nun. Do they offer any evidence? No, they do not. Instead, we are simply expected to take their word for it that the Messiah's name is spelled and pronounced exactly the same as Joshua son of Nun. Those of us who require evidence to back up unsupported claims are compelled to dig deeper.

Since it is universally agreed that the Messiah was given the same name that was originally given to Joshua son of Nun, one of the first things we naturally check out in our initial research is the Hebrew spelling of the name we know as *Joshua*. This man's name was originally **הושע** Hoshea (Oshea), but in Numbers 13:16, Moses changed it to **יהושע** (*Yehoshua*) or, as Sacred Name Movement adherents prefer, *Yahshua / Yahushua*. Here is the text in question:

> [16]These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua.

Although the King James Version first presents this new name as *Jehoshua*, this version proceeds to refer to him as *Joshua* the next time his name is mentioned (Numbers 14:6). Other versions use the form Joshua in Numbers 13:16. Even *The Interlinear Bible* renders this name, **יהושע**, as *Joshua*. Here is an excerpt from this verse as it appears in *The Interlinear Bible*[11]:

	3091	5126/1121	1954	4872	7121	
:	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	בִּן־נֻן	לְהוֹשֵׁעַ	מֹשֶׁה	וַיִּקְרָא	←
	Joshua	Nun son the of	Oshea to	Moses	called And	

We would like to think that settling the matter of the correct spelling and pronunciation of the Messiah's name would be as simple as seeking out the closest approximation of how **יהושע** was anciently and originally pronounced. However, as you may have already guessed, it isn't that simple; the pronunciation of this Hebrew name is but *one* facet of this usually spirited and always-controversial topic.

Since none of the references we examined in the previous chapter supplied evidence substantiating their claims about the Messiah's name, and especially in view of the fact that more than one potential option is presented by each one (*e.g.*, Joshua/Yehoshua), those otherwise scholarly sources leave their readers no way of really knowing which pronunciation, if any, most closely matches the way the Messiah pronounced His name while He walked this earth as a flesh and blood human. It is one thing to say, "Jesus is the same name with Joshua," but it is entirely another to *demonstrate* how that name was originally pronounced.

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[11] From *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew-Greek-English*, Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1986, excerpt from Numbers 13:16, p. 128. Remember: Hebrew is read from right to left!

Another Spelling Enters the Picture

As we mentioned earlier, the discussion of the Messiah's name would be much simpler if it was only a matter of determining the original pronunciation of the Hebrew **יהושע**. However, further stirring the pot of this controversial topic is the fact that not all references agree that the Messiah's name was in fact pronounced the same as Joshua's, or at least the same as that particular form of the name *Joshua*. You see, Joshua son of Nun is referred to as **ישוע** (*Yeshua*) in Nehemiah 8:17, and many references point to this particular rendering as more closely matching the name given to the Messiah at His birth. Let's take a look at the name used for *Joshua* in Nehemiah 8:17, as displayed by the following transcription from *The Interlinear Bible*[12]:

1961	1931	3117	5704	3478	1121	3651	5128	1121	3442	3117	6213	3808	3588
וַתְּהִי	הַהוּא	הַיּוֹם	עַד	יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי	כֵּן	נוּן־	בֶּן	יֵשׁוּעַ	מִימֵי	עָשׂוּ	לֹא־	כִּי
and was there	that	day	until	Israel	sons the of		Nun	the of son	Joshua	the since of days	had done	not	For ←

3966	1419	8057
מְאֹד׃	גְּדוֹלָה	שִׂמְחָה
very	great	gladness ←

As you may recall from the Hebrew text of Numbers 13:16, the name attributed to Joshua is spelled **יהושע** in Hebrew. The name attributed to this same man in Nehemiah 8:17 is considered a shortened form of the above long form: **ישוע**. This form, to the best of our knowledge, did not come into use within the ranks of Judaism until their return from the Babylonian Captivity in the sixth century BCE; hence, it is sometimes referred to as the *late form* of the Messiah's name. Since it didn't come into use until the return from captivity, many Sacred Name Movement adherents regard it as a product of heathen influence and on that basis alone summarily reject it as a potential candidate for the Messiah's name. This is in spite of the fact that this spelling is sanctioned by Scripture. These are just a few of the dynamics surrounding the controversy of the Messiah's name, all of which we address in this study.

In our previous chapter, we supplied information about the Messiah's name as found in scholarly references that would seem to indicate that He was given the long form, **יהושע**, at birth. Other scholarly references might persuade you that He was given the short form, **ישוע**, at birth. Here are a few examples:

From *The Names of Jesus* by Vincent Taylor: "Of all names none is more precious in Christian ears than the name 'Jesus.' From the end of the first century it expressed a deep-seated Christian sentiment of veneration and worship. In itself, however, it is a personal name significant by reason of its meaning. It transcribes the Greek Ιησους, which was used for the Hebrew *Jeshua*, a shortened form of *Jehoshua* (Joshua), 'He whose salvation is Yahweh', or, more briefly, 'God's salvation.'"[13]

From the book *The Gospel According to Matthew* by Leon Morris: "*Jesus* is the Latin form of the name = Ιησους, the Greek form of the Hebrew *Jeshua*, a shorter form of *Jehoshua*, which means 'Yahweh

[12] Ibid, excerpt from Nehemiah 8:17, p. 428.
[13] From *The Names of Jesus*, by Vincent Taylor, St. Martin's Press, Inc., New York, 1953, p. 5.

is salvation.'"[14]

From *Responses to 101 Questions About Jesus*, by Michael L. Cook: "In any event, Jesus was a relatively common name at that time. It comes from the Hebrew for Joshua (*Yehošua'*, later shortened to *Yešua* and *Yešu*. It may have originally meant 'Yahweh helps' but was later interpreted in popular usage as 'Yahweh saves.' Thus, the angel says to Joseph: '... you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). Historically, Jesus would have been known as *Yešu bar Yosef* = Jesus son of Joseph."[15]

From the book *Jesus* by David Flusser: "Jesus is the common Greek form of the name Joshua. In Jesus' time the name was pronounced 'Jeshua'; and so, we often find Jesus of Nazareth named in ancient Jewish literature. That, almost certainly, was the Galilean pronunciation."[16]

Thus, as the above references inform us, the Messiah's name is not *really* pronounced as "Yehoshua / Yahshua," but rather as "Yeshua" or "Yeshu." This, of course, is in direct opposition to the other references from which we quoted in our previous chapter. According to the one set of references, His name is pronounced "Yehoshua / Yahshua" (as in Joshua). According to the other set of references, His name is pronounced "Yeshua" or "Yeshu." Regrettably, neither set of references comes forward with any evidence to support their claims. *How can we know if <u>either</u> set of references is correct?*

[14] From *The Gospel According to Matthew*, by Leon Morris, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992, p. 19.
[15] From *Responses to 101 Questions About Jesus*, by Michael L. Cook, S.J. Paulist Press, New York, 1993, p. 24.
[16] From *Jesus*, by David Flusser, Translated by Ronald Walls, Herder and Herder New York, 1969, p. 13. We will later see (in chapter 14) that Walls mistranslated Flusser, who actually wrote that *Yeshu* was the Galilean pronunciation.

3. Stand Taken by the Sacred Name Movement

We found in our previous chapter that none of the scholarly references we reviewed offer evidence of either the original spelling or pronunciation of the Messiah's name. Nevertheless, as we are about to see, many within the Sacred Name Movement have chosen to publish or issue statements characterized by what can very well be construed as *prejudicial* against any who do not pronounce the Messiah's name "their way." This extreme bias is primarily based on the belief that the form *Yeshua* (represented by the Hebrew spelling **ישׁוע**) is the result of a Jewish conspiracy to remove the Father's name from the Son's name. In other words, from the perspective of Sacred Namers, Judaism is overly-concerned that any name containing the "Yah" prefix presents too much of a risk of slipping and accidentally pronouncing the Creator's name. To reduce or eliminate any possibility of inadvertently pronouncing the Name, Judaism changed the "ah" sound (in names beginning with "Yah") to an "eh" sound, or so it is taught by many Sacred Name Movement members. Thus, it is held that the Messiah's true name, *Yahshua* (or *Yahushua*) was deliberately changed to *Yehshua* or *Yeshua*.

We are aware of two contentions disseminated by various Sacred Name Movement leaders regarding this "scheme," both of which are easily refuted. The first contention alleges name-tampering with any original Hebrew name that begins with the first three letters of the Tetragrammaton (**יהוה**). Hebrew, of course, is read from right to left, and from the perspective of Sacred Namers, Judaism preserves the first letter of the Messiah's name, the "yod" (**י**), but then they "drop" the next two letters (**הו**). Thus, as alleged by many Sacred Name Movement members, the Hebrew spelling **יהושע** was altered to **ישׁוע** in a deliberate attempt to change the Hebrew pronunciation of the first syllable from "Yah" to "Yeh." Don't get us wrong, we're not denying that the change in spelling took place any more than we're not denying that my own name, *Larry*, "evolved" from an original "Lawrence." The question is, was **יהושע** changed to **ישׁוע** in an attempt to hide the Creator's name?

If you ask the majority of Sacred Name Movement leaders, they will answer yes to the above question, or at least that has been our personal experience. However, if you carefully review the inside cover of our study, you will notice historical evidence from an ancient ossuary which, in and of itself, disproves this contention. You can see for yourself how, if there was a scheme to hide the Creator's name from Hebrew names beginning with the letters **יהו**, ancient Judaism didn't get the message. One of the ossuaries (burial boxes) that was discovered in ancient Jerusalem is labeled "Yahuda, son of Yeshua" (**יהודה בן ישׁוע**). The one name contains the letters **יהו**, whereas the other name is the name that Sacred Name Movement folks are making such a fuss about – the name **ישׁוע**, which is recognized as being the short form of the longer **יהושע**. If Jews deliberately changed the spelling of the name **יהושע** to **ישׁוע**, then why didn't they likewise tamper with the name *Yehuda* (or as some would prefer to pronounce it, *Yahuda*)? Notice that *Yehuda* (**יהודה**) begins with the first three letters of the Tetragrammaton. If there was a scheme to remove the first three letters of the Tetragrammaton from any name that had such a prefix (**יהו**), then it is reasonable to expect the same tampering to have been done with the "Yah" (**יהו**) from the name *Yahuda*. Also, please bear in mind that the form pronounced *Yeshua* (**ישׁוע**) was already in place hundreds of years before the Messiah's birth.

The second contention being circulated by Sacred Name Movement members is that Greeks changed the pronunciations of Hebrew names, including *Yahshua*, to *Iesous* to help promote their worship of *Zeus*. We will demonstrate later in our study that this allegation is simply not true, at least not in the case of the

form *Iesous* (and certainly not in the form *Yeshua*).[17] For now, since we previously mentioned that we would *quickly* disprove this contention, please ask yourself why Greeks such as Clement of Alexandria[18], Theodoret[19] and Epiphanius[20] all explained that the Tetragrammaton is pronounced *Iaue* (or *Iabe*) in the Greek language (thus preserving the "Yah" pronunciation)? If they were so intent on changing the pronunciations of words so as to conform to the names of the idols they worshipped, why didn't they change that first syllable from *Yah* to *Yeh*? The same Greeks who transliterated the Tetragrammaton *Iaue* transliterated the Messiah's name *Iesou*, *Iesous* or *Iesoun* (not conveying the "Yah" pronunciation). We will see examples of these three forms later in this study.[21]

The contention that Greeks changed the pronunciations of Hebrew names also ignores the fact that the Hebrew scholars who translated the Torah from Hebrew to Greek in the 3rd century BCE consistently rendered Joshua's name (**יהוֹשע**) as *Iesou*, *Iesous* or *Iesoun*. We will demonstrate later that the New Testament writers most frequently cited the Septuagint text. Did those ancient Hebrew scholars somehow foreknow the name that would be given to the Messiah and on that basis deliberately remove the Father's name from the Son's name centuries before He was even born? That would appear to be the scenario promoted by those who reject the form *Yeshua*. We will address this argument more fully in a subsequent chapter.[22]

We thus see that there are some holes in the theory that the form *Yeshua* came about as a consequence to the "ineffable name" doctrine. Nevertheless, as we are about to see, this is the primary charge brought against those who, like June and me, refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua*.

In the course of our research in this area, we have encountered a significant number of statements from Sacred Name Movement constituents that are designed to influence others that certain spellings and/or pronunciations of the Messiah's name are not only erroneous, but also *may* have a bearing on our very salvation. We're about to provide quotations from various Sacred Name organizations and individual Sacred Name Movement leaders, primarily to give you an idea of the general approach exhibited by these individuals and groups with regard to the Messiah's name. When I composed my original Unity Conference presentation back in 2001, I knew I would be delivering it to a hostile audience consisting of many authors of the very material from which I would be quoting. Rather than risk making the audience any more uneasy than I knew they would already be, I decided at that time to simply list the quotations as my examples, while omitting the authors' names and/or revealing publication names from my presentation.

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[17] Cf., chapter 4, "Evidence for the Messiah's Name: The Septuagint" and chapter 10, "Can the Name 'Jesus' Be Traced to Zeus Worship?"

[18] According to Clement of Alexandria (c.150 - c. 215) in *The Stromata*, Book V, ch. 6:34-35: "... Further, the mystic name of four letters which was affixed to those alone to whom the adytum was accessible, is called *Jave* [Iaou, or Iaoue], which is interpreted, 'Who is and shall be.' The name of God, too [i.e., θεὸς], among the Greeks contains four letters."

[19] According to Theodoret of Cyrus (393 – 457 CE), "This name was also inscribed on a plate of gold worn on the forehead of the high priest and bound to his head with a fillet. The Samaritans call it 'Iabe,' the Jews 'Ia.'" Cf., *The Questions on the Pentateuch*, Vol. 1, "The Questions on Exodus," Question XV, English translation by Robert C. Hill, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 2007, pp. 250-251.

[20] Epiphanius of Salamis, who lived from circa 320 – 403 CE, wrote, "'Jahveh' means, 'He who was and is, He who forever is,' as he translates for Moses, 'He who is' hath sent me, shalt thou say unto them." Cf., *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, Book I (Sects 1-46), Anacephalaeosis III, 40. Against Archontics, 5.8 – 5.10, 2nd ed., Translated by Frank Williams, Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands, 2009, p. 288.

[21] Cf., chapter 4, "Evidence for the Messiah's Name: The Septuagint."

[22] Ibid.

I'm not sure if that strategy worked or not. From that point on, June and I were never really treated the same by some of the folks whom we had previously considered close friends, so I knew I had struck a raw nerve within the Sacred Name Movement leadership. Based on the negative overall response that I received, I couldn't help but wonder what would have happened if I had listed the authors' names in the course of my presentation. *Would they have tarred and feathered me afterwards?* Nearly ten years later, I decided to add a little more substance to this study by listing the names of the publications we cite as well as the names of the authors. This should not be misunderstood as an attempt to expose or otherwise attack those who are at odds with our view; rather, it is simply honoring the basic journalistic principle of not only correctly *documenting* your sources, but also revealing who they are.

Since that memorable Unity Conference presentation, June and I have lost touch with many of the authors whose remarks I cited. Our disassociation is not necessarily due to the issue involving the Messiah's name. For example, since that time, we have had some fundamental disagreements with many Sacred Name groups, one of the more serious of which, ironically, is over the issue of whether or not we honor the Almighty by referring to Him as "our God."[23] We say no, many say yes. Nevertheless, the pronunciation of the Messiah's name remains a *huge* issue within the ranks of what is known as "the Sacred Name Movement." Through it all, and in spite of the raw nerve I had struck that day in 2001, I am pleased to report that, as a result of my presentation, many folks have indeed come away with a new and more respectful perspective.

One of the more heartwarming responses came from a gentleman named Scott Leys, an elder with the Assembly of Yahweh West Michigan. At first, I was only going to incorporate an *excerpt* from the e-mail he sent me; however, upon further reflection, I find that the entire body of his commentary is worthy of dissemination:

> Larry,
>
> I received your Unity Conference presentation on our Savior's name in the mail yesterday. I read it last evening.
>
> I want to commend you, and thank Yahweh for an excellent, well-balanced paper. You accomplished something that I have rarely seen in Sacred Name Movement writings – intellectual honesty.
>
> Like you, I was introduced to the Savior's name as "Yahshua" many (about 25) years ago. I've taught my children that name since we had our first child 17 years ago. I definitely have some kind of emotional attachment to "Yahshua." Having said all of that, I've had to come to the conclusion in the past few years that I can't be sure of the true pronunciation of His Name. I think "Yahushua," "Yahoshua," or "Yeshua" are all likely candidates.
>
> As I mentioned in a previous e-mail, our fellowship is evenly divided on the issue, but it doesn't divide us. As a matter of fact, I am having lunch this afternoon with one of the brothers from our fellowship who is a proponent of "Yeshua." I intend to pass your presentation to him.
>
> I hope your presentation receives wide circulation within the SN brotherhood. It deserves that kind of attention.
>
> Thank you for your hard work and scholarship.
>
> Yahweh bless you and June as you continue to bring unity and harmony to the Body.[24]

Needless to say, June and I were very humbled by the e-mail we received from Mr. Leys. We incorporated his encouraging response into our 2010 revision because we felt the time had come to

[23] For an in-depth study into this matter, we invite you to read our study *God's Identity According to Ancient Hebrew Scholars*, which may be accessed at the following URL: www.ponderscripture.org/nameYHWH.html.
[24] This is the full text of the e-mail we received from Scott Leys on 08/28/2001.

establish that there really are a few folks out there who will take the time to study this entire issue. Part of the reason we decided to update our study in 2010 is because of another e-mail we received just prior to our revision that was very similar to the one that Scott sent us. The e-mails were sent over eight years apart from individuals with whom we aren't really even acquainted. What follows is the e-mail that we received from a believer whom we had never heard from before, nor have we heard from him since:

> Greetings,
>
> I just finished reading your article on the Messiah's Name and wanted to tell you that I really enjoyed it. You did a good job putting on paper thoughts and questions I have entertained for years. Many Sacred Name people are really dogmatic about a number of issues that have no, or very little, conclusive scriptural evidence. It is a shame that so many times there is division over these issues.
>
> Again, let me say, great job[25]

Our 2013 update incorporated, not only an additional encouraging response, but also a contribution from another student of the Word. This gentleman not only offered his endorsement of our study, but he also provided some much-needed editing, correcting some pretty embarrassing typos and other grammatical mistakes along the way. Shown below is an excerpt from an e-mail that Chuck Henry sent us in 2013:

> Shalom Larry & June,
>
> I finished reading your study *Name of the Messiah:* יהושע*?* ישוע*?* It was excellent! Thank you for your untold hours of research and writing.[26]

June and I are thankful that there are still some individuals out there who, like Chuck, will take the time to not only carefully read our study, but also conduct their own independent research before forming a conclusion. Chuck is one of the few individuals out there who was actually raised in Sacred Name Movement teachings, including the view that the Messiah's name is correctly pronounced *Yahshua*. When Chuck completed his investigation, he expounded on his "change of mind":

> With regard to my change of mind pertaining to the Messiah's name, it wasn't very easy, especially at first. But, I want to make an honest effort to, as accurately as possible, call Him by His given name. Like you, I concur that the weight of the evidence points to *Yeshua*, especially in light of the fact that some of the mainstay Sacred Name Movement arguments don't hold water. Of course, as we covered in our phone conversation the other night, neither of us seek trouble with Sacred Name believers who use the other forms; for we are glad that they too are trying to honor the name given to the Son of Yahweh. Nevertheless, we understand that trouble sometimes comes knocking in the form of some Sacrednamers who are unwilling to take a mutual approach.[27]

We knew Chuck for a number of years, and even during the years before he began referring to the Messiah as *Yeshua*, he maintained a very respectful approach towards those of my persuasion. Regrettably, we will see later that many believers, to this day, are not willing to take a "mutual approach."

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[25] This is the full text of the e-mail we received from L. Lawhorn on 06/03/2010.

[26] From an e-mail we received from Chuck Henry, Cisco, TX on 09/12/2013. Chuck devoted the remaining portion of his e-mail to pointing out some rather embarrassing grammatical errors and typos in this study. Sadly, Chuck passed away in 2022.

[27] From an e-mail we received from Chuck Henry, Cisco, TX on 09/23/2013.

Reevaluating and Reconsidering Spiritual Intolerance of the Form Yeshua

Our study has reached and influenced more than a few people, and we pray the influence has been with Yahweh's blessing and motivated by His Spirit. One gentleman, after having witnessed my 2001 Unity Conference presentation, eventually began to exhibit a more open understanding and acceptance of our position while maintaining his belief that the Messiah's name is more correctly pronounced *Yahshua*. Although he didn't change his preference, he was one of the very few to agree that we all need to be more accepting – and understanding – of other views on this topic. His name? Frank Brown.[28] Before gaining a better handle on our perspective, Frank was one of those who exhibited what I would describe as "spiritual intolerance" towards those who refer to the Messiah as "Yeshua." Frank hailed from Clarksville, Arkansas and published a monthly newsletter titled *Search the Scriptures*. As you will see very shortly, some of the articles that Frank incorporated into his newsletter over the years were very critical—to the point of intolerant—of the short form **ישׁוע** (*Yeshua*). Frank was among those who practically insisted that unless you referred to the Messiah with the "long form" of the Hebrew (**יהושׁע**), commonly rendered *Yahshua* or *Yahushua* by members of the Sacred Name Movement, you were guilty of participating in a Jewish conspiracy to remove the Father's name (Yah) from the Son's name.

Frank Brown, however, unlike many with whom we've attempted to discuss this matter over the years, gradually expressed a willingness to consider our position. Frank attended my Unity Conference presentation, but he didn't seem to grasp the substance of my message until I brought some "spiritually intolerant" portions of articles from his newsletter to his attention. At length, he seemed to understand that by publishing articles contributed by authors who are spiritually intolerant of the form *Yeshua*, he was simultaneously placing his stamp of approval on such active displays of spiritual intolerance. As a show of his understanding of the need for us to come together instead of putting each other down, Frank even published a study we wrote titled "The Messiah's Name and Spiritual Intolerance" in his monthly newsletter.[29] Not only did he include our study in his newsletter, but, for a brief time, he posted it on his website.

I could provide many examples of the "spiritually intolerant" articles that appeared in Frank's newsletter, and I will incorporate a few here, not only because they serve as prime examples of the same intolerant view that still exists within the Sacred Name Movement, but also because they are examples of what this one man wrote—then later repented of. As you read the excerpts from Mr. Brown's newsletter, we hope you keep in the back of your mind the fact that, once he realized his error, he no longer exhibited the spiritually intolerant attitude regarding the Messiah's name that was apparent when he originally published the articles. With that in mind, what follows are some examples of the *spiritual intolerance* exhibited by various members of the Sacred Name Movement, directed against those who don't pronounce the Messiah's name the way they do:

Frank Brown, in his *Search the Scriptures* newsletter, once published an article titled "The Mysterious Hybrid Christian," which had been sent to him by an anonymous reader. Apparently, the anonymous reader was fairly new to Torah observance and had stumbled across an article that poked fun at those who practiced such "Jewish" customs as Sabbath observance, avoidance of Christmas celebrations, etc. Presumably, this anonymous reader was confused by the article he had read and asked

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[28] We were saddened to learn that Frank Brown passed away on May 17, 2013 at the age of 85.

[29] Our study, titled "The Messiah's Name and Spiritual Intolerance," appeared in the Jan. – Feb. 2003 issue of Frank's *Search the Scriptures* newsletter.

Frank to publish it in his newsletter while providing his commentary in response to the various points raised by the author. Frank agreed to this arrangement and provided his own commentary in bold italics within brackets. Admittedly, the author of "The Mysterious Hybrid Christian" has his share of differences, not only with the Sacred Name Movement in general, but with June and me as well. However, June and I essentially agree with that author's commentary chiding the Sacred Name Movement for its perpetual bickering over the Messiah's name. Here is what he wrote:

> I doubt if the Lord minds being called Yeshua (many groups actually differ over the Name, claiming it to be either Yeshua, Yehoshua, Yahshua, or Yeshu). But what purpose, exactly, does this serve?[30]

The author of the above commentary, Charlie Read, pretty much summarized the position that June and I have held since 1997, when we reached the conclusion that the form we had been semi-brainwashed to use by the Sacred Name Movement, *Yahshua*, doesn't have the solid backing that we had been led to believe that it has. Each of the forms presented above by Mr. Read, in our humble opinion, represents a valid, legitimate attempt at transliterating the Messiah's name. We'll deal with that part later in this study.[31] For now, though, let's see how Frank Brown responded to Mr. Read's commentary:

> ***The purpose, exactly, that it [the Messiah's name] serves, is this: Acts 4:12 – Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is <u>none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. I can't think of a better reason</u>.***
>
> ***Our Savior had the same Name as Joshua, the Old Testament general who succeeded Moses and led the Israelites into the Promised Land. There is no letter "J" or "J" sound in either the Hebrew or Greek languages. All the Biblical names of people and places that start with "J" actually have the "Y" sound. Thus, John is Yachanan; James is Ya'akob, etc., in Hebrew.***
>
> ***The Jews and some others refer to Him as Yeshua to get around the prohibition the Jews have against using the Holy Name, which begins with "Yah." The true name of the Savior, Yahshua, means "the salvation of Yah," or "Yah's Salvation." That is why the angel told Joseph in Matthew 1:21, "you shall call His Name Yahshua (Yah-Shua) FOR HE SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS."***[32]

We highlighted in yellow the portion of Mr. Brown's response that concerned us enough to publish it in this study. Is it true, as Frank reported, that the Jews refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua* to "get around the prohibition against using Yah"? If this statement from Frank is true, then there would indeed appear to a legitimate problem with the form *Yeshua*. On the other hand, if Frank's remark was unfounded, he had just provided his reading audience with false information. Since Frank chose to not validate his comment anywhere within his newsletter, the reader was left to either believe his remark is true or else prove otherwise to himself or herself.

Frank Brown's bias against the form *Yeshua* certainly did not originate with the May 1999 issue of his newsletter. The previous month's issue contained an article authored by a fellow Sacred Name member

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[30] Charlie Read, "The Mysterious Hybrid Christian," originally appearing in the April 1999 issue of *The New Jerusalem Times* newsletter, Parkersburg, WV, and reprinted with commentary by Frank in his May 1999 issue of *Search the Scriptures*, Clarksville, AR, p. 4.

[31] Cf., Chapter 7, "Evidence for the Messiah's Name: The Hebrew Hebrews," esp. the heading titled "<u>The Shift From Yehoshua to Yeshua – In Layman's Terms</u>."

[32] Frank Brown, commenting on the article "The Mysterious Hybrid Christian," *Search the Scriptures* newsletter, May 1999, pp. 4-5.

named Michael. Here is what Michael had to say regarding the Messiah:

> When He is our Healer, He is Yahweh-Rapha. He is our provider as Yahweh-Yireh; our savior as Yah-Shua, or Yah-Hoshea, or Yahushua (not Yeshua, as the Jews teach. They try to degrade Him to only 'he who saves,' one of many "savior men of history").[33]

Note that the author of the above statement, in keeping with the approach exhibited above by Frank Brown, did not provide documentation to *prove* that those who prefer the pronunciation *Yeshua* "try to degrade Him." Do authors such as Frank and Michael provide their reading audience with facts that do not need validation *or* are they feeding us propaganda?[34]

As we will see, the answer is "feeding us propaganda." For years, June and I were fed this same propaganda – and we accepted it – until we accidentally stumbled across the evidence unmasking the truth that these authors had left hidden behind their biased words.

As we have already stated, once Frank realized that publishing articles whose authors are clearly biased against the form *Yeshua* constituted his approval of that same attitude, he no longer exhibited the spiritually intolerant attitude regarding the Messiah's name that was apparent when he originally published those articles. This bears repeating because it's difficult to imagine that the author of the comments cited below would later change his mind. In the Nov. – Dec. 2000 issue of his *Search the Scriptures* newsletter, Frank supplied his readers with a "Feast of Tabernacles 2000 Report," which was a summary of the events and experiences that he and his wife shared with others at a Feast of Tabernacles gathering in Missouri. In his report, Frank described a Bible study that was held one night, and he posted the questions that were covered during that study, as well as a summary of the answers to those questions. One of the questions addressed the Messiah's name:

> **Q.** "The Jews prefer 'Yeshua' over Yahshua. Why?"
> **A.** Because they will not pronounce Yahweh's Name, and since "Yah" in Yahshua is part of His Name, they have subverted the first syllable to the "Yeh" sound.[35]

If we follow Frank's answer to its logical conclusion, anyone who refers to the Messiah as *Yeshua* is accepting and following the lead of those who have *subverted* His name. What did this say about Frank's regard for the reasoning of those who, like June and me, refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua*? At *best*, we would have to be considered dumb sheep following the blind leaders into the proverbial ditch. Again, we are glad to report that Frank eventually had a "change of heart" about the above answer. However, in terms of Sacred Name adherents, we regret to inform you that Frank was (and would still be) in the minority.

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[33] Michael Mastropaolo, "Hear, O Israel – יהוה is One!" published in *Search the Scriptures* newsletter, Clarksville, AR, March-April 1999, p. 3.

[34] While we cannot speak for Michael Mastropaolo, we are pleased to report that Frank Brown eventually expressed (privately) agreement with our plea for mutual acceptance of other views regarding the spelling and pronunciation of the Messiah's name. For example, here's an excerpt from an e-mail he sent me on 12/04/2002: "I did get a copy [of your study] at the conference; I also read your previous comments several years ago when you took me to task for the same thing [spiritual intolerance of the form *Yeshua*]. It was a really short answer to a question I had been asked. I used it for a space filler and did not elaborate. And to that point, I thought it was correct. You pointed out your conclusions, and I have not argued or disagreed with it since."

[35] Frank Brown, "Feast of Tabernacles 2000 Report," *Search the Scriptures* newsletter, Number 48, Nov. – Dec. 2000, p. 3.

The Official Position of the Sacred Name Movement

Back in 1998, when June and I composed the forerunner to my Unity Conference presentation, we already knew that the Sacred Name Movement, in general, was propagating plenty of negative sentiment against the pronunciation *Yeshua*. We had only recently cast aside our own bias against this form, so we knew what we were up against and we understood that prejudice, once formed, is not easily shaken. We knew from experience that persuading others of our view would be difficult, and as Frank eventually admitted, becoming persuaded was no easy task. Frank was one of the few whom we were able to reach.[36] However, twenty years later, we see that relatively little has changed. While many of the quotes we are citing here are taken from the time when our study was composed, they could just as well be taken from any Sacred Name publication today.

For example, here is what a Sacred Name believer named Tamar sent us in 2009, after having visited our website. Although she gave no indication of having read our study, she offered the following commentary:

> Okay…..here is what my husband said to give you…
>
> Yeshua He is salvation
> Yahshua Yahweh is salvation
> Yahushua Yahweh will be salvation
>
> So…there are minor differences….but, hey…that may be the difference in "being sealed" during tribulation or not…[37]

Does the pronunciation matter? According to Tamar's husband, it matters greatly because a different pronunciation alters the *meaning*. This is understandable; however, we need to be careful before reaching potentially premature conclusions about what a name means. The form she uses in her own writings is "Yahshua," which, in her estimation, retains the Father's name within the Son's name. On the other hand, the form *Yeshua*, at least based on the options listed above, *removes* the Father's name. We can understand some of the linguistic rationalization as expressed by Tamar. According to *Strong's* Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary, *Yeshua* does indeed mean "He is salvation," or more specifically, "He will save":

> **3442. יֵשׁוּעַ Yêshûwaʿ**, *yay-shoo'-ah;* for 3091;
> *he will save; Jeshua*, the name of ten
> Isr., also of a place in Pal.:—Jeshua.

We don't often question the meanings of names as listed by *Strong's*, but we will demonstrate later in this study that not all scholars agree with the "he will save" meaning for *Yeshua* as listed above.[38] Again, we need to be careful before reaching potentially premature conclusions about what a name means. Tamar specifies a preference for the form *Yahshua* because it is the one that means "Yahweh is salvation," and this meaning also matches what we find in *Strong's*:

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[36] It bears repeating here that although Frank no longer exhibited a bias against the form *Yeshua*, he preferred to use the form *Yahshua*.
[37] From an e-mail we received from Tamar on 12/01/2009.
[38] Cf., Chapter 16, "Addressing the Objections," section C, "Does Referring to the Messiah as 'Yeshua' Constitute a Violation of the Third Commandment?"

3091. יְהוֹשׁוּעַ **Y^ehôwshûwaʿ**, *yeh-ho-shoo'-ah;*
or
יְהוֹשֻׁעַ **Y^ehôwshûʿa**, *yeh-ho-shoo'-ah;*
from 3068 and 3467; *Jehovah saved;*
Jehoshuä (i.e. Joshua), the Jewish leader:—Jehoshua, Jehoshuah, Joshua. Comp. 1954, 3442.

Keep in mind that James Strong, in his concordance, offered transliterations strictly based on the vowel-pointings found in the Hebrew Masoretic text. Those vowel-pointings were inserted by Jewish scribes who deliberately mis-vowel-pointed the Tetragrammaton so as to prevent the reader from inadvertently speaking the Sacred Name. This should help explain why we see "Jehovah" listed in *Strong's* instead of "Yahweh."[39] Many Sacred Name believers are persuaded that the Jews didn't stop with mis-vowel-pointing the Tetragrammaton and that they deliberately (mis) vowel-pointed *any* name beginning with *yod, heh, waw* (יהו) so as to render its pronunciation *yeh* instead of *yah*. Consequently, those who refer to the Messiah with a name beginning with the "*yeh*" sound are regarded by Sacred Namers as the less-studious victims of *Strong's* decision to go along with the Masoretic scribes' vowel-pointing errors.

At least on the surface, then, we can understand why those who refer to the Messiah as *Yahshua* or *Yahushua* regard those who refer to Him as *Yeshua* as (at best) not being very studious and at worst having little or no regard for the sanctity of our Heavenly Father's name. Back in the days when we composed our original study, we retained articles consisting of prejudiced remarks against the form *Yeshua*. These days, we more or less just shrug our shoulders. This is why many of the anti-*Yeshua* quotes you'll read in this chapter are the same ones found in our original study. They may be old quotes, but they're certainly not outdated. Nevertheless, we've kept a few of the studies pertaining to the Messiah's name that we've received since my presentation, and it seems that the overall approach has not changed over the years. Sadly, virtually every major Sacred Name group we've heard of has exhibited some level of spiritual intolerance against the form *Yeshua*. Of course, we will delve into whether or not this spiritual intolerance is justified through the course of this study, but for now, I believe we need to produce examples displaying the low regard that the Sacred Name Movement in general has for the name *Yeshua*.

The following example is taken from an article authored by Robert W. Young that appeared in a 2005 issue of *The Faith* magazine:

> Therefore, since the Son has the name of the Father Yahweh, and since His name is the same as that of the successor of Moses, the Son of Nun, that name, YHUSHUA (and its shorter form Y'SHUA must have the name of Yahweh in it. Furthermore, since it is by speaking it rather than by writing it that we call on a name, when we call on the name of Yahweh for salvation through calling on the name of the Son, Y'SHUA, the sound of Yahweh's name must be in it in some form. But this can only be so if the vowel assigned to it is sounded as "ah", as in "Yashua" or "Yahshua", rather than "eh", as in "Yeshua" or "Yehshua". To say that the name of the Father is implied in the term "Yeshua" is to ignore the fact that it is the sound of that name, not just something indicated, or implied, in the written form, that is used to give Him

[39] For details regarding the Masoretic scribes' vowel-pointing of the Hebrew text of Scripture as it relates to the pronunciation of our Heavenly Father's name, please read our online study Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton (especially chapters one and 15).

honor and praise.[40]

Here we see author Robert Young's expressed view that the first syllable of the Messiah's name *must* contain the "ah" sound, and that those who say "Yeshua" ***ignore*** the "fact" that it is the sound of the Messiah's name that is used to give Him honor and praise.

When I first read those words, I had to do a "double-take." What was the author saying? Think about his words for a moment and consider how utterly biased—and mistakenly so—those words are. He is saying that those of us who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua* ignore the fact that it's the sound of His name that is used to give Him honor and praise. Please understand that if by referring the Messiah as *Yeshua*, this means we ignore that fact that it is the sound of the Messiah's name that is used to give Him praise, this in turn can only mean that "Yeshua" is not the right sound! From Robert W. Young's perspective, then, unless you pronounce the Messiah's name the way *he* feels it should be pronounced, you are apparently giving Him some form of mindless praise.

We address such unfounded, biased remarks as the above statement in subsequent chapters of this study; for now, however, we believe a brief commentary/response is in order. Here's why Mr. Young's teaching doesn't really make any sense: If I believe a man's name is "Mike," but he tells me he prefers to be called "Michael," this would not take anything away from any nice, praiseworthy things I had previously said about him while referring to him as "Mike." In fact, a man at work recently told me he *prefers* to be called "Michael" instead of "Mike," but he wasn't about to infer that when I had been previously referring to him as "Mike," I was ignoring the fact that the sound of his correct name is used to give him praise (when praise is due, of course). That's just not how things work in the real world, and something tells me that Yahweh provided a pattern in this world to let us catch a glimpse of how things are spiritually.

Now that I know my friend prefers to be called "Michael," I am careful to respect that choice. June and I try to follow this same pattern with the Messiah's name. If we can be shown that He would prefer to be called *Yahshua* or *Yahushua*, we will stop referring to Him as *Yeshua* immediately. As we hope you can see, we are persuaded that *Yeshua* or *Yeshu* are both very likely candidates for the pronunciation that the Messiah was known by. If that's the name He was called, then it hardly makes sense to believe that those first-century believers who called Him *Yeshua* or *Yeshu* were "ignoring the fact that it is the sound of that name that is used to give Him honor and praise."

Of course, the same is true today. We emphasize that our scenario is only true ***if*** Yeshua (or Yeshu) is the name He was called during the first century. Whether or not that is how His name was pronounced during that time period is what this discussion is all about, and to this point, those who write such biased statements in opposition to the form *Yeshua* have not demonstrated that this is *not* how His name was either written or spelled during the first century. Their reasoning that Jews intentionally removed the "ah" sound from the Savior's name just doesn't hold up when examined under close scrutiny, as we will see throughout the course of this study.

We've already produced several quotes from Frank Brown's *Search the Scriptures* newsletter and *The Faith* magazine, demonstrating the intense spiritual intolerance for the form *Yeshua* as exhibited by

[40] Robert W. Young, "The Savior's True Name," *The Faith* magazine, Vol. 69, No. 4, published by Assembly of Yahweh, Eaton Rapids, MI, 10/12/2005, p. 10.

members of the Sacred Name Movement. As we are about to see, virtually every major Sacred Name group exhibits this same intolerance and belittling of the intelligence of those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua*. On a more "minor" level, here's an example of intolerance from a small group named Truth Restoration Ministries. As of 2014, this group appears to have disbanded. Back in 2002, I printed from the internet an article titled "The Name of the Mashiach Was Never Yeshua and the Teachings of David Stern" by an author named Daron of Truth Restoration Ministries. I recently conducted an internet search to see if that article is still available on the Internet; not only is it gone, but I am no longer able to locate *any* group by the name of Truth Restoration Ministries.[41] Maybe Daron has changed his mind about some of the comments he made in his article. We certainly hope so. Here, then, is an excerpt from a now-defunct group known as "Truth Restoration Ministries" in which more of the same spiritual intolerance against the form *Yeshua* is exhibited:

> The name Jeshua {and Jesus} is a common name and even, ten Israelites, had this name. This name was also used for the name of a place in Palestine: This means that the name Yeshua identifies 10 Yisraeli's and a town in Palestine. However, the scriptures teach that the name of the Mashiach is above every name. This means that the name Yeshua {Jesus} is not the name of the Mashiach, because this would make the Mashiach's name equal with their names and not above their names. The Rabbis would not stand for somebody using the name YHWH for their name, right? Nor would Christian leaders stand for 10 people in each Church that have the name "Jesus/Yeshua." Is Jesus coming to Church today? No, he is out sick today! LOL!! Even the Spanish culture has a tradition of naming their children the common name of Jesus and it is spelt with English letter as "Jesus." Simple common sense and scripture proves that the names of Yeshua and Jesus is a great error, and are not for the name of the Mashiach of Yisrael![42]

We will address the reasoning that *Yeshua* cannot be the Messiah's name due to its being "too common" later in our study.[43] For now, we will only focus on the author's remark that "simple common sense" proves that the form *Yeshua* is a "great error." It should be clear that the author regards folks like June and me as lacking "simple common sense."

From another newsletter comes the following isolated remark, offered to the reader without the benefit, once again, of proper documentation to seal the truthfulness of his statement:

> Actually, the pronunciation "Yeshua" comes from the Syriac or Aramaic language, not the Hebrew.[44]

The *intent* behind the above remark concerns us more than the accuracy. His remark reflects an

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[41] We should point out that we *did* find a group named "Truth Restoration Ministries," but we highly doubt it's the same one we found back in 2002. The "Truth Restoration Ministries" that is currently (2022) found on the Internet has the following slogan: "Where God is Rebuilding and Restoring Lives."

[42] Author who only identifies himself as Daron, "The Name of the Mashiach Was Never Yeshua and the Teachings of David Stern" *Truth Restoration Ministries*, pp. 2-3, accessed on 12/21/2002 at the following (now-defunct) web site: http://www.truthrestorationministry.net/trm/messages/52/530.html.

[43] Cf., Chapter 9, "Must the Son's Name Contain the Name of His Father?" section D, "But if the Form 'Yehoshua / Yahushua' Was Also Fairly Common, Then Doesn't This Mean 'Yehoshua / Yahushua' May Have Been the Messiah's Name?"

[44] Jerry Healan, "Is His Name Yahshua or Yeshua," *YEA Newsletter*, Atlanta, TX , Jan. – Feb. 1999, p. 7. The author goes on to write, "That 'Yahshua' (so written as to remove all ambiguity of pronunciation and to better show its connection with the Father's name in written form) is the correct sound of the Savior's name is clear according to the Biblical evidence (some of which we have considered). And this pronunciation of this common Hebrew name, which was given to our Savior at His birth as the ultimate 'Salvation of Yah', is confirmed by other findings as well."

attempt to remove any semblance of Hebrew roots from the form *Yeshua*. Clearly, since the majority of Sacred Name believers regard the Hebrew language as the "heavenly language," this man's statement was intended to evoke a very negative perception of the pronunciation "Yeshua." Surely no true believer, knowing that the pronunciation "Yeshua" is of "non-Hebrew origin," would choose to refer to the Messiah by that name! We obviously want Him to have a Hebrew name! But again, without the proper documentation, the above author's remark is invalid and although the name *Yeshua* was apparently not used until after the Babylonian exile, it is very much a part of the inspired Hebrew Scriptures.

With regard to the Aramaic language, this is the language that, quite frankly, was most commonly spoken in Judea during the Messiah's time here on earth. According to *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, "By the time of Jesus, Aramaic was the vernacular in Palestine."[45] George Lamsa, who translated the Aramaic version of Scripture called *The Peshitta* into English, wrote, "Jesus and his disciples spoke the Galilean dialect of Aramaic, the language which the early Galileans had brought from the other side of the river Euphrates."[46] Was the Messiah's name influenced by the Aramaic language? Perhaps it was. Does this mean Yeshua or Yeshu could not have been the name given to the Messiah? No, it does not.

The authors we have cited thus far have exhibited relatively mild anti-sentiment against the form *Yeshua*. Other authors, as we are about to see, are more dogmatic and even ***condemning*** with their words on this subject. The following Sacred Name believer expressed a stern admonition on page 10 of his booklet:

> Since the name Yeshua (Jesus) and Yahoshua are not the same name, and there is only one name under heaven whereby we can receive salvation, we must make a choice.[47]

Not only does this author distinguish one name as being the Savior's true name as opposed to the other one's not even being "on the radar" for salvation, but the *other* name (Yeshua) is also directly parenthetically identified and classified as being an actual equivalent to the name Jesus. The obvious intent is that no true believer will want to refer to the Messiah by a name disassociated from salvation, so the reader is thereby subtly persuaded to choose the form *Yahoshua* over *Yeshua*.

Shown below are quotations from other publications and/or general writings in which a definite stand is taken in opposition to the form *Yeshua*:

From an article titled "The Name Yahushua **יהושע**":

> It is interesting to note here that those who are calling Him Yeshua **leave out the part in Yahweh's name which tells us who He is that saves**.[48]

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[45] From *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, by Merrill F. Unger, Moody Press, Chicago, IL, 1988, item "Languages," p. 755.

[46] From the Introduction to *The Holy Bible From the Ancient Eastern Text: George Lamsa's Translations From the Aramaic of the Peshitta,* HarperSanFrancisco; originally published in 1933 by A.J. Holman Co.; p. xi.

[47] From a study titled "The Name of the Saviour is Yahoshua, Not Jesus," authored by J. David Klopfenstein, Kendallville, IN, p. 10. The study is not dated, but the author personally gave us a copy in 1991.

[48] From the article, "The Name Yahushua **יהושע**" authored by Dennis Bitterman, published by the Evangelistic Assembly of Yahweh, Fulton, MO, January/February 2003, p. 10. Dennis has promoted his understanding in other articles, such as "The Savior's Name in Aramaic, **ישוע**," p. 4: "Salvation is written, **ישועה**; *the Savior's name* is written, **יהושע**." The Savior's name in Hebrew has salvation incorporated into its meaning, but not so in Aramaic."

The author of the above remark doesn't actually condemn those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua*, but he certainly leaves open the question as to why anyone would want to "leave out" the part of His name that saves. The implication is that if we *want* salvation, then we will insist upon incorporating *Yah* into the Messiah's name. Conversely, as the reasoning goes, those who *don't* want salvation, won't.

From a study entitled "How the Savior's Name Was Changed," written in 1999:

> The Savior clearly avowed, "I am come in my Father's Name" (John 5:43a). This passage means that He carried His Father's Name. Its meaning is not limited solely to His coming by authority or command of the Heavenly Father.[49]

The two quotations above convey a popular belief among Sacred name people that the Messiah's name MUST contain the "Yah" of Yahweh's name or else it is invalid. This belief, as mentioned above, is based largely on an interpretation of John 5:43, an interpretation which we maintain is inherently flawed. We will demonstrate later how many Sacred Name Movement adherents misinterpret the meaning and intent of this verse. We will also demonstrate that, contrary to the teachings of the Sacred Name Movement, the Father's name is contained within the names *Yeshu* and *Yeshua*.

The most condemning words we have seen directed at those who use the forms *Yeshua* or *Yeshu* were on a Sacred Name web site forum where people write in to express their ideas, opinions and beliefs. This particular forum topic was titled "**Another Look at the Name Yahshua/Yahushua. Again, 'Have We Been Duped'?**" A woman contributing to the forum discussion wrote the following:

> As you know, the Holy Scripture was originally written without any vowel points. With the use of 'vowel dissimilation'[50] only a slight change occurs, but the slight change REMOVES the Name of Yahweh, effectively shutting off SALVATION FROM YAHWEH to those who are deceived into using the name Yeshua, according to Acts 12. (Emphasis hers)[51]

This woman's commentary condemning those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua* was submitted only a little over a month prior to the original writing of this study, as it was posted on June 23, 2001. Does she speak for everyone in the Sacred Name Movement? We don't believe so, or at least we hope not! Certainly, however, her position is representative of a fairly large group of individuals within the Sacred Name Movement, and no one in that forum came forward to refute her remark or otherwise suggest that she take a more respectful approach. Sadly, we later learned, thanks to a "Google" search, that she borrowed her commentary from a Sacred Name group's website. This same group, The House of Yahweh from Abilene, Texas, presents virtually word-for-word the same commentary in the preface of

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[49] YNCA (Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly), "How the Savior's Name Was Changed" (by an anonymous author), April 1999. The article was originally accessed online at the following URL: http://www.ynca.com/howthesa.htm, but it was later moved to the Yahweh's Assembly in Yahshua website: http://www.yaiy.org/literature/HowTheSaviorNameChanged.html.

[50] It might help here to briefly explain what is meant by "vowel dissimilation." In vowel dissimilation, a vowel sound in a word is replaced by another vowel sound, often the result of normal dialectal influence, not an intentional pronunciation change. In the case of the Messiah's name, the Sacred Name Movement teaching is that Jews intent on removing the "Yah" from "Yahshua" replaced it with "Yeh" in a deliberate attempt to keep others from vocalizing the first syllable of the Creator's name. We are persuaded that the opposite occurred, i.e., the original name is *Yehoshua*, but the "eh" was dropped, leading to "Yoshua," which in modern vernacular is pronounced as "Yahshua." We are moreover persuaded that the form *Yeshua* is the result of dropping the "ho" from *Yehoshua*.

[51] Posting submitted on 06/23/2001 at 11:03 AM to the EliYah's Forum's discussion forum at www.eliyah.com by an anonymous contributor (pseudonym "wife of Yahyl"). The forum thread was titled "**Another Look at the Name Yahshua/Yahushua. Again, 'Have We Been Duped'?**" http://eliyah.com/forum2/Forum1/HTML/002763.html.

the Bible translation that they produce. Here is an excerpt from the Preface of their work, *The Book of Yahweh*:

> Our Messiah Himself stated His mission was to proclaim WHO our Savior is—YAHWEH! (Yahchanan Chapter 17). Obviously, our Messiah's very Name would state Who our Savior is; and the Name of our Messiah makes this distinction: 'Yahweh is Salvation', or 'YAHWEH IS OUR SAVIOR'. That Name is YAHSHUA. (Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, pp. 339).
>
> The world, for the most part, has rejected this Name (Yahshua), and has replaced it with the name YESHUA, or JESUS. However, even the scholars of the Christian Church openly admit that these FALSE NAMES (Yeshua, Jesus) replaced the True Name (Yahshua) in the Scriptures. Louis Hartman, **Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible**, pp. 1141, openly admits this fact in his writings:
>
> 'JESUA—In the last few centuries before Christ, the personal name YOSUA (Yahshua) was pronounced and written as YESUA (Yeshua).
>
> **New Catholic Encyclopedia**, Vol. 7, pp. 970:
>
> Jesus (The Name): In English, the name Jesus is a transliteration of the Latin form 'Iesus', which represents the Greek form 'Iesous', of the Hebrew name 'Yesua (Yeshua). The latter is a LATE FORM, by VOWEL DISSIMILATION, of the name Yosua (Yahshua).
>
> Mr. Hartman (Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible) clearly shows that the original name Yahshua was first changed by the Hebrews to YESHUA, using the same vowel point system which was used to HIDE the Name of YAHWEH! Then, the Churches perpetuated this error, further changing the name to the present 'Jesus'.
>
> With the subtle use of 'vowel dissimilation', the True Name of the Messiah, Yahshua, was replaced with the name that HID Yahweh's name—YESHUA, which means 'He will save'. Then, the Greeks wrote a literal transliteration of the Hebrew word 'Yeshua' (Iesous); the Latins (Romans) wrote a literal transliteration of the Greek word 'Iesous' (Iesus); then the English wrote a literal transliteration of the Latin word 'Iesus' (Jesus). All of these names are VOID of the power of Yahweh's Name!
>
> With the use of 'vowel dissimilation,' only a slight change occurs, but this slight change REMOVES the Name of Yahweh, effectively shutting off SALVATION FROM YAHWEH to those who are deceived into using the names of Yeshua and Jesus![52]

For those who may be drawn into accepting The House of Yahweh's reasoning, I feel we should at the very least point out that Yisrayl Hawkins doesn't seem to grasp the fact that while author Louis Hartman recognizes "Yosua" as the older form, the later form, *Yeshua* is indeed the form that was used "in the last few centuries before Christ." This means that the form *Yeshua* was certainly in use prior to the Messiah's birth, making it a very real and potential candidate for the name that He was given. Thus, in spite of his attempt to discredit the form "Yeshua," Mr. Hawkins unwittingly provided his reading audience with a scholarly validation of a point that June and I have often made to Sacred Name Movement adherents (but they often don't seem to get it): The name *Yeshua* (**ישׁוע**) was accepted by all of Judaism as a legitimate Hebrew form of the original Yehoshua/Yahushua (**יהוֹשׁע**) long before the Messiah's birth in Bethlehem.

Our reason for citing the above excerpt, which dates to at least 1988, is to demonstrate the apparent influence that it has had on so many individuals over the years. Thus, it is clear that the woman, in her Internet forum posting, was merely parroting what she has been taught by a certain preacher within the Sacred Name Movement. Exhibiting this same approach is author Gail Melvin, who wrote the following

[52] From the Preface of *The Book of Yahweh*, Second Printing, authored by Yisrayl B. Hawkins, Pastor and Overseer of The House of Yahweh, Abilene, TX, copyright 1988, pp. 4a-5a. Hawkins passed away in October 2021.

in her book titled *Yahweh Yahshua & You*:

> Unfortunately, the term *Y'shua*, like *Yeshua*, does not contain Yahweh's name, thereby rendering it useless as a means of salvation. Jewish Believers today who embrace the Messiah *Yeshua* or *Y'shua* unknowingly put their trust in tradition born out of rebellion by trusting in a name that never identified Yahweh's only Son.[53]

Elsewhere in her book, the same author refers to the form *Yeshua* as an "illegitimate word."[54] According to her reasoning, the Jews employed the form *Yeshua* to illustrate how they rejected Him as Messiah:

> Removing Yahweh's name from the Son's name was, in fact, a prophetic action. It foretold the response the Jews would demonstrate toward the Son in that it indicated that the Jews would reject the relationship Yahshua had with the Father. They would attempt to remove Yahweh's association with this man and, thereby, be justified in rejecting Him as their Messiah.[55]

Gail affirms her belief that those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua* cannot be in a covenant relationship with Him, offering the following assertion:

> Even when Yahshua lived among them [the Jews], they would not have called Him *Yahshua*. Only His disciples and followers would have used His proper name; those who were not in relationship with Him would have used *Yeshua*— the same name used today in place of His perfect, divinely-given name.[56]

The author of the above commentary goes on to state that *Yeshu* (**ישו**), a still shorter form of *Yeshua*, is an acronym meaning "*Yimach sh'mo v'zikhrono* ('May his name and memory be blotted out')," then she makes the following generalization:

> Of course, it is understandable why some Jews would like to blot out His name and memory. They will be distancing themselves from the guilt of their ancestors who rejected Him and His Son, their Savior.[57]

We will further address the teaching that *Yeshu* is an acronym for such a derogatory meaning of the Messiah's name in chapter seven. For the moment, we would simply like to demonstrate that *anyone* can convert *any* name into a derogatory acronym. The name "Sue," for example, could be detrimentally construed to mean "**S**elfish" "**U**ngrateful" "**E**gotist." It is not inconceivable, then, that some impious Jews, wishing to bring the Messiah's name into disrepute, would convert His name into a derogatory acronym meaning "May his name and memory be blotted out." Proponents of the long form of the Messiah's name (**יהושע**) need to be mindful that a derogatory acronym can also be made with this form. This long form, *Yehoshua*, which many Sacred Name folk insist should be pronounced either *Yahshua* or *Yahushua*, is spelled "Yod, heh, waw, shiyn, ayin" (**יהושע**) in Hebrew. By taking each letter of this name, we can indeed form a derogatory acronym: **י** = *yeda* (make known, #3046), **ה** = *heres* (destruction, #2041), **ו** =

[53] Gail Melvin, *Yahweh Yahshua & You*, Jubilee Publications, Panama City, FL, 1998, p. 165.
[54] Ibid, p. 167.
[55] Ibid, p. 167.
[56] Ibid, p. 167.
[57] Ibid, p. 169.

vazar (guilty, #2054), **שׁ** = *shav* (false, #7723), **ע** = *ashowq* (oppressor, #6216).[58] By stringing together the words we have just formed from the letters of the name **יהושע**, we come up with the phrase "Make known the destruction of the guilty, false oppressor." It is sad that the minds of men will think to construct such acronyms out of a person's name, yet we believe this very thing was done with the short form *Yeshu* (**ישו**), and we believe it was done out of contempt for the Person represented by that name. The fact that men would contrive such a negative acronym does not, of course, mean that *Yeshua* or *Yeshu* is not the Messiah's name. If anything, the sheer fact that they would go to such lengths to discredit this name should serve as evidence that it *is*, in fact, His name. *Why go to such lengths to malign this name if, in fact, it was never His name in the first place?*

We are therefore not impressed (or persuaded) by those who employ the "derogatory acronym" rationale in their attempts to discredit the legitimacy of either the form *Yeshua* or *Yeshu*. Again, we will deal with this teaching more extensively in chapter seven.

The author of *Yahweh Yahshua & You* offers her readers the following summary of her understanding with regard to the name *Yeshua*:

> He intended His name to remain in usage, to be known by all generations. He intended it to remain—unchanged, unaltered, unadulterated—forever. Unfortunately, neither His name nor His Son's name has remained in the memory of generations. The few terms that are generally thought to be their names (*Jehovah, God, Lord, Jesus, Christ, Yeshua*) are not Their names at all but rather unacceptable substitutions or flagrantly false names, often because they are closely associated with pagan gods.[59]

As shown above, author Gail Melvin lumps *Yeshua* in with the "unacceptable substitutions or flagrantly false names." Without question, she regards *Yeshua* as a false, "illegitimate" rendering of the Messiah's name and is "useless as a means of salvation." Indeed, Ms. Melvin has done everything short of actually *condemning* those who refer to Him as *Yeshua*. Or maybe she *does* condemn those who refer to the Messiah in this way, since deeming it useless as a means of salvation is another way of stating that those who refer to the son of Yahweh as *Yeshua* will not be saved. We should also point out that although we are personally persuaded that *Jesus* is a poor transliteration of the Messiah's name, we nevertheless strongly disagree with Ms. Melvin's assessment that it is associated with idol worship. Moreover, we will allow the son of Yahweh, whether His name is pronounced *Yahshua* or *Yeshua*, to be the judge of our salvation (John 5:22-23), not Gail Melvin.

To further illustrate how widespread the anti-Yeshua stronghold has become within the ranks of Sacred Name Movement adherents, I should note that we even received a letter from a prisoner in the state of Pennsylvania echoing the same basic words employed by the woman in her web forum posting, quoted earlier in this chapter. Here is a portion of what he wrote:

> After a little reading it should become obvious that with the subtle use of vowel dissimilation, the true name of the Messiah, Yahshua, was replaced with the name that hid Yahweh's Name, Yeshua.[60]

Clearly, these individuals have established their position with regard to the Messiah's name.

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[58] Word numbers for each of these words are keyed to *Strong's* numbering system.
[59] Gail Melvin, *Yahweh Yahshua & You*, Jubilee Publications, Panama City, FL, 1998, p. 171.
[60] From a letter we received from a prisoner whom we will only identify here as Douglas, dated 12/29/02.

Furthermore, as we have shown, in the estimation of some folks within the Sacred Name Movement, unless one pronounces the Messiah's name the way they do, that person is doomed on the Day of Judgment. Their assessment is that anyone pronouncing His name as *Yeshua* will not inherit eternal life. Thus, regardless of how representative these authors' view is of the official Sacred Name Movement position on this matter, we know many members are persuaded that because June and I don't pronounce the Messiah's name the same way they do, we are headed for the Lake of Fire.

The common thread connecting the remarks cited here is the expressed belief that the Messiah's name *must* include the "Yah" sound of the Father's name and that those who use pronunciations such as *Yeshua*, *Yeshu* and *Yehoshua* either ignorantly or deliberately remove the Father's name from the Son's name. This is the primary contention we address with the scope of this study. Right now our only intent is for you to see the *mentality* expressed by many within the Sacred Name Movement and the negative sentiments directed at those who pronounce the Messiah's name *Yeshua*, *Yeshu* or *Yehoshua*.

Finally, let's backtrack to the remark made by the woman who posted her commentary on the web forum. As quoted earlier, she wrote, "With the use of 'vowel dissimilation' only a slight change occurs, but the slight change REMOVES the Name of Yahweh, effectively shutting off SALVATION FROM YAHWEH to those who are deceived into using the name Yeshua, according to Acts 12." We need to point out that she obviously intended to cite Acts 4:12 instead of Acts 12. According to Acts 4:12, "There is no salvation by any other man; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

Many folks within the Sacred Name Movement, including the authors heretofore cited, use Acts 4:12 to dogmatically promote their particular pronunciation of the Messiah's name, as if a particular phonetic resonance can mean the difference between eternal life and destruction in the Lake of Fire. We implore Yahwists everywhere to call upon the name of Yahweh, reaching out to His merciful throne in the name of His Son. We implore all people to refer to the Messiah by His given name, but not because their salvation depends on enunciating it with precise accuracy; rather, we should want to know and reverently use His name out of our desire to *honor* Him. If someone is doing his or her best to correctly pronounce the Messiah's name, who are we to tell them they're going with a pronunciation that is "useless for salvation"?

Certainly, we honor others more when we refer to them and address them with their given names, but the Messiah is worthy of so much ***more*** honor than any man. Instead of promoting salvation based upon a particular *pronunciation* of a name, we believe the phrase, "There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" has a different meaning. We are persuaded that the Apostle Peter, in Acts 4:12, was stressing, not the pronunciation of a name, but rather the *identity* of the person Who does the saving. The name is what identifies Him, and yes, there is a connection to a name being an *identifier* and that name being pronounced so as to properly identify who the intended person is. We therefore support striving to pronounce His name properly as a show of honor and respect, yet if we put the focus more on the pronunciation than on the *identity* of the person, we will have missed Peter's point. Peter was *identifying* the Man Who offers us salvation, not exhorting us to pronounce it correctly (or else).

This having been said, no one can deny that, according to Acts 4:12, salvation can be found in no other name than the name given to the Son of Yahweh. Was *Jesus* the name given to the Son of Yahweh? No, it was not, unless you prefer a poor transliteration of the Greek transliteration of *Yeshua*. Does this mean we should earnestly strive to learn what His name is? We are persuaded that it does. Does this

mean if we fail in our earnest quest to learn the precise pronunciation of that name, we are thereby and therefore doomed? We do not see such a teaching in Scripture. We personally believe that our ancestors, who didn't have as much access to the truth as we do today, and who earnestly and fervently referred to the Messiah as "Jesus," are no more removed from the Kingdom than those of us who know that He was *never* addressed or referred to as "Jesus" during His lifetime here on earth. We contend that if it turns out His name is correctly pronounced *Yeshua*, but everyone in the Sacred Name Movement insisted on referring to Him as *Yahushua* out of their earnest belief that this is the correct pronunciation of His name, they will not be denied access to the Kingdom on account of being "erroneously ignorant." On the other hand, we are persuaded that if His name is correctly pronounced *Yahushua*, but we chose to refer to Him as *Yeshua* out of our earnest belief that this is the correct pronunciation, we will likewise not be denied access to the Kingdom on account of being "erroneously ignorant." If we could all regard each other's motives from this perspective, we could achieve our goal of *unity* much more quickly than we have by practicing the *condemnation approach* to the Messiah's name.

Sometimes we frame our words in such a way so as to exhibit an *understanding approach* towards those who do not share our view regarding the Messiah's name, yet we later say or write things that betray this approach. That is what I personally experienced in the year 2000. In his newsletter article "Is His Name Yeshua – Yahshua – Yahushua?", author Jerry Healan of Yahweh's Evangelical Assembly concluded his treatise with the following summary:

> Therefore, we prefer to utilize the name Yahshua as the form which will fit into all three renderings. For the others who prefer to utilize Yahushua or Yeshua or Yehoshua, we will not contend with them nor will we seek to exalt our form above theirs. We will respect their choice to pronounce the name as they see fit. We certainly hope that they will also afford us the same respect in our choice.[61]

We wholeheartedly concur with Jerry's attitude as expressed above. We should not seek to exalt the form we believe is correct above the form someone else believes is correct; rather, we should give each other the freedom to share why we believe the way we do. A creed that June and I try to uphold involves the commitment to pursue scholarly inquiry with the respectful sharing of ideas. We can agree to disagree agreeably and simultaneously accomplish that goal. It is when we approach this and any topic with the underlying desire to learn from each other that an atmosphere of mutual edification prevails. That should be the goal. When we belittle and undermine each other's intelligence and intentions, no one wins.

Regrettably, the same individual who so willingly expressed his respect for those who prefer the *Yeshua* form later betrayed those same words. Jerry's article, cited above, was written in July of the year 2000. On August 1, 2000, however, he wrote the following in an e-mail, which he sent to a large contingency of believers:

> Now, the Jews and others who are Judaizers will utilize the pronunciation *Yeshua*, but they don't like to use *Yahshua* because that contains a form of the "ineffable name" which the Jews (99.9%) will not pronounce. Of course, Christianity and the Jews utilize the Yeshua/Jesus concept and that is what the pronunciation *Yeshua* does. It justifies the Jews and the Christians in their use of the pagan name *Jesus*.[62]

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[61] From "Is His Name Yeshua – Yahshua – Yahushua?" authored by editor Jerry Healan in his *YEA Newsletter*, Atlanta, TX, Jul.-Aug. 2000, p. 5.

[62] Excerpt from an e-mail we received from Jerry Healan, dated 08/01/2000. He had previously acknowledged that *Yeshua* is a legitimate representation of the Messiah's name. I believe it is only fair to add that when I pointed out to Jerry the enormous

At first glance, it's difficult to imagine that the author of the above quotation is the same author who wrote the article in his *YEA Newsletter*. Nevertheless, this is a common approach exhibited by many within the Sacred Name Movement: Openly expressing loving acceptance and understanding of those having a differing view while privately harboring deep-seated prejudice.[63]

We supplied the foregoing quotations only because they come from publications or other writings we have in our home. We have read many similar remarks in numerous other publications, but there is no need to make this chapter any longer than it already is. We have already provided a very generous sampling of what's "out there," so by now you can see that there is an ongoing, prevalent aversion to the forms *Yeshua*, *Yeshu* and *Yehoshua* as exhibited by many members of the Sacred Name Movement.

We do not want anyone responsible for any of the foregoing quotations to think we are trying to "pick on them" or otherwise single them out for criticism. Our only purpose in sharing their perspective is to establish my point that there is currently a predominant aversion to the forms *Yeshua*, *Yeshu* and *Yehoshua* within the Sacred Name Movement, including a prejudice against those found to employ that form.

In spite of the quotes supplied above, some may question whether the Sacred Name Movement in general *really* takes such a firm stand against forms such as "Yeshua" or "Yeshu." To be sure, leaders such as Frank Brown and Jerry Healan, after butting heads with me a few times, came to semi-agree that, even though they prefer the form *Yahshua*, the form *Yeshua* is also legitimate. However, as we are about to see, they are definitely in the minority. One of the most widely-known Sacred Name groups is the *Assemblies of Yahweh*, located in Bethel, Pennsylvania. What follows is a statement found in their study "What is the Messiah's Name? **יהושע**":

> "Yeshua" is late Hebrew or Aramaic. It is from the time when the Jews began to suppress the use of the tetragrammaton in mundane usage. They began to distort the pronunciation of the NAME "YAH," pronouncing it "Ye." They are still doing this in our day. Again allow us to emphasize the fact that the Savior's Name is recognized as being YAHSHUA in Hebrew, and not Yeshua or Jesus![64]

The above author, the late Jacob O. Meyer, not only regarded the "Ye" as being a distortion, but in his view, the form *Yeshua* shouldn't even be up for consideration as a possible name for the Messiah. It goes without saying that Mr. Meyer exhibited an intense intolerance for the form *Yeshua*. Standing in stark opposition to Meyer's commentary is Scripture itself. If his statement that the form *Yeshua* is traced to the time when Jews began to suppress use of the Tetragrammaton is true, then the authors of Ezra, Nehemiah and First and Second Chronicles either didn't get the message or see the problem, since they used *Yeshua*

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contradiction between what he wrote in July 2000 and what he subsequently wrote in August 2000, which served to indicate where his true feelings lay, he relented and agreed that his latter comments of August 1, 2000 were out of line. He went on to exhibit an acceptance of the form *Yeshua* in the Nov. – Dec. 2002 issue of his *YEA Newsletter*. In the concluding paragraph of his article "Ossuary of James Discovered!" he wrote, "We still prefer the pronunciation Yahshua because of the English name Joshua. However, we could also write it as Yoshua and give others the right pronunciation. For those who prefer Yeshua, we also have no problem. For those who prefer Jesus….Houston we have a problem." Thus, we believe Jerry, like Frank Brown, has wisely chosen to pursue *tolerance* instead of the former spiritual intolerance.

[63] As conveyed within the above footnote, we are thankful Jerry corrected his "conflicting viewpoint" in a subsequent newsletter.

[64] From the study "What is the Messiah's Name? **יהושע**" by Jacob O. Meyer, a publication of Assemblies of Yahweh, Bethel, PA, copyright 1973, 1983. Jacob O. Meyer passed away in April 2010.

a combined 30 times. Since those books were certainly available during the Messiah's earthly ministry *and* since there is no hint of a protest against such a "distortion," it would seem the form *Yeshua* had Yeshua's approval.

Another organization, *Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah*, mirrors the understanding promulgated by the above group:

> "Yeshua" is the translator's transliteration of the Aramaic or the modern Hebrew. As stated previously, the e in the Name "Yeshua" as well as the e in the word "Jehovah" is a product of the substitution of the vowels of "Adonai" so as to hide the correct pronunciation of His Holy Name, less it be blasphemed. So they purposefully hid the Name by inserting false vowel points so that the Gentiles would not know how to pronounce the Sacred Name correctly.[65]

The above author emphatically drives home his point that the form *Yeshua* is the product of an elaborate Jewish scheme to subvert the Creator's name. We do not question the fact that the Masoretes vowel-pointed the Tetragrammaton so as to not pronounce it as it is spelled. However, this is no conspiracy, since Judaism *admits* that this is what their ancestors did—and this tradition continues today. Is this what the Jews *also* did to the Messiah's name? You will find the answer to this question as you continue reading our study. In the meantime, suffice it to say the above author believes that anyone who refers to the Messiah as *Yeshua* either willingly or unwittingly participates in a scheme to hide the true pronunciation of both His name and that of His Father. We thus see yet another clear demonstration of spiritual intolerance with regard to the form *Yeshua*.

Still another Sacred Name group, the Assembly of Yahweh (7th Day), also demonstrates spiritual intolerance of the form *Yeshua*. The following commentary is taken from a study titled "The Savior's Name":

> *Through the centuries the Hebrew people developed a taboo against pronouncing the Father's Name. Even so, they still wished to use these ancient and beloved names which had in them the short form of the Sacred Name,* ***Yah****. They did this by changing the* ***A*** *(in Yah) to an* ***E****. This is, evidently, the reason for the spelling* ***Je****shua, or* ***Jeh****shua (with an* ***E****). As the centuries passed, this spelling became more popular as the taboo about The Name became stronger. This can be noticed in Scripture. Before the 70 years spent in Babylon, there seems to have been only two men mentioned in Scripture with the spelling Jeshua (1 Chr. 24:11, 2Chr. 31:15). During and after the captivity there were many with this spelling.*[66]

What we find to be especially interesting about the above commentary is the fact that the author admits that the form *Jeshua* (which we know is more accurately transliterated *Yeshua*) came into use after the Babylonian Captivity. In other words, this name was certainly in use *prior* to the Messiah's birth. Does this mean the Messiah could have been given this name? Not according to the general understanding promoted by the Sacred Name Movement. We explore this reasoning over the course of our study. For now, we can see that the author conveys the same view as the author we previously cited. According to this view, those who use the form *Yeshua* are unwitting victims of the taboo against

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[65] From *The Heavenly Father's Great Name*, published by Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah, Rocheport, MO, no date available (we obtained this booklet in 1986), p. 24. Although no specific author is listed, in the publication's "Acknowledgement," found on the back of the title page, they write, "We gratefully thank DeWitt Smith for his literary contribution that provided the basis for this booklet."

[66] From "The Savior's Name," by Voy Wilks, distributed by the Assembly of Yahweh (7th Day), dated 6/25/87, p. 1.

speaking the Creator's name. The author thus perpetuates the negative sentiment against those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua*.

The above author, the late Voy Wilks, in spite of his intolerance of the form *Yeshua*, represented one of the most respectful intolerances that we have encountered. In contrast, the following Sacred Name leader depicts those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua* as breaking the Third Commandment:

> A few Messianic Jewish groups still spell the Savior's name as "Yeshua" instead of the scholarly "Yahshua," perhaps to placate those who strive to conceal even the short form "Yah!" We disagree with the wrong spelling "Yeshua" (instead of Yahshua) as it breaks the Third Commandment by replacing the short form YAH (as found in HalleluYAH), with the "yeh" prefix. Who would ever say, "HalleluYeh"? Whenever we attempt to cover up or set aside, or do away with Yahweh's name we are breaking the Third Commandment. Yahshua boldly proclaimed Yahweh's name, Psalm 22:22, John 17:6, 26.[67]

According to the view expressed above, *Yeshua* is "the wrong spelling." Not only does the above author fail to quote or otherwise reference any sources explaining how or why his conclusion has any merit, but he then proceeds to operate on this presumption as though it were factual. It is poor journalism, of course, to introduce a "perhaps" clause, and then proceed as though it were a "definite" clause. Upon presenting the <u>possibility</u> that people ***may*** use the *Yeshua* form in an attempt to conceal *Yah*, he promptly accuses these same people of breaking the Third Commandment! As we delve into the various pronunciation options as well as linguistic and historical evidence, we will see that the author's presumption is incorrect. Thus operating from a faulty premise, he arrives at what we believe is an ill-advised, flawed and definitely misleading conclusion.

We incorporated the above commentary to not only demonstrate the extreme negative regard that some hold for the form *Yeshua*, but there is also a very important aspect of his writing that should not be overlooked: *Lack of documentation*. He offered no footnotes, no guidance to any references substantiating his claims. His claims are apparently very significant, insofar as he obviously believes failure to heed his counsel will result in disobeying the Third Commandment, yet he apparently did not feel his claims merited any scholarly research on his part or the need to fully demonstrate that his claim is valid. In the meantime, his reading audience is subconsciously guided in the direction of spiritual intolerance of the form *Yeshua*.

We could cite example after example of spiritual intolerance directed against those who pronounce the Messiah's name as *Yeshua*. While the majority of them simply parrot the oft-expressed belief that those who use *Yeshua* either hide or deny the Father's name, some authors, as the one above, portray those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua* as violating the Third Commandment. Others, like the one whose commentary follows, refer to the forms *Yeshu* and *Yeshua* as "blasphemous":

> This is why TRUE BELIEVERS who do not want to identify with the mockers of our Messiah, REFUSE AND SHOULD REFUSE THE BLASPHEMOUS TALMUDIC MONIKER OF YESHU OR YESHUA. It is not the Aramaic contraction it is the devil's contraction and the name of mockery TO THIS DAY by unbelieving Judah!
> Let them write their magazine articles as they resound sillier and fall on the ears of a band of

[67] From a booklet titled "Orthodox Followers," by the late Donald Mansager, published by Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, Kingdom City, MO, 2001, p. 7-8. Mr. Mansager passed away in July 2012.

> decreasing followers. But the facts remain. When we pronounce the Messiah's Name as Yeshua, we identify (like it or not) with the lies of the TOLDOT YESHU. Lets stick to Yahshua the name that is incorrupted in the Hebrew.[68]

The author of the above commentary has one thing in common with all the other authors I have quoted in this study who demonstrated spiritual intolerance: A failure to provide documentation to substantiate his claims. If we find ourselves making claims that fall within the parameters of controversy, we *must* defend those claims with documentation from credible, unbiased sources.

June and I appreciate the scholarship of those who back up their claims with evidence from credible references and I enjoy the fellowship of folks who do not "just accept" the testimony of authors who make unsubstantiated claims. We can only suggest that you, the reader, consider doing the same. We believe this is what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he instructed the Thessalonian believers to "prove all things" (I Thess. 5:21).

Sadly, much of the correspondence that we have received from dissenters, like the above commentary, emanates from believers who choose to withhold the needed evidence that would disprove our personal view that the Messiah's name is very likely pronounced either *Yeshua*, *Yeshu* or possibly *Yehoshua*. For example, in a November 2010 phone conversation, a dissenter named Worley made it plain that I "shot myself in the foot" in our original study by acknowledging that Joshua son of Nun was given the long form of the name (**יהוֹשֻׁע**). We cover this particular argument later in our study,[69] but for now, suffice it to say that we do indeed agree that Joshua was originally given the long form (**יהוֹשֻׁע**) instead of the short form (**יֵשׁוּע**). Of course, Worley's belief is that since the son of Nun and the Messiah had the same name, this can only mean that the correct form for both the son of Nun and the Messiah is the *long form* (**יהוֹשֻׁע**), and even though Joshua was later referred to with the short form after the Babylonian Captivity, this fact is irrelevant to Worley's pre-determined conclusion—and this doesn't even take into consideration the additional fact that the majority of existing Hebrew New Testament manuscripts refer to the Messiah with this same short form (**יֵשׁוּע**), which is pronounced *Yeshua*. During our phone conversation, Worley added that, in our original study, I contradicted myself in several places. I repeatedly asked Worley to produce quotes validating my alleged contradictions, but he was unable to do so (nor did he exhibit a desire to produce the same). It is difficult for me to correct alleged contradictions when the accusing party is unable to produce the necessary quotes. I mentioned to Worley that I had already updated our original study, but that I would be glad to add any comments or insights that he had to offer. He only offered one quote that seems quite fitting for the tone of dissenters in this chapter: "The name *Yeshua* is an abomination!"[70]

We need to emphasize that our purpose in addressing this topic is not necessarily to influence you to choose one pronunciation over another. In fact, we urge you to think very carefully before dogmatically informing others that "their" pronunciation is not as correct as yours, especially so if you are not prepared

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[68] From an editorial titled "What Did Yahshua Call His Father?" by author Moshe Koniuchowsky, from an e-mail sent to [YourArmsToIsraelNews] distribution list on 06/21/01, p. 2.

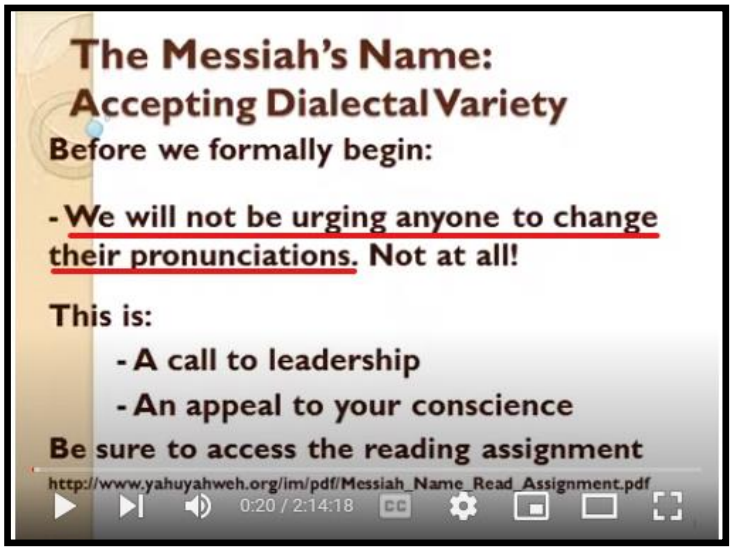
[69] Cf., Chapter 16, "Addressing the Objections," section C, "Does Referring to the Messiah as 'Yeshua' Constitute a Violation of the Third Commandment?"

[70] This is a direct quote from Worley Maynard during a phone conversation held on November 25, 2010. Quoted with permission from Worley. Sadly, Worley passed away in April 2016. In spite of our enormous disagreement, I considered Worley to be a great friend who was sincerely passionate about wanting the "Yah" sound from *Yahweh* to form the first syllable of His Son's name.

to defend your position. Furthermore, we believe we should apply this principle to our Heavenly Father's name as well. It bears repeating that none of the above authors were led to produce documentation proving that their "pronunciation of choice" is more correct than the ones in question, "Yehoshua," Yeshua" and "Yeshu."

When such remarks are off-handedly made without proper documentation, the question of *bias*, of *prejudice*, and of *responsible scholarship* comes to mind. For those in the Sacred Name Movement who know the Messiah's name is not "Jesus," the time has come to take another look at the name we have to this point been taught as having been given to Him. But if we cannot shed our preconceived biases and take a few moments to, point by point, examine and honestly consider other perspectives, other peoples' views, then our quest for truth, not to mention our quest for *unity*, has just come to a screeching halt.

Speaking of the question of *bias*, *prejudice* and *responsible scholarship*, we urge you to beware of those who, like June and me, urge taking an unbiased approach, but they then inadvertently slip in a very subtle, yet heavy, dose of bias. Sacred Name advocate Michael Banak gave a special 2014 "Elders Only" Unity Conference presentation on this same topic. Titled "The Messiah's Name: Accepting Dialectal Variety," Mr. Banak affirms in his introduction, "We will not be urging anyone to change the pronunciations they use for the holy names. Not at all! I respect everybody's pronunciation—you all have some very good reasons for saying the names the way you do." In fact, this statement is found in writing on the very first slide of his presentation. He later adds, "Just because somebody doesn't open up their jaw a fraction of a centimeter less, or doesn't sustain a syllable length just right, brethren are being needlessly divided."[71] Just when you think no one can be as gracious, humble and accepting as Michael Banak, nearly two hours into his presentation, he drops this bombshell about how the first syllable of the Messiah's name was *not* vocalized in ancient times:

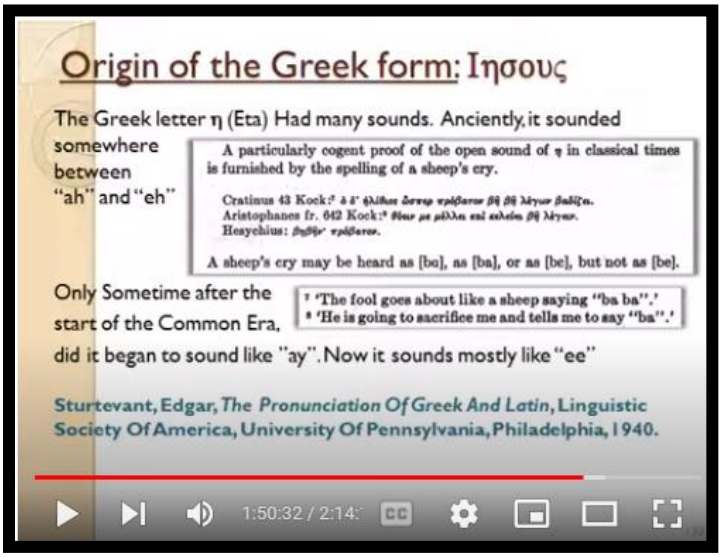


> Now let's talk about the "eta" first in this Greek form of "Iesous." Now today people are saying it was pronounced "YAY-soos," but **anciently**, when it was first rendered, the "eta" didn't sound like "ay" [as in "say"]. In Edgar Sturtevant's book about Greek—*and you'll find this in the reading assignment*—he cites three historical references of people who make the sound—who record the sound of a sheep crying, and they use the "eta" to spell that. They spell it "beta eta," and you'll have to look real closely here …. We have three historical references of it, and Edgar Sturtevant makes the claim that—this is going to sound, you know, as like a "ah," an "uh," an "ehh," but NOT as an "ay." Now the sound of a sheep crying might have some variability to it, but it doesn't sound like "bay." So this is evidence that the sound of the "eta" is going to be somewhere between an "ah" and an "ehhh." "Ah" and a "ehhh." Not a "ay" [as in "say"]. Not

[71] From "The Messiah's Name: Accepting Dialectal Variety," by Michael A. Banak, a recorded recapitulation of the presentation he delivered at the Sacred Name Movement Unity Conference in Sterling, Illinois on 08/02/2014. You can hear the exact quote during the 9:36 – 9:46 minute time frame of the recording.

that long vowel "ay" [as in "say"].[72]

You may wonder why we're using the Greek language in determining how the Messiah's name may have been pronounced in ancient times. Here's why: It can be demonstrated that, in spite of its limitations, the Greek language does a fairly decent job of transliterating the Messiah's name into that language from the Hebrew. If the Greek "eta" adequately transliterates the first syllable vowel sound from the original Hebrew, *and* if Michael Banak is correct about how the Greek "eta" was pronounced at the time of the Messiah's birth, then it *could not* have been pronounced as an "*ay*" as in "*say*" at that time. However, as we will see later in this study, scholars are not in agreement about when the "eta" began to be pronounced as "*ay* as in *say*." Some claim it was already pronounced "*ay* as in *say*" by the time of Alexander the Great. Others claim a post-first-century CE transition. Who's to say, then, that the "eta" could *not* have been pronounced as "*ay* as in *say*" at and even *before* the Messiah's birth? Well, as we have just seen, that is *precisely* what Michael Banak claims.



Michael Banak assigns "many sounds" to the ancient Greek letter *eta*, but not the one we have been led to use ("ay" as in "say").

We thus see that, on the one hand, Michael Banak encourages "dialectal variety" and the same mutual acceptance that June and I have so often called for. He even describes the first syllable Greek transliteration "eta" as having a "rainbow of sounds." On the other hand, he flat-out rejects any possibility that the ancient, pre-1st century "eta" could have been pronounced "ay" as in "say." As it turns out, Michael's rejection of the "*ay* as in *say*" sound would disqualify the very pronunciation that June and I have long used in reference to the Messiah. Ironically, this rejection is slipped into a presentation that encourages acceptance of dialectal variety and very strongly discourages any bias whatsoever when it comes to pronouncing the Messiah's name. The only positive item to report from this particular situation is that Michael, unlike many of his Sacred Name Movement predecessors, does not believe that June and I remove the Father's name from the Son's name.

Who Are the "Real" Intolerant Ones?

We have definitely presented several examples of Sacred Name adherents who are intolerant of those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua* or (heaven forbid!) *Yeshu*. But could it be that June and I are the *real* intolerant ones? When addressing any controversial topic, the opposing party is occasionally known to try to "turn the tables" on the other party, apparently in an attempt to deflect the heat. After all, sometimes the guy who calls the fire department to report the fire is the one who intentionally started it.

[72] Ibid. You can hear the exact quote during the 1:50:26 - 1:51:34 minute time frame of the recording. Note: For the record, I agree that the sound of a sheep crying may have some variability to it, but I definitely do ***not*** hear them bleat "bah" as in "Yah." The sound I hear comes closer to the "a" as in "that" or "sat." If *anything*, a sheep's bleating comes closer to "bay" than it does to "bah." Here's a link to bleating sheep.

One way to deflect the heat away from a charge of guilt is to do whatever you can to make the *other* guy out to be the real culprit. I am reminded of the lengthy online lunar Sabbath forum board discussion that I was involved in several years ago. The discussion, which was more akin to an perpetual debate, lasted a grueling three years. On many occasions during that discussion, various lunar sabbatarians attempted to portray me as putting the historical record above Scripture. Certainly, if I were to accept the record of history over and above Scripture, anything else I might write in defense of the continuously-repeating weekly Sabbath is automatically invalidated due to a perceived low value that I ascribe to the inspired Word of Yahweh. In the case of the Messiah's name, our motives have likewise been misrepresented. We have repeatedly made it clear that we're not trying to dictate which spelling or pronunciation believers should accept as being the most accurate and true, nor have we accused anyone of "removing the Father's name from the Son's name." That's why we subtitled our study "*An Appeal for Mutual Understanding and Acceptance of Those With Differing Ideas*." In spite of this, we have been told that *we* are the ones who are "non-accepting."

As it was with the lunar sabbath discussion, so it is with the discussion pertaining to the Messiah's name. Of course, our appeal for understanding must be accompanied by a defense of why we personally lean the way we do. Yes, it is possible to argue in defense of a certain position while *simultaneously* requesting that we all respect each other's views.

Nevertheless, here are some examples of how June and I have been presented as "the intolerant ones." The following excerpt is from a letter we received from a believer named Dennis:

> It's kind of ironic that if we put our findings in print we are intolerant, but when you publish your works, picking apart others who write on the name, who is the intolerant one? Should I say, How bizarre?[73]

To best grasp the above author's perspective of his view regarding the form *Yeshua*, we cited his commentary earlier. He's the one who wrote, "It is interesting to note here that those who are calling Him Yeshua **leave out the part in Yahweh's name which tells us who He is that saves**." Let's think about this man's assertion that I am the one who is actually intolerant. Am I the one who presents those who use the "other" spelling/pronunciation as intentionally leaving out or otherwise denying the Creator's name with the name we believe is most accurate?

Another author whose writings we have cited in this chapter, Jerry Healan, had the following charge to bring against me:

> Your booklet presents Yahshua and Yeshua. From the point of view from your booklet the preferred spelling and pronunciation is Yeshua. The very words of your mouth reveal this, because you continually pronounce the name as Yeshua now rather than Yahshua. Thus, even though you say that you still accept those who want to write and pronounce the name as Yahshua, you no longer do so. Like it or not, this relegates those who utilize the form Yahshua to a second place status as well. You see, our own biases and preferences do tend to relegate others to second place status.[74]

Please notice how both Jerry and Dennis attempted to "turn the tables" on June and me. The

[73] Excerpt from a letter we received from Dennis Bitterman, dated 01/19/2003, p. 3.
[74] Excerpt from an e-mail we received from Jerry Healan, dated 02/22/1999.

implication we saw from Dennis is that **I** am the "intolerant one." According to Jerry, June and I relegate those who pronounce the Messiah's name as *Yahshua* to "second place status." We would ask Jerry essentially the same question that we asked Dennis: "Are *we* the ones who wrote that the pronunciation *Yeshua* 'justifies the Jews and the Christians in their use of the pagan name *Jesus*'"? We would also ask Jerry to produce anything we have written that in any way maligns the pronunciation *Yahshua*. It's as though Jerry wanted us to ask his permission before we share with others which way we personally lean, and he certainly didn't seem to approve of our presenting our reasons for leaning the way we do.[75]

Another individual who attempted to "turn the tables" on June and me is a gentleman who read our study, "The Messiah's Name and Spiritual Intolerance," which Frank Brown published in his *Search the Scriptures* newsletter. Here is what he wrote:

> According to your letter in "Search the Scriptures" you proclaim that because you use the name "Yeshua" to address the Messiah you assume that some brethren have shown 'signs of spiritual intolerance' to your view. That may be so. However, is it possible it is because you are "intolerant" to their view? While I was reading your study I got the feeling that you are upset because they refuse to accept your view. So please, before you castigate those that do not agree with you with "spiritual intolerance," be so kind and display: "a spirit of understanding towards those who don't spell or pronounce the Messiah's name the way" you do as well.[76]

It is ironic that in spite of how adamantly one can try to express his or her position, there is often someone there to try to "turn the tables" or as they say, "shift the blame." In this case, although I laid it out in no uncertain terms to both that I have no problem with using either the long form or the short form, my effort was apparently in vain. In the case of the man quoted above, I decided to go ahead and produce the testimony of two witnesses who are willing to testify that, indeed, I am supportive of those who choose to refer to the Messiah with the long form. Both witnesses, by the way, prefer to use the long form, whereas I prefer the short form. Although it is uncertain as to whether or not the testimony of two unbiased witnesses will serve to persuade this man, at least I know I tried!

In their attempt to portray June and me as the "intolerant ones," what are the above individuals missing? They are missing our purpose for writing this study in the first place—to appeal for acceptance and understanding. We don't mind anyone defending why they believe the form *Yahshua* or *Yahushua* (**יהוֹשע**) is more accurate than the form *Yeshua* (**ישוע**). However, when they present those of our persuasion as being either willing or unwitting participants in a scheme to subvert the Creator's name—of "leaving out the part in Yahweh's name which tells us who He is that saves"—they aren't being fair. Since these charges are never accompanied by actual evidence supporting their position, they *do* promote intolerance and foster strife. When we tell others that those who use a certain form of the Messiah's name cannot be in a covenant relationship with either the Father or His Son, this is spiritual intolerance.

Is it possible to defend why we believe a certain way while simultaneously encouraging acceptance of the other view? In certain cases, such as this one, we believe the answer is yes. In our defense of why we believe the preponderance of evidence supports the forms *Yeshua* and *Yeshu*, June and I have not attempted to present those who support the forms *Yahshua* or *Yahushua* as heretics or otherwise unwitting victims of a grand scheme to subvert the Almighty's name. Can the other side say the same about the

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[75] To be fair, Jerry's comments here, expressed in 1999, were composed prior to gravitating to a more tolerant view in his July/August 2000 and Nov./December 2002 *YEA Newsletter*.

[76] Excerpt from a letter I received from a man named Silveer Maes, dated March 7, 2003, p. 1.

way they treat those of *our* persuasion? Can they produce inflammatory remarks from those of the "Yeshua" persuasion directed at those of the "Yahshua" persuasion? Have we ever belittled anyone for using the form *Yahshua*?

If so, it was unintentional, and we apologize. Unlike those who have portrayed June and me as ignorant at best and heretics at worst, June and I have no problem with forms such as *Yahshua, Yahushua or Yahoshua*. This doesn't mean we necessarily endorse any of these pronunciations, but that doesn't mean we believe they're necessarily wrong, either.

As long as the other party regards June and me as deceived heretics, there will be no acceptance and certainly no understanding. As long as we're treated as duped victims of a grand Jewish conspiracy to subvert the Father's name in the Son's name, no progress will be made.

Here, then, is the collective stand taken by the Sacred Name Movement as exhibited within their writings. I believe we've cited enough sources to establish why June and I cannot currently identify with what is known as the "Sacred Name Movement." Sadly, groups such as the *The Assemblies of Yahweh*, *Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah*, *Assembly of Yahweh (7th Day)*, *Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly*, *The Congregation of Yahweh*, *Yahweh's Restoration Ministry*—virtually every major group considered a part of the "Sacred Name Movement"—has produced articles establishing their "official" intolerance of the forms *Yeshua*, *Yeshu* and *Yehoshua*. We have waited for over twenty years for even *one* of the above groups to extend an olive branch of acceptance towards those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua*. Sadly, only four Sacred Name Movement leaders have produced the olive branch; two of those four are no longer with us: Frank Brown, the editor of the *Search the Scriptures* newsletter and Chuck Henry of *Assembly of Yahweh 7th Day)*. The others are Scott Leys of the Assembly of Yahweh West Michigan and Jerry Healan, who represents Yahweh's Evangelical Assembly.

Will others follow the lead of these gentlemen *or* will the Sacred Name Movement continue its policy of intolerance while presenting June and me as the ones with the problem?

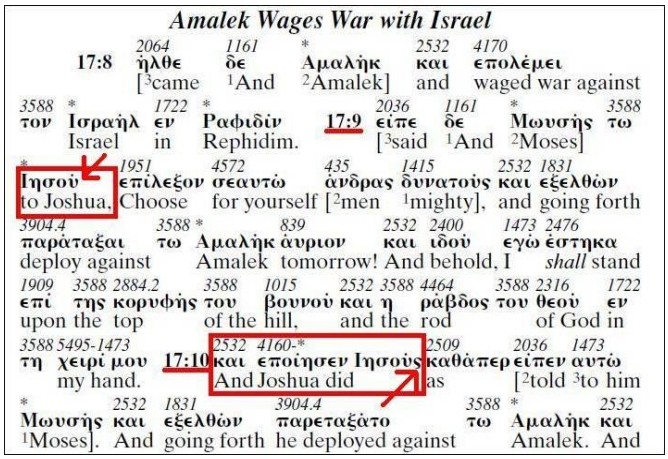
4. Evidence for the Messiah's Name: The Septuagint

The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures that was completed in Alexandria, Egypt in the third century BCE during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. The year often attributed to this translation is 283 BCE. For this particular discussion, it is important to note that the Septuagint translation was carried out by Jewish Hebrew scholars who also knew Greek. To be clear, these were bilingual Hebrew scholars who translated the Hebrew Torah into the language that would best facilitate understanding Jewish culture, practice and belief. We need to emphasize this facet of the Septuagint translation because many Sacred Name adherents are persuaded that the Septuagint translation was carried out by pagan Greeks who had no regard for the Jewish faith or culture. This is simply not true. Nevertheless, there are some stories about how this translation came about that we *do* need to take with a "grain of salt." For example, according to legend, there were 72 Jewish scholars involved in the translation, each one confined to his own separate chamber for a total of 72 days, and at the completion of days, each scholar's translation agreed perfectly with those of the other Jewish scholars. This legend may or may not be true; I find it highly unlikely, although I am persuaded the differences would have been minor ones. While I tend to regard the legend surrounding the Septuagint translation as being a little exaggerated, the fact nevertheless remains that the translation was indeed carried out and the Septuagint (often referred to as the LXX) was certainly in use during the first century CE.

What Does the Septuagint Have to Do With the Messiah's Name?

You may well wonder why we're including the Septuagint in a chapter that offers evidence of the pronunciation of the Messiah's name. The explanation is a simple one: When the ancient Hebrew scholars who translated the Torah into Greek came to the Hebrew name *Yehoshua* (or as Sacred Namers prefer, *Yahshua*), they gave the all-important first syllable a "Yeh" sound ("Ιη" in Greek) instead of a "Yah" sound ("Ια" in Greek). Anything but a "Yah" sound, in the estimation of many Sacred Name Movement adherents, is an affront to the Almighty's name and represents an attempt to conceal or otherwise subvert His name. It shouldn't be surprising, then, that many Sacred Namers target the LXX as an unreliable text at best and inspired by the adversary at worst.

In the Septuagint translation, the name "Joshua" is usually rendered either *Iesou* (Ιησου) or *Iesous* (Ιησους), as displayed below[77]:



Amalek Wages War with Israel

			2064	1161	*	2532	4170								
	17:8		ἦλθε	δε	Αμαλὴκ	και	επολέμει								
			[3came	1And	2Amalek]	and	waged war against								
3588	*	1722	*		2036	1161	*	3588							
του	Ισραὴλ	εν	Ραφιδίν	17:9	είπε	δε	Μωυσὴς	τω							
	Israel	in	Rephidim.		[3said	1And	2Moses]								
*	1951	4572	435	1415	2532	1831									
Ιησοῦ	επίλεξον	σεαυτὸ	ἄνδρας	δυνατοὺς	και	εξελθὼν									
to Joshua,	Choose	for yourself	[2men	1mighty],	and	going forth									
3904.4	3588 *	839	2532	2400	1473	2476									
παράταξαι	τω	Αμαλὴκ ἄυριον	και	ιδοὺ	εγὼ	ἕστηκα									
deploy against		Amalek tomorrow!	And	behold,	I	*shall* stand									
1909	3588	2884.2	3588	1015	2532	3588	4464	3588	2316	1722					
επὶ	της	κορυφὴς	του	βουνοὺ	και	η	ῥάβδος	του	θεοὺ	εν					
upon the		top	of the	hill,	and	the	rod		of God	in					
3588	5495-1473		2532	4160-*		2509		2036	1473						
τη	χειρί μου	17:10	και	εποίησεν	Ιησοῦς	καθάπερ		είπεν	αυτὸ						
	my hand.		And	Joshua did		as		[2told	3to him						
*	2532	1831	3904.4		3588	*	2532								
Μωυσὴς	και	εξελθὼν	παρεταξάτο		τω	Αμαλὴκ	και								
1Moses].	And	going forth	he deployed against			Amalek.	And								

[77] From Exodus 17:8-10 as found in *The Apostolic Bible Polyglot*© ISBN 0-9632301-1-5 Rev. 1.2, www.apostolicbible.com, p. 26, January 2006.

Many students are not aware that yet *another* Greek rendering of "Joshua" is *Iesoon* (Ιησουν):[78]

επωνόμασε	Μωυσής	τον Αυσή	υιόν	Ναυή	Ιησούν
Moses named		Ausi	son	of Nun	Joshua.

Never mind the fact that there are three different Greek *endings* for the Messiah's name when transliterated into Greek – Sacred Namers primarily focus on the *first syllable* of the Messiah's name, which they are persuaded must be "Yah" or "Iα" in Greek. Since the pronunciation indicated by the scholars who translated the Septuagint is "Yeh" or "Iη" in Greek, some Sacred Name Movement adherents rationalize this discrepancy by claiming that the translators were pagan Greek idol-worshippers who sought to incorporate the name of their chief idol, Zeus, into the Messiah's name.[79] If such a claim were true, you wouldn't be able to trust the pronunciation of *any* name found in the Septuagint and such is indeed the conclusion of many Sacred Namers.

Later in our study, we will demonstrate that the Greek form of the Messiah's name, *Iesous*, is and was considered the best transliteration option for Greek-speaking students of the Word.[80] Briefly stated, if the original pronunciation of Joshua's name is *Yehoshua*, then the Septuagint's *Iesous* correctly transliterates the first syllable. Since there is no "sh" sound in Greek, the "Yeh" sound is simply followed by the "soo" sound. Finally, since many feminine proper nouns end with *-a*, whereas many masculine nouns end with either *-n* or *-s*, the resulting *Yeh-soos* or *Yeh-soon* pronunciation is certainly understandable. The fact that pre-Christian copies of the LXX included this pronunciation makes it irrational to conclude that this pronunciation was the result of a Jewish conspiracy to remove the Father's name from the Son's name.

Some have suggested that the Ineffable Name Doctrine, i.e., the teaching that the Creator's name is too holy to speak aloud, was already in effect when the Septuagint was translated, and therefore the first syllable of the Messiah's name, as with any name beginning with *Yah* (**יה**), was subverted to *Ie* (**Ιη**). However, as we're about to see, it is no secret that the most ancient copies of the Greek Septuagint transliterated the Tetragrammaton as *Yaho* (**Ιαω**), which in turn means the Hebrew scholars who rendered Yahweh's name in the Greek language were unaware of the Ineffable Name Doctrine. If such a teaching had been in place during the 3rd century BCE, we can be certain they would *not* have transliterated the Tetragrammaton. It wasn't until the persecutions of Jews in Egypt in the first half of the first century CE (cf., Philo, "On the Embassy to Gaius")[81] that there would have been any movement, misguided as it was,

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[78] From Numbers 13:17 as found in *The Apostolic Bible Polyglot*© ISBN 0-9632301-1-5 Rev. 1.2, www.apostolicbible.com, p. 24, January 2006.

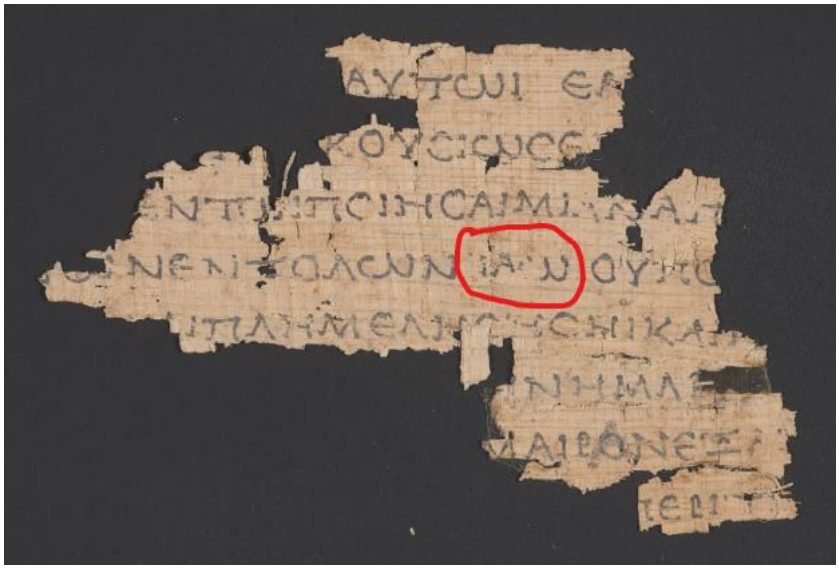
[79] Various Sacred Name adherents claim that "Iesous" is a combination of "Ie" + "Zeus," which either means "Hail Zeus" or, as others claim, "Zeus, the healing deity" ("Ie" being the name of a pagan healing deity). We address this claim in chapter 10, "Can the Name 'Jesus' Be Traced to Zeus Worship?"

[80] For details, we refer you to chapter 10, "Can the Name 'Jesus' Be Traced to Zeus Worship?"

[81] Philo, a Jew from Alexandria, Egypt, led a small delegation to Rome in 38 ce in a failed attempt to persuade Emperor Gaius Caligula to reverse his edict requiring that iconic images of his deified figure be placed in Jewish synagogues. Jewish refusal to comply led to violent persecutions that were supported by the Roman governor over Alexandria, Flaccus. Realizing that he and his fellow delegates barely left Rome with their lives, Philo could only wonder at what lay ahead for him and his fellow Jews. He thus concluded, "Would it not be a terrible thing for the interests of all the Jews throughout the whole world to be thrown into confusion by the treatment to which we, its five ambassadors, were exposed? For if he [Gaius] were to give us up to our enemies, what other city could enjoy tranquility? What city would there be in which the citizens would not attack the Jews living in it? *What synagogue would be left uninjured?* What state would not overturn every principle of justice in respect of those of their countrymen who arrayed themselves in opposition to the national laws and customs of the Jews? They will be overthrown, they will be shipwrecked, they will be sent to the bottom, with all the particular laws of the nation, and those too which are common to all and in accordance with the principles of justice recognized in every city." (Philo, "On the Embassy to

to substitute *Kyrios* for *Yaho*, although the Talmud records that one of the decrees of Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 BCE forbade speaking the Creator's name.[82] It is not inconceivable that fears of annihilation spreading from Judea to Egypt, along with the potential ramifications of Antiochus Epiphanes' decree, influenced the decision to substitute *Kyrios* for *Yaho* in subsequent copies of the Septuagint. In this age, we may never know the full impact of that decree or how widespread it was.

Fragment 15 of Dead Sea Scrolls 4Q120, also known as 4QLXXLevb, contains a portion of Leviticus 4:27, wherein the Tetragrammaton is transliterated *Yaho* (**Ιαω**) in contradistinction to the later practice of replacing the Name with *Kyrios* (κὺριος). Scholars date this fragment, displayed below,[83] to the late 1st century BCE:



We are not aware of any copies of the Septuagint in which the Hebrew name **יהושע** (or **ישוע**) is ever rendered Ιασουα (Yahsua/Yahshua). If we can be shown any instances in which ancient copies of the LXX rendered the first syllable of the Hebrew name **יהושע** (or **ישוע**) as **Ια**, this would represent a significant find. Until such evidence is produced, we will proceed with the understanding that the first syllable of this Hebrew name was (and *is*) pronounced **Ιη** (*Ye* as in *say*).

In his commentary on Psalms 2:2, the famous third century theologian Origen wrote, "In the more accurate exemplars [of the LXX] the (divine) Name is written in Hebrew characters; not, however, in the current script, but in the most ancient."[84] In other words, the most accurate Greek translations of Torah not only included the Tetragrammaton, but the Name was written in the ancient Paleo-Hebrew characters: 𐤉𐤄𐤅𐤄. Of particular interest on the topic of the Messiah's name is the fact that Origen, while expressing

Gaius," XLVI, §371, translated by C. D. Yonge). Was Philo's state of mind over these circumstances shared by his fellow Jews? Were his fears of Jewish annihilation justified? How safe would *you* have felt?

[82] *Cf.*, Rosh Hashanah 18b - 19a, as found on pages 76-77 of *The Babylonian Talmud*, Seder Mo'ed, translated into English with notes, glossary and indices under the editorship of Rabbi Dr. I. Epstein, published by The Soncino Press, London, 1938. If this record is accurate, the first decree to not speak the Creator's name was directed *at* the Jews, not *by* the Jews. Note: We do not normally recommend reading the Talmud, except for gleaning historical information.

[83] Screen capture lifted from The Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library. Image of 4QLXXLevb © 2023 Israel Antiquities Authority.

[84] Quoted from Origen's commentary on Psalms 2:2. For additional details, please see W.G. Waddell, "The Tetragrammaton in the LXX," *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. 45 No. 179-180 (July 1944): p. 158.

approval and even appreciation for those translations that retain the Creator's name, omitted any concerns about how the Messiah's name was rendered in the Greek language. Out of the thousands of manuscripts and fragments of the LXX and even NT manuscripts, we are not aware of a single one that offers *Yah* as the first syllable of the Messiah's name. We would not expect that a man so appreciative of a translation that transliterated the name *Yaho* to posture with the Messiah's name. Indeed, the fact that Origen held the Father's name in such high esteem while simultaneously referring to His Son as *Iesous* in his Greek commentaries is admissible as evidence that the first syllable of the Messiah's name is *Yeh*, not *Yah*.

As we mentioned earlier, presenting the Septuagint as having been the work of pagan Greek idol-worshippers who pulled all the stops to transform otherwise pious Hebrew names into names reflecting the names of the idols they worshipped represents a common form of misleading propaganda widely circulated within Sacred Name Movement. This stratagem throws off casual students of the Word who don't see or understand the need to investigate such claims. Since Sacred Namers typically reject the Septuagint translation as a pagan work, we need to reinforce the fact that the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek by bilingual Jewish Hebrew scholars, *not* by pagan Greeks. To that end, we need to address this and other false Sacred Name claims head-on. The Sacred Name Movement as a whole rejects or otherwise dismisses the Septuagint version, as exemplified by a group known as The Assembly of Yahweh, located in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. This group, in their website article "Is Jesus the Name?" expresses in no uncertain terms their disdain for the LXX. We encourage you to carefully read the following excerpt from their study because it contains a mixture of truth and error that casual readers gloss over. We have extensively footnoted some key misleading comments:

> In Colliers magazine of Sept. 11, 1937, appeared a statement which scholars know to be a fact, but which the average layman does not understand; or, if it is known, it is thought inconsequential. Paul Parnell wrote, as follows: "The founder of Christianity probably never heard Himself called Jesus Christ during His life. He was known by His Hebrew name Joshua.[85]

[85] I was eventually able to gain access to the exact quote as it appeared on page six of *Collier's: The National Magazine*, September 11, 1937. The quote was submitted by a layman named Paul Parnell from Cliffside Park, New Jersey. His brief, unsubstantiated comment appears in Freling Foster's column "Keep Up With the World" column. Foster's column featured an assortment of trivia tidbits, and contributors whose "interesting or unusual facts" were accepted received a $5.00 reward, which was a considerable recompense in 1937. Here's the exact quote from Parnell's contribution: "The founder of Christianity probably never heard himself called Jesus Christ. During His life, He was known by His original Hebrew name Joshua. After the crucifixion, He was referred to as Joshua the Messiah until the time, many years later, when this name was changed into Greek and became Jesus the Christ." You can view a scanned copy displaying Parnell's brief comment in the Appendix of this study. Our concern is not so much that Paul Parnell's quote wasn't cited word-for-word by the "Is Jesus the Name?" author as it is Paul Parnell's credentials. Paul Parnell's contribution to *Collier's* was not as an accredited Hebrew scholar, but merely as a brief, unsubstantiated comment that he sent to the magazine editors as a *subscriber* seeking monetary compensation. The author of "Is Jesus the Name?" could certainly have cited *any* of the sources we have already supplied in support of the form *Joshua*, i.e., *The Layman's Bible Encyclopedia*, *New Bible Dictionary* and *Encyclopedia International*, all of which cite qualified scholars making essentially the same statement. For example, you may recall the following quote from chapter 1: 'From *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*: 'Jesus is the same name with Joshua, the termination only being changed, for the sake of conforming it to the Greek." For whatever reason, instead of quoting a scholarly reference, the author of "Is Jesus the Name?" chose to quote an unsubstantiated remark by an unqualified individual. Citing an unaccredited source such as Paul Parnell would be akin to me authoritatively stating, "Man has lived on the earth for more than 2 million years, hardly more than the blinking of an eye in relation to earth's total history, which stretches back for the almost inconceivable span of 4700 million years." I'm not a scientist, so I'm certainly not qualified to make such a remark on my own without the benefit of qualified support. As it turns out, I disagree with the source from which I quoted (*The Last Two Million Years*, The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., Pleasantville, NY, 1981, p. 9). I'm sure Paul Parnell was a nice guy who wasn't trying to stir up controversy, but let me just say I am just as qualified to authoritatively state that man has lived on the earth for 2 million years as Paul Parnell was to express that the Messiah was known by the name *Joshua* during His life as a flesh and blood human being. His remark proves nothing and is not worthy of citation.

After the crucifixion, He was referred to as Joshua[86] the Messiah, until the time many years later, when His name was changed into Greek, and became Jesus the Christ."

The Hebrews were very careful of their names, and the name of the Supreme was often used as a part of the name of Israelites, such as EliYAH, JeremYAH, DaniEL, JoEL, etc., etc. The same idea prevailed among the heathen religions, and the worshippers of Baal, Zeus, and other deities, were careful to affix the name of their deity to their children, and so we find, Jezebel (Jeze-Baal), Nebuchadnezzar (Nebo-chadnezzar), Baaliada (Baal knows), etc., etc. Among the Greeks we find this same rule prevailing, and it was adhered to when the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into the Greek, as in the Septuagint.[87]

In William Smith's Bible Dictionary[88], relative to the Septuagint Version, we read: "Proper names are sometimes translated, sometimes not."[89] "**The divine names are frequently interchanged**."[90] "The version is therefore not minutely accurate in details."[91] "We find a marked distinction between the original (Hebrew) and the Septuagint (Greek)."[92] The Septuagint Version was translated in Alexandria, Egypt, as some say, for Greek speaking Jews; but Josephus says it was made because the king of Egypt commanded it to be done, that he might have a copy of the Jews' greatest literature. The fact is that whoever made the translation, and for whatever purpose, wittingly covered up the sacred Name of Yahweh by substituting the

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86 Same as above.

87 Notice that the author here very subtly attempts to introduce an assumption that the Septuagint was translated by Greek idol worshippers.

88 We were able to locate the 1863 edition of this dictionary (volume 3) online. The actual name of the dictionary is *A Dictionary of the Bible: Comprising Its Antiquities, Biography, Geography, and Natural History*, edited by William Smith, D.C.L., LL.D. The anonymous author borrowed all of his quotes (generally out of context) from page 1207 of volume 3. Here is a link to the online dictionary:
http://books.google.com/books/about/A_Dictionary_of_the_Bible_Red_Sea_Zuzims.html?id=BbMeAQAAIAAJ.

89 Ibid, p. 1207. The dictionary's primary example of "proper names sometimes being translated, sometimes not" is the name of the cave where Abraham buried Sarah (Machpelah). We would agree that names, including place names, should not be translated; rather, they should be transliterated. This having been said, we find it curious that the anonymous author chose to not supply the following quote from page 1206 of *Smith's Bible Dictionary*: "In many cases (e.g. Ex ii. 25; Nahum iii. 8) the LXX. have probably preserved the true pronunciation and sense where the Masoretic pointing has gone wrong."

90 Ibid, p. 1207. In order to best explain the anonymous author's oversight here, this excerpt needs to be quoted in full context: "3. The divine names are frequently interchanged; Κύριος is put for **אֱלֹהִים**, GOD, and Θεός for **יְהוָה**, JEHOVAH; and the two are often wrongly combined or wrongly separated." We must overlook William Smith's being unaware of the fact that, as of his composing this summary, LXX fragments containing the Tetragrammaton (e.g., Papyrus Fouad 266, see below) had not yet been discovered. We now have compelling evidence that the LXX originally contained the Divine Name, which in turn indicates that the interchanging and mis-matching of the titles *Kurios* and *Theos* was the work of a later copyist, not the original translators; hence, it cannot be legitimately considered a flaw of the original LXX translation. Again, we can overlook William Smith's not being aware of this information; however, the anonymous author of the article "Is Jesus the Name?" certainly had access to this information, but either didn't take the time to properly research or else he willfully chose to suppress it.

91 This is another quote taken out of context. No one has ever claimed that the LXX is a perfect translation; yet it is certainly not the corrupt and ignominious text that the anonymous author would have his readers believe. In spite of its flaws, please note the following summary found on page 1208 of *Smith's Bible Dictionary*: "After all the notices of imperfection above given, it may seem strange to say, but we believe it to be the truth, that the student of Scripture can scarcely read a chapter without some benefit, especially if he be a student of Hebrew, and able, even in a very humble way, to compare the Version with the Original. 1. For the Old Testament. We have seen above, that the Septuagint gives evidence of the character and condition of the Hebrew MSS. from which it was made, with respect to vowel points and the mode of writing. This evidence often renders very material help in the correction and establishment of the Hebrew text. Being made from MSS. far older than the Masoretic recension, the Septuagint often indicates readings more ancient and more correct than those of our present Hebrew MSS. and editions; and often speaks decisively between conflicting readings of the present MSS." Clearly, *Smith's Bible Dictionary* gives the LXX far less harsh treatment than the anonymous author is willing to admit.

92 Ibid, p. 1208.

name Kurios[93], and by other means: See the Septuagint Version itself for proof.)

Under the Greeks, in the following centuries, "The names of places were Hellenized: Rabbath-Ammon to Philadelphia; Armoab to Areopolis; Akko to Ptolemais. The same occurred with personal names. Homi became Menelaus; Joshua became Jason, or Jesus." (See The Jewish Encyclopedia, article on Hellenism.)

The Greek practice of changing names or persons, removing the abbreviated forms of rival deities and replacing them with the abbreviated form of their supreme deity, Zeus, is readily seen in such prominent changes as that of the Hebrew prophets: Elisha (El of supplication) became Eliseus (my El is Zeus)[94]. Other prophets as Jeremiah, had the Yah ending changed to "S", the Grecian terminal referring to their deity Zeus. Elijah (my El is Yahweh) became Elias (My El is Zeus).

Dr. W. F. Wilkinson, M.A., Vicar of St. Werburgh's, Derby Joint Editor of Webster and Wilkinson's Greek Testament, in his book, "Personal Names in the Bible," edition 1886, says, "The name Joshua (Yahshua) derives its greatest importance and highest sanctity from the fact that it was sacredly chosen as the name to be borne among men by the Messiah . . . When the name Yah[95] was prefixed to the word Hoshua, the compound resulting was, as given in our version (Num. 23:16), the word Jehoshua (Yahshua). This word ... was altered in the pronunciation of the Alexandrian Jews, into Jesus; Just as Elisha was into Eliseus.[96] And this word (Jesus) is always written in the Septuagint Version wherever Jahoshua or Jeshua (Yahshua) occurs in the Hebrew. Hence Jesus is read for Joshua (Yahshua) in the Greek of the New Testament, and retained very inconveniently in our version, in Acts 7:45 and Heb. 4:8." - pages 342, 343.

Dr. Hislop, in his, "The Two Babylons," says, "It has been all along well enough known that

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93 The author is apparently unaware of the fact that ancient fragments of the LXX have been found which contain the Creator's name (**יהוה**) instead of "Kyrios" in an otherwise Greek text. The oldest known Greek text of the Septuagint is a fragment known as Papyrus Fouad 266 (also known as P. Faud 266). This fragment, dated as late as 50 B.C.E., contains the second half of the book of Deuteronomy, and instead of substituting Kyrios for the Tetragrammaton, the form **יהוה**, in Aramaic script, appears in the otherwise Greek text. According to *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (Vol. 6, Doubleday, New York, David Noel Freedman, Ed.-in-Chief, 1992, p. 392), Papyrus Fouad 266 is listed as one of three pre-Christian copies of the Greek Scriptures known to incorporate the Divine Name. Moreover, as we have already seen, 3rd century Christian scholar Origen Adamantius (184/185 – 253/254), in his commentary on Psalms 2:2 from the Septuagint, wrote the following: "In the most accurate manuscripts the Name occurs in Hebrew characters, yet not in today's Hebrew [characters] (**יהוה**), but in the most ancient ones (𐤉𐤄𐤅𐤄)." Evidence suggests that using 𐤉𐤄𐤅𐤄 for the Creator's name was the practice used in the original translation of the Septuagint. It was apparently in later translations of the LXX that copyists began inserting "Kyrios" as a substitute for the Tetragrammaton.

94 This is a blatant translation error that we feel needs to be addressed immediately. "Eliseus" does *not* mean "My El is Zeus." To begin with, if ancient Judaism had gleaned such an understanding, the LXX translation would have been utterly rejected as a pagan translation by all of Judaism well in advance of the Messiah's birth. Secondly, the name "Zeus" (Ζευς) begins with the Greek letter "zeta" (Z), not the "sigma" (upper case Σ, lower case σ) that is found in the name "Eliseus" (Ἐλισσαίου). This same information applies to the author's argument that "Elias" means "My El is Zeus." We address this particular argument, as well as his argument that the name *Iesous* is derived from Zeus, in chapter 10.

95 The anonymous author of the article "Is Jesus the Name?" here inserts the name "Yah," whereas author W. F. Wilkerson actually used "Jah." We're not saying that the author of "Is Jesus the Name?" was incorrect with his choice of "Yah" over "Jah," but we *are* saying that he incorrectly cited his source. He does the same thing with his reference to "Hoshua," which Wilkerson rendered "Hoshea," as well as "Jahoshua," which was written as "Jehoshua" in Wilkerson's book. The author of the article appears to subliminally ascribe Wilkerson's support for the "Yah" prefix and apparently sees nothing wrong with altering Wilkerson's actual name spellings to accomplish his biased purpose/agenda. Wilkerson's book, *Personal Names in the Bible*, is currently available for reading online.

96 This is another subtle misrepresentation for Wilkerson's book. The actual sentence reads, "The word Jeshua was altered, in the pronunciation of the Alexandrian Jews, into Jesus; just as Elisha was into Elisæe and Elissæus."

the Greeks occasionally worshipped the supreme deity under the title of 'Zeus the Saviour…"[97]

The plan of the Greeks was simple, they merely dropped the Hebrew terminology of names which referred to the Hebrew deity, and substituted the name, or letters, referring to the name of the supreme deity, Zeus. Thus Eliakim became AlcimUS, Elisha became EliSEUS, while Yahshua became (JeSUS) Iesous.

Ernest Renan, in his work, "The Life of Jesus," says, "It is not probable that the Saviour knew Greek. This language was very little spread in Judea, beyond the classes who participated in the government, and the towns inhabited by the pagans, like Caesarea."

After the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Hebrews hated the Greeks and detested their language. In the first part of the Talmud, the Mishna, the Jews are emphatically taught it is worse for a Jew to learn Greek than to eat swine's flesh.

Dr. F. C. Burkitt of Cambridge says, "But our Saviour and His first disciples spoke Aramaic; there is nothing to suggest that they were acquainted with the current Greek Version (the Septuagint).[98] In the synagogues they would hear the Scriptures read in the original Hebrew, followed by a more or less stereotyped rendering into the Aramaic of Palestine the language of the country, itself a cousin of Hebrew. A faithfully reported saying therefore of (the Saviour) or of Peter ought to agree with the Hebrew against the Greek." Quoted in "Gospel Light", p. 27.

"From all these considerations must be drawn the conclusion that (the Saviour) grew up speaking the Aramaic tongue and that He would be obliged to speak Aramaic to His disciples and to the people in order to be understood." The Saviour "had taught in the Aramaic; and in that language the Hebraists must have taught concerning Him in (their) worship, if the address were to be intelligible at all. If, further, the substance of such an address were noted down for the Aramaic speaking Hebraists; composition in Hebrew after the model of the Biblical books was not inconceivable, especially as the Jews who could read were also able to understand Hebrew; but the most probable course with material already formulated by oral delivery was to write it down in the language in which it was spoken, particularly if the record were designed to afford convenient and reliable information for further recital or public exposition." Pages 11 and 16, "Words of Jesus."

From the above evidence, and other that could be provided were space available, we must conclude that the pious Hebrews, disciples of the Saviour and otherwise, were not dependent upon the Septuagint Version with its substitutions, but used the Hebrew Scriptures expounding them in the Hebrew-Aramaic. All the earliest evidence of the disciple writers of the first centuries is that the first Gospel Scriptures were written in Hebrew-Aramaic. Scholars of renown of our day are coming to the opinion from internal evidence and linguistics that all the New Testament was originally penned in Hebrew-Aramaic, and later translated into Greek and other languages. This would explain the substitution of the Grecian forms of Hebrew Names, for the Greek translators would largely follow the current Septuagint Version of the Greek; of which we learned that in this Version the names of the prophets were changed, as Elisha to Eliseus, and Yahshua (Joshua) to Iesous (Jesus).[99]

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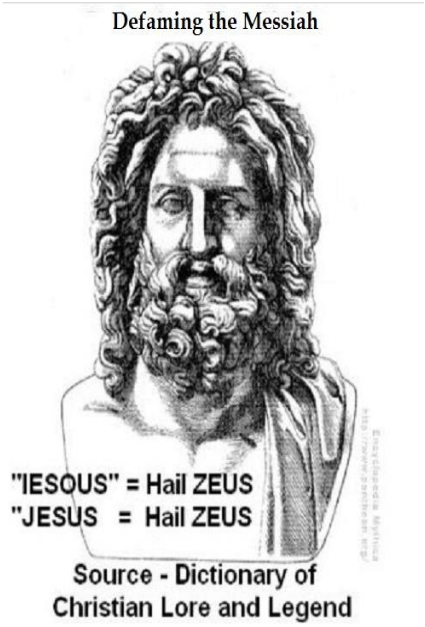
97 The anonymous author does not list the page number for this quote. It is taken from page 117 of Hislop's *The Two Babylons*, Fifth Edition, London: S. W. Partridge and Co., 1873.

98 The argument that the Saviour and His disciples weren't acquainted with the Septuagint translation is what is known as a "red herring" argument designed to throw us off topic. For argument's sake, let's say that no one in first-century Israel spoke Greek, nor were they aware that a Septuagint translation existed. Would that change the fact that the Septuagint had been translated over 200 years earlier (long before a teaching existed that it is worse for a Jew to learn Greek than to eat swine's flesh)? Would collective Israel's not knowing Greek change the fact that Jewish Hebrew scholars produced this translation for a Greek-speaking reading audience?

99 This anonymously-authored and undated article may be read in its entirety online at the following link: www.assemblyofyahweh.com/is-jesus-the-name/. We first read it in the 1-3, 2005 issue of their quarterly publication, *The Faith* magazine (Vol 69, No. 1); however, that issue was a reprint of *The Faith*, May-June 1980. The article likely appeared in a previous issue(s). Based on the citation from the 1937 issue of *Collier's*, I have a strong hunch that the anonymous author is none other than the founder of *The Faith* magazine, which was founded by C. O. Dodd in 1937.

If you were able to follow along with our footnotes addressing what we feel are key errors on the part of the above author (who wisely chose to remain anonymous as a means of evading accountability), you noticed the primary areas in which he takes the wrong turns in his negative and decidedly biased evaluation of the LXX. First, the anonymous author cites an unqualified, unaccredited contributor to a magazine writer's column. Second, as we alluded in our introduction to his article, he writes with the mistaken presumption that it was pagan Greeks who translated the Septuagint from Hebrew into Greek. While this is no minor error on his part, he proceeds to dig a deeper hole by falsely accusing the translators of the Septuagint of having "wittingly" substituted the Creator's name with "Kurios," which he incorrectly classifies as a name. Unless he can prove otherwise, "Kurios" is a *title*, not a name, and there was never an idol named "Kurios" in the Greek pantheon. Moreover, anyone who digs deeper than the anonymous author did will find that, indeed, those ancient Jewish translators *retained* the Divine Name instead of substituting it with titles.

The anonymous author of "Is Jesus the Name?" cemented a much-deserved reputation of linguistic ignorance by asserting that names such as "Eliseus" are the result of name-tampering by incorporating Zeus' name into the various Hebrew names. Contrary to the author's heavily biased report, there is no evidence whatsoever linking "Eliseus" to Zeus worship. In fact, the actual Greek rendering of Elisha's name is "Elissaiou."[100] It was English translators who came up with the "-seus" ending, so any attempt to cast blame of name-tampering on the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint is either wishful thinking or basic ignorance of linguistics and history. Finally, attempts to disassociate the LXX from first-century Judaism, while also misguided (*cf.*, the writings of Philo and Josephus), appear to be subtle attempts at maligning a translation that had long since been accepted as a respected translation of the Torah. It is also worth noting that this same author, who is so eager to accuse others of name tampering, blatantly changed the spellings of names as found in Dr. W. F. Wilkerson's book, *Personal Names in the Bible*, making this a classic case of "the pot calling the kettle black."



Other Sacred Name authors come up with equally preposterous reasons for rejecting the names found in the Septuagint. One author, Maria Merola, attempted to prove that the form "Jesus" is traced to "Zeus." The image displayed at right is taken from her website. Maria's article, titled "Does the Name Jesus Really Come from Zeus?"[101] contains many of the same Sacred Name claims that we have already covered, but she also includes a link to *another* internet study titled "What is the Septuagint?" by David W. Daniels. His article is specifically crafted to expose the Septuagint translation as a "hoax." June and I would tell you that Daniels' study is nothing more than a farce, but of

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As a demonstration of this article's popularity within the Sacred Name Movement, we are also providing the link for this same article as posted online by The Congregation of Yahweh, located in St. Marys, Georgia: https://sites.google.com/site/congregationofyahweh/article2.

[100] See the Greek text of Luke 4:27, where Elisha is rendered Ἐλισσαίου (Elissaiou).

[101] For a more in-depth look at the teaching that the form "Jesus" is derived from Zeus worship, please read Chapter 10, "Can the Name "Jesus" Be Traced to Zeus Worship?"

course, that is our opinion. We suggest that you read the study and determine for yourself if our summary is unwarranted.

First, Mr. Daniels attempts to discredit the LXX based on a universally-accepted understanding that the infamous "Letter of Aristeas"[102] is bogus. Whether or not that letter is genuine has no bearing on the fact that, indeed, a scholarly translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek was completed and this translation was known and used by the likes of first-century Jews Philo and Josephus, not to mention the fact that it was cited extensively by New Testament authors. Attempting to undermine the legitimacy of the Septuagint on the basis of a pseudepigraphic document laced with false information would be akin to declaring that Dwight Eisenhower's election to the presidency in 1952 was a hoax—all because the same Chicago Tribune newspaper that reported his victory had previously mis-reported that Thomas Dewey defeated Harry Truman for President four years earlier.

If the Chicago Tribune couldn't give a factual report of the outcome of the 1948 election, how can we trust their report of the 1952 election? But we know that Eisenhower *really was* our nation's 34th President and we know there *really was* a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures and that it was highly regarded and quoted by Judaism's most respected believers of the first century, including Philo, who, out of hundreds of thousands of Jews at that time living in Alexandria, Egypt, was chosen to lead a delegation to Rome in order to plead the emperor for Jewish civil rights. For those who may question Philo's reputation within normative first-century Judaism, we are providing the following excerpt from *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*:

Chicago Daily Tribune
FINAL
LANDSLIDE FOR IKE!
Stratton Likely Winner; County Race Tight

> Philo was a prominent member of the Jewish community of Alexandria[103], the largest Jewish settlement outside Palestine. The only certain date known from his life comes from his account of the great pogrom[104] in Alexandria which started in A.D. 38 under the prefect Flaccus, during the reign of the Roman emperor Gaius Caligula. Philo was then chosen to head a delegation (*Gaium* 370) sent in A.D. 39/40 by the Jewish community to Gaius Caligula in Rome.[105]

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102 J.R. Bartlett, in his book *Jews in the Hellenistic World*, Cambridge University Press. pp. 20-21, 1985, offers this summary of the "Letter of Aristeas": "In the document known as the Letter of Aristeas, which scholars believe was written by a Hellenistic Jew in the mid second century BC, an elaborate story is related about how the translation of the Pentateuch was done, and the reasons for it, and the circumstances. The Aristeas document pretends to date from more than a century earlier, and the setting of the story is the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus in Alexandria. Scholars generally view the work as fiction, but nevertheless, it is the basis for the name by which the Greek Bible has become known, the "Septuagint" or "LXX." It is also regarded as an important source document for the history of the period."

103 According to this same reference, article "Alexandria," p. 152, we learn, "By the 1st century C.E. the Jewish population in Alexandria numbered in the hundreds of thousands." The majority of these Jews were descendants of prisoners of war who were forcibly settled there by Alexander the Great when the city was founded.

104 "Pogrom" is defined as "An organized and often officially instigated local massacre, especially one directed against the Jews. [<Russian, destruction]" —From *The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary*.

105 From *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 5, David Noel Freedman, Editor-in-Chief, article "Philo of Alexandria," by Peder Borgen, Doubleday, 1992, p. 333.

In spite of an unreliable author's account of *how* the Septuagint came to be translated, we nevertheless know this translation was accepted and used by normative first-century Judaism, including Philo.[106] Nevertheless, David W. Daniels concludes, "So the Septuagint story is a hoax. It was not written before Christ; so it was not used by Jesus or His apostles." In view of the historical facts contradicting Daniels' conclusion, we can safely say that his rejection of the "Letter of Aristeas" is yet another red herring argument designed to sidetrack readers from the real discussion of whether or not the LXX was an accepted translation of Scripture before and during the first century. His denial that this translation was in use before the days the Messiah walked the earth as flesh and blood human does not change the fact that it was indeed accepted and used by first-century believers.

Daniels' other reason for rejecting the LXX is even more bizarre than his "Letter of Aristeas" argument. Let's read it:

> Many scholars claim that Christ and his apostles used the Septuagint, preferring it above the preserved Hebrew text found in the temple and synagogues. But if the Greek Septuagint was the Bible Jesus used, he would not have said,
>
> > 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. (Matthew 5:18)
>
> Why would Jesus not have said this? Because the jot is a Hebrew letter, and the tittle is a small mark to distinguish between Hebrew letters. If Jesus used the Greek Septuagint, His scriptures would not have contained the jot and tittle. He obviously used the Hebrew scriptures![107]

As we consider author David W. Daniels' reasoning as stated above, please consider the fact that most of us have read the Messiah's Hebraic "jot and tittle" commentary about the law from an *English* translation, such as the King James Version. The "jot," of course, represents the smallest Hebrew letter, the *yodh* (י) and the English word "tittle" is derived from the Latin word *titulus*, which is a small distinguishing mark over a letter or word, such as a diacritic or the dot on a lowercase *i* or *j*. We do not question that the Messiah, when speaking the words recorded in Matthew 5:18, expressed them in Hebrew or Aramaic. Such being the case, would the fact that He spoke Hebrew invalidate the existence of the Septuagint translation? Would the fact that the Messiah spoke Hebrew prove that the Septuagint translation is a "hoax"? How would rendering the Hebrew *yod* as *iota* in Greek alter the meaning of His original words any more than rendering it as *jot* in English? This reasoning is as absurd as concluding that the U.S. Constitution is a hoax because it was composed in English, whereas Christopher Columbus, who discovered America, spoke Italian and Spanish.

If we are to reject the Septuagint translation as a hoax based on David W. Daniels' reasoning, more questions are raised, such as why the Septuagint version is the version of choice that New Testament authors almost exclusively turned to when quoting Old Testament passages. For example, when Luke penned Acts 7:14, he made reference to the number of Jacob's descendants who went down to Egypt with Joseph. That number, 75, is recorded in Genesis 46:27 and Exodus 1:5 of the LXX. However, according to the Hebrew text of Genesis 46:27 and Exodus 1:5, the number is *seventy*. Given this information, which version did Luke cite when he composed Acts 7:14? Quite frankly, author David W. Daniels'

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[106] For details outlining Josephus and Philo's use of the Septuagint translation, please read chapter 13 ("The Bible Used by Philo and Josephus") of our study *Facing the Pentecost Controversy*.

[107] David W. Daniels, "What is the Septuagint?" http://www.chick.com/information/bibleversions/articles/septuagint.asp

research doesn't go that deep. He simply does not address these questions in his attempt to discredit the Septuagint. One of the characteristics of *surface research* is basing conclusions on emotional bias instead of facts and we have found this to be a common thread binding those who bash the Septuagint translation.

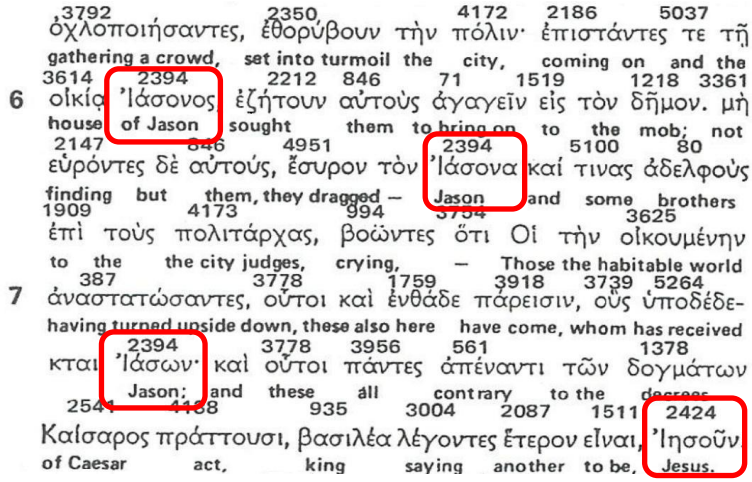
What About Jason in the New Testament?

Sacred Namers in general are adamant in their belief that Greek translators manipulated the "true name" of the Messiah. We're still not certain if they believe the conspiracy was perpetrated by Zeus-worshipping scholars who wanted to identify the Messiah with Zeus or if they believe the conspiracy was engineered by a Jewish contingency bent on removing the Father's name from the Son's name. We're sure some folks believe it was a dual conspiracy orchestrated by Satan.

If it is true that translators intentionally removed the "Yah" from the Messiah's name, we first have to wonder how the 3rd century BCE Hebrew scholars who translated the LXX foreknew that the name attributed to the Israelite general known as the son of Nun would also be attributed to the son of Yahweh, thus requiring a removal of the "Yah" sound from the first syllable. That is certainly an unexplained mystery (at least no one has ever explained it to us). We also have to wonder why the alleged conspirators who translated the New Testament overlooked the name of the man known as "Jason," a righteous man whose name appears in the book of Acts. In Greek, his name is rendered Ιάσονα (Yahsohna), Ιάσονος (Yahsohnos), and Ιάσων (Yahsohn). This one name, with the first syllable **Ια**, provides strong evidence that there was no Greek conspiracy to hide the "Yah" pronunciation within anyone's name.

Sacred Namers may claim the Greek translators somehow "missed" altering Jason's name, or they may even claim that the conspirators' only focus was on the Messiah's name. However, in view of the fact that the form Ιησους was in use centuries before the Messiah was born, and especially in view of the fact that it was used in reference to Moses' successor, the man known as Joshua son of Nun, it seems highly unlikely that there was any attempt to either connect the Messiah to Zeus worship or to remove the Father's name from His name. Displayed below is a copy from *Green's Interlinear* of Acts 17:5-7, where the Greek form of Jason's name is presented three times:

Ιάσονος (Yahsohnos) and Ιησους (Yehsous)



If there was a conspiracy to remove the "Yah" pronunciation from names to cover up the Father's name, then why did the New Testament translators overlook the "Yah" in Jason's name? Were they less competent than Sacred Name Movement students of the Word? Were they not detail-oriented?

The LXX "furnishes an older and more weighty tradition"

Finally, we have found that the same Sacred Namers who are so quick to deride the names found in the Septuagint *also* uphold Wilhelm Gesenius' Hebrew lexicon and grammar book as the most reliable source for a foundation in Hebrew linguistics. However, they are apparently unaware of the tremendous respect that Gesenius had for the Septuagint translation. Here is what he wrote:

> The pronunciation of the Jews of the present day is very divergent. The Polish and German Jews adopt a worse one, partly like the Syriac, while the Spanish and Portuguese Jews, whom most Christian scholars (after the example of Reuchlin) follow, prefer a purer one, more in harmony with the Arabic.
>
> The manner in which the Septuagint (LXX) wrote Hebrew proper names in Greek letters, furnishes an older and more weighty tradition. Several, however, of the Hebrew sounds they were unable to represent for want of corresponding characters in the Greek language, e.g., שׂ, ק, צ, ע, ט (in which cases they made the best shifts they could).[108]

In spite of the Sacred Name Movement's general snubbing of the Septuagint's handling of Hebrew names, the Hebrew scholar whose authority ranks as high as any Hebrew linguistic authority, Wilhelm Gesenius, is on record extending *accolades* to the Septuagint's overall accuracy in this area. When we consider the fact that the Septuagint truly was a respected translation before, during and after the first century, it becomes clear that the transliteration of the name we know as "Joshua" was accepted as legitimate by normative Judaism and later by Messianic believers. The first syllable of that name, to the chagrin of many Sacred Name Movement adherents, is expressed in the LXX as *Yeh*, not *Yah*. There are bound to be those who, upon learning of the respect that Gesenius had for the LXX's treatment of names, will now pursue alternate options in their attempts to malign the *Yeh* pronunciation. One such attempt may be to promote the view that the Greek "η" *originally* carried the "α" sound. Certainly, if such a thing was true in the ancient past, it was not true by the time of the first century. By the first century CE, the Greek Ιησου was certainly pronounced *Yeh-soo*, not *Yah-soo*.

[108] From *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, Translated by Benjamin Davies, LL.D, Ira Bradley & Co., Boston, MA, 1880, p. 26.

5. "Cry of the Sheep" and the Controversial First Syllable

We closed our previous chapter by pointing out a potential claim promoted by those of the Sacred Name Movement persuasion: Once they are no longer able to deny the fact that the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint spelled Joshua's name Ιησους, (which we understand as having been pronounced *Yeh'-soos*), resolute Sacred Namers may begin promoting the view that the Greek "η" originally carried the "α" sound. We wrote, "There are bound to be those who, upon learning of the respect that Gesenius had for the LXX's treatment of names, will now pursue alternate options in their attempts to malign the *Yeh* pronunciation. One such attempt may be to promote the view that the Greek 'η' (*eta*)[109] *originally* carried the 'α' sound." We were given a foretaste of this potential claim in 2014.

In his 2014 Unity Conference presentation titled "The Messiah's Name: Accepting Dialectal Variety," researcher Michael Banak eloquently and candidly presented and endorsed the same message that June and I have promoted so extensively all these years: Mutual acceptance and recognition of other pronunciation attempts without necessarily agreeing. Michael was so diligent and respectful that he asked June and me to review his "pre-presentation" several months in advance of the conference. In fact, in a private e-mail, Michael recalled a conversation he had with an author whose biased study is aimed at discrediting the form *Yeshua*. After respectfully discussing their differences, the two men came to agree that ultimately, "both forms are right." That agreement, in and of itself, is a rarity within what is known as the Sacred Name Movement. Nevertheless, in spite of Michael's emphasis on the need for us to make allowances for "dialectal variety," he in fact exhibited a greater support for the form that is primarily embraced by the Sacred Name Movement; namely, *Yahshua*, while simultaneously *rejecting* the pronunciation *Yeshua*, specifically the pronunciation listed by such references as *Strong's Concordance* and *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon* for the short form יֵשׁוּעַ (word #3442). We more fully address our concerns about Mr. Banak's Unity Conference presentation in chapter 18 ("Pronouncing the Name of the Messiah: Accepting Dialectal Variety—With an Asterisk*").

When it comes to the call for us to accept "dialectal variety" with the various renderings and pronunciations offered for the Messiah's name while simultaneously <u>not</u> expressing an educated bias supportive of one's personal conclusion, please don't misunderstand us. We are not opposed to forming a bias after having diligently researched *any* topic! We certainly respect attempts to uncover and exhibit supportive evidence for a certain form above another; that's what the quest for truth is all about. If your research causes you to lean more towards the form *Yahshua* as representing the original pronunciation of the Messiah's name, then we respect your view and we're not about to question your sanity or intelligence for having reached your conclusion. However, in the process of researching, we must be careful to not allow our biases to cause us to brush aside other information that may alter the dynamics of our initial findings. For this reason, we need to examine *any* new information that might be considered supportive evidence for *any* form and carefully weigh, sometimes to the point of exhaustion and even disappointment, the pros and cons.

Michael Banak's exhaustive research included an unusual and fascinating find in an old book titled *The Pronunciation Of Greek And Latin*, by Edgar Sturtevant, which was published in 1940. In his PowerPoint presentation, Michael cites a select portion from Sturtevant's chapter titled "The Greek Sounds." Sturtevant, in the course of explaining the Greek letter *eta*, pointed out that ancient Greeks

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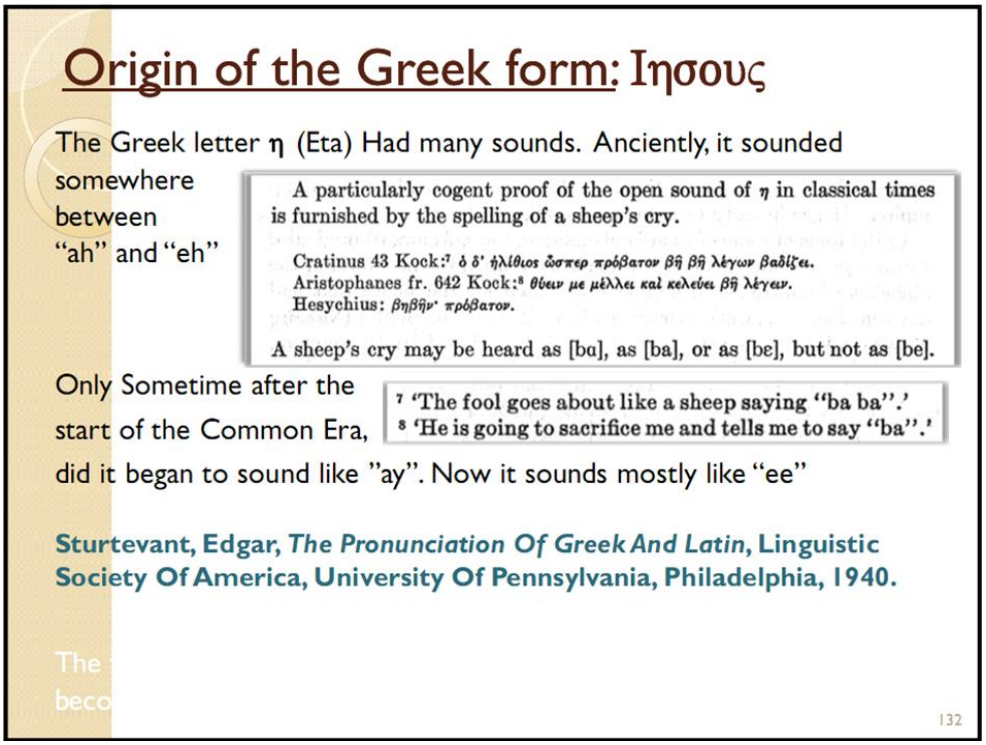
[109] The Greek letter *eta* is written as η within a word; its upper-case form is H.

transliterated the bleating of a sheep by writing "βῆ βῆ." According to a more *modern* transliteration of Greek, which includes the transliteration offered by *Strong's Concordance*,[110] this sound would be transliterated in English as "Bay Bay." However, those who have been around sheep extensively know that the sound made by a bleating sheep is more accurately rendered "Baaa," as in "bad." How do we explain this variation? Did ancient sheep cry, "Bay Bay"? I guess it depends on what sound you hear, since there *is* some variability in animal sounds and how we perceive them. Nevertheless, it shouldn't be a question whether or not ancient sheep produced a different sound than modern sheep; rather, it's a question of how the ancient Greeks pronounced the letter *eta* (η). Sturtevant's apparent point (as displayed below on one of Michael's PowerPoint slides), is this: In his opinion, the ancient Greeks didn't pronounce the Greek letter *eta* (η) as the modern-day "*ee* as in *be*," but rather with an "ah as in Yah" sound. What follows is Michael Banak's presentation of Sturtevant's point[111]:



This one slide from Mr. Banak's presentation offers insightful details, but regrettably it also raises questions that Michael leaves unanswered. June and I were not in attendance at his presentation, nor was it recorded, so we were not privy to any additional comments or explanations that may have accompanied the actual showing of the above slide until Michael made a separate "YouTube" video demo of his presentation in February 2015. Since June and I did not witness the actual presentation, we are left to address the slide's information with our own observations while anticipating the questions and answers that may have been posed during the presentation.

One question that definitely needs to be asked is, "What does a sheep sound like to *you*?" Having raised sheep as a youth on the family farm in Illinois, I can assure anyone that I have *never* heard a sheep

[110] For details, please review the *Strong's Greek Dictionary* pronunciation chart as supplied in chapter 18 of this study.
[111] The slide displayed on the following paste is taken from Michael Banak's 2014 Unity Conference presentation titled "The Messiah's Name: Accepting Dialectal Variety."

say, "Bah," as in "Yah." The sheep we raised would cry, "Baaa," as in "bad." The two vowel sounds have enough differences that I personally do not understand how the one could be confused for the other, though I'm sure this could happen within other dialects of the English language. The question, then, is, "Does the information from Edgar Sturtevant's *The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin* validate a conclusion that the Messiah's name was anciently pronounced *Yahshua* instead of *Yeshua*?" If we can agree that Greek linguistics provide a key to the pronunciation of the first syllable, and if we can agree that sheep do ***not*** cry, "Bah" as in "Yah," then the answer can only be no. If we were to rely on the cry of sheep for determining how the first syllable of the Messiah's name is pronounced, it would have to be "Yashua" as in "Nashua."

Even Sturtevant seems uncertain as to the exact vowel sound necessary for reproducing the bleating of a sheep, but that particular quote, found on the same page as the other information offered from E. H. Sturtevant's book, is omitted from Michael Banak's presentation. Sturtevant writes that one can scarcely say whether the cry of a sheep is nearer to the *a* of *father* or the *a* in the word *care*[112]:

> A sheep's cry does not, of course, contain a pure vowel sound, and one can scarcely say whether it is nearer to the *a* of *father* or of *care;* but it has little resemblance to any vowel closer than the latter.

That "latter sound" referenced above is the *a* as in *care*. Indeed, if I have ever heard any variations in the sound made by bleating sheep, they would come closer to the *a* as in *care* rather than the *a* of *father*. E. H. Sturtevant's above remark was in essence a repetition of a more expanded commentary that he made earlier in his book regarding onomatopoetic animal sound reproductions:[113]

> Occasionally cries of animals are represented by speech-sounds. Menaechmus' wife repeats her charge of theft in these words: "Tu, tu istic, inquam." Then the slave breaks in: "Shall I bring you an owl to keep right on saying 'tu, tu' for you?" Unless owls have changed their language, this fixes the sound of Latin long *u* within rather narrow limits (p. 33). The Greek comic poets spelled the cry of a sheep βῆ βῆ. This cannot be read in the modern Greek fashion [vi: vi:], nor yet with a close *e*-sound [be: be:]; it might be read with the vowel either of English *far* or of English *care* (p. 123).

Sturtevant's comments above do nothing to resolve the question of whether the first syllable of Ιησους, was anciently pronounced *Yah'-soos* or *Yay'-soos* because he concedes that the η *might* be read

[112] From *The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin: The Sounds and Accents*, by E. H. Sturtevant, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1920, page 123. This page may be accessed online at the following link: https://archive.org/stream/pronunciationgr00unkngoog#page/n140/mode/2up.
[113] *Ibid*, p. 7. This page may be accessed online at the following link: https://archive.org/stream/pronunciationgr00unkngoog#page/n24/mode/2up

either as an *a* in *far* or as an *a* in the word *care*. So is it pronounced like the "Yah" sound or is it more like the "Yay" (which is like the *a* in *care*)? Or something in between? We can well imagine that the debate over how the first syllable of the Messiah's name is pronounced may eventually deteriorate to a debate over the precise sound made by a bleating sheep. One person may hear the sheep say, "Baaa" as in "bad." Another hears "Bey" as in "bay." Still another may actually insist that he hears "Baaa" as in "Yah." Ultimately, we hear what we hear and hopefully we all do the best we can as individuals to get it right while exhibiting an understanding spirit of kindness and forbearance towards those who hear, then repeat what they hear, differently than we do.

E. H. Sturtevant, in his chapter on the Greek sounds, goes on to make strong, yet vague, assertions that the ancient pronunciation of η came much closer to representing the same *ay* (as in "pray") sound that is commonly supplied in Greek grammar books and lexicons. For example, he writes that the η was an intermediate between the *epsilon* and the *alpha*. Not only that, but it was an open *e*[114]:

> must have the same quality as ε. The contraction of ε+α to η presents a more complicated problem; η cannot be equivalent to ᾱ, because these sounds are consistently distinguished in writing; it cannot be equivalent to long ε, because, as we have just shown, long ε is written ει, and ει is not confused with η in early inscriptions. Therefore η must be intermediate between ε and α; it must be a relatively open *e* and ε a relatively close *e*. It follows also that ει is a relatively close long *e* (pp. 121 f.).

If, as claimed above by Sturtevant, the *eta* was intermediate between the Greek *epsilon* (ε) and the Greek *alpha* (α), then we can know with certainty that this Greek letter could not have conveyed the *ah* as in "Yah" sound because that sound is reserved exclusively for the *alpha*. We can see how one might possibly review Sturtevant's information about the sound that ancient Greeks attributed to bleating sheep (βῆ) and conclude that in ancient times the ῆ (*eta*) must have been pronounced as a short "a" sound (as in "bad"), but we do *not* see how anyone could conclude that this Greek letter was pronounced as the *ah* in "Yah." If the ancient *eta* indeed carried the "ah" sound as in *Yah*, then what sound was represented by the Greek α (*alpha*)? This question, which we feel is a rather obvious one, is left unanswered in Mr. Banak's presentation. If you proceed to page 126 of Sturtevant's book, we find that the author certainly recognized that even in ancient Greek, there was a distinct difference between the Greek *eta* and the *alpha*. He writes:

> In the first century B.C. Dionysius of Halicarnassus finds η [eta] the most pleasant in sound of all the vowels except α [alpha], while ι [iota] is the least pleasant.[115]

Sturtevant's commentary above clearly shows that there was an ancient distinction of sorts between

[114] Ibid, p. 11. This page may be accessed online at the following link: https://archive.org/stream/pronunciationgr00unkngoog#page/n28/mode/2up

[115] E. H. Sturtevant, *The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, Published September 1920, p. 126. An "open *e*" sound is the "ay" as in "pray" sound, represented by the é in French.

the *eta* and the *alpha* during the time period pre-dating the Messiah's birth. Presuming that the Greek *alpha* has always produced the "ah" sound (as in *Yahweh*), the question becomes, "What sound did the *eta* produce?" Again, Michael does not address this distinction in his presentation. The fact that there *was* an ancient distinction really needs to be addressed before making any claims as to how the Greeks would have vocalized Ιησους in the distant past, in spite of any dialectal variants that may have existed with the vowel *eta*. One thing is nearly certain: It would most likely *not* have been vocalized *Yah-soos*, at least not from any evidence that we have ever seen. We say this with all due respect to those who refer to the Messiah as *Yahshua* and we certainly do not believe such a pronunciation dishonors Him in any way.

Nevertheless, it should be a given that by the time of the Septuagint translation, there *must* have been a difference between the η (*eta*) and the α (alpha). This is made quite evident by the Hebrew scholars' decision to select the α (as opposed to the η) to represent the "Yah" sound in the Greek equivalent of "HalleluYah" (άλληλουΐα instead of άλληλουΐη). More relevant to this discussion, it would have been a simple matter for the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint to have written the Messiah's name as Ίασους, but that isn't what was done. Let's face it: The Sacred Name Movement wants to *at least* see Ίασους in the LXX and the fact that they see something else has contributed to their general rejection of the Septuagint translation.

Not only was there an apparent difference between the ancient *eta* and the ancient *alpha*, but we're about to see that by the time the Septuagint translation was carried out, the *eta* was most likely pronounced "ay" as in "say" (or "ey" as in "they"). To that end, author E. H. Sturtevant offers additional information, namely, that by the time of Alexander the Great (which was *prior to* the translation of the LXX), the Greek *eta* was already pronounced as the *e* in "they," not *a*. Since the Septuagint was translated in the 3rd century B.C.E., this means that by the time the Messiah was born, the Greek *eta* was essentially pronounced as the *ey* as in "they." Here is what Sturtevant wrote only a few pages after his "Cry of the Sheep" commentary:

> Oriental loan-words indicate that Greek η continued to be an *e*-vowel in the East from Alexander's time until long after the beginning of the Christian Era. Indian coins have *Heliyak-reyasa* = Ἡλιοκλέους and Diyamedasa for Διομήδου, while Greek Μηρός and Χάβηρις represent Indian *Mērusẹ* and *Kāvērī*.[116] In Armenian of the fifth century A.D. η is represented by *ĕ* twenty-five times, by *e* three times, and by *i* only six times.[117] Even at the present day η is an *e*-vowel under some conditions in Pontic Greek.[118]

If we can understand that the Indian coins, as referenced above, date from around the time of the second century B.C.E., when Seleucid kings ruled portions of India, the Indian transliterations of those rulers' names bear out that the *eta* carried the "ay as in "pray" sound. Thus, regardless of how the *eta* may have been vocalized centuries earlier, by this time its "dialectal variety" included the "ay" sound. Once we compile all this information, we need to consider the implications of the information supplied by E. H. Sturtevant in his book *The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin*: We have seen, courtesy of Michael

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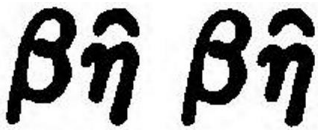
[116] E. H. Sturtevant's footnote: "Kern, *Ellas*, I, 186; Gardner, Percy, *Indian Coins*, pp. 23, 31, etc." Note: The book *Indian Coins* is currently available for reading online under the full name *Catalogue of Indian Coins in the British Museum: Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India*, by Percy Gardner, London, Longmans & Co., 1886. Here's a link to the book.
[117] E. H. Sturtevant's footnote: Thumb, *Bys. Z.*, IX, 394-96.
[118] E. H. Sturtevant, *The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, Published September 1920, p. 127. This page may be accessed online at the following link:
https://archive.org/stream/pronunciationgr00unkngoog#page/n144/mode/2up

Banak's citation from Sturtevant's book, that in ancient times the Greek η (eta) was used in the following onomatopoetic expression mimicking the cry of a sheep:



We're not sure of what precise effect the addition of the circumflex mark over the ῆ had on its ancient pronunciation.[119] Did it change it from its regular "ay" sound (as in "say") to a short "a" sound (as in "mad")? Regardless of how the ῆ was pronounced in the far ancient past, Sturtevant points out that by the time of Alexander the Great, who died in the 4th century B.C.E., it was pronounced "ay" as in "say." In other words, Sturtevant would say the following to Sacred Name Movement adherents: "Sorry to disappoint you, but by the time the Messiah was born, the name Ιησους was most likely vocalized *Yay'-soos*." Are we putting words in Sturtevant's mouth? We invite you to contact any unbiased, qualified Greek scholar to confirm whether or not our proposed summary from Sturtevant is accurate. If you refer to chapter 18, you can read quotes from some of the Greek professors that we personally contacted.

The fact of the matter is, by the time the Hebrew scholars translated the Septuagint, the pronunciation of *eta* (ῆ) was very likely *already* pronounced as "ay" in "say." The evidence that E. H. Sturtevant used in determining that the *eta* was a long *e* by the time of Alexander the Great comes from Indian transliterations of the names of Seleucid kings on their coins.[120]

Sturtevant goes on to further clarify that by the time of the 3rd century B.C.E., there was confusion, *not* between the pronunciation of the Greek *eta* versus the Greek *alpha*, but between the *eta* (H, η) and the *epsilon* (E, ε):

> E and η must have had identical quality at some time between the beginning and close of the development, although they remained distinct in quantity until a new distinction in quality had developed. As a matter of fact a confusion between ε and η appears in papyri, beginning with Δεμήτριος, *P. Petr.*[2] 56. *b* 5 (260 B.C.).[121]

The Greek *epsilon* (pronounced "e" as in "met") and the Greek η, according to E. H. Sturtevant, were pronounced the same (or very nearly so) by the year 260 B.C.E., effectively nullifying any similarity by

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[119] For proof that the Greek circumflex was a pronunciation-changer, please see the *Wikipedia* article "Greek Diacritics," at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_diacritics. "The **circumflex** (Ancient Greek: περισπωμένη *perispōménē* 'twisted around') – ᾶ — marked high and falling pitch within one syllable. In distinction to the angled Latin circumflex, the Greek circumflex is printed in the form of either a tilde or an inverted breve. It was also known as ὀξύβαρυς *oxýbarys* 'high-low' or 'acute-grave', and its original form (like a caret: ^) was from a combining of the acute and grave diacritics. Because of its compound nature, it only appeared on long vowels or diphthongs."

[120] A scholar cited by Michael Banak (in private e-mails to us) is at times at disagreement with E. H. Sturtevant's conclusions, including the transliterations of Greek names on Indian coins. The scholar I'm referring to is W. Sidney Allen, who authored another book detailing the history of the Greek language, *Vox Graeca: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Classical Greek*. In expressing disagreement with Sturtevant's transliteration of some consonants, Allen nevertheless offers no protest to Sturtevant's transliteration of the *eta* (it's an *e* sound, not an *ah* sound). Here's the excerpt from page 30 of his 3rd edition: "... as Sturtevant has to recognize, transcriptions of Greek names on Indian coins show no such equivalence (Διομῇδου, for example, is represented simply as *Diyamedasa* and not *Dhiyamedhasa*)."

[121] Ibid, p. 129. This page may be accessed online at the following link: https://archive.org/stream/pronunciationgr00unkngoog#page/n147/mode/2up

that time between the *eta* and the *alpha*. This in turn disproves any Sacred Name Movement teaching that the ancient Greek transcription of a sheep's cry validates the pronunciation *Yahshua* as the name given to the Messiah at birth.

Sacred Name Movement adherents may not appreciate Michael's appeal to embrace both the forms *Yahshua* and *Yeshua* (Yəshua) as possible names of the Messiah, but they will wholeheartedly embrace his suggestion that ancient Greeks may have pronounced Ιησους something more akin to *Yah'-soos* than *Yeh'-soos* on the basis of the ancient Greek transcription of the "Cry of the Sheep." However, as we have shown, if the *eta* used in mimicking the "Cry of the Sheep" was anciently pronounced as "a" as in "hand," this pronunciation changed well in advance of the Septuagint translation. On the sole basis of the available evidence, we are left to reiterate that when we consider the fact that the Septuagint truly was a respected translation before, during and after the first century, it becomes clear that its transliteration of the name we know as "Joshua" was accepted as legitimate by normative Judaism and later by Messianic believers. The first syllable of that name, to the chagrin of many Sacred Name Movement adherents, was rendered *Yeh*, not *Yah*.

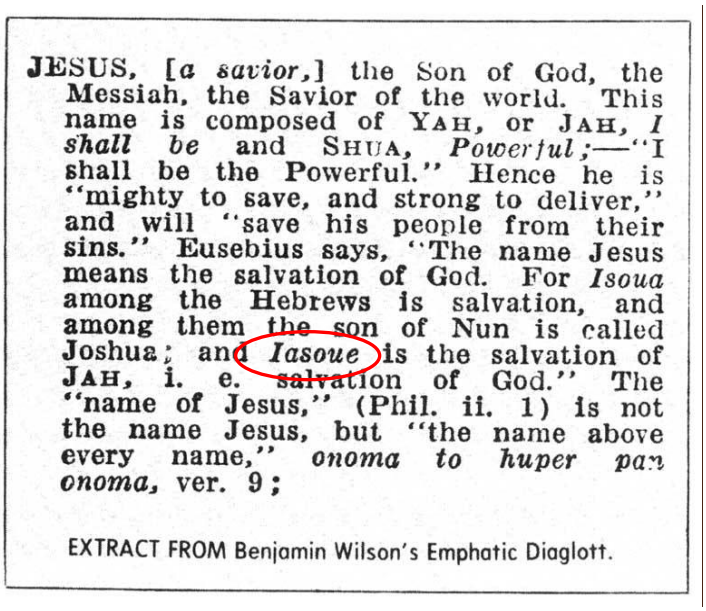
6. Evidence for the Messiah's Name: Eusebius

Various Sacred Name Movement groups point us to the writings of eminent fourth-century scholar and historian Eusebius as evidence that the name given to the Messiah is *Yahshua*. A group known as Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah cites Eusebius in their booklet *The Missing J*. We very well could have included a quote from this popular booklet in our chapter addressing the extensive examples of Sacred Name Movement intolerance of the form *Yeshua*. Here is how the author of *The Missing J* regards the rendering *Yeshua*:

> Jewish superstitious reverence for the name still is evident in their aversion to including the short form of the sacred name in YAHshua. Even today the Jews change the vowel form to spell YEHshua. That is how the "e" crops up in the Savior's name.[122]

We demonstrated that the "e" didn't ever "crop up" in the Savior's name in our previous chapter. If, as claimed by the above Sacred Name Movement author, the correct vowel is an "a" instead of the "e," then the 3rd century BCE Hebrew scholars who translated the LXX into Greek apparently didn't get the memo. However, we turn to *The Missing J*, not only to further illustrate Sacred Name Movement intolerance of the form *Yeshua*, but also to point out incorrect research methods as exhibited within a reference they make to the writings of Eusebius.

The author of *The Missing J* supplies what he refers to as an "extract" from the appendix of Benjamin Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott*, which in turn quotes from one of Eusebius' writings. Wilson's commentary focuses on the correlation between the name Moses gave to the son of Nun and the name given to the Messiah. We circled the form of this name that is of primary interest to Sacred Name Movement proponents:



JESUS, [*a savior,*] the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the world. This name is composed of YAH, or JAH, *I shall be* and SHUA, *Powerful;*—"I shall be the Powerful." Hence he is "mighty to save, and strong to deliver," and will "save his people from their sins." Eusebius says, "The name Jesus means the salvation of God. For *Isoua* among the Hebrews is salvation, and among them the son of Nun is called Joshua; and *Iasoue* is the salvation of JAH, i. e. salvation of God." The "name of Jesus," (Phil. ii. 1) is not the name Jesus, but "the name above every name," *onoma to huper pan onoma,* ver. 9;

EXTRACT FROM Benjamin Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott.

[122] From *The Missing J*, published by Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah, Rocheport, MO, 1996, p. 21. *The Missing J* was originally published in 1981. It should be noted that a virtually identical booklet known as *The Mistaken J*, possibly written by the same (anonymous) author, was published in 1996 by Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, Kingdom City, MO. The reference to *The Emphatic Diaglott* is found on page 12 of *The Mistaken J*.

We can understand how someone reading the above, without taking the time to do additional research, might believe Eusebius wrote that the Greek rendering of Joshua's name is *Iasoue*. Of course, the primary item of interest is the first syllable of this name, which contains the "Yah" pronunciation. Since both Joshua and the Messiah were given the same name, this, in turn, would create the impression that the Messiah's name must *also* have the "Yah" in the first syllable. However, as we are about to see, the author of *The Missing J* misrepresented Benjamin Wilson's words in his *Emphatic Diaglott*. While it's possible an error was made in a later edition of *The Emphatic Diaglott*, the 1902 edition makes reference to the form *Iosoue*, **not** *Iasoue*:[123]

JESUS, [*a savior,*] the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the world. This name is composed of YAH, or JAH, *I shall be;* and SHUA, *Powerful;*—"I shall be the Powerful." Hence he is "mighty to save, and strong to deliver," and will "save his people from their sins." Eusebius says, "'The name Jesus means the salvation of God. For *Isoua* among the Hebrews is salvation, and among them the son of Nun is called Joshua; and *Iosoue* is the salvation of JAH, i. e. salvation of God." The "name of Jesus," (Phil. ii. 1) is not the name Jesus, but "the name above every name," *onoma to huper pan onoma*, ver. 9: viz. the supreme dignity and authority with which the Father has invested Jesus Christ, as the reward of his disinterested exertion in the cause of the divine glory and human happiness.

As we mentioned above, it is possible that the anonymous author of *The Missing J* had access to a later edition of *The Emphatic Diaglott* in which an error was made in changing the Greek form of Joshua's name (as expressed by Eusebius) form *Iosoue* to *Iasoue*. The two forms are very similar, yet the vowel difference results in a different pronunciation. *Iosoue*, in Greek, is pronounced "Yoh-soo-eh," whereas *Iasoue* is pronounced "Yah-soo-eh." We highly doubt that the Messiah would be offended by either rendering, but we cannot say the same for many of the Sacred Name Movement adherents we have met over the years.

If we presume the *Missing J* author had access to an edition of *The Emphatic Diaglott* that had the form *Iasoue* instead of *Iosoue*, it would be natural to question which of the two editions correctly transliterates the form supplied by Eusebius. To resolve that enigma, we had to locate the Greek text of what Eusebius wrote. It is found in his work titled *Demonstratio Evangelica* ("Proof of the Gospel"), Book IV, ch. 17, line 23. Regrettably, we were unable to gain access to the full Greek text of Eusebius' work; however, the pertinent Greek phrase can be found in Volume I of the 19th century work titled *Critica Biblica*:

'Ισουά μέν γάρ παρ' 'Εβραίοις σωτηρία, υιος δε Ναυη παρα τοῖς αύτοις 'Ιωσουέ

[123] From *The Emphatic Diaglott*, by Benjamin Wilson, published by Fowler & Wells Co., Publishers, New York, NY, "Alphabetical Appendix of the Geographical and Proper Names, Weights, Measures, Coins, Precious Stones, Apostolic Words and Phrases, &c., Contained in the Books of the New Testament," 1902, p. 23.

> ὀνομάζεται : Ἰωσουὲ δέ ἐστιν Ἰαώ σωτηρία, τοῦτ' ἔστιν θεοῦ σωτήριον.[124]

Translated into English, the above text reads as follows: "For indeed in Hebrew '*Isoua*' is 'salvation,' and the son of Naue [Nun] is called by the Hebrews *Iosoue*, *Iosoue* being 'Salvation of *Yaho*,' that is, Salvation of Theou [Almighty]." We thus see that, once again, to the chagrin of many Sacred Name Movement adherents, Eusebius renders the first syllable of Joshua's name as *Yoh*, not *Yah*. In our chapter addressing the evidence from the Septuagint, we saw that the Hebrew scholars who translated this work form Hebrew to Greek centuries before the birth of the Messiah gave that first syllable the *Yeh* sound. Eusebius, writing centuries *after* the birth of the Messiah, gave that first syllable the *Yoh* sound. Regrettably, Sacred Namers have misrepresented Eusebius in their attempt to forcefully make his conclusion agree with theirs.

In Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, he supplied his readers with additional commentary regarding the Messiah's name:

> The same Moses, under the divine Spirit, foreseeing the epithet *Jesus*, likewise dignified this with a certain distinguished privilege. The name, which had never been uttered among men before Moses, he applied first to him alone who, by a type and sign, he knew would be his successor after his death in the government of the nation. His successor, therefore, who had not assumed the appellation *Jesus* (Joshua) before this period, ~~being called by his other~~ name *Oshea*, which his parents had given, was called by Moses *Jesus* (*Jehoshua*, *Joshua*) (Num. 13:17). This name, as an honorable distinction far superior to any royal diadem, was conferred on Joshua, because Joshua the son of Nun bore a resemblance to our Savior as the only one after Moses and the completion of that symbolical worship given through him that should succeed him in a government of pure and undefiled religion. Thus, Moses attached the name of our Savior Jesus Christ as the greatest honor to two men, who, according to him, excelled all the rest in virtue and glory; the one to the high priest, the other to him who should have the government after him.[125]

Eusebius conveyed the understanding that the Messiah's name must be spelled and pronounced exactly the same as that of the man known as the son of Nun. Of course, most standard English Bibles present his name as "Joshua." Although the majority of scholars believe this man's name was originally vocalized *Yehoshua*, many within the Sacred Name Movement lean more towards the pronunciation *Yahushua* in an attempt to incorporate "Yah" into this name. Usually rendered **יהושע** in Hebrew, it is singled out as representing the Hebrew spelling of Joshua's name on all but one occasion, Nehemiah 8:17, where it is rendered *Yeshua* (**ישוע**). Of course, the translators consistently present this name as "Joshua" instead of "Yeshua," as displayed by the following transcription from *The Interlinear Bible*[126]:

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[124] From *Critica Biblica, or Depository of Sacred Literature*, edited by William Carpenter, Vol. I, London: William Booth Publisher, 1824, p. 31.

[125] From *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History*, Book 1, chapter 3, § 3-5, translated by C. F. Cruse, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 2000, p. 10.

[126] From *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew-Greek-English*, Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1986, excerpt from Nehemiah 8:17, p. 428. Remember: Hebrew is read from right to left!

1961	1931	3117	5704	3478	1121	3651	5128	1121	3442	3117	6213	3808	3588
וַתְּהִי	הַהוּא	הַיּוֹם	עַד	יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי	כֵּן	־נוּן	בֶּן	יֵשׁוּעַ	מִימֵי	עָשׂוּ	לֹא־	כִּי
and was there	that	day	until	Israel	sons the of		Nun	the of son	Joshua	the since of days	had done	not	For ←

3966	1419	8057
מְאֹד׃	גְּדוֹלָה	שִׂמְחָה
very	great	gladness ←

Given the understanding that Eusebius recognized the Messiah's name as matching Joshua's name, it is understandable that one might reason that the Messiah's name must likewise be spelled **יהושע** in Hebrew. Since we already know from his work *Demonstratio Evangelica* that he rendered Joshua's name as *Iosoue*, the only real debate one would expect to unfold is whether this name is pronounced *Yohshueh* or *Yohshua* in Hebrew. However, in his Greek *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius renders the Messiah's name *Iesou* (Ιησου), *Iesoun* (Ιησουν) and *Iesous* (Ιησους). Shown below is the Greek text of Book 1, ch. 3, section 4, where we have circled these three forms. We also circled the Greek transliteration of Joshua's original name, Hoshea (Αὐσή, Ausé):

> [4] τὴν κατὰ πάντων ἀρχήν. οὐ πρότερον γοῦν τὸν αὐτοῦ διάδοχον, τῇ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ κεχρημένον προσηγορίᾳ, ὀνόματι δὲ ἑτέρῳ τῷ Αὐσῇ, ὅπερ οἱ γεννήσαντες αὐτῷ τέθεινται, καλούμενον, Ἰησοῦν αὐτὸς ἀναγορεύει, γέρας ὥσπερ τίμιον, παντὸς πολὺ μεῖζον βασιλικοῦ διαδήματος, τοὔνομα αὐτῷ δωρούμενος, ὅτι δὴ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ τοῦ Ναυῆ Ἰησοῦς τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν τὴν εἰκόνα ἔφερεν, τοῦ μόνου μετὰ Μωυσέα καὶ τὸσυμπέρασμα τῆς δὶ ἐκείνου παραδοθείσης συμβολικῆς λατρείας, τῆς ἀληθοῦς καὶκαθαρωτάτης εὐσεβείας τὴν ἀρχὴν διαδεξαμένου.[127]

As with the Messiah's name in the Greek New Testament and as found in the Septuagint, Eusebius rendered the pronunciation of the first syllable of the Messiah's name *Yeh* and *Yoh*, but (contrary to Sacred Name proponents' claims) not *Yah*. Since the Greek forms of this name do not distinguish between a "long form" and a "short form," we can see that Eusebius really does *nothing* to lend support to the Sacred Name Movement's doctrinal stand as it relates to the Messiah's name. Instead, he perpetuates the practice of his predecessors (the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint) in using *Yeh* instead of *Yah*. Nevertheless, we value Eusebius' testimony that the Messiah's name matches the name of the son of Nun. If Eusebius' testimony is valid, that name would likely be **יהושע** (*Yehoshua* or *Yohshua*) in its original Hebrew form, but we have also seen this same name rendered **ישוע** (*Yeshua*). This name, as understood by scholars and even the 1st century Jewish philosopher Philo, means "the salvation of Yahweh."[128] We are about to see that the Hebrew Matthew, in its references to the Messiah, uses the

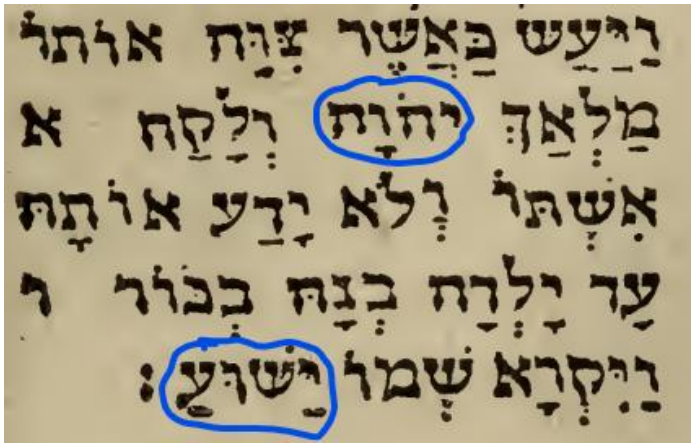
[127] This Greek text of *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History*, Book 1, chapter 3, § 4 is borrowed from the online Perseus Digital Library, Gregory R. Crane, Editor-in-Chief, Tufts University (www.perseus.tufts.edu).

[128] Philo wrote, "But, moreover, Moses also changes the name of Hosea into that of Joshua; displaying by his new name the distinctive qualities of his character; for the name Hosea is interpreted, 'what sort of person is this?' but Joshua means 'the salvation of the Lord,' being the name of the most excellent possible character." This quotation comes from *The Works of Philo*, by Philo of Alexandria, "On the Change of Names," ch. XXI (122), translated by C. D. Yonge, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1993, p. 351.

short form of this name (**יֵשׁוּע**). In fact, it uses an even *shorter* form, **יֵשׁוּ** (*Yeshu*).

7. Evidence for the Messiah's Name: The Hebrew Matthew

We are aware of at least three separate Hebrew versions of the book of Matthew that have been discovered, and all three versions employ the forms *Yeshua* and *Yeshu*. These are the *Shem-Tob*, the *DuTillet*, and the *Münster* versions. The *Münster* version actually presents the names of both Yahweh and Yeshua. Here's the screen capture of an excerpt taken from Matthew 1:24-25:



The *Shem-Tob* Hebrew Matthew is the most widely known of the three referenced above, likely due to the work published and translated into English by the late Professor George Howard of Mercer University, Macon, Georgia. The *Shem-Tob* version of the Hebrew Matthew was included in the 14th-century work *Eben Boḥan* ("The Touchstone") by the Spanish Jewish Rabbi Shem-Tov ben Isaac ben Shaprut around the years 1375-1380 CE. Professor Howard presented a solid case for believing this text is a copy that descends from a Hebrew *original*. In his book *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, Howard wrote the following:

> Shem-Tob's Hebrew Matthew is characterized by literary devices such as puns, word connections, and alliteration. These are numerous—the text is saturated with them, far beyond what appears in the Greek—and belong to the very structure of the Hebrew Text. Although their origin is a mystery, it does not seem probable that Shem-Tob created them in the fourteenth century. Being a polemist (one who engages in argument or controversy) intent on damaging the Christian message, he would hardly have attempted to beautify and enhance the text of Matthew at the same time he refuted it. The text's literary niceties appear to come from the hand of a believer, not a hostile polemist.[129]

Shown below is a photocopy from Matthew chapter 1:20-2:2, reflecting the Hebrew spelling of the Messiah's name as found in Professor Howard's rendition of the *Shem-Tob* version, which he transcribed and translated from the original manuscript. As you can see, the Messiah's name is spelled **יֹשו״ע**[130] (yod, shin, waw, ayin), as opposed to the form commonly recognized by members of the Sacred Name Movement **יהוֹשע**—yod, heh, waw, shin, ayin). His name is also rendered *Yeshu* (**יֹש״ו**):

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[129] From *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew* by George Howard, Mercer University Press, Macon, GA, 1995, p. 184. Professor Howard passed away in 2018.

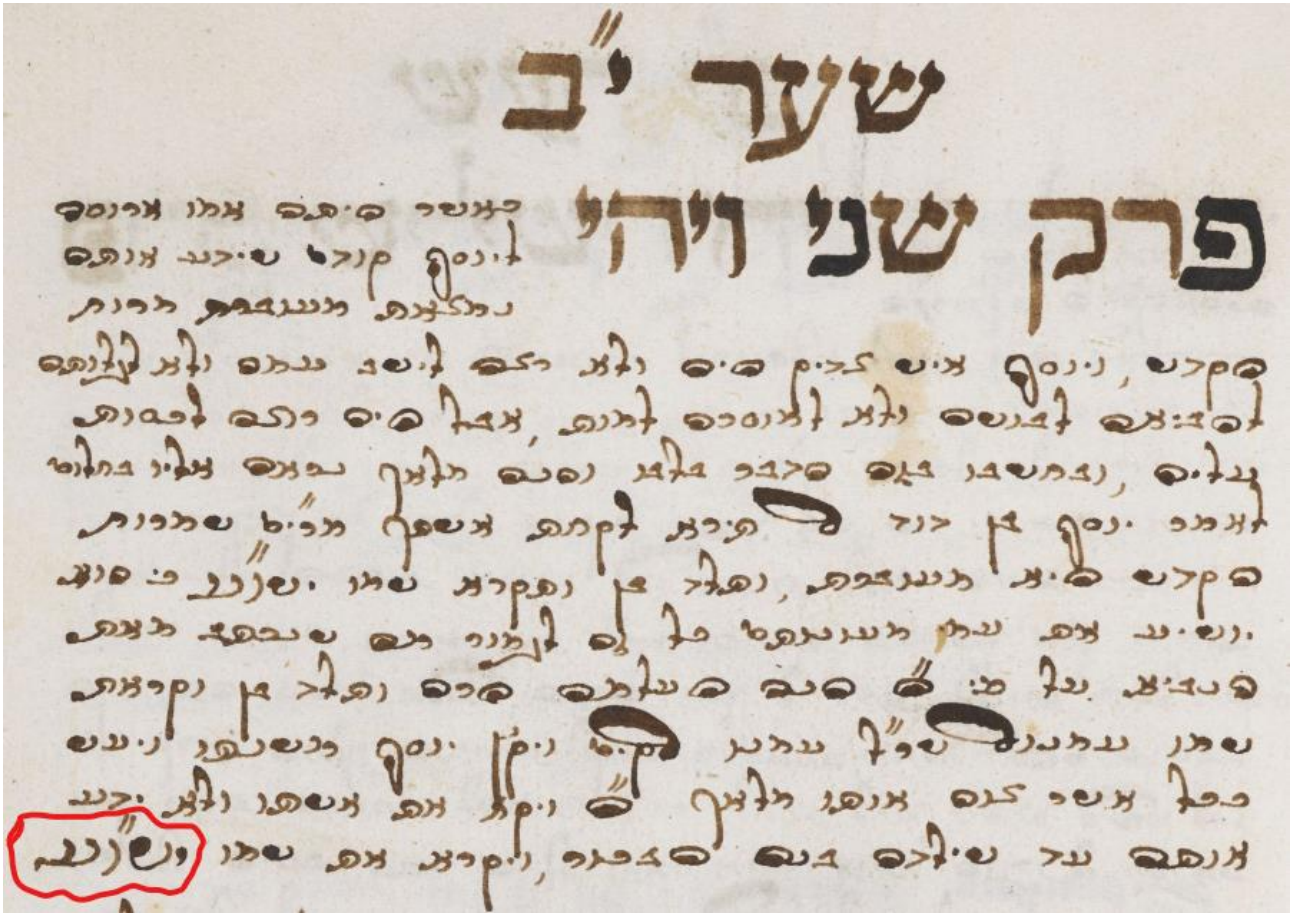
[130] We should point out that the diacritical marks (״) in **יֹשו״ע** have no bearing on the Hebrew spelling, but were only used as a pronunciation guide.

[20]ובחשבו בזה הדבר בלבו והנה מלאך נראה אליו בחלום ואמר יוסף
בן דוד אל תירא לקחת אשתך מר״ים שמרוח הקדוש היא מעוברת.
[21]ותלד בן ותקרא שמו ישו״ע כי הוא יושיע את עמי מעונותם.
[22]כל זה לגמור מה שנכתב מאת הנביא על פי ה״.
[23]הנה העלמה הרה ותלד בן וקראת שמו עמנואל שר״ל עמנו אלקים.
[24]ויקץ יוסף משנתו ויעש ככל אשר צוה אותו מלאך ה״ ויקח
את אשתו.
[25]ולא ידע אותה עד שילדה בנה הבכור ויקרא את שמו ישו״ע.

פרק שלישי

[1]ויהי כאשר נולד יש״ו בבית לחם יהודה בימי הורודוס המלך והנה
חוזים בכוכבים באים ממזרח לירושלם.
[2]לאמר איה מלך היהודים הנולד. ראינו סבבו במזרח ובמתנות
חשובות באו להשתחוות לו. [131]

The original *Shem-Tob* Hebrew Matthew manuscript is now available online at the British Library's website (Add MS 26964). Displayed below is chapter 1:18-25. We circled the Messiah's name:



[131] From *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew* by George Howard, Mercer University Press, Macon, GA, 1995, p. 4.

The *Tol'doth Yeshu* and the Name of the Messiah

The Messiah's name is actually most often spelled **ישו״ו** (*Yeshu*) in the *Shem-Tob* version, which many Sacred Namers are persuaded is the culminating result of a Jewish conspiracy to dishonor and subvert the Messiah's name. In fact, some Sacred Name adherents associate *Yeshua/Yeshu* with a Jewish writing known as the *Tol'doth Yeshu*.[132] The *Tol'doth Yeshu* is a Jewish medieval parody on the account of the Messiah aimed at discrediting Him. As we are about to see, there are several reasons to question the credibility of this document. According to Professor Howard, "In brief, the Tol'doth Yeshu states that Jesus was born illegitimate, performed miracles blasphemously by pronouncing the Divine Name, and was executed by the Jews. His body was stolen from the tomb by Yehuda the gardener, an act which led to the claim that he had arisen from the dead."[133]

Howard adds the following:

> According to the Tol'doth Yeshu, Jesus' original name was Yehoshua (**יהושע**). Later, when he became a heretic, his name was changed to Yeshu (**ישו**). The explanation given for this change is that **ישו** stands for **ימה שמו וזכרו** (*Yimmah shemo w'zichro*), meaning: "may his name and memory be blotted out."[134]

A personal note regarding use of the *Tol'doth Yeshu* to prove anything regarding the Messiah's name: Because this writing stands in glaring opposition to the account presented in the Messianic biography found in the Bible, we are very hesitant to formulate ***any*** conclusions based upon the information found within its text. As already mentioned, it supports believing the Messiah was illegitimate and a heretic, that He was executed by hanging and His body was subsequently stolen from the tomb by the gardener, an act which led to the claim that He had arisen from the dead. To be more specific, the *Tol'doth Yeshu* teaches that the mother of the One we call the Messiah was raped by a warrior named Joseph Pandera. Miriam consequently conceived and gave birth, naming her son Yehoshua, after her brother. According to the *Tol'doth Yeshu*, "This name later deteriorated to Yeshu."

This polemical writing relates far too many outlandish anecdotes surrounding the life of the Messiah that escape not only the scope of Scripture, but also sound reasoning, to completely cover in this exposé. Please allow me, though, to give just a few examples to illustrate what I mean. We read the following:

> One day Yeshu walked in front of the Sages with his head uncovered, showing shameful disrespect.[135]

Certainly, if walking in front of sages with one's head uncovered is an act of "shameful disrespect," we should expect to find some allusion to this alleged "fact" somewhere in the Torah. If indeed such an explanation can be found there, no one has (as of yet) pointed us to the chapter and verse.

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[132] *Tol'doth Yeshu* means "Generations of Yeshu."
[133] Ibid, p. 207.
[134] Ibid.
[135] This quotation, as well as subsequent information relevant to the *Tol'doth Yeshu*, was obtained from a Web site hosted by the University of Pennsylvania. In offering readers the "Toledoth Yeshu," we are told, "This is a derogatory version of the life of Jesus, growing out of the response of the Jewish community to Christianity. The tradition presented here is most commonly dated to approximately the 6th century CE. The text itself is closer to the 14th c." For those wishing to access the Web site, the URL is: http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~humm/Topics/JewishJesus/toledoth.html.

The author of the *Tol'doth Yeshu* would have his readers believe the man claiming to be the Messiah was only able to perform miracles by virtue of having written the Creator's name on a parchment, then placing that parchment over an open cut on his thigh and drawing his flesh over the incision to conceal the parchment. Later, Judas Iscariot also learned this same "secret" and was able to duplicate those miracles. They both eventually flew off toward heaven, where Judas managed to defile Yeshu, causing both of them to lose their powers at the same time.

According to the *Tol'doth Yeshu*, the Messiah lied when asked his name: "Asked his name, he replied to the question by several times giving the names Mattai, Nakki, Buni, Netzer, each time with a verse quoted by him and a counter-verse by the Sages."

The *Tol'doth Yeshu* also presents Queen Helene as having played a role in the burial of the Messiah's body. According to the Bible, it was Pontius Pilate. Pontius Pilate is not even mentioned in the *Tol'doth Yeshu*. To the best of my knowledge, there is no record of a Queen Helene during that period in history. On the other hand, not only is Pontius Pilate mentioned by such historians as Philo, Josephus, and Eusebius, but archaeologists have discovered an inscription bearing his name and some of Pilate's coins.[136] It appears that whoever the 14th century author of the *Tol'doth Yeshu* was, he was woefully ignorant of 1st century history, but one thing he had in common with Judaism (and modern-day Sacred Namers) was an intense dislike of the name *Yeshua*, and especially its shorter form, *Yeshu*.

There are those who urge caution before actually rejecting such a "hostile witness" as the *Tol'doth Yeshu*. Indeed, we need to be cautious when it comes to deciding whose testimony to accept and whose testimony to reject when conducting any investigation. Occasionally the comments of a hostile witness can indeed prove invaluable. The Moabite Stone, for example, is a "hostile witness" account detailing Moabite King Mesha's victory over Israel. It was written to ascribe honor to their deity *Chemosh* while mocking the Israelites' deity *Yahweh*. In spite of its hostile treatment of the Mighty One of Israel, the Moabite Stone offers Yahwists additional evidence supporting the belief that names (such as Yahweh and Chemosh) do not translate from one language to another, and it offers believers everywhere historical evidence supporting the authenticity of Scripture, as is evident by its mentioning of Israelite King Omri, proving that the events surrounding his reign, as described in the book of I Kings 16, really did occur. In view of the fact that this inscription validates the authenticity of Scripture, it is a useful "hostile witness," even though it was written to discredit those who worship *Yahweh*.[137] In spite of its negative portrayal of Yahweh, it does not twist the record of events as they unfolded. If we consider the obvious distortions of facts found in the *Tol'doth Yeshu*, however, which in turn reveal the clear unethical intent behind such a maliciously written document, we would be quite reluctant to use the *Tol'doth Yeshu* to prove *any* point, including the original spelling of the Messiah's name.

Although we remain reluctant to use the *Tol'doth Yeshu* to prove the original spelling of the Messiah's name, in another sense, it actually lends credence towards believing that the Messiah's name was indeed pronounced *Yeshu*. Consider this: The author expended considerable effort, "pulling all the stops," in his

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[136] Cf. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 5, David Noel Freedman, editor-in-chief, Doubleday, 1992, item "Pontius Pilate," pp. 395-396.

[137] Regarding the Moabite Stone and its negative remarks pertaining to those who worship Yahweh, consider the words of King Mesha, as found in lines 14-18: "And Chemosh said to me: 'Go, take Nebo against Israel.' And I went by night and fought against it from break of dawn until noon, and took it and slew all of them, seven thousand men and boys and women and girls and maidservants; for I had devoted it to Ashtor-Chemosh. And I took thence the altar-hearths of Jehovah [Yahweh] and dragged them before Chemosh." This information was found in *A Dictionary of the Bible*, by John D. Davis, Ph.D., D.D., LL.D., The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1927, item "Moabite Stone," p. 509.

attempt to discredit a man whose name he presents as being *Yeshu*. Why would someone go to so much trouble to ridicule a certain individual, effectively attempting to smear his name, yet *alter* that person's name in the process? Let's face it: If you are so determined to make someone out to be a fool that you decide to write a dissertation explaining his foolishness, why would you change his name in your literary work? Shall we change the name *Adolf Hitler* to something else? Or *Osama bin Laden*? No, we want our progeny to know the identity of these evil men.

On the other hand, the Messiah's name is consistently rendered **ישוע** in the *Münster* version.

The Reliability of the Hebrew Matthew

In considering our case regarding the Messiah's name as it is found in the three Hebrew versions of Matthew, there are several factors we need to address:

To begin with, please bear in mind, as we have already pointed out on several occasions, that many within the Sacred Name Movement consider the Hebrew spelling of the Messiah's name as it appears in those three versions to be the result of a deliberate conspiracy to remove and subvert the Messiah's actual name. Let's consider the following argument as presented to me in a letter I received in March of 1998:

> The Shem Tob and DuTillet Hebrew versions of Matthew are only copies of copies which date back no further than 1380 (*The Semitic Origin of the New Testament*, p. 36). Name tampering is quite evident in them since the various places wherein the Tetragrammaton should appear it is replaced with two or three 'yods' (*The Semitic Origin of the New Testament* p. 37 [footnote]).[138]

Another man expressed the same sentiments regarding the Hebrew versions of Matthew. The following brief commentary was offered in a Web forum in December 1999:

> Well, we see them [scribes] deliberately changing the Father's name to 'Yod Yod' or something else. Why would one believe they would not fear taking the Father's name out of the Son's?[139]

The above authors were obviously unaware of the *Münster* version of the Hebrew Matthew, wherein the short form of the Messiah's name appears alongside the full form of the Tetragrammaton. In fact, we found numerous instances of the full form of the Tetragrammaton in *Münster's* Hebrew Matthew, but the Messiah's name is consistently rendered **ישוע**. As we consider the validity of the criticisms cited above, we also need to reinforce the fact that the form *Yeshua* is actually found in Scripture, and in Nehemiah 8:17, Joshua son of Nun is himself referred to as *Yeshua*. This, in and of itself, should disprove any negative connotations that one might wish to attribute to the form *Yeshua*. Of course, one of the men quoted above, Jerry Healan, later attempted to demonstrate that the books of Scripture containing the form

[138] Excerpt from a letter sent by Jerry Healan, dated March 10, 1998, pp. 2-3.
[139] From a posting submitted on 12-02-1999 at 04:44 PM EST in the forum thread titled "Name of Our Messiah." This posting was submitted by forum board owner Tom Martincic, who prefers to go by the pseudonym "EliYah." The entire forum discussion was at one time available online at the following URL: http://www.eliyah.com/forum2/Forum1/HTML/001600.html. Regrettably, as of 2014, that link is no longer active.

Yeshua are "not books necessarily of inspiration."[140] This is precisely where this discussion will go when we take the aversion for the form *Yeshua* to its furthest extreme.

The other individual, although not going so far as to question the inspiration of the books Ezra and Nehemiah, nevertheless attempted to discredit anything written in Aramaic. He wrote, "Larry, I truly believe that what we are discussing here is the difference between an Aramaic rendering and a Hebrew original. If we want to discuss whether or not it is acceptable to use the Aramaic, that to me is a separate issue."[141]

The obvious implication is to promote distrust in any names changed by an Aramaic influence, which must subsequently lead to distrust in such books as Ezra and Nehemiah. Clearly, if any names found to have undergone changes due to Aramaic influence indicate uninspired, unacceptable changes, then the natural progression must be to conclude that books such as Ezra and Nehemiah are not "books of inspiration" because the author used such names in composing those two works. When one goes to such great lengths to undermine the inspiration of Scripture, especially when those doing so establish themselves as leaders, the issue regarding the Messiah's name suddenly develops into more than just a "side issue." The very inspiration of Scripture is put to the test.

Jerry Healan based his rejection of *Yeshua* as it appears in the Hebrew Matthew on the fact that Yahweh's name does not actually appear in any of the extant Hebrew Matthews. Of course, he was not aware of the *Münster* version. His premise seemed to be, "Since Yahweh's name was obviously removed, we can be certain the Messiah's name was also corrupted." The *Münster* Hebrew Matthew proves otherwise.

What incentive would Jews have to tamper with the Messiah's name? Presumably, it was to remove the Father's name. If this is true, then for the sake of consistency one should expect them to have removed the Father's name every time it forms a part of another man's name, for presumably their mission is to prevent others from saying "Yah" in *any* context and regardless of the name into which it is incorporated. Nevertheless, in the very genealogy of the Messiah as found in the **Shem-Tob Hebrew Matthew** chapter one, the name Jehoshaphat appears. The first three letters of Jehoshaphat's name match the first three letters of the Tetragrammaton, as does the name Yehoshua (or as some would prefer, *Yahushua*). Jehoshaphat's name is spelled **יהושפט** in Hebrew. If the Jews were so intent on removing the Father's name from the Messiah's name, why did they stop with **His** name? Why not remove it from Jehoshaphat's name, too?

Let's go a step further. If the Jews were so intent on removing the Creator's name from the Messiah's name, why do they continue to refer to the son of Nun as "Joshua"? All one has to do is restore the "Y"

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[140] From an e-mail that Jerry Healan sent me dated 02/22/1999. His exact words are, "Only in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is the form yod, shin, waw, ayin utilized. And if he did write the books of Chronicles as tradition dictates, then he wrote the name as yod, heh, waw, shin, ayin in one place speaking of the son of Nun. Now, this is my observation, but it appears that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are historical books and not books necessarily of inspiration. I haven't found a place in those books where he received instruction from Yahweh by saying, 'The word of Yahweh came unto me.' But again, his contemporary Zechariah, who did receive inspiration was led to spell the name yod, heh, waw, shin, ayin."

[141] From a posting submitted on 12-15-1999 at 07:58 PM EST in the forum thread titled "Name of Our Messiah." This posting was submitted by forum board owner Tom Martincic, who prefers to go by the pseudonym "EliYah." The entire forum discussion was available for reading at Martincic's web site for several years at http://www.eliyah.com/forum2/Forum1/HTML/001600-5.html, but my attempt to access it in 2013 revealed that it has since been removed.

sound where it belongs and voilà! You have the pronunciation "Yoshua," i.e., "Yahshua." If, as is so often claimed, Jews are guilty of subverting the "ah" sound to make it an "eh" sound, then why do they consistently refer to the son of Nun as "Joshua" in their writings? Why don't they refer to him as "Jeshua" instead?

Shown below is a Jewish commentary on Numbers 13:16, pertaining to Joshua, as found in *The Chumash*:

> **16. Moses prays for Joshua.** Moses added the letter י to Hoshea's name, so that his name would begin with the letters of God's name [יה]. The Hebrew name Yehoshua means, *God save* or *God will save*, which signifies that Moses prayed, 'May God save you [Joshua] from the conspiracy of the spies' (*Rashi*).[142]

It is interesting to note that not only do Jews regularly employ the form "Joshua" in reference to the son of Nun in spite of the fact that this pronunciation carries the "ah" sound, but also noteworthy is the fact that, while Jews openly teach against speaking the name "Yahweh," nowhere do they teach against speaking names that contain the "Yah" sound. One case in point is the Israeli prime minister named Benjamin Netanyahu.

For those who may not fully grasp why so many within the Sacred Name Movement are so adamant that the pronunciation *Yeshua* is the result of the modern Judaism's determination to not acknowledge the Father's name in the Son's name, Sacred Name Movement evangelist Jerry Healan offers us a concise summary:

> Many times today people will go to a Rabbi to ask the correct spelling of the Savior's name, not realizing if he told you Yahshua, he would be breaking a major tradition in Judaism of not pronouncing the Heavenly Father's name. Also in recognizing this spelling he would be honoring a person who said He is the Meshi-Yah to say nothing of being Elohim and Master. The name Jesus is the result of this lack of revelation. In coming through the Greek, the name Yeshu lost the "sh" sound since there is no "h" in the Greek. The "s" was added because of Greek grammar. This is also true of the name Moses (correctly Mosheh in the original). Then the Latin form of Yeshu is Iesus because the "i" represents the "y" sound in the Greek and Latin. The original King James version 1611 edition spells the name this way. In 1630 the "j" was added to the English alphabet to represent the "y" sound and the "i" would represent the long "i" sound. The French perverted the sound of the "j" to the "dz" sound we have for the "j" today. The "y" was later added to represent the "y" sound in "yes" in our language. We can see how this erroneous spelling of our Savior's name denies His Meshi-Yahship, Rulership, and Mightiness.[143]

As we demonstrated earlier, although Jerry Healan's explanation represents the summary position of the Sacred Name Movement in general, it just doesn't "hold water." Not only does he fail to satisfactorily explain why Jews "settle" for the name "Joshua" (knowing that the "ah" sound in that name comes

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[142] From *The Chumash*: *The Torah: Haftaros and Five Megillos With a Commentary Anthologized From the Rabbinic Writings*, by Rabbi Nosson Scherman, Mesorah Publications, Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1997, p. 799.
[143] Excerpt from a letter we received from Jerry Healan in March 1998.

extremely close to the "Yah" pronunciation), but we haven't addressed several other words in their vocabulary that start with the "Yah" sound, which would likewise appear to violate their "major tradition of not pronouncing the Heavenly Father's name." One easy example is that of the city *Jahzah*, more correctly pronounced *Yahzah*. This city is mentioned in I Chronicles 6:78 (I Chronicles 6:63 in the Jewish *Tanakh – The Holy Scriptures*). The name of this city is spelled יהצה in Hebrew (word #3096 in *Strong's* Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary). Why didn't Judaism cover up the "Yah" sound so as to pronounce this city's name *Yehzah*? We should also mention the fact that Mr. Healan, in his otherwise detailed explanation, does not address where the "eh" sound in *Yeshu* came from or how the "Yah" sound degenerated to the "Yeh" sound.

Finally, please bear in mind the fact that over the course of history, Jews have been generally adamant in their rejection of the One we recognize as the Messiah. They have openly taught others that He was a "false teacher." When seeking to expose false teachers, it is very important that we preserve their identity. If, when attempting to point out to others who the "bad guy" is, we alter his name, we simultaneously defeat our purpose. For example, if I were to ask you to reveal the identity of the false teacher who, on November 18, 1978 coerced his followers to drink Flavor-Aid[144] laced with cyanide, whose name would you give me? Many are familiar with this historical event and know the man's name is Jim Jones. In our attempt to discredit Jones' legacy, should we alter his name? What useful purpose would *that* serve, anyway? By altering his name, we simultaneously confuse his ***identity***, and we should want to *preserve* his identity in order to better preserve the story and emphatically underscore the lesson that humanity needs to learn regarding such men. Certainly no one is going to insist that it was ***Fred Smith*** who offered his followers the poisoned drink! Yet, even if we slightly alter Mr. Jones' name to become ***James Jones***, we detract from the name so widely recognized as belonging to the cult leader. No, when we teach our children the appalling truth about one of the most dastardly cult leaders of all time, we go to great lengths to <u>preserve</u> the exact spelling and enunciation of his name.

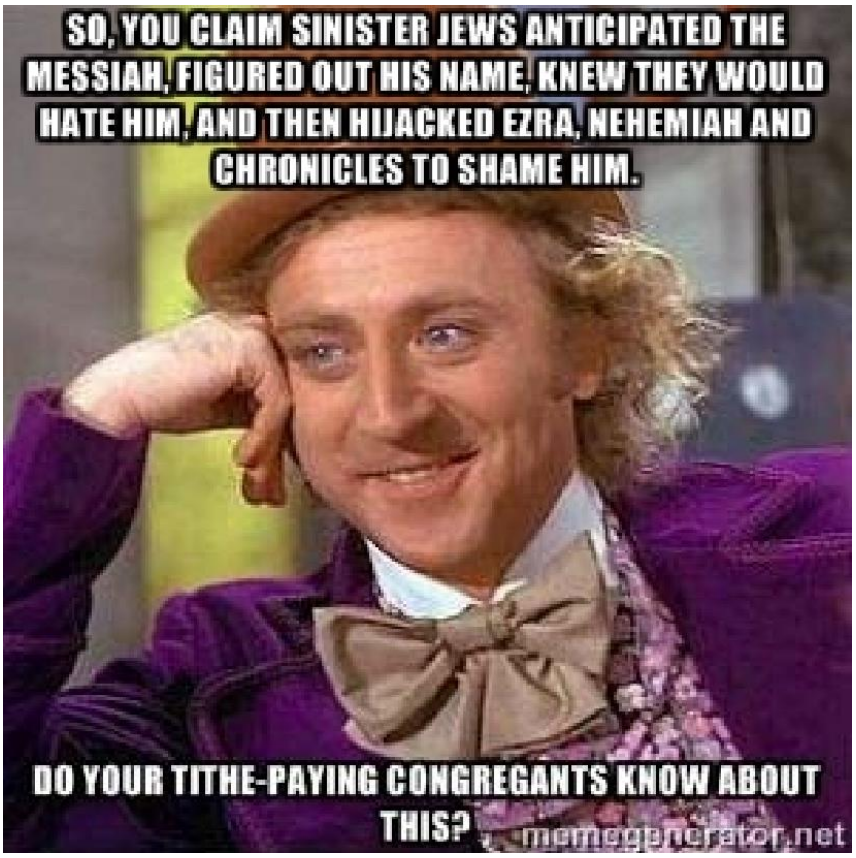
It is the same with regard to many Jews and their treatment of the Messiah's name. Those Jews who do not recognize Him as the Messiah do not make any attempts to alter His name. Instead, they preserve it so they can teach their children their perspective of who He "really" is (or was). Any motive on the part of Jews or anyone else opposed to the Messianic evangel that involves altering His name can only serve to defeat their purpose, for any attempt to alter His name can only result in confusing His identity. Furthermore, from what we have read, many Jewish writers have ***openly professed*** to rendering Yahweh's name as *adonai* out of their "reverence" for the sanctity of His name and the belief that it is "too sacred to pronounce." They **admit** to this substitution of the Creator's name! However, nowhere have we read any admissions from them pertaining to a deliberate attempt to alter the name of the One Whom we refer to as the Messiah. Unless these Jewish writers have been covertly conducting a mission to alter the Messiah's name, we can only conclude that they have had no desire, let alone motive, to change His name.

Thus, it is quite possible and even likely that the forms "Yeshua" and "Yeshu" were indeed in the original Hebrew text of Matthew. Again, *Yeshua* was certainly not considered a corrupt name, for it appears in Scripture as the name of a high priest as well as an acceptable form of Joshua's name. As for the form *Yeshu*, not only have we seen that this is the name that the author of the *Tol'doth Yeshu* worked so hard to smear, but we will also see that this form is what is known as the "Galilean pronunciation" of the Messiah's name. Not only this, but if the Hebrew scribes did indeed remove Yahweh's name from the Messiah's name, then why didn't they do the same with Jehoshaphat's name? These are questions and

[144] This drink is often mislabeled as *Kool-Aid*.

concerns that Sacred Name Movement adherents do not satisfactorily answer.

In his 2014 Unity Conference presentation titled "The Messiah's Name: Accepting Dialectal Variety," Michael Banak satirically addresses the quandary that many Sacred Name Movement adherents overlook when they claim that impious Jews deliberately subverted the Messiah's name in such books as Ezra and Nehemiah:



As humorous as the above caption is, when we seriously ponder the "claim" as expressed above, we find that it accurately summarizes the Sacred Name Movement's overall conclusion, which, when examined carefully, is one based on emotion instead of evidence. And that is a sad testimony.

Nevertheless, in our attempt to achieve balance, we must consider *all* the possibilities. In so doing, we do need to at least acknowledge the possibility that Jewish scribes *may have* tampered with the Messiah's name. Professor George Howard recognizes this possibility. In his book *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, he writes:

> Shem-Tob's Matthew, as printed above, does not preserve the original in a pure form. It reflects contamination by Jewish scribes during the Middle Ages. Considerable parts of the original, however, appear to remain, including its unpolished style, ungrammatical constructions, and Aramaized forms.[145]

[145] From *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, by George Howard, Mercer University Press, Macon, GA, 1995, p. 178.

Professor Howard further acknowledged the possibility that the Messiah's name may have been corrupted in an article he authored entitled "A Primitive Hebrew Gospel of Matthew and the Tol'Doth Yeshu," which appeared in the 1988 edition of *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 34. *New Testament Studies* is a quarterly journal published by Cambridge University Press. On page 67 of that journal he wrote the following:

> In regard to the change in Jesus' name, from Yeshua to Yeshu, it is inconceivable that a Jewish Christian, composing the Hebrew Matthew at an early date, would have introduced such a discrepancy in the spelling of Jesus' name. It is likely, on the other hand, given the nature of the Tol'doth Yeshu, that the antigospel capitalized on the spelling Yeshu, which it no doubt received from the Talmud or from an even earlier unknown source and in return influenced the transmission of the Hebrew Matthew in regard to the change of Jesus' name. In this case the Hebrew Matthew reflects the work of medieval Jewish scribes who were aware of the traditional significance of the name Yeshu and who employed it in their transcriptions as a private insult. Gentile Christians, who rarely knew Hebrew well, would hardly be aware of the subtleties of this slight alteration.

At first glance, the above might appear to be an admission or concession from George Howard that the Messiah's name may have originally been the long form *Yahushua*, but was later changed (subverted) to *Yeshua*. Such is not the case, however. Notice, first of all, that Mr. Howard mentions the change having been from "Yeshua" to "Yeshu." He does ***not*** mention a change from "Yahushua" to "Yeshua." Nor does he mention any negative attributes associated with "Yeshua"—he only mentions the possibility that the form "Yeshu" ***may*** have been employed as an insult to the Messiah.

Notice also Professor Howard's claim that <u>medieval</u> Jewish scribes made changes to the Hebrew Matthew. This means, if his statement is correct, Jewish scribes made those changes to the Messiah's name during the Middle Ages, which ran from the latter part of the 5th century through the beginning of the 16th century. As it turns out, however, the earliest Aramaic text of the Bible <u>*also*</u> employs the form *Yeshua* in reference to the Messiah, and this text containing the New Testament dates to at least the year 170 CE, a time well before the dates when the alleged changes may have occurred.[146] The odds of Jewish scribes so thoroughly and completely changing New Testament texts so as to alter the name *Yehoshua* (**יהושע**) to *Yeshua* (**ישוע**) are simply too phenomenal for any unbiased scholar familiar with linguistics and history to accept as being plausible.

While compiling information for our response to the criticisms of those who reject the form *Yeshua* as it is found within the *Shem-Tob Hebrew Matthew*, I wrote Professor Howard a letter in 1999 requesting his perspective. Here is a portion of what I wrote:

> My research is partly based on a debate questioning the authenticity of the *Shem-Tob Hebrew Matthew*. There are those who adopt the view that the Messiah's name was originally spelled "yod, heh, waw, shin, ayin," but that it was changed to 'yod, shin, waw, ayin' by impious scribes. Would you be able to help me with any insight or evidence?

[146] This information comes from *The Syriac Language of the Peshitta and Old Syriac Versions of Matthew* by Jan Joosten, E.J. Brill Publishers, New York, 1996, p. 10.

Here is Professor Howard's reply:

> The spelling yod, shin, waw, ayin is simply an alternate form of Yehoshua. There is nothing impious about the short form so long as it ends in ayin. The form yod, shin, waw (without ayin) is a Jewish insult coming from the Middle Ages: the letters stand for "may his name and memory be blotted out". I offer an explanation for this in my book (second edition, p. 207).[147]

We thus see that Professor Howard believes the form *Yeshua* stood in the original text of the Hebrew Matthew, but he suspects impious scribes changed it to *Yeshu* during the Middle Ages. This, coupled with the fact that Aramaic texts containing the form *Yeshua* date back at least as far as 170 CE demonstrates that *Yeshua* may indeed represent the name the Messiah was given at birth. On the other hand, we have already addressed the possibility that *Yeshu*, instead of being an "original insult," was later so contrived by impious individuals bent on discrediting and smearing this name. As we are about to see, Professor Howard recognizes this possibility.

In spite of Professor Howard's initial claim that *Yeshua* was changed to *Yeshu* by impious scribes, other sources assert that there was *never* anything "negative" about the form *Yeshu*, at least not until relatively modern times. According to *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel*, an ossuary (stone coffin) discovered in 1931 demonstrates that there were **no negative connotations** associated with the form *Yeshu*, as it appeared on the <u>same</u> <u>ossuary</u> as the longer form *Yeshua*. Here is how the book describes the name found inscribed on this ossuary:

> **1. ישׁוע**: A contraction of **יהושׁע** [Yehoshua], familiar from the later books of the Bible (I and II Chron., Ezra and Neh.) and Talmudic sources, where it is also contracted as **ישׁו** [Yeshu] for Jesus of Nazareth (cf. Krauss 1908; Goldstein 1950:24 and 270, n. 22). This ossuary carries both the fuller form of the name, Yeshua', as well as the contraction Yeshu, indicating that the shorter form of the name bore no negative connotations due to its association with Jesus of Nazareth (as assumed in Kuhn 1982:667-668)."[148]

When I brought this quotation to Professor Howard's attention, he agreed that in its original form, there <u>may</u> have been nothing negative associated with the form "Yeshu," but that by the time of the Middle Ages it very likely became as such. Here is the e-mail reply I received from Mr. Howard:

> I cannot answer your question with finality. My feeling is that the change of Jesus' name in the Hebrew Matthew from *Yeshua* (1:21, 25) to *Yeshu* (elsewhere) deserves some explanation. I tried to establish in my article on the Tol'doth Yeshu that there was a literary relationship between Tol'doth Yeshu and Hebrew Matthew. In Tol'doth Yeshu it is definitely the case that Jesus' name is changed from *Yeshua* to *Yeshu* for pejorative reasons. I suspect the same for Hebrew Matthew. Whether the name *Yeshu* was pejorative when Hebrew Matthew was penned, I cannot say. It certainly later became pejorative.[149]

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[147] From an e-mail received from George Howard on 2/3/99.

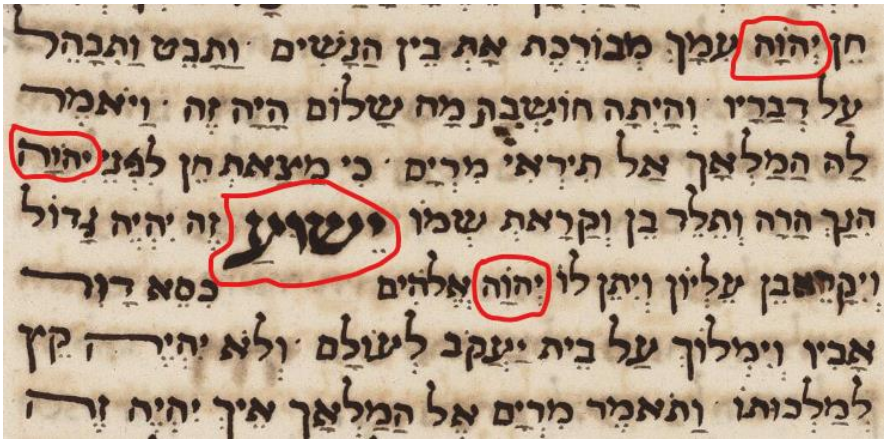
[148] From *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel*, by L.Y. Rahmani, The Israel Antiquities Authority, Jerusalem, Israel, 1994, p. 77.

[149] From an e-mail received from George Howard on July 31, 2001.

As conceded by Mr. Howard, it is quite likely that the form *Yeshu* originally had no negative attributes. Man, however, has an exceptional knack for taking something pure and innocent and corrupting it into something distasteful. A common name that comes to mind is the name *John*. During my adolescent years, I was aware of nothing negative about this name. At some point in time, however, it became a commonly used slang word for a toilet. For a few years of my adolescent life, the name "Ricky" became a pejorative name because of the popular "I Love Lucy" television program. The star's husband's name was Ricky Ricardo, but through a clever manipulation of his last name, some of my classmates changed it to "Ricky Retardo" and applied it to those to whom they attributed inferior intellect. While the change from "Ricardo" to "Retardo" was an obvious ploy, the name "Ricky" was left intact, and if anyone laughed and called you "Ricky," you knew what they meant. Thankfully, that prankish fad was a passing one that seems to have faded away. I am sure you can think of other names that have deteriorated from an originally untainted designation into a perverted association. I believe it is quite likely that this is what occurred to the name *Yeshu*.

Other Hebrew Gospels Support the Short Form

Other Hebrew versions of the Messianic Accounts (a.k.a. the "gospels") have surfaced since the various versions of the Hebrew Matthew, and they incorporate the short form of the Messiah's name. The following is an excerpt from the Hebrew Luke, taken from the Vatican online library:


חן יהוה עמך מבורכת את בין הנשים ותבט ותבהל
על דבריו והיתה חושבת מה שלום היה זה ויאמר
לה המלאך אל תיראי מרים כי מצאת חן לפני יהוה
הנך הרה ותלד בן וקראת שמו ישוע זה יהיה גדול
ויקרא בן עליון ויתן לו יהוה אלהים כסא דוד
אביו וימלוך על בית יעקב לעולם ולא יהיה קץ
למלכותו ותאמר מרים אל המלאך איך יהיה זה

The above excerpt is taken from Luke 1:28-32, where the angel of Yahweh informed Mary that she would conceive, bear a son and His name would be Yeshua. Of special interest is the fact that the full name of the Almighty, *Yahweh*, appears in the text. Of course, the vowel-pointing identifies the manuscript as a medieval document, but many who have examined the text are persuaded that it is descended from a Hebrew original.

8. Evidence for the Messiah's Name: The Hebrew Hebrews

In 2002, a researcher named James Trimm brought a new historical perspective to the table that certainly changed the dynamics of this discussion. He pointed out that he had at that time recently obtained a copy of an old Book of Hebrews that was actually composed in Hebrew. This is significant because all previously-known copies of the Book of Hebrews (so far as we knew at the time) were composed in the Greek language. The question begging to be answered was, "How was the Messiah's name spelled in the Hebrew Book of Hebrews?"

Before we answer that question, let's briefly review the Greek rendering of the Messiah's name as found in the Greek New Testament, including the Greek Book of Hebrews. We know three forms are found throughout the New Testament: *Iesou*, *Iesous* or *Iesoun*. In our review of the Hebrew Book of Matthew, we found the following short forms of the Hebrew name attributed to the Son of the Almighty: **ישׁוע** (*Yeshua*) and **ישׁו** (*Yeshu*). The above forms are all rejected by many Sacred Name Movement adherents because they are all missing the *Yah* sound that Sacred Namers as a whole feel is key to understanding that the Messiah's name must contain a portion of the Father's name, which in turn (in their estimation) must include the first three letters of the Tetragrammaton (**יהו**). Never mind the fact that when Moses changed Hoshea's name to Joshua (Numbers 13:16), all he did was add a *yod* (**י**) to a name meaning "salvation" and suddenly the name means "Yahweh is Salvation."[150] The Sacred Name Movement formula requiring the trio of **יהו** affixed to a name before it can truly be considered as including the Father's name, then, is simply a teaching that is foreign to Scripturally-approved example.

In spite of the fact that the short form **ישׁוע** is found in Scripture (*cf.*, Nehemiah 8:17) and appears in the Hebrew Matthew, the fact remains that it is the *long form* (**יהושׁע**) that appears in the Hebrew Book of Hebrews. As mentioned above, we first learned of this document back in 2002, but we weren't able to obtain a copy until 2014. We could devote considerable space to supplying evidence that links this copy to the original book of Hebrews (it only makes sense that the Book of Hebrews was originally composed in the Hebrew language), but suffice it to say this is information that you will need to research and prove to yourself. In the meantime, as explained by researcher James Trimm, in 1537, Sebastian Münster[151] published a Hebrew text of Matthew which he stated he had obtained "from the Jews." Twenty years later, he published a new edition, but this time he added the Hebrew text of the Book of Hebrews to the appendix. Shown below is the full text of Mr. Trimm's announcement[152]:

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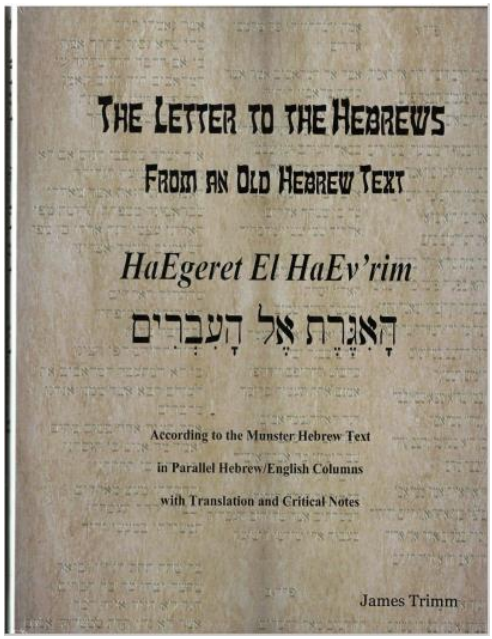
[150] We address this important aspect of the Messiah's name in greater detail in chapter 16, section C, "Does Referring to the Messiah as 'Yeshua' Constitute a Violation of the Third Commandment?"

[151] We should here point out that although this 16th century scholar is usually referred to as Sebastian Münster, he identifies himself as Seb. Mvnsteri (Sebastiani Munsteri) in his 1557 publication of *Evangelivm Secvndvm Matthæum in Lingva Hebraica, cvm Versione Latina*, (*The Gospel According to Matthew in the Hebrew Language with a Latin Version*), Basel, 1557.

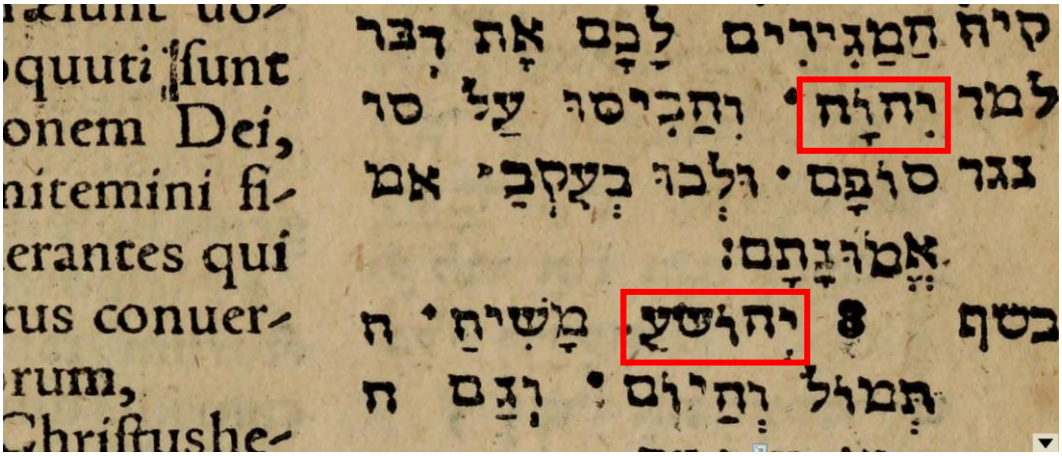
[152] Taken from EliYah's Forums, forum thread titled "Update on Hebrew Hebrews and More!" 03/07/2002, by James Trimm. The last time we checked, the posting is still available online for reading at the following link: http://www.eliyah.com/forum2/Forum1/HTML/003109.html,

Author	Topic: Update on Hebrew Hebrews and More!
James Trimm	posted 03-07-2002 10:57 AM
Posts: 329 Registered: Oct 98	All, As many of you know, in 1537 Sebastian Munster published a Hebrew text of Matthew which he stated he had obtained "from the Jews". (This "Munster" text of Matthew was very similar to the DuTillet text published later in 1553). Unfortunately Munster also stated that his manuscript contained many holes and was defective and that he had been forced to fill in the gaps himself and sadly he dmade no record of his own repairs to the text. What you probably do not know is: 1) In 1551 Johannes Quin-Quarboreus Aurila republihed the Hebrew text with a set of corrections to Munster's Hebrew. 2) In 1557 Munster printed a second edition of his book, this time adding a Hebrew text of Hebrews. I now have in my possesion copies of both of these documents! (I have had a facsimile of Munster's 1537 edition for years) I have had these two new documents for less than 24 hours now but am ready to give you all a preliminary report on the second of these documents: Hebrew Hebrews. Some notable points: * Hebrew Hebrews tends to follow the Hebrew Masoretic text in its quotations from the Tanak. * Hebrew Hebrews uses the Sacred name in the following passages: 1:1; 2:13; 7:21; 8:8, 9, 10, 11; 9:20; 10:16; 10:30(x2); 12:6 & 13:6 The Sacered Name appears written as a single Hebrew letter HEY written by itself, just as it is written in the Shem Tob Hebrew Matthew except for 13:6 in which it is written out as YHWH. * The Messiah's name is spelled YUD-HEY-VAV-SHIN-AYIN (Yahushua or as pointed in the Masoretic text Yehoshua). This is especially important because all of our Hebrew and Aramaic NT manuscripts up until now have had "Yeshua" rather than "Yahushua". * In Hebrews 2:9 there is a passage in which some versions and manuscripts read "appart from God" while others have "by the grace of God". The oldest copy of Hebrews we have is p46 which has "by the grace of God" (3rd century) while Origin quotes the passage , alos in the third century as "appart from God". The Peshitta Aramaic texts are also divided on this passage. The Jacobite copies have "by the Grace of God" while the Nestorian copies have "apart from God". The Hebrew has "by the grace of Elohim (b'chesedai HaElohim). James Trimm IP: Logged

James Trimm's posting brought forth new and exciting information to a lot of people, ourselves included, and nearly everyone we knew clamored to get a copy of Münster's Hebrew Hebrews. However,



to our dismay, Mr. Trimm did not let anyone know how they could obtain their own copy, ignoring our requests for the same (we were left with the impression that he felt he had special "scholar privileges"). Not having access to any other resources or channels, we were thus compelled to wait until he came out with his English translation in 2006.[153] Even then, his publication did not have what June and I were looking for. Although he transcribed the Hebrew text in one column, with the English translation in the right-hand column, we were hoping to see a copy of at least *one* page from Münster's actual text, most notably the one in which both the Messiah's name *and* the Tetragrammaton appear. However, none were offered. It wasn't that we didn't trust Trimm's report, but nevertheless, we like to see things for ourselves.[154] Finally, in the year 2014, the entire work by Münster, including not only the Hebrew Matthew, but also the Hebrew Hebrews, became available to the general public.[155] Not only does the long form of the Messiah's name consistently appear within the Hebrew Book of Hebrews, but in one passage (Hebrews 13:6-7) the Tetragrammaton appears *twice*. Shown below is a screen capture of these two verses as they appear in the Hebrew Hebrews:



Screen shot of actual copy from Sebastian Münster's *Hebrew Hebrews* (Hebrews 13:7-8). Does the *Hebrew Hebrews* prove the correct spelling of the name given to the Son of Yahweh? Does it prove how it was pronounced?

We are amazed that the Sacred Name Movement hasn't championed the *Hebrew Hebrews* as its *coup*

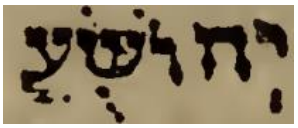
[153] C.f., James Trimm, *The Letter to the Hebrews From an Old Hebrew Text*, Netzarim Publishing, Hurst, TX, 2006.

[154] Nevertheless, it turns out Mr. Trimm made changes to the Hebrew text of Münster's work. Whenever obvious abbreviations of the Sacred Name appear within the Hebrew text (ה), James Trimm converts them to the full form (יהוה), which he explains as follows: "In this parallel edition, we have restored יהוה wherever ה stood alone to represent the Sacred Name" (Intro, p. 7).

[155] We accessed our copy of Münster's *Hebrew Hebrews*, which is found within his 1557 publication of *Evangelivm Secvndvm Matthæum in Lingva Hebraica, cvm Versione Latina*, at Open Library online, which you can access at the following link: https://openlibrary.org/books/OL25273977M/Torat_ha-mashi'ah.

de grâce in overthrowing the short form **ישוע** and its pronunciation *Yeshua*. After all, not only is the long form **יהושע** the only form of the Messiah's name that appears in the *Hebrew Hebrews*, but this text also contains the full form of the Sacred Name, *Yahweh* (**יהוה**), as displayed above. Although the full form of the Tetragrammaton only appears twice in the *Hebrew Hebrews*, the fact that it appears in its complete form *anywhere* would certainly appear to lend credibility to this text.

In spite of our amazement that Sacred Name proponents have not jumped on a *Hebrew Hebrews* bandwagon to flaunt the long form of the Messiah's name, we nevertheless know that such a bandwagon would not in any way resolve the controversy. The first item that would need to be addressed is how the long form is pronounced. Notice how Sebastian Münster vowel-pointed the Messiah's name:



The above is a screen shot and enlargement of the Messiah's name as it appears in Hebrews 12:24 of Münster's text. Without going into the pronunciation rules as they pertain to Hebrew vowel-points, suffice it to say Münster vowel-pointed the above name so as to be pronounced *Yehoshua*, not *Yahshua* or *Yahushua*. Of course, Sacred Name proponents can be expected to point out that Münster was simply deceived into following the Jewish tradition of using the vowel points to conceal the Father's name, even though he faithfully copied the correct spelling of the name. Here is how Sacred Namers would have vowel-pointed the above name:

The above spelling of the long form is vowel-pointed so as to be pronounced *Yahushua*. We can well imagine that if the Messiah's name appeared in the *Hebrew Hebrews* with the above vowel-pointing, Sacred Namers would champion the *Hebrew Hebrews* as the final arbiter validating *Yahushua* as the correct pronunciation. We would hardly blame them; nevertheless, the fact remains that Sebastian Münster used the same vowel-pointing that is found in the Masoretic Text of Scripture. To the dismay of Sacred Name Movement adherents, this vowel-pointing falls right in line with the pronunciation indicated by the translators of the Septuagint version. If our focus is on the first syllable, that first syllable was rendered "Yeh" by both the translators of the LXX and by Sebastian Münster. The contracted short form, **ישוע** (*Yeshua*), retains this same first-syllable pronunciation.

We understand, based on the fact that the long form of the Messiah's name is consistently found in the Hebrew Book of Hebrews, that many may choose to use the Hebrew spelling **יהושע** with any and all references to the Messiah. Not only do we understand such a decision, but we also respect it. What we do *not* understand is why anyone would insist that the correct pronunciation of **יהושע** can only be *Yahushua* or *Yahshua*. While Hebrew linguistics allow for such a pronunciation, they *also* allow for the pronunciation *Yehoshua*, and this is the pronunciation indicated by the Hebrew scholars whom we have either consulted or whose reviews we have studied. Moreover, and most significantly, this is the pronunciation indicated by the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint long before the Messiah was even born.

Did Sebastian Münster alter the spelling of the Messiah's name in the Hebrew Matthew?

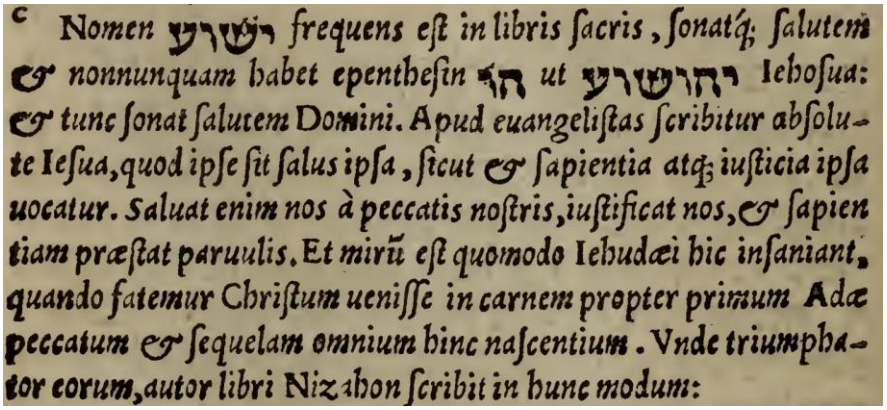
In 2005, researcher Yoseph Viel authored a scholarly commentary on the textual nature of the Hebrew Book of Hebrews, presenting compelling evidence that this New Testament book was originally composed in the Hebrew language. In his writing, Mr. Viel included a very brief piece addressing the Messiah's name and an apparent admission by Sebastian Münster that he altered the Messiah's name in the Hebrew Matthew manuscript that he had received from Jewish friends, whom he had converted to Christianity. Here is what Yoseph Viel wrote:

> • On page 124 of Munster's 1557 publication, Munster is recorded as saying that his source text for Matthew recorded Yeshua's Name as either "Yehoshua" or "הו", all of which he altered to the more familiar "Yeshua" everywhere. However, in the Hebrew version of Hebrews, we never see "Yeshua" and it's always spelled out in the long form of "Yehoshua", fitting the more formal style of the Letter to the Hebrews, as well as the description of Munster's source text.[156]

According to Yoseph Viel, Sebastian Münster apparently confessed to altering the Messiah's name from "Yehoshua" (**יהושע**) to "Yeshua" (**ישוע**). This is attention-grabbing, vitally significant information, which, if true, would seem to lend credence to the Sacred Name Movement's claim that impious scribes altered the Messiah's name. If it is true that Sebastian Münster made this kind of change to the text, this would immediately raise concerns about the validity of *any* historical references to the Messiah with the short form **ישוע**. If Münster admitted to altering the Messiah's name in this one text, how many *other* texts were altered without such admissions? Finally, if such an alteration was perpetrated, one has to wonder *why* it would have been done and the only possible explanation we can think of for such an act comes from Sacred Name Movement advocates: *To incorporate Judaism's ineffable name doctrine into the text so as to facilitate converting Jews to Christianity*. We present this reasoning *not* because we agree with such logic in any shape or form because we do *not* agree with Sacred Name Movement's teaching that the Father's name is removed from the form **ישוע**; rather, we offer it here because we cannot think of any other reason for deciding to change the spelling of the Messiah's name from what is in the original text. It is due to my curiosity about how or why Münster would do such a thing that I decided to look into this matter a little more closely. What I found was at once surprising and disappointing.

Since we now own a copy of the Hebrew Hebrews, I decided to check out Münster's commentary on page 124 of his 1557 publication as referenced above by Yoseph Viel. The commentary is in Latin and displayed below is a screen shot of what Münster wrote pertaining to the Messiah's name:

[156] From "Hebrew Hebrews," a PDF document authored by Yoseph Viel and dated 02/15/2005.


c Nomen ישוע frequens eſt in libris ſacris, ſonatq; ſalutem & nonnunquam habet epentheſin הו ut יהושוע Iehoſua: & tunc ſonat ſalutem Domini. Apud euangeliſtas ſcribitur abſolute Ieſua, quod ipſe ſit ſalus ipſa, ſicut & ſapientia atq; iuſticia ipſa uocatur. Saluat enim nos à peccatis noſtris, iuſtificat nos, & ſapientiam præſtat paruulis. Et mirũ eſt quomodo Iehudæi hic inſaniant, quando fatemur Chriſtum ueniſſe in carnem propter primum Adæ peccatum & ſequelam omnium hinc naſcentium. Vnde triumphator eorum, autor libri Nizahon ſcribit in hunc modum:

Since we do not know Latin, I enlisted the services of a Latin translator named Maria in an effort to find out exactly what Münster was attempting to communicate to his reading audience. Here is what she came up with:

> Yeshua (**ישוע**) is a recurring name in Holy Scriptures and means "salvation"; sometimes it has the epenthesis[157] of "ho" (**הו**) such as in **יהושוע** Iehoshua and then it means "Lord's salvation." In the writings of the Evangelists this name is written as Iesua since he himself is just the salvation, as well as wisdom is also called justice. He in fact saves us from our sins, forgives us, and gives wisdom to the humble (in heart). It is amazing how the Jews are going mad when we say that Christ became incarnate because of Adam's original sin and all the other sins as a consequence of that first sin. Hence the one who triumphs over the sins, as the author Nizahon writes: ...[158]

As you can see from the above translation, there is nothing on page 124 of Münster's manuscript indicating that he in any way made changes to the Messiah's name as it originally appeared in the manuscript that he had been given. Did Yoseph Viel misinterpret and misrepresent Münster's Latin text? Regrettably, the answer is yes. Since there is obviously nothing in the above text indicating an admission from Sebastian Münster that he made any changes to the Messiah's name, it occurred to me that maybe Yoseph Viel mistakenly supplied his readers with the wrong page number from Münster's work. I decided to contact him to confirm whether or not Münster's admission was on another page. Once we got past the initial confusion as to whether or not I was using the correct version, Mr. Viel confirmed that his interpretation of Münster's commentary indicated an inference that led to his "natural conclusion" that Sebastian Münster changed the Messiah's name. Here is what he wrote:

> I didn't say he directly described himself as altering the text. I commented on how he describes finding the text in the second paragraph on that page, and if you compare that to the text he presented, you don't find what he describes. So the natural conclusion of

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[157] *Epenthesis* is defined by *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary* (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/epenthesis) as "the insertion or development of a sound or letter in the body of a word (as \ə\ in \'a-thə-ˌlēt\ athlete)." In this case, it appears that Münster is stating his opinion that when you insert the "ho" (הו) into the name "Yeshua" so as to produce the long form *Yehoshua*, this form of the name means "the Lord (YHWH) is salvation." Without the added "ho," the form *Yeshua* means "He is the salvation."

[158] I requested the translation at a web site called Allexperts (www.allexperts.com), which offered such translations as a free service by experts who served as volunteers. My question and its answer (dated 02/16/2014) was available for viewing online at this link. However, as of 2023, we read the following: "After more than 19 years, and over two million questions answered, AllExperts.com is now closed. We apologize for any inconvenience."

> comparing those two things is that he altered the text. For example, You don't see "הו" anywhere in his printing of Matthew, though he is describing it in the source text. He has "Yeshua" everywhere instead in the text he presented.
> The second paragraph starts by saying, "Nomen YESHUA frequens est in libris sacris" or "The name 'Yeshua' is frequently in the sacred books." By Sacred Books, he obviously means the Gospels. Not sure what else it could be. if someone really had a bias to argue the converse, they might try to argue he meant something other than Hebrew Matthew, but that begs the question of what else it could refer to.
> He continues by saying,
> "nonunquam habet epentbesin wh ut YEHOSHUA Iehoshua" or "sometimes has 'הו' sounded as 'Yehoshua.'" I get the impression here that what he is saying here is that "הו" is what is literally in the text, and it has been annotated so the reader knows it is referring to YEHOSHUA. Maybe the other letters are written in the margin or above/below the word, maybe it is some sort of symbol - I don't know. He does not give detail on this, so one has to use their imagination on the possibilities of how this was annotated. "epentbesin" refers to adding extra sounds to a word. BUT, we don't find anything like this in the Gospel of Matthew as he printed it. Instead, we find "Yeshua" everywhere He is referenced. So the natural conclusion of comparing what he said with the text he printed is that he changed "הו" along with its annotations to "Yeshua". He may have felt like the annotations were so proprietary that not every Hebrew reader would understand it, so he put it in standard Hebrew format.
> How did the person you talked to translate it ? Did she have some other interpretation of the wording?
> Shalom, Joe[159]

I have several concerns with the above response from Yoseph Viel. First, he writes that he never stated that Münster directly described himself as altering the Hebrew text. However, this is not true. If you re-examine what Mr. Viel actually wrote, he states, "Munster is recorded as saying that his source text for Matthew recorded Yeshua's Name as either 'Yehoshua' or 'הו', all of which he altered to the more familiar 'Yeshua' everywhere." This is for all intents and purposes a direct statement from Mr. Viel that (in his opinion) Münster altered the text. Second, I am at a loss to understand how Mr. Viel could construe from Münster's words that the "ho" (הו) in *Yehoshua* is what was literally in the text that he received from the Jews; nevertheless, this is the impression that he apparently had from what Münster wrote in his commentary. Mr. Viel requested the translation of the Hebrew text that Maria from Allexperts supplied me and here is what he sent in response to her translation:

> So in other words, she is suggesting that the "Ho" being added to Yeshua rather than "Y+shua" added to "Ho". Thanks for the note. I'll update my book to reflect that.[160]

While I feel the above response exhibited a step in the right direction, I am nevertheless not satisfied that Mr. Viel and I are on the same page. First, Maria (the translator) never "suggested" *anything* because all she did was supply the translation of Sebastian Münster's Latin commentary. Here is an excerpt from the response that I sent Mr. Viel:

[159] This is the full text of the response I received from Yoseph Viel on 05/28/2014.
[160] This is the full text of the response I received from Yoseph Viel on 05/31/2014.

> I'm not sure we're really on the same page with this matter, but I am nevertheless persuaded that we're a lot closer than I previously thought, so I am encouraged by that.
>
> I'm sure you know that Maria is not suggesting anything with her translation of Munster's Latin paragraph on page 124 because all she was doing was translating from Munster's commentary without adding any insights of her own. And all Munster was saying is that the short form, Yeshua, appears frequently in the Sacred Writings, and that with the epenthesis "ho" it means "the Lord's salvation," whereas without it, the name means "he is the salvation." I'm not saying I agree with Munster's comment, but that is what Maria indicates he said with her translation. I should probably here explain that I have a degree in French and Spanish, which are both Romance languages with enough Latin roots that caused me to have immediate concerns about your "Hebrew Hebrews" summary when I initially compared your words with what I read on page 124. I only submitted my translation request to Maria as a means of confirming that I wasn't missing anything. When she confirmed my personal understanding as being correct, I presumed that you must have been referring to some other page instead of page 124, so now you know why I contacted you.[161]

I concluded my response to Yoseph Viel's e-mail with a detailed explanation outlining my concerns about his statement that Sebastian Münster admitted to altering the Messiah's name (even though Münster said no such thing), and addressing why this is such an important matter that needs to be clarified and resolved before Sacred Name Movement adherents "run with it" without conducting the necessary research. Here is what I wrote:

> And now, I hope you don't my me giving you further explanation that may prove helpful to this discussion as it relates to my purpose in contacting you: I'm not sure if you're familiar with the Sacred Name Movement or not, but its members in general teach that the only "correct" spelling of the Messiah's name is יהושע, so they will love reading your comments that this is the form that Munster says was in the original text of the Hebrew Matthew that he had been given. This will prove to them that ישוע was never originally in any of the Hebrew Matthew texts, but was only added as impious scribes like Munster saw fit to convert the long form of this name to the short form. Moreover, it will validate their teaching that copyists such as Munster had no qualms about altering names. Sacred Name Movement advocates claim that the form ישוע only appears in the Hebrew Matthew texts because impious scribes / copyists intentionally removed the Father's name from the Son's name. With that backdrop, I hope you possibly, maybe & hopefully have a little better understanding of where I'm coming from with my questions. In spite of my skepticism, I would have accepted a direct statement from Munster (without any need to interpret his words) that he changed the form יהושע to ישוע, as much as I wouldn't have liked reading such a direct statement. The short form of the Messiah's name, from the perspective of many Sacred Name Movement advocates, is a product of the ineffable name doctrine and a statement by Munster affirming that he altered the long form and changed it to the short form would validate this important doctrine that is openly taught by Sacred Name Movement leaders. I apologize for the above lengthy explanation, but hopefully it gives you a better of idea of where I'm coming from and why I really, really needed to see a direct

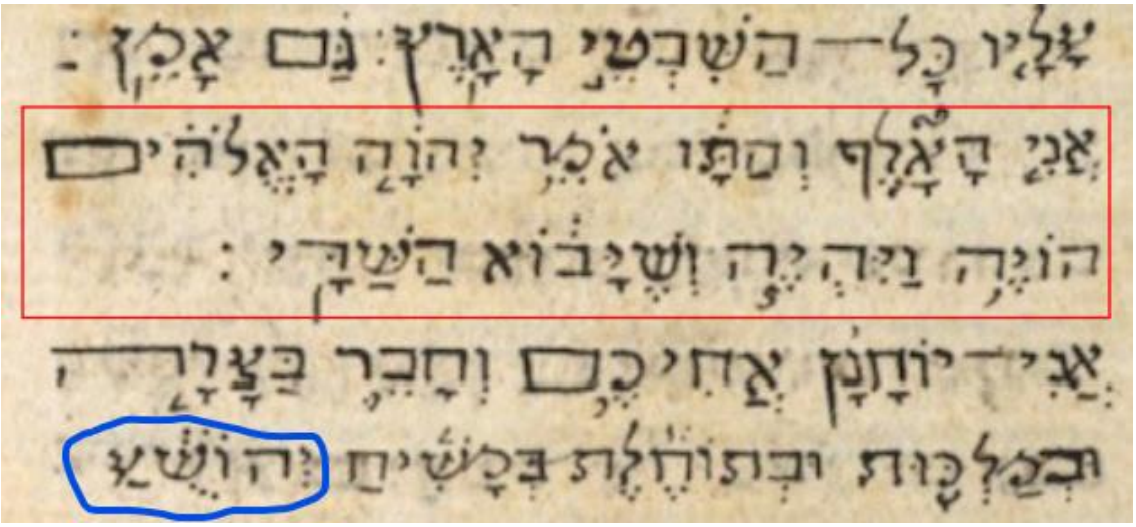
[161] This is an excerpt from the response that I e-mailed to Yoseph Viel on 06/01/2014.

> statement from Munster instead of an interpretation of what someone thinks he may have meant.[162]

It is interesting to note that Yoseph Viel removed the paragraph in question from the December 2005 update of his "Hebrew Hebrews" article, which as of 2023, is no longer available for reading online. Until we can be shown otherwise, we have no reason to suspect that Sebastian Münster made any changes to the Messiah's name in any of the manuscripts that he was given.

The Hebrew Book of Revelation

In 2023, we came across another ancient text of the Bible substantiating the long form *Yehoshua*. Dr. Miles R. Jones, in his treatise *The Hebrew Gospels: Do They Exist?*[163], includes copies from various Hebrew manuscripts. He doesn't delve into the matter of the Messiah's name, but he does offer an interesting excerpt from The Hazon Hebrew Manuscript of Revelation, which can be found in the British Library's Sloane Collection Manuscript #273. Jones' primary focus is on the fact that chapter one, verse eight, reads, "I am the Aleph and the Tav, said Yehováh[164] Elohim - Who is, Who was, Who is to come, 'HaShaddai' The Almighty." The Greek text of Revelation hides the Name behind the words "the Lord," leading many to conclude that the One being referred to is "the Master Yehoshua." It's nearly unanimous that *Yeshua* is "who is, who was, who is to come," but here in the Hebrew Revelation He is identified as *Yahweh*, validating the Apostle John's understanding that Yeshua is Yahweh. Yeshua, or as presented in the Hebrew Revelation, *Yehoshua*, is the central figure in the chapter and the very context of the passage leaves no doubt that He is the One being referenced. Although Dr. Jones supplies no commentary pertaining to the Messiah's name, he nevertheless supplies the pertinent Hebrew text displaying His name in Revelaton 1:9. A screen capture of the pertinent text is displayed below:



[162] Ibid.
[163] From *The Hebrew Gospels: Do They Exist?*, Miles R. Jones, PhD, 2020, p. 14. Available online at the following link: https://bibleconcepts.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Hebrew-Gospel-Do-They-Exist.pdf
[164] Of course, we are persuaded that the Name more correctly rendered "Yahweh," a topic we address in our study *Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton*, available online at http://www.ponderscripture.org/PDF%20Files/Pronunciation%20of%20the%20Tetragrammaton.pdf.

The Shift From Yehoshua to Yeshua – In Layman's Terms

By this point, you may be asking yourself something like this: "If the form *Yehoshua* came first, then how did forms such as *Yeshua* and *Yeshu* come into being?" Of course, Sacred Name Movement adherents would likely answer that none of the above names are legitimate options in the first place, so all of them are the result of deception. For those who are willing to examine this issue based on the factual evidence thus far presented instead of wishful thinking, we would like to propose that a combination of foreign influence and dissimilation may very well have contributed to the change. While Aramaic and Hebrew are similar languages, they nevertheless have their differences, which we won't get into here. If you can imagine the differences in dialect and even vocabulary that exist between the United States and Great Britain, and if you can imagine how your children would talk if you moved from one of those countries to the other and raised your children there from infancy to adulthood, then you might have a handle on the influence that growing up in a different land (where the language isn't spoken quite the same) would have on your family. For example, I know my great-great-grandfather, who moved to the United States from Ireland, had an accent very different from my own and he very likely spoke fluent Irish. I never knew my great-great-grandfather, but I knew his son and his English, including his rural American accent, was virtually indistinguishable from that of other country folk I knew growing up.

If a family can lose an Irish accent in only one generation, I can well imagine how a family that spoke excellent Hebrew could soon have a family that spoke better Aramaic than Hebrew if they were forcibly transported to a land where Aramaic was the language of the land. This is where dissimilation may come in. We addressed vowel dissimilation in footnote #50 back in chapter three. One of the examples of vowel dissimilation that we mentioned is where southern folk say, "Y'all" instead of "You all." For some people, especially northerners, the way they frame their mouths when they speak makes it easy and natural to say, "You all." For us southerners, the way we frame our mouths when we speak, it's actually difficult to say the words "You all" together. It's more natural to say, "Y'all." This act of dissimilation is not the result of a clever plot to subvert the English language; it's just the way different people speak the language and for some reason these different dialects tend to be concentrated in different areas of the country.

For the Hebrew-speaking family that was forcibly moved to Babylon, they very likely experienced some trying moments as they witnessed, to their dismay, their children gradually picking up the nuances and speech patterns of the Aramaic language that was now predominant in their new surroundings. For the parents, saying a name like *Yehoshua* may have been second nature. Maybe their older children likewise had no issues saying the name *Yehoshua*, but the younger children may have gradually found themselves becoming prone to involuntary dissimilation by *trying* to say *Yehoshua*, but the name came out *Yeshua* or maybe even *Yoshua*, depending on which syllables they inadvertently dropped. As these children grew into adults, married and had children, saying names like *Yehoshua* would not have become any easier for their offspring. Suffice it to say that by the time their descendants moved back to Judah, the dynamics of the Hebrew language, as their ancestors knew it, had irreversibly changed. Adjusting to a new system of linguistics, combined with dissimilation, may very well have caused the "eh" sound in "Yehoshua" to give way to the shortened "Yoshua." Similarly, others may have vocalized it "Yeshua" by glossing over the "ho" in "Yehoshua." This may also explain why Eusebius, as presented in chapter six, made references to the Messiah as both *Iosoue* and *Iesous*. It's the same principle in how we dissimilate letters when we say, "Dyawannanornge?" What we *mean* to say is, "Do you want an orange?" but it rarely comes out that way, especially when we're in a hurry. That, in a nutshell, is our take on what may very well have brought about the change from *Yehoshua* to *Yeshua* and *Yeshu*. A linguistics expert would

very likely tell you much the same thing in a 30-page dissertation.

A co-worker recently inquired about my faith. She knew we observe the weekly Sabbath (to the best of our ability), but she didn't know we recognize Yeshua as the Messiah. In the course of the discussion, I was compelled to let her know we do not refer to him as "Jesus." She knew more about His name than I was expecting and she asked, "Isn't His name *Joshua* in Hebrew?" I gave her the same basic summary as outlined above, i.e., that there is essentially nothing wrong with *Joshua* (apart from the "J," of course), but that through vowel dissimilation some people allow the "ho" sound of *Yehoshua's* second syllable to overpower the "eh" sound of the first syllable, hence *Yoshua*; others allow the first syllable to overpower the second syllable; hence *Yeshua*. Neither one should be considered better than the other. My co-worker expressed understanding of this concept; if only all leaders of the Sacred Name Movement did the same!

9. In Search of the Oldest Form: Does it Matter?

We find it interesting that many individuals within the Sacred Name Movement lay such a heavy emphasis on the historical form of the Messiah's name that they keep going … and going … and going, waaaay back through the passage of time in order to find it. In fact, they go well over 500 years *in advance* of the time frame during which the Messiah was born to find the "original historical name." This, they contend, is the *only* name that could have been given to the Messiah at birth. While this "energizer bunny" approach may seem to be a legitimate search method on the surface, it does not take into consideration the fact that names in all cultures go through an evolutionary process. This is how names like "Elizabeth" produce spin-offs such as "Eliza," "Liza," "Lisa," "Liz," "Betty" and "Beth." In fact, one of my work-related acquaintances is a woman named Lizbeth. Like it or not, this is what happens to names, whether it be in English or in Hebrew.

Many Sacred Name Movement advocates who hold to the long form *Yahushua* as being the "only true name of the Savior" reject any notion that the Hebrew name **יהושע** could have legitimately evolved into shorter forms such as **ישוע** or **ישו** (*Yeshu*). In fact, some individuals claim that the form **ישוע** isn't even a Hebrew name at all. Sacred Name Movement author Tom Martincic, who hosts the EliYah.com web site, is among those who claim that the form **ישוע** is not a Hebrew name, which apparently, in his estimation, renders it invalid. According to Mr. Martincic, the form **ישוע** is *Aramaic*, not Hebrew. That would be like saying, "Joseph isn't a Hebrew name, it's English!" Those who check out the origin of the name *Joseph* understand that, yes, the way it is pronounced bears the results of English influence, but it really *is* a Hebrew name. In the same way, "Joey," which is derived from "Joseph," only reflects the *influence* of the English language on a name that is of Hebrew origin. The argument that **ישוע** is not a Hebrew name, then, is simply unfounded. Is it a Hebrew name wrought by Aramaic influence? Yes, it certainly is!

Tom Martincic authored a study on the topic of the Messiah's name titled "Why Yahushua?" in which he expends considerable effort attempting to validate his conclusion that the original form of the Messiah's name is pronounced *Yahushua*. Without going into a lot of detail, I will say that his premise may possibly be correct, since the pronunciation *Yahushua* certainly fits within the framework of linguistic possibility of the form **יהושע**; however, this is not the pronunciation indicated by those who transliterated **יהושע** into other languages, most notably the Greek language. Nevertheless, going all the way back to the 5th century BCE, Tom attempts to build a case for his belief that the original pronunciation is *Yahushua* (as opposed to *Yehoshua*), and he therefore concludes that *Yahushua* is the *only* legitimate pronunciation of the name that was given to the Son of Yahweh at birth.

What about the Murashu Tablets?

Since I wasn't present in the 5th century BCE to hear whether the vowel sound in the first syllable of that name has an "ah" versus an "eh" sound, I have no choice but to acknowledge that Tom's pronunciation claim may possibly be correct even though, as we have previously reinforced, this is *not* the pronunciation that was understood by the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint from Hebrew into Greek. Regardless of how correct Tom's conclusion about the "original pronunciation" is, such a premise is completely irrelevant to the discussion of how to pronounce the Messiah's name because there is no rule requiring the form of the Messiah's name that He was given at birth to precisely match the *original* form of that same name. Nevertheless, quipped with this background information, let's take a

look at what Tom wrote:

> Also, a family of Jewish businessmen living in the Mesopotamian city of Kippur in the fifth century BC left behind a collection of clay tablets recording their commercial transactions. The clay tablets, known as the Murashu documents, contain vowels and list the names of about 70 Jewish settlers in Persia. The Hebrew names which begin with **יהו** (Yod Heh Waw) are all written "Yahu-" and never "Yeho".
> "In the cuneiform texts Yeho [YHW], Yo [YW] and Yah [YH] are written Yahu, as for example in the names Jehu (Yahu-a), Jehoahaz (Yahu-khazi) and Hezekiah (Khazaqi-yahu)" A. H. Sayce in "Higher Criticism" on p. 87
> "The evidence from the Murashu documents thus corresponds to that from other sources: after the Exile the ordinary form of the divine name used as an initial theophorous element was yahu"
> *"Patterns in Jewish Personal Names in the Babylonian Diaspora" JSJ, Vol. 4 Issue 2 Pg. 188*
> Notice that not only were names beginning with "Yeho" written as "Yahu", but also names beginning with "Yo" such as "Yochanan" (John) and "Yoel" (Joel) were written as "Yahu". This indicates John and Joel were originally pronounced "Yahuchanan" and "Yahuel".[165]

Tom goes on to write:

> With all the evidence, it becomes clear that the name was never originally pronounced "Yehoshua". Rather "Yahushua" is more correct and there is no reason to mispronounce the Heavenly Father's name when speaking the name of His Son. Just as names which end with a reference to Yahweh correctly convey the Father's name ("ZecharYah/ZecharYahu"), so do the names which begin with it.[166]

On the surface, Tom's claim that we should pronounce the Messiah's name *Yahushua* because that's the way the long form of this name was originally vocalized in the cuneiform texts seems reasonable. I checked out his first reference and it was not helpful in satisfying my curiosity about how anyone could possibly know how a cuneiform vowel is pronounced just by looking at it. The book is actually titled *The "Higher Criticism" and the Verdict of the Monuments* by A. H. Sayce. I personally questioned Tom's decision to only offer his reading audience that one lone sentence from Sayce's book; however, upon accessing the reference, I could later see why, due to Tom's biased approach, he omitted supplying his readers with the full context. You see, according to the author of *The "Higher Criticism" and the Verdict of the Monuments*, those "cuneiform vowels" reveal a different pronunciation of the Creator's name than

[165] Tom Martincic's study, "Why Yahushua?" can be accessed online at the following URL: www.eliyah.com/pronunciation-messiahs-name/. NOTE: The study has been renamed "Pronunciation of the Messiah's Name (Yahushua)."
[166] Ibid.

the one promoted by Tom Martincic. Mr. Martincic fully supports referring to the Creator with the name pronounced *Yahweh*.[167] I concur with the pronunciation *Yahweh*, but if we go by A. H. Sayce's report, which is presumably based on the same "cuneiform vowels" that Tom promotes in his article, then we should refer to the Creator as *Yahăvah*, not *Yahweh*. In other words, Tom employs a double standard. He is eager to cite Sayce's book to justify using the first-syllable pronunciation *Yah* for the Messiah's name, yet he *ignores* Sayce's book when it comes to vocalizing the final syllable of the *Creator's* name. Let's examine the entire paragraph from A. H. Sayce's book so we can view the writing in full context (and see what Tom chooses to ignore):

> The name of Yahveh, which is united with Elohim in the second account of the creation in Genesis, and by which the national God of the Hebrews was distinguished from the gods of the heathen, is a name upon which oriental archæology has as yet shed but little light. Even its meaning and origin are obscure, though we now know that the full form Yahveh, or rather Yahăvah, and the shorter form Yeho, Yô, or rather Yahu, existed side by side from an early date. In the cuneiform texts Yeho, Yô, and Yah are written Yahu, as for example in the names of Jehu (Yahu-a), Jehoahaz (Yahu-khazi), and Hezekiah (Khazaqi-yahu). But there are also contract-tablets found in Babylonia on which the names of Jews occur, and these names are compounded, not with Yahu, but with Ya(h)ava(h). This was first pointed out by Dr. Pinches, we have Gamar-Ya'ava or Gemariah, and Ya'ava-natanu or Jonathan.[168]

Upon reading the full quotation from Sayce's book, the obvious question I had is, "Why does Tom Martincic believe A. H. Sayce's report that the first syllable of names beginning with **יהו** in Hebrew was anciently pronounced 'Yahu,' yet he *ignores* Sayce's additional report that the Tetragrammaton was anciently vocalized *Yahăvah*?" This is an example of *selective citation*, whereby an author selects the portion of a reference that seems to offer support for his view while intentionally ignoring the portion that, by applying the same rule, would require him to alter his view on something else.[169] In this instance, the very same "cuneiform vowels" that might appear to validate Mr. Martincic's view about the first syllable of the Messiah's name simultaneously *invalidate* his view about the final syllable of the Creator's name. I find it interesting that Mr. Martincic cites Sayce's work in his study dedicated to the correct pronunciation of the Messiah's name, but in his study validating the pronunciation *Yahweh*, Sayce is ignored.[170]

In our previous version of this study, I openly questioned how anyone could look at ancient cuneiform writings and determine how certain vowels were pronounced. Once I finished reading the *second* article Tom Martincic cited, I now concede that scholarly consensus supports that it may indeed be

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[167] Cf., Tom Martincic's article titled "Why the Heavenly Father's name is pronounced, 'Yahweh.'" This article may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL: http://www.eliyah.com/proof.htm.

[168] A. H. Sayce, *The "Higher Criticism" and the Verdict of the Monuments*, 7th Edition, Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, England, 1910, pp. 87-88.

[169] Indeed, there are websites dedicated to the belief that the Creator's name is pronounced *Yahavah* or *Yahwa*. One online article titled "Pronunciation According to Its Letters (6th Century B.C.)" upholds the pronunciation *Yahwa*, based on cuneiform writings.

[170] The study I'm referring to is titled "Why the Heavenly Father's name is pronounced, 'Yahweh,'" which is currently available online at the following link: www.eliyah.com/yahweh.html. Curiously, Sayce's "cuneiform vowel" evidence pertaining to the pronunciation *Yahwa* didn't merit space within this study.

possible to determine the pronunciations of vowels in cuneiform writings. M. D. Coogan, in "Patterns in Jewish Personal Names in the Babylonian Diaspora," bolsters the argument that comparative examinations of cuneiform writings with Neo-Babylonian writings allow sufficient grounds for believing that theophoric names began with *yah*. Here's an excerpt from his article:

> Names with *-ya-a-ma* are not unique to the Murashu documents, and there has been general scholarly consensus that this ending corresponds to the Yahwistic element *-yahū* found in biblical and extra-biblical names; all of the names listed above are demonstrably West Semitic or have biblical parallels. There has not, however, been as much unanimity about the pronunciation of the element. But, as F. M. Cross has pointed out, recent advances in Neo-Babylonian orthography make it clear that *-ya-a-ma* was pronounced *-yaw*. Final vowels were generally not pronounced, and there is now considerable evidence to show that Neo-Babylonian *m* was the equivalent of West Semitic *w*. Thus, in each of the twenty-one names just listed, we should read the theophorous element as *-yaw*: *'abīyaw*, *'ahīyaw*, etc.[171]

Coogan expounds on the above in a follow-up book he authored titled *West Semitic Personal Names in the Murašû Documents*:

> The relatively small number of names with *yahū* in the Murašû onomasticon makes any large-scale generalization difficult, but on the basis of the limited evidence available, we suggest the following typology in the treatment of the divine name as a theophorous element:
> 1. In initial position, at Nippur and generally in Judah and at Elephantine, the element was pronounced *yahū* and spelled accordingly by the end of the fifth century [BCE]. As Albright has shown, Massoretic *y^{e}hô-* is a later formation on the basis of analogy; but *yahū-* (both in alphabetic orthography *yhw-* and in its cuneiform equivalent *ya (-a) - ḫu (-ú)-)* is a correct archaism which has generally been adopted in initial position by the end of the fifth century [BCE].[172]

To be clear, M. D. Coogan affirms that in the Murašû tablets, theophoric names that began with a form of the Tetragrammaton had the *yahū* pronunciation, not *y^{e}hô*. Among these names is the biblical name *Jonathan*. Many of us are acquainted with how this name is presented in the Masoretic Hebrew text: *Yehonathon* or *Yonathan*. The first syllable, according to the Murašû tablets, is rendered *Yahū*, this producing the pronunciation *Yahúnatan*. Coogan offers this information on page 184 of "Patterns in Jewish Personal Names in the Babylonian Diaspora": [173]

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[171] Coogan, M. D., "Patterns in Jewish Personal Names in the Babylonian Diaspora," by M. D. Coogan, *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1973), pp. 189-190.
[172] Coogan, Michael David, *West Semitic Personal Names in the Murašû Documents*, Edwards Brothers, Inc., Ann Arbor, MI, 1976, pp. 51-52.
[173] Coogan, M. D., "Patterns in Jewish Personal Names in the Babylonian Diaspora," by M. D. Coogan, *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1973), p. 184.

I. *Names with* yahū

In the Murashu documents, three names [1]) occur with the theophorous element *yahū* in initial position [2]):

$^{I\,d}$*ya-a-ḫu-ú-natan* (UM 97.7, 12; 119.11, LoE); variant:
$^{I\,d}$*ya-ḫu-ú-natan* (IX.25.19; 45.1)
$^{I\,d}$*ya-a-ḫu-ú-la-ki-im* (IX.28.15); variant:
$^{I\,d}$*ya-a-ḫu-la-ki-im* (X.77.3, LE)
^{I}*ya-a-ḫu-lu-nu* (IX.55.1, 14)

The identification of the element (^{d})*ya*(*-a*)-*ḫu*(*-ú*) with Massoretic *y^{e}hô* is guaranteed by the alphabetic transcription of the first name above as *yhwntn* on one of the Aramaic dockets often found on the tablets [3]). This name thus corresponds to biblical *y^{e}hônātān* "Yahweh has given (a son)."

Thus, we find that Tom Martincic has scholarly support for believing that in ancient times the name given to the Israelite general would not have been *Yehoshua*, but rather *Yahushua*. This, of course, is the original name that was later given to the Son of Yahweh. We are fine with this information! So let's say this scholarly evidence confirms that, *anciently*, the Messiah's name was pronounced *Yahushua*. Do we really need to go back 500 years *prior* to the birth of the Messiah to determine how His name was originally pronounced? Should our goal be to pronounce the Messiah's name in that name's most original form *or* should it be to pronounce it with the form by which He was actually named at birth 500 years later? Of course, Tom believes that he achieves both goals with the form *Yahushua* (**יהושע**). However, we have already seen historical evidence supportive of the possibility and likelihood that the Messiah was given the name *Yeshua* (**ישוע**) at birth. Mr. Martincic ignores this historical evidence (which he feels was mishandled by translators), instead citing his interpretation of a prophecy in Zechariah as evidence of the "prophetic name."

Why doesn't Tom put any stock in the existing historical documents attesting to the form **ישוע**? He answered this question during a 1999 forum discussion about this very topic. In response to my comment that he apparently finds archaeological evidence to be "wrong," Tom wrote the following:

> I hear you saying by the above statement that you hold the belief that I regard the archaeological evidence as 'wrong'. I do not regard it to be wrong at all in the sense that I deny its existence. What I disagree with is the interpretation of the said evidences. The interpretation that I hear you setting forth is that since the short form was used in the said evidence, that this proves it had to have been the short form originally. I take a more skeptical position based on my understanding of Zechariah 6 as well as the knowledge of the 'ineffable name' doctrine being well seated in mainstream christianity at least as soon as the early half of the 2nd

> Century C.E. This is evidenced by the writings of Justin Martyr who stated:
>
> > For no one can utter the name of the ineffable deity (theos); and if any one dare to say that there is a name, he raves with a hopeless madness. (I Apol.,61)
>
> Therefore, to sum it up, I believe that we both acknowledge the "evidence". One of us believes it is a reliable witness for the original name, the other sees it as unreliable evidence for such. If we want to go on evidence, look at all the evidence for "Iesous"? Yet, we both view it as an unreliable source for the original name and for very good reasons.
>
> The second reason I view it as an unreliable witness for the original name is that there is no way to prove that those who put "Yeshua" in the various places didn't think it mattered. They may have believed it was ok to shorten the Messiah's name from "Yahushua" to "Yeshua". For these reasons, I do not rely on these evidences to verify the Messiah's true name. It would be one thing if we were discussing whether or not it is 'okay' to shorten the Messiah's name to begin with. It is quite another when we are discussing that the 'shortened form' was the Messiah's original name.[174]

The above commentary serves as an illustration of how clear it was during the forum discussion that Tom and I were never really "on the same page," and I'm not sure he ever *did* get a proper handle on what I was trying to convey with my perspective of the Messiah's name. For example, he wrote, "The interpretation that I hear you setting forth is that since the short form was used in the said evidence, that this proves it had to have been the short form originally." I had never written anything *close* to what he says he "heard from me"; I hope I have by now made it abundantly clear that June and I agree **יהושע** is the *original* spelling of the Messiah's name, just as "Lawrence" is the *original* spelling of my given name, and "Thomas" is the *original form* that is often shortened to "Tom," as is the case with Tom Martincic. That a name can be shortened or abbreviated doesn't mean the "original spelling" is what he or she is given at birth.

It is clear from Tom's commentary that he believes the original form **יהושע** is the only viable candidate for the actual name given to the Messiah at birth because, in his opinion, the short form **ישוע** is the result of unfaithful men wrongfully contracting the long form. The "wrongful behavior," according to Tom, involved removing the Father's name from **יהושע**. However, we have explained elsewhere that when Moses added the Father's name to the name **הושע** (Hoshea), all he did was add a *yod* (**י**). Since this same *yod* is present in the form **ישוע**, it is a mistake to arbitrarily conclude the name **ישוע** does not contain the Father's name. Moreover, if we are to seriously believe that unfaithful men shortened the name, there were apparently so many "unfaithful men" involved in this conspiracy that even the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint stooped to this same level when they gave the first syllable of Joshua's name the "Yeh" sound instead of the "Yah" sound. Did they somehow know in advance that

[174] From a posting that Thomas Martincic submitted under the screen name "EliYah" on his EliYah's Forums web site (www.eliyah.com) on 12-08-1999 at 12:26 AM. The name of the forum topic was "Name of Our Messiah." Regrettably, that forum topic is no longer available for reading online.

this is the name that would, some 280 years later, be given to the Messiah and on that basis they "pre-removed" the Father's name from the Son's name?

In the above commentary that Tom addressed to me, he also assumed we both agree that the form produced by the Hebrew scholars who translated the Torah into Greek (*Iesous*) is an "unreliable source for the original name." Once again, he misunderstood my perspective because, contrary to his assertion, we consider the Greek form *Iesous*, which is how the Septuagint translators rendered Joshua's name, to be a very *reliable* source for the original pronunciation, at least the pronunciation of the first syllable ("Yeh").[175]

While there is an abundance of historical support for the short form **ישוע**, we aren't about to deny the existence of historical support for the long form **יהושע** from the Hebrew Book of Hebrews and the Hebrew Revelation. During the forum discussion, I cited archaeological evidence supportive of the short form **ישוע**; since that discussion, additional archaeological evidence has been found.[176] Nevertheless, our primary source of historical evidence comes from textual evidence, including all existing copies of the Hebrew gospel of Matthew and as we learned in the previous chapter, the Hebrew Book of Hebrews and Hebrew Revelation. Suffice it to say that there is historical evidence supporting both the short form **ישוע** and the long form **יהושע**. While Sacred Name Movement representatives, including Tom Martincic, agree the short form is what is found in the majority of these documents, they are quick to point out that since the Creator's name (the Tetragrammaton) is not found in the manuscripts containing the short form[177], this points to the likelihood that those who removed the name *Yahweh* from the existing Hebrew versions of the gospel of Matthew *also* changed the spelling of the Messiah's name from **יהושע** to **ישוע**. Here is what Tom wrote:

> There are also no traces of historical documents or manuscripts specifically showing the name "Yahweh" in the NT. Yet, we know it was there originally based on what scripture says. If one was changed, the

[175] See chapter 4, "Evidence for the Messiah's Name: The Septuagint."

[176] See our inside cover, where we provide information about the inscription "Yahuda, son of Yeshua" found on an ossuary near Jerusalem. This ossuary, bearing the Hebrew **יהו** ("Yah") in conjunction with the name "Yeshua," effectively disproves the contention that the form "Yeshua" is the result of a Jewish conspiracy to remove "Yah" from the Messiah's name. More recently, another ossuary bearing the inscription "Ya'aqob, son of Yoseph (Joseph), brother of Yeshua" was brought to global attention (cf., the Nov./Dec. 2002 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*). Did this ossuary once contain the bones of James, the son of Joseph, the brother of the Messiah? This ossuary and the questions it raises have been the center of great controversy, and you can be certain that Sacred Name Movement supporters of the form *Yahushua* are counted among those who consider the inscription to be a modern forgery. The late Hershel Shanks, who was both founder and editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, along with a number of experts, including epigrapher André Lemaire, contended that the ossuary inscription is authentic. The Israeli Antiquities Society, consisting of Jews who would certainly be biased against the genuineness of the inscription, ruled that it is a modern forgery made sometime after the year 2000. Later, however, a photograph of the ossuary, including the inscription, which was taken in 1976, surfaced. As Lior Beringer, attorney for the ossuary's owner, stated, "It is unreasonable that someone would forge an inscription like this in the 70s and suddenly decide to come out with it in 2002." For a summary of this controversy please see the Wikipedia article "James Ossuary." It can be accessed online at the following URL:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Ossuary.

[177] We saw in the previous chapter that the full form of the Creator's name, יהוה, appears twice in the Hebrew Book of Hebrews (13:6-7).

> other could have been changed as well. It doesn't seem unlikely that both would have been changed at the same time.[178]

In other words, according to Tom Martincic, it is likely that those who removed the name **יהוה** from Hebrew versions of the gospel of Matthew also altered the spelling of the Messiah's name from the "long form" to the "short form." This reasoning was later disproven when we were introduced to the Munster Hebrew Matthew, as well as the Hebrew gospel of John. This assumptive reasoning also fails to rationalize how the Almighty, knowing that His Son would one day be born in Bethlehem, would allow the name **יהושע** to "deteriorate" to **ישוע** in two inspired books of Scripture. This "name change," which obviously was not met with Yahweh's wrath and indignation, should not be expected to be regarded any differently by Yahweh with the naming of His Son.

If the Messiah's given name at birth is **ישוע**, which is considered the "short form" of the longer form **יהושע**, then this should be considered sufficient reason to refer to Him with that shorter form. For anyone to maintain that we should refer to Him with the long form "because it's the original form" would be the same as saying we should pronounce Jenny's name as "Jennifer" because that's the original form of the name "Jenny." Never mind the fact that "Jenny" is what appears on her birth certificate! It would be like saying we should pronounce Mike's name as "Michael" because that's the original form of the name "Mike." Again, never mind that "Mike" is the name on his birth certificate! In my own case, it would be like referring to me as "Lawrence," even though "Larry" is on my birth certificate. I've actually been called "Lawrence" on quite a few occasions, and it's never bothered me; however, that doesn't mean it's my name. What would be most helpful in the case of the Messiah's name would be to see the name that is on His birth certificate. Since He didn't have a birth certificate for us to examine, the only viable option is to find the name that is found within the existing written records. Archaeological evidence and evidence from texts such as the Hebrew books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, James and Jude validate that His birth name is spelled *yod*, *shin*, *waw*, *ayin* (**ישוע**), whereas the Hebrew books of Hebrews and Revelation validate the spelling *yod*, *heh*, *waw*, *shin*, *ayin* (**יהושע**).[179] The best available evidence that we have seen from reliable transliterations into Greek presents the pronunciation of the first syllable of <u>both</u> spellings as "*Yeh*," not "*Yah*."

The primary difficulties that Mr. Martincic does not resolve in his quest for the "original form and pronunciation" are (1) providing any evidence validating the original first syllable pronunciation *Yah* for either form of the Messiah's name (cuneiform writings found on ancient clay tablets don't <u>prove</u> anything!) and (2) explaining why the short form is allowed in the inspired canon of the Bible if it truly represents an attempt to remove the Father's name from the long form. We have already explained that the Father's name is actually found in *both* forms; later in this study we will present this fact in greater detail.[180]

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[178] From a posting that Thomas Martincic submitted under the screen name "EliYah" on his EliYah's Forums web site on 12-08-1999 at 12:26 AM. The name of the forum topic was "Name of Our Messiah," which is no longer available for viewing online. Please note that Mr. Martincic's expressed understanding about no NT manuscripts containing the name *Yahweh* was posted some five years before the announcement of the existence of the Hebrew Book of Hebrews, which contains the Tetragrammaton twice (Hebrews 13:5-7).

[179] Another Hebrew Revelation has been found that refers to the Messiah with the short form ישוע.

[180] Cf., Chapter 16, "Addressing the Objections," Part C, "*<u>Does Referring to the Messiah as 'Yeshua' Constitute a Violation of the Third Commandment?</u>*"

An even greater concern lies with the fact that Tom agrees the best evidence for the pronunciation *Yahweh* stems from Greek transliterations of the Tetragrammaton[181]; yet when these same Greek writers attest to the first syllable of the Messiah's name being pronounced with the "Yeh" sound, they are somehow accused of removing the Father's name from the Son's name. So it's okay to turn to ancient Greek writers to affirm the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton, *but they botched the Messiah's name*?

As noble as Tom's intentions may be, they are based on flawed reasoning. Our focus should be on what name was actually given to the Son of Yahweh on the day of His birth, not on the original *form* of that name as given centuries earlier. Also, it is unreasonable to reject Greek transliterations of the Messiah's name while upholding their transliteration of the name *Yahweh*.

[181] I base this observation on the fact that in his explanation for why he believes the Heavenly Father's name is pronounced "Yahweh," Mr. Martincic refers his readers to chapter 9 ("Is the Correct Pronunciation Known?") of a study titled *The Sacred Name* 𐤉𐤄𐤅𐤄. The author of this chapter points to Greek transliterations as evidence supporting the pronunciation *Yahweh*. In lending his support to the author's conclusion, Tom writes, "To see why His name is pronounced 'Yahweh' I would point you to the following resource which I have checked out thoroughly and have found to be adequate and in agreement with what I have found on the pronunciation." This is taken from the introduction to his own study titled "Why the Heavenly Father's Name is Pronounced 'Yahweh.'" Here's an exact quote from page 109 of *The Sacred Name* 𐤉𐤄𐤅𐤄: "Despite Jewish and Roman Church prohibitions against its use, the vocalization of the complete name was revealed and is preserved by a few. Clement of Alexandria (second century C.E.), for instance, tells his readers that the sacred name is pronounced 'Ιαουέ and 'Ιαουαί, both words which approximate the sound Yah-oo-ay. In various Jewish-Egyptian magic-papyri it appears most frequently as Ιαωουηε, but is also found written Ιαωουηι Ιαωουεη Ιαωουε, and Ιαωουεα (all approximating 'Yah-ou-ay'). It should not go unnoticed that these writers use only Greek vowels to represent the sacred name, again, demonstrating that we are dealing with four Hebrew vowels." Why does Tom agree that the ancient Greeks *preserved* the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton, yet he's persuaded they *removed* it from the Messiah's name?

10. Must the Son's Name Contain the Name of His Father?

In chapter three, we displayed some quotations from various Sacred Name Movement publications reflecting their sentiments about the Messiah's name and those who don't vocalize the first syllable of His name with *Yah*. Many point to John 5:43 and insist this verse proves that "YAH" must form a part of His name. Some are so adamant about this that they actually condemn those with an opposing view! Let's take a quick look at John 5:43:

> [43] I have come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

As we have previously explained, many Sacred Name groups and individuals regard the above verse as a proof text that the Messiah's name **must** contain a portion of Yahweh's name. One such source from which we quoted was an article titled "How the Savior's Name Was Changed." Here is that quotation once again:

> The Savior clearly avowed, 'I am come in my Father's Name,' John 5:43. This passage means that He carried His Father's Name. Its meaning is not limited solely to His coming by authority or command of the Heavenly Father.[182]

Another man, on an Internet forum discussion board, wrote the following:

> Yeshua is a product of the ineffability doctrine! ... Yeshua is certainly better than using the greek/Roman name J.e.s.u.s., but it still is not the name of our Messiah nor does it contain the Father's NAME. By the Messiah's own testimony, He came in His Father's name with all its power and authority, by YHWH's permission, if you will.[183]

Certainly, the prevailing belief among those in the Sacred Name Movement is that since the Messiah came IN HIS FATHER'S NAME, His name must contain at least a portion of the name *Yahweh*. More specifically, according to proponents of this belief, His name must contain at least the first three letters of the Tetragrammaton.

Regrettably, this argument lacks substance, since coming in someone else's name cannot logically be construed to mean that person's name forms a part of the other person's name. The argument is completely shattered when compared with a verse in the book I Samuel, chapter 17. This is the account of David and Goliath. Observe carefully the words David spoke to Goliath in verse 45:

> [45] Then said David to the Philistine, 'Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I COME TO THEE IN THE NAME OF YAHWEH OF HOSTS, the Mighty One of the armies of Israel, Whom thou hast defied!

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[182] YNCA (Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly), "How the Savior's Name Was Changed" (author's name not provided), April 1999. The article was accessed online at the following URL: http://www.ynca.com/howthesa.htm, but was later moved (with changes, such as converting the Messiah's name from *Yahshua* to *Yahshuah*) here. Further attesting to the article's popularity within the Sacred Name Movement, it is also currently available here.

[183] From a posting submitted on 11-26-1999 at 07:31 AM EST in the forum thread titled "Name of Our Messiah" by an individual who only identified himself as Don. The entire forum discussion was available for reading at Thomas Martincic's web site for several years (http://www.eliyah.com/forum2/Forum1/HTML/001600-5.html), but an attempt to access it in 2013 revealed that it has since been removed.

If we apply the reasoning parroted by many within the Sacred Name Movement, we are left to believe that "David" must not be the true name of the King of Israel. You see, he came "in the name of Yahweh." Therefore, if we apply their logic, "Yahweh" must have formed a part of David's name; yet neither "Yah" nor "Yahweh" forms any part of David's name!

Again, David came *in* Yahweh's name, but "Yahweh" does not form any part of David's name. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that just because the Messiah came *in* His Father's name, this does *not* mean that "Yah" must form a part of His name.

A. Does "I am come in My Father's name" mean "My name contains My Father's name"?

Author Daniel Botkin touched on this very subject in a study he composed regarding the names *Yahshua* and *Yeshua*. I am displaying his article in its entirety on the pages that follow for examination purposes, as I believe it merits our attention and consideration:

The Messiah's Hebrew Name: "Yeshua" Or "Yahshua"?

by Dr. Daniel Botkin

The Messiah's Hebrew name is usually transliterated as either *Yeshua* or *Yahshua*. Under normal circumstances I would not bother to write an article about something as trivial as the difference between the vowel sounds "e" and "ah." There is a need to address the subject, though, because some people who use the *Yahshua* form say untrue things about those who use the *Yeshua* form. The opponents of the *Yeshua* form claim that this pronunciation is the result of a Jewish conspiracy to hide the Savior's true name. Those who call the Messiah *Yeshua* are accused of perpetuating a Jewish conspiracy and "denying His name" or "degrading Him" by their use of the *Yeshua* form. If you have never read or heard these outlandish accusations, you probably will eventually. From time to time I receive personal letters to this effect.

The proponents of the *Yahshua* form claim that the Messiah's name was the same as Joshua's, written **יהושע** or **יהושוע** (Strong's #3091). The only problem is that neither of these Hebrew spellings of Joshua's name can possibly be pronounced "Yahshua." The third letter in Joshua's name (reading from right to left) is the letter *vav* (w) and a *vav* cannot be silent. The letter *vav* must be pronounced as either a "v" or an "o" or a "u." (In the case of *Joshua*, it takes an "o" sound, giving us "Ye-ho-SHU-a." Strong's confirms this pronunciation.) For a name to be pronounced "Yahshua," it would have to be spelled **יה־שע**, and no such name exists anywhere in the Hebrew Bible. You don't have to just take my word for it, though. Dr. Danny Ben-Gigi says of the *Yahshua* form that "there is no such name in Hebrew" and that "people invented it to

fit their theology." Dr. Ben-Gigi is an Israeli and the former head of Hebrew programs at Arizona State University. He is the author of the book *First Steps in Hebrew Prayers*, and he designed and produced the "Living Israeli Hebrew" language-learning course. Dr. David Bivin, a Christian, says that the *Yahshua* form "is rooted in a misunderstanding." Dr. Bivin is a renowned Hebrew scholar and teacher and author of *Fluent Biblical Hebrew*.

I do not know of a single individual that knows Hebrew well enough to actually read it and understand it and converse in it who uses the *Yahshua* form.

Please do not misunderstand. A person does not need to know Hebrew and Greek linguistics in order to be spiritual. However, if a person is going to take it upon himself to instruct others about subjects of a linguistic and Hebraic nature, he should know the Hebrew language and he should know some basics about linguistics. This is especially true if he is going to use his Hebrew-based linguistic teachings to accuse his brethren of being part of a "Jewish conspiracy" to "deny the true name of the Messiah."

To people who actually know Hebrew—people like Dr. Ben-Gigi, Dr. Bivin, and others—it is very obvious that those who insist on the *Yahshua* form know very little about the Hebrew language. The only Hebrew that most of these self-appointed scholars know is what they can learn from a *Strong's Concordance*. *Strong's* is a great study tool and a fine place to start, but it is not a means by which a person can learn the Hebrew language.

The English form *Jesus* is derived from the New Testament Greek name Ιησους, pronounced "Yesous." According to *Strong's*, *Yesous* (Strong's #2424) is "of Hebrew origin" and can be traced back to Joshua's Hebrew name, *Yehoshua* (#3091, **יהושע**). But how do we get the Greek *Yesous* from the Hebrew *Yehoshua*? Someone armed with nothing more than a *Strong's Concordance* may have difficulty answering that question. Someone who reads the Bible in Hebrew, though, knows that the name *Joshua* sometimes appears in its shortened form, *Yeshua* (**ישוע**). In Neh. 8:17 it is apparent even in English: "**Jeshua** the son of Nun." (The letter *J* was pronounced like a *Y* in Old English.) Strong does not tell the reader that the Greek *Yesous* is actually transliterated from this shortened Hebrew form, *Yeshua*, and not directly from the longer form *Yehoshua*. The process from "Yehoshua" to "Jesus" looks like this:

Hebrew *Yehoshua* → Hebrew *Yeshua*
Hebrew *Yeshua* → Greek *Yesous*
Greek *Yesous* → English *Jesus*

There is no "sh" sound in Greek, which accounts for the middle "s" sound in *Yesous*. The "*s*" at the end of the Greek name is a grammatical necessity, to make the word declinable.

In Neh. 8:17, Joshua's name is 100% identical to the name which today's Messianic Jews use for the Messiah, *Yeshua* (**ישוע**). Strong's confirms this pronunciation, and tells us that there were ten Israelites in the Bible who bore this name (#3442). Therefore the shortening of *Yehoshua* to *Yeshua* predates the Christian era by at least 500 years, and cannot be the result of a Jewish conspiracy to hide the Savior's true name. To claim that the shortened form *Yeshua* is the result of a Jewish conspiracy is to ignore the facts of history and the facts of the Hebrew Scriptures. The form Yeshua existed for several hundred years before the Messiah was even born. Even in the pre-Christian Septuagint, we see the Greek form ΙΗΣΟΥΣ (*Yesous*) in the title of the Book of Joshua. (This is also proof that *Yesous* has no connection to the pagan god Zeus.)

So where did the transliteration *Yahshua* come from? This form of the name can be traced back to the beginnings of the Sacred Name movement, a movement that grew out of the Church of God, 7th Day, in the late 1930s. I have in my files an article entitled, "A Brief History of the Name Movement in America" by L.D. Snow, a Sacred Name believer. According to this article, "John Briggs and Paul Penn were the FIRST to pronounce and use the name Yahshua" (emphasis Snow's). This was in 1936 and in 1937, the article states. No information is given about how Briggs and Penn came up with this (mis)translation.

Later Sacred Name literature appeals to the Messiah's statement in John 5:43 as "proof" of the *Yahshua* form: "I am come in My Father's name," He said. In the minds of Sacred Name believers, this means that "*Yah*," a shortened form of *Yahweh*, must appear in the name of the Son. However, the Messiah did *not* say "My name contains My Father's name" or "My Father's name must appear inside My name" or any such statement. He said absolutely nothing here about His own name. The only "name" mentioned here was the Father's name. He said, "I am come in My Father's name," which simply means that He was coming by His Father's authority, on His Father's behalf. If we take Yeshua's statement "I am come in My Father's name" to mean that His own name must contain the Father's name, then we ourselves cannot do anything "in the Father's name" unless our own personal name happens to contain the syllable "*Yah*." The folly of this interpretation is also evident if the same line of reasoning is applied to the rest of Yeshua's statement: "…if another shall <u>come in his own name</u>, him ye will receive." If the logic of Sacred Name believers is applied to this half of the verse, it would be saying "a person's name must contain his own name," which is meaningless. If, on the other hand, "in his own name" means "by his own authority," then the statement makes

sense.

Why is the *Yahshua* form used by no one but Sacred Name believers and people who have been influenced by Sacred Name believers? Probably because no such name exists in the Hebrew Bible and, to my knowledge, no such name exists in any extra-Biblical Hebrew literature. It appears that Dr. Ben-Gigi is correct when he says that people invented the name *Yahshua* to fit their theology.

I have read a lot of literature from writers who seek to expose the "errors" of those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua*. The only thing these writers actually expose is their lack of knowledge. I could give several examples of statements which are absolutely ridiculous. I do not have the space in this publication to give all the examples I have in my files, and I do not wish to embarrass sincere people for their honest but misguided efforts. There are some examples, though, that grossly misrepresent the facts, and some of these examples need to be exposed.

In one popular booklet published by a well-known Sacred Name organization, the anonymous author makes this statement: "Most reference works agree with *Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the NT* statement on page 284, which states that the name Yahoshua was shortened after the exile to the short form *Yahshua*." This statement makes it sound like Kittel uses the forms *Yahoshua* and *Yahshua*. I went to the library and looked at this page in *Kittel's*. The words *Yahoshua* and *Yahshua* do not appear even one time on this page. This can be verified by going to a library and looking up this page. (It's in Volume III.) If your library does not have *Kittel's*, I can send a photocopy of this page to any skeptics.

This same Sacred Name organization which misrepresents Kittel's also misrepresented a Jewish author. In a magazine article written by this organization's main leader, a lengthy segment is quoted from a book published by KTAV, a Jewish publishing house. When copying this quotation for his magazine article, this Sacred Name author freely used *Yahshua*, making it appear that the Jewish author used that transliteration in his book. I got the book from the library, though, and discovered that "Yahshua" did not appear in the book. I wrote to this Sacred Name leader asking for an explanation. I told him that unless he had some other explanation, I could conclude one of three things: either he deliberately misrepresented the facts, or he did it accidentally, or the book I got from the library was a different version from his, in which case I would owe him an apology. My letter was sent September 1, 1997, and I am still waiting for a reply. I will not embarrass this man by mentioning his name or the name of his ministry. It is not my intention to embarrass anyone.

I am not writing this article to persuade people to quit saying "Yahshua." If people want to continue using a mistransliteration that was erroneously contrived by early Sacred Name pioneers who didn't know Hebrew, it really doesn't matter to me. I don't believe the substitution of an "ah" sound for an "e" sound matters much to the Lord, either. What does matter, though, is the spreading of false accusations against Messianic Jews and others who call the Messiah "Yeshua."

Paul warned Timothy about "doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings [suspicions]" (1 Tim. 6:4). Unfortunately, this is an accurate description of what goes on among many people in the Sacred Name movement. Personally, I would rather fellowship with non-contentious people who call the Messiah "Jesus" than with contentious people who insist that everyone call Him "Yahshua."[184]

This concludes the article by Daniel Botkin. He brings up some key points that really need to be addressed, but for now, I want to use his article to further reinformce that it is not sound reasoning to use John 5:43 as a proof text for believing the Messiah's name must contain the Father's name. As he pointed out, if we are to believe the Messiah's coming in Yahweh's name must mean His name contained the "Yah" prefix, then none of us can honestly do anything in Yahweh's name unless OUR NAMES ALSO CONTAIN THE "YAH" PREFIX. Finally, the Messiah concluded, "... if another comes in his own name, him ye will receive." So if Yeshua coming in the Father's name must mean His name contains a portion of the Tetragrammaton, then if I come in my OWN name, this must mean my name contains a portion of my name. *Say what?!* This is convoluted reasoning, but after over twenty-five years, I'm not aware of anyone from the Sacred Name Movement understanding how ridiculous such a notion is.

So again, if the Messiah's coming in His Father's name means it must contain the "Yah" prefix, then His statement "... if another comes in his own name" must be construed to mean that the individual's name must contain his own name. This, of course, does not make any sense, but if we understand that "coming in the Father's name" means to come with the Father's authority, then we are able to properly understand the meaning and intent of the Messiah's words. Amazingly, even though Botkin's article was published 25 years ago, Sacred Name Movement adherents *continue* using the argument that John 5:43 proves that the Messiah's name must contain the Father's name. Since they haven't even bothered to address Botkin's arguments, much less respond, it appears that they haven't taken the time to read his article.

And now for a little suspense! We are persuaded that there are some untrue statements in Daniel Botkin's article with regard to what he says about people in the Sacred Name Movement, but we will address them a little later in this study (chapter 13), so please bear with us. We will defend the intelligence of anyone who prefers to use the form *Yahshua*, and we will therefore address what we believe were some inaccurate and unfair comments in his article.

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[184] From the article "The Messiah's Hebrew Name: 'Yeshua' or 'Yahshua'?" by Daniel Botkin. Posted with permission. This article can actually be accessed online, but it originally appeared in Volume 5, Number 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1999) of his bi-monthly publication *Gates of Eden*, pp. 10-11. His mailing address is: Gates of Eden, P.O. Box 2257, East Peoria, IL 61611-0257.

B. Other "Proof Texts" Cited in Support of the Belief That the Messiah's Name "Ought To" Contain a Portion of the Father's Name

There are other reasons listed by Sacred Name advocates in support of the belief that the Messiah's name "must" contain at least a portion of the Father's Name. In the "Explanatory Notes" section of the translation known as *The Scriptures*, we read the following:

> Deleting the Yeho- from Yehoshua's name was probably the reason our Messiah became known as Yeshua in the Hebrew Shem-Tob text of Mattithyahu. According to Yn. 17:11-12, and Philip. 2:9, the Name of יהוה, or at least part of it, ought to be in the Name of יהושע![185]

It is odd that the editor of *The Scriptures* would write that "Yeho-" was deleted from the name *Yehoshua* because the "Ye-" syllable was most certainly *not* deleted; it is the "ho" syllable that can be either added or removed, which we previously read from Sebastian Münster back in chapter eight. The *yod* is what produces the "Ye-" sound. In fact, we continue to maintain that the *yod* in both the long form and the short form shows that the Father's name is inclusive with both forms. Although we are persuaded that the Father's name is understood as forming the first syllable in both forms, we nevertheless urge caution before issuing a declaration that part or all of the Father's name must be found within the name of the Son. Before officially concluding that the "proof texts" he cited validate believing that any part of the name of Yahweh should form a portion of the Messiah's name, we should examine them very carefully.

It is odd that the editor of *The Scriptures* would write that "Yeho-" was deleted from the name *Yehoshua* because the "Ye-" syllable was most certainly *not* deleted.

The editor of *The Sciptures*' "Explanatory Notes" cites two proof texts, which he apparently feels add weight to his position that all or part of the Father's name must be inclusive of the Son's name: John 17:11-12 and Philippians 2:9. We will address Philippians 2:9 later; first, let's turn our attention to John 17:11-12. Shown below is John 17:11-12 as it appears in *The Scriptures* translation:

> [11]And I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Set-apart Father, guard them in Your Name which You have given Me, so that they might be one, as We are.
> [12]When I was with them in the world, I was guarding them in Your Name which You have given Me, and I watched over them, and not one of them perished except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be filled.

As I ponder the wording of the above translation from *The Scriptures*, I do not personally understand how anyone could be led to justify using it to conclude that the Messiah's name "ought to" contain at least a portion of the Father's name. The name of the Father is *Yahweh*. If the Father gave His name to the Messiah, then the Messiah's name must more correctly be promoted as being *Yahweh*, not *Yahshua*, not

[185] From *The Scriptures*, published by the Institute For Scripture Research, Republic of South Africa, 1998, pp. 1,219-1,220.

Yahushua, not even *Yehoshua* or *Yeshua*. Only the name *Yahweh* could correspond to such a literal understanding of John 17:11-12. If, however, certain individuals wish to insist that the proper interpretation of the above passage is that the Messiah's name ought to contain a *portion* of the Father's name, then indeed He was given a portion of the Father's name because, as we have briefly touched on before and will address in greater detail later in this study, when Moses changed Hoshea's name to *Yehoshua*, all he did was add a *yod* to the name "Hoshea" and suddenly a name meaning "salvation" meant "Yahweh is Salvation." It was the *yod* that made the difference – no extra letters required![186]

Interestingly, not all versions of the Bible translate John 17:11-12 the way it is presented in *The Scriptures*. Consider the rendering of this same passage as presented in *The Holy Name Bible*:[187]

> [11]And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, take and keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We *are*.
> [12]While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy Name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; in fulfillment of the Scripture.

In reading the passage in question, as translated in *The Holy Name Version*, there is nothing that should lead one to even remotely conclude that the Messiah's name ought to contain a portion of the Father's name. *The Holy Name Version's* rendering of this passage parallels the reading found in *The King James Version*. This also matches the wording found in *The Interlinear Bible*. This latter version provides not only the Greek text with a word-for-word English translation, but it also has a column with a literal English translation. Shown below is this literal English translation of John 17:11-12 as it appears in *The Interlinear Bible*:

> [11] And I no longer am in the world, yet these are in the world; and I come to You, Holy Father; keep them in Your name; those whom You gave to Me, that *they* may be one as We *are*.
> [12] While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name; I guarded those whom You gave to Me, and not one of them was lost, except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

We can thus observe that *The Interlinear Bible* clearly supports the reading found in both *The Holy Name Bible* and *The King James Version*, but <u>not</u> the reading found in *The Scriptures* translation.

This having been said, it is only fair for us to point out that another Greek text actually favors the translation as it appears in *The Scriptures*. We don't mean to add confusion to this issue, yet if we are to critically examine all the possibilities, we need to examine all the evidence. We trust you understand that if we leave out any evidence it is only because we are unaware of its existence!

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[186] Cf., Chapter 16, "Addressing the Objections," section C, "<u>Does Referring to the Messiah as 'Yeshua' Constitute a Violation of the Third Commandment?</u>"
[187] *The Holy Name Bible*, revised by A. B. Traina, The Scripture Research Association, Inc., Brandywine, MD, 1983.

The Interlinear Bible's Greek text is taken from what is commonly known as the Received Text.[188] Another Greek text frequently cited is known as The Nestle's Greek New Testament. According to the introduction to *The Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English*, this Greek rendering is the eclectic result of a scholarly comparison of Greek texts performed by Eberhard Nestle nearly a century ago.[189]

Notice the literal reading of John 17:11-12 as presented in *The Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English*:

> [11] And no longer am I in the world, and they in the world are, and I to thee come. Father holy, keep them in the name of thee which thou hast given to me, that they may be one as we.
> [12] When I was with them, I kept them in the name of thee which thou hast given to me, and I guarded, and not one of them perished except the son perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

If the above Greek text as presented by Eberhard Nestle truly represents the most accurate transmission of the Messiah's words, then indeed this rendering as found in *The Scriptures* and other versions so translated should not be ignored, even if we are persuaded that it is a bit of a stretch to conclude that these verses should be interpreted as meaning the "name of thee" (Yahweh) was given to the Messiah. Indeed, we are persuaded that the Messiah's prayer was most likely that those "which thou has given me" be kept "in the name of thee."

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that in comparing various commentaries in order to examine other views regarding this passage, not one commentary that we perused supports the belief that the Messiah was making a reference to His name in any way matching His Father's Name. Shown below is a sampling of commentaries for your review:

From *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*:

> The whole passage should be read thus: "Holy Father, keep them through Thy own name which Thou hast given me, that they may be one." By *the name*, here, it is evident that the doctrine or knowledge of the true God is intended; as if our Lord had said, Keep them in that doctrine which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one. This reading is supported by the most ample evidence and indisputable authority.[190]

From *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*:

> **12.** The best attested Greek text reads, *I was keeping them in thy name which thou gavest to me*. Not only did Jesus keep his own disciples by the authority of the Father, but he kept them by the truth and power of the nature of God, which he himself

[188] This information comes from the first page of the preface to *The Interlinear Bible*, Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1986.
[189] From *The Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English*, Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI, 1982, p. ix.
[190] From *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Holy Bible*, by Adam Clarke, Abridged by Ralph Earle, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, Kansas City, MO, 1985 (originally published in 1832), p. 945.

revealed.[191]

From *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*:

> "Name" stands for the power of God manifested in his person (cf. 5:43; 10:25; 12:28; 17:6, 26), for a name represents authoritatively the person it describes.[192]

Based on all the above, we consider it too dicey to offer John 17:11-12 as a proof text supporting a particular rendering of the Messiah's name. If one chooses the literal interpretation, he or she must conclude that the Messiah's name is *Yahweh*. Such an interpretation, however, would go completely against the name that Joseph was commanded to name Mary's son in Matthew 1:21, not to mention other textual enigmas that such an interpretation would create, not to mention the fact that it defies all available manuscript evidence. On the other hand, if one chooses anything other than a literal interpretation, this passage is subject to more than one such interpretation. We therefore urge great caution to anyone bent on using this passage as a proof text for establishing doctrine, especially in view of the fact that apparently no one came up with such an interpretation until the 20th century CE.

C. But "Yeshua" Was a Common Name! His Name is Above All Names, Which Must Mean it is Unique!

We have just addressed a select portion from the Explanatory Notes section of the 1998 edition of *The Sciptures* translation in which the author presents such passages as John 17:11-12 as evidence that the name יהוה, or at least part of it, should be incorporated into the name of the Messiah. The same author also cites Philippians 2:9 as a "second witness" validating his stand. In the 1993 edition of *The Scriptures*, the editor offers a separate commentary addressing why he is persuaded that the "Name above every name" referred to in Philippians 2:9 must contain either יהו or יה, thus eliminating *Yeshua* as a possible candidate for the Messiah's name. Here is what he wrote:

> In Philippians 2:9 we read, 'Elohim, therefore, has highly exalted Him and given Him the Name which is above every name.' The name Yeshua belonged to many people and is not 'above every name.' Is this 'Name above every name' not the Name of יהוה or its abbreviated forms יה or יהו?[193]

According to the publishers of *The Scriptures*, "Yeshua" cannot be the Messiah's name because many people were named "Yeshua," and this must therefore indicate that "Yeshua" is not "above every name." Now please don't get us wrong; we're not trying to say we know the precise interpretation of "name above every name." However, we believe it is safe to say we know what it *does not mean*! We do not believe "name above every name" means "a name not shared with any other man," unless perhaps the Messiah's full name, such as *Yehoshua ben Yahweh* is His name, for no other man can rightfully ever dare claim to be the physical son of the Almighty. Perhaps one might consider his "full name" to be *Yehoshua*

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[191] From *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, Edited by Charles F. Pfeiffer (Old Testament) and Everett F. Harrison (New Testament), The Southwestern Company, Nashville, TN, 1968, p. 1,112.

[192] From *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 9, Frank E. Gaebelein, General Editor, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1984, p. 164.

[193] From *The Scriptures*, published by the Institute For Scripture Research, Republic of South Africa, 1993 edition, p. x. Note: This brief commentary was left out of the 1998 edition.

ha Mashiach (Yehoshua the Messiah), or as Sacred Name Movement advocates would put it, *Yahushua ha Mashiach* (Yahushua the Messiah).

The fact of the matter is this, however: The same reasoning used to eliminate *Yeshua* as a possible candidate for the Messiah's name must also be used to eliminate *Yehoshua / Yahushua* as a possibility. Many men were given the name *Yeshua*, no question about it. Josephus, the famous Jewish historian, mentions 20 different men named *Yeshua*. According to Ray Ehrenshaft in his article "Why Do We Call Our Messiah Yeshua Rather than Jesus?" the name *Yeshua* is in a tie for 3rd place for names during the Biblical period of our Savior.[194] However, according to the article "How Yeshu'a Became Jesus" by Joseph Stallings, *Yeshua* only shares a 5th place tie.[195] We're not interested in conducting an investigation to determine which of these two men is correct, so we'll just settle for agreeing with both of them that *Yeshua* was indeed a very common name in the first century.

As common as the name *Yeshua* was, though, this doesn't mean it couldn't have been the name given to the Messiah. If His name is "above every name," and if "above every name" means "not shared by any other person," then we must also eliminate the form *Yehoshua / Yahushua*, as the long form **יהושע** was certainly a name borne by more than one person! Not only is this the name given to the man commonly referred to as Joshua son of Nun, but other men also shared this Hebrew name. For example, *Yehoshua / Yahushua* is the name of a man from Beth-Shemesh who owned a field in which the ark of the covenant stopped on its return from the Philistines to the people of Israel (I Samuel 6:14). *Yehoshua / Yahushua* is also the name of the reputed governor of Jerusalem during the reign of King Josiah (2 Kings 23:8). According to the book *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel*, an ossuary was found near Jerusalem in 1936 (dating to the first century) bearing the inscription **יהושע**.[196] Certainly, a man named *Yehoshua / Yahushua* was buried in that ossuary and we all hopefully know it wasn't the Messiah. Additionally, still another *Yehoshua / Yahushua* (Joshua) is referenced in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, a man named Joshua ben Hananiah. He was "a Palestinian rabbinic sage active during the early period of Yavneh (Jamnia), from the destruction of the temple in 70 to before the Bar Kokhba rebellion."[197] With all these men named **יהושע**, it seems premature to determine that it is a better candidate for the Messiah's name than *Yeshua* is, just because "not as many men" were given that form of the name.

We can therefore recognize and understand that the Messiah's name could very well be *Yeshua ben Yahweh* or *Yeshua ha Moshiach*.

The author of the Preface to *The Scriptures* rightly mentioned that the name *Yeshua* belonged to many individuals. In fact, this truth in itself can be used to demonstrate that *Yeshua* may well have been the Messiah's name! Consider the following information provided by *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*:

> In Jesus' own lifetime, his name, since it was common in Israel, called for a specifier: "Jesus the Galilean" (Matt 26:69; cf. 21:11), or, more often, "Jesus of Nazareth" or

[194] From "Why Do We Call Our Messiah Yeshua Rather than Jesus?" by Ray (Reuven) Ehrenshaft of Kehilat Dvar haShem, found at the following web site: http://www.kehilatdvarhashem.org/YeshuaJesus.htm
[195] From "How Yeshu'a Became Jesus" by Joseph Stallings, *The Catholic Digest*, January 1991, p. 45.
[196] From *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel*, by L.Y. Rahmani, The Israel Antiquities Authority, Jerusalem, 1994, p. 92. An enlarged photocopy of the inscription is shown on the inside cover of this study.
[197] From *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 3, David Noel Freedman, editor-in-chief, Doubleday, 1992, p. 1,001.

"Jesus the Nazarean."[198]

If the Messiah was given a name that is truly unique, not shared by anyone else, then there would have been no need to use a "**specifier**," such as "Yeshua of Nazareth" when making reference to Him. He would have simply been referred to by His first name only without a need to add "**of Nazareth**," "**of Galilee**," etc., to distinguish Him from other men so named. Since other men were also known by this same name, though, it became necessary to distinguish the Messiah from others having the same name, and that is how the New Testament authors accomplished this feat. Note the following, as taken from *Easton's Bible Dictionary*:

> To distinguish Him from others so called, He is spoken of as 'Jesus of Nazareth' (John 18:7) and 'Jesus the son of Joseph' (John 6:42).[199]

Again, if the Messiah had been given a singular name not shared by anyone else, there would have been no need for the populace to have referred to Him as *Yeshua of Nazareth* or *Yeshua of Galilee*. They used these "specifiers" to identify *which Yeshua* was being referred to. The controversy surrounding the proper interpretation of Philippians 2:9 is resolved when we understand that "name above every name" does not mean the Messiah was given a unique name not shared by any human.

D. But if the Form "Yehoshua / Yahushua" Was Also Fairly Common, Then Doesn't This Mean "Yehoshua / Yahushua" May Have Been the Messiah's Name?

We have established that specifiers such as "of Nazareth" and "of Galilee" offer strong evidence that the name given to the Messiah was not a unique name shared by another other man. We have also shown that neither the long form nor the short form of this name were unique, thus invalidating the argument the "name above all names" must be a name that was given to only one man – the Messiah. Since neither name can be considered *unique*, someone is bound to respond, "Well, since the long form was also common and therefore required a specifier so as to distinguish the Messiah from other men having the same name, this means the Messiah could very well have been given the *long* form of the name." Our answer: Of course, this is true, but all we've done is return to "square one" because both forms are equally possible. The main thing preventing us from leaning more towards *Yahushua* as opposed to *Yehoshua*, *Yeshua* or even *Yeshu* is the lack of manuscript evidence supporting the pronunciation *Yahushua*. We are persuaded that either the long form (**יהושע**) or the short form, **ישוע** may be honorably applied to the Messiah, but the available evidence we have seen indicates that the first syllable of His name is pronounced *Yeh*, not *Yah*. We should bear in mind that the two forms are interchangeable, though, and both forms are recognized as "valid" by Yahweh or else He wouldn't have inspired those names to be found within the text of Scripture.

I do not feel that we can properly bring this portion of our study to a close without commenting on yet another statement found in the preface of *The Scriptures* pertaining to the editor's belief that the Messiah's name must contain the "Yah" prefix of His Father. We read the following:

> The fact of the Messiah being named after the Father is further confirmed in Eph. 3:14-

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[198] From *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 3, David Noel Freedman, editor-in-chief, Doubleday, 1992, p. 773.

[199] From *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, third edition, by M.G. Easton, M.A., D.D., published by Thomas Nelson, 1897, item "Jesus."

> 15 and in 2 Mosheh 23:21.[200]

Before responding to this comment, let's examine the two verses mentioned above:

Ephesians 3:14-15:

> [14] For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Master Yeshua Messiah,
> [15] Of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

I have read various interpretations of the verse above, and the one I personally used to ascribe to was the belief that we are all named "Christians" after the Messiah. I don't hold to that belief anymore, but somehow I have a difficult time perceiving that this verse in any way implies that the Messiah's name must contain the prefix "**יהו**" or any portion of Yahweh's name, for that matter. For one thing, if we are all part of the same "family," then by employing this reasoning, our names should *likewise* contain the prefix "Yah." Since this is obviously not true, I don't believe this is the intended meaning of Ephesians 3:14-15. As is the case with our examination of John 17:11-12, the interpretation of Ephesians 3:14-15 as offered by *The Scriptures'* editor is of modern origin. To the best of our knowledge, no pre-20th century scholars ever embraced the notion that Ephesians 3:14-15 refers to the Messiah having been named after His Father, Yahweh. Furthermore, Bible translations such as the New Revised Standard Version and the New International Version omit the words "of our Lord Jesus Christ," opting instead to provide a footnote indicating that "other ancient authorities add *of our Lord Jesus Christ*."

As I just mentioned, I have read several interpretations of Ephesians 3:14-15. Matthew Henry, in his *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, favors the understanding that the "whole family in heaven and earth" is named *Christian*. Although I am not in agreement with his understanding of this passage, I offer his interpretation to illustrate the varying opinions given by reputable scholars. The interpretation that I believe makes the most sense is that presented by Adam Clarke, in his *Commentary on the Bible*:

> 15. *Of whom the whole family*. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ on earth, the spirits of just men made perfect in a separate state, and all the holy angels in heaven make but one family, of which God is the Father and Head. Paul does not say, Of whom the "families," as if each order formed a distinct household; but he says *family*, because they are all one, and of One. And all this family is *named*, derives its origin and being from God, as children derive their name from him who is the father of the family; holy persons in heaven and earth derive their being and their holiness from God, and therefore His name is called upon them.[201]

Differing interpretations as to the intent and meaning of Ephesians 3:14-15 aside, it is noteworthy that there is an Aramaic text of the New Testament that leaves us with a completely different translation of this passage. The man who translated this text into English, Victor Alexander, claims that the text from which he translated his work is "The Ancient Church of the East Ancient Aramaic New Testament," and

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[200] From *The Scriptures*, published by the Institute For Scripture Research, Republic of South Africa, 1993 edition, p. x of the Preface. Note: This comment is missing from the 1998 edition.

[201] From *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Holy Bible*, by Adam Clarke, Abridged by Ralph Earle, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, Kansas City, MO, 1985 (originally published in 1832), p. 1,177.

that other Aramaic versions are themselves translations from Greek texts.[202] Here is how Mr. Alexander translates this passage in Ephesians chapter three:

> [14]And that I may kneel down on my knees to my Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, [15]From Whom is celebrated* every parenthood in heaven and on earth.[203]

The asterisk placed after the word "celebrated" is referenced in a footnote at the bottom of the page in Mr. Alexander's translation, where he lists an alternate translation possibility: "Renowned." Since the word "named" does not appear in the ancient Aramaic text, it is hardly conceivable that the Apostle Paul intended for anyone to glean his intention as being to demonstrate the Messiah's name contains the first three letters of the Tetragrammaton.

Now let's examine the other verse referenced above by *The Scriptures'* 2 Mosheh 23:20-21 (Ex. 23:20-21):

> [20] Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.
> [21] Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for My name *is* in him.

Obviously, the author of the Preface to *The Scriptures* believes this passage in the book of Exodus is a reference to the Messiah. I do not mean to open a new can of worms by debating whether or not this is an actual reference to our Savior, so I will simply ask, "Does having the Creator's name 'in you' mean part of your name must be 'Yah'?"

Should this verse be interpreted as meaning "the Messiah's name contains a portion of Yahweh's name"? I believe it is a bit of a stretch to arrive at such a conclusion. The *Septuagint* and the *Peshitta* versions both employ the phrase "My name is UPON him" instead of "My name is in him." Once again, I believe we have a case of misconstruing the intent behind the use of the word "name" in this verse, which in turn leads to a forced interpretation. Just as is the case in John 5:43, so it is in Exodus 23:21. Just as "coming in the Father's name" means "coming by His authority," so it is with the expression "My name is upon him." The Hebrew word for name (*shem*) is word #8034 in *Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*, and as *Strong's* shows, this word by implication can be used to designate ***authority***. Thus, rather than expecting us to believe that the angel of Exodus 23 had a name containing a portion of Yahweh's name, I believe the intent of that verse is that the angel had Yahweh's ***authority*** upon him.

Furthermore, if Exodus 23:21 is truly a valid proof text for establishing that the Messiah's name contains a portion of Yahweh's name, it is peculiar that no writer of any New Testament books picked up on such an interpretation to comment on its relevance and/or relationship to the Messiah's name. We must be careful when it comes to establishing connections based on such esoteric interpretations.

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[202] From Mr. Alexander's web site introduction to his work, he writes, "Judging by the thousands of idioms that only make complete sense in the Aramaic, there is no doubt as to the origin of the Ancient Aramaic New Testament. The Ancient Church of the East Ancient Aramaic New Testament is the original Gospel of Jesus Christ. All others are translations." His web site is located at the following URL:
http://www.v-a.com/bible/confession.html.

[203] From *Disciples New Testament*, translated by Victor Alexander, copyright © 1995 – 2003.

E. Is "Yah" Yahweh's Surname?

Tony Suckla, a missionary based in India, submitted yet another argument, which he feels supports believing that the first syllable of the Messiah's name must be pronounced "Yah." In fact, Tony is persuaded that "Yah" is Yahweh's surname. The following is an excerpt from Tony's article "My Journey to Myanmar in October-November 2015":

> Pastor Lazum heard about the Sacred Names about 15 years ago and somewhat followed them. I had a four day meeting with Pastor Lazum and congregation, with eight people taking immersion in Yahshua Messiah's Name. Lazum told me that he had already been baptized in Yesu Christos name and asked if that was enough. I told him that in Yeshayah 26:4 and 12:2 that Yeshayah said "Yah Yahweh" was his salvation and that a son will always take the surname of the father. I advised him that since he is a pastor it was best for him to set a good example, he accepted, and so he and seven others took immersion in the name of Yahshua Mashiach. In Myanmar, as in most places of Asia, the surname or family name of a person is always written first and then the given name. So when they saw "Yah Yahweh" in Yeshayah 12:2, they reasoned that Yah was the surname. And that this is the Name Yahshua was referring to when He said, "I have come in my Father's Name," John 5:43. I know there is a spiritual understanding to that verse, but I believe there is a literal understanding as well. Personally, I see the prominent Yah syllable in HalleluYah, many Hebrew names, and the short form Yah used about 50 times in the Old Testament. I cannot see any reason why it should be changed to Yeh, Ye, Yo, etc….[204]

As you might expect, June and I object to Tony's reasoning as expressed in his article. We could start with his parting comment in which he expresses not being able to see any reason to "change" Yah to Yeh, Ye, Yo, etc. His comment implies that those of us who refer to the Messiah as Yeshua settle for a "changed pronunciation"; however, as we have consistently maintained, we are persuaded that the "Ye" in Yeshua represents the *original* pronunciation of the name He was given at birth, <u>not</u> a changed one. In fact, the question of "original pronunciation" forms a major component of this study.

Tony writes that he told the pastor that in Yeshayah 26:4 and 12:2 that Yeshayah said "Yah Yahweh" was his salvation and that a son will always take the surname of the father. We are trying to understand the connection that Tony makes between "Yah Yahweh" and the Messiah's name. First, if it is true that a son always takes the surname of his father, we should expect Scriptural support for such an understanding. Tony offers none, leaving us to wonder such things as, "*What was Noah's surname? What was Moses' surname?*" The same goes for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Someone might say that Abraham's full name was "Abraham ben Terah," but that would beg the question of why he is never referred to as such. This would in turn open up the possibility that the Messiah's name was "Yeshua ben Yahweh," or as Sacred Name Movement constituents might render it, "Yahshua ben Yahweh." Suffice it to say there is no Scriptural support for believing that a son must take the surname of his father.

So what does "Yah Yahweh" mean? Is "Yah" the surname that precedes His given name? Did Yahweh practice the same Myanmarian custom referenced by Tony in which the surname or family name

[204] Suckla, Tony, "My Journey to Myanmar in October-November 2015," published in *The Faith* magazine, The Assembly of Yahweh 1017 N. Gunnell Road Eaton Rapids, MI 48827, Vol. 80, 1-3, 2016, p. 11.

of a person is always written first, followed by the given name? Frankly, we had never heard of this reasoning until we read Tony's article. From our vantage point, this teaching is a teaching of man, and is void of Scriptural support. Judging from our research results, the scholarly community is unaware of such reasoning.

Let's take a look at the two proof texts cited by Tony. First, here's Isaiah 26:4:

> [4]Trust ye in Yahweh for ever: for in Yah Yahweh is everlasting strength:

Here's Isaiah 12:2:

> [2] Behold, the Almighty is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for Yah Yahweh is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

Does the appearance of "Yah Yahweh" in the two above verses prove or even imply that "Yah" is Yahweh's surname? And do we ever read in Scripture any such explanation? Why is this reasoning missing from any scholarly references? The references we have consulted do not exhibit such an understanding of the appearance of "Yah Yahweh" in these verses. Here's what we found in *Jamieson, Fausset & Brown's Commentary*:

> 2. **Lord** JEHOVAH —*Jah, Jehovah*. The *repetition* of the name denotes emphasis, and the unchangeableness of God's character.[205]

Barnes' Notes echoes much the same understanding:

> **Isaiah 12:2**
> In this place, and Isaiah 26:4, "the repetition" of the name seems to be used to denote "emphasis;" or perhaps to indicate that Yahweh is the same always - an unchangeable God. In two codices of Kennicott, however, the name **יה** yâh is omitted, and it has been conjectured by some that the repetition is an error of transcribers; but the best MSS. retain it. The Septuagint, the Chaldee, and the Syriac, however, omit it.[206]

Again, the most respected scholarship that we have seen does not exhibit any understanding that "Yah" in "Yah Yahweh" represents Yahweh's surname.

The next item of concern is Tony's apparent association with the Myanmarian custom of placing a person's surname in front of his given name, then cross-referencing that custom with Isaiah 12:2 and 26:4, as though the one custom validates his interpretation of those two verses. However, if such a custom truly represents the understanding of the way things were done during Bible times, not only are we curious as to why this isn't the name that Yahweh gave to Moses when Moses asked Him what His name is (Exodus 3:15), but this also begs the question of why we so frequently see "Yah" at the *end* of

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[205] From *Jamieson, Fausset & Brown's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI, 1961, p. 523.

[206] From *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database, Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved. This reference commentary can also be accessed at Bible Hub Online Bible Study Suite (http://biblehub.com/commentaries/isaiah/12-2.htm).

peoples' names. Among the many examples of this practice is the prophet from whose writing Tony cites: Isaiah (Yeshayah). Others include Jeremiah (Yirmeyahu), Matthew (Mattithiah) and Elijah (Eliyahu). Didn't the parents of these individuals know that the surname should go *first*?

Summarizing our concern about Tony Suckla's belief that the "Yah" of "Yah Yahweh" in Isaiah 12:2 and 26:4 represents the Almighty's surname: First, there is no approved Scriptural example of anyone ever attributing a surname to the Creator. Second, if we are to understand that Yahweh has a surname, then we should expect Him to reveal it as such to His people (Exodus 3:15 would have been a great spot) instead of hiding it for 21st century students to find in obscure passages that may be interpreted in more than one way. Third, there is no historical evidence that anyone ever understood "Yah" as being a surname for our Heavenly Father. Fourth, the scholarly community in general regards the "Yah Yahweh" expression as denoting *emphasis*, not a surname.

How Exodus 3:15 is correctly translated from the Masoretic Hebrew text:	**How I would want Exodus 3:15 to be translated if I believed the way Tony Suckla does:**
And Elohim said to Moses again, You shall say this to the sons of Israel, Yahweh the Eloah of Abraham, the Eloah of Isaac, and the Eloah of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My title from generation to generation.[207]	And Elohim said to Moses again, You shall say this to the sons of Israel, Yah Yahweh the Eloah of Abraham, the Eloah of Isaac, and the Eloah of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My title from generation to generation.

While I do not mean to speak for Tony Suckla, I will nevertheless maintain that if I were to point to the likes of Isaiah 12:2 and 26:4 as evidence for my claim that Yahweh goes by a surname, then I would definitely expect Yahweh to introduce His name to Moses in this same manner. This all being said, even **IF** Yahweh had introduced Himself to Moses as "Yah Yahweh," if His Son were to take on His Father's surname, shouldn't we expect something like "Yah Yeshua" or "Yah Yahshua"?

In spite of a lack of any evidence supporting his theory, Tony assumes that his understanding is correct, then he attempts to link this alleged surname to the Messiah's name, citing John 5:43 ("I am come in My Father's name and ye receive me not ..."). We addressed and debunked the John 5:43 argument back in Section A of this chapter. If coming in the name of Yahweh means that one's name must begin (or end) with "Yah," then we'll need an explanation for how and why David said what he did to Goliath in I Samuel 17:45 ("I come to thee in the name of Yahweh"), even though the name David does not contain "Yah." Speculating that coming in someone's name must mean that the two individuals share a common portion of the same name has given rise to a doctrine that needlessly divides brethren.

Please understand that if you wish to believe that "Yah" is Yahweh's surname, that is certainly your prerogative, but when you introduce speculation that never entered the minds of the ancients and even if it *did* enter their minds it wasn't important enough to record, and *then* you proceed to use this new reasoning to create a chasm between those who refer to the Messiah as "Yahshua" and those who refer to Him as "Yeshua," you really need to pray that you are right because if you aren't, instead of building bridges you are building stumblingblocks and creating barriers to what *should have been* blessed and meaningful

[207] I copied this translation directly from *The Interlinear Bible* Hebrew-Greek-English, Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, 1986, p. 49. The only alterations I made were to change "Jehovah" to "Yahweh" and "God" to "Elohim/Eloah," matching the transliterations of this title as found within the actual Hebrew text.

fellowship. In fact, if you are wrong, then you are *tearing down bridges* instead of building them. In establishing what he feels is evidence that "Yah" is a surname as presented in Isaiah 12:2, Tony proceeds to conclude, "Personally, I see the prominent Yah syllable in HalleluYah, many Hebrew names, and the short form Yah used about 50 times in the Old Testament. I cannot see any reason why it should be changed to Yeh, Ye, Yo, etc...." I would remind Tony that the same Greeks whose transliterations can be used to validate the pronunciations "Yahweh" and "Hallelu**Yah**" transliterated the first syllable of the Messiah's name as "Yeh." Can he explain this? With all due respect to Tony's efforts to teach others about the importance of serving and obeying Yahweh and His Son, which I admire, I urge caution. Yahweh did not send servants to teach false notions or doctrines emanating from wishful thinking. Please, let's be absolutely certain of what we believe before we relegate those of differing views to second or third-class citizen status.

11. Can the Name "Jesus" Be Traced to Zeus Worship?

Early in our association with the Sacred Name Movement, we encountered the following claim: "*The name 'Jesus' comes from the Greek Iesous, which in turn is derived from Zeus worship!*" Although the above claim was still making the rounds back in 2001, I chose to not address it in my Unity Conference presentation, primarily because my focus was on *Yeshua*, not *Iesous*. Also, by that time the believers with whom we associated, even though they referred to the Messiah as *Yahshua*, had come to the realization that the assertion of *Iesous* emanating from Zeus worship is, quite frankly, false. In other words, addressing this particular teaching had by that time become a low priority. Nevertheless, since the form *Iesous* is a key to understanding the validity of the form *Yeshua*, and since we still occasionally hear folks asserting that *Iesous* emanates from Zeus, we decided to devote a small amount of space to addressing this argument here in our study.

What follows are some pertinent quotes from a popular Sacred Name publication known as *The Faith* magazine. As demonstrated by anonymous author of the article "Is Jesus the Name?" the belief that *Iesous* is derived from Zeus worship is a belief garnering widespread acceptance within the Sacred Name Movement:

> The Greek practice of changing names or persons, removing the abbreviated forms of rival deities and replacing them with the abbreviated form of their supreme deity, Zeus, is readily seen in such prominent changes as that of the Hebrew prophets: Elisha (El of supplication) became Eliseus (my El is Zeus). Other prophets as Jeremiah, had the Yah ending changed to "S", the Grecian terminal referring to their deity Zeus. Elijah (My El is Yahweh) became Elias (My El is Zeus).[208]

A few paragraphs later, the author of the article puts "two and two together," so to speak:

> The plan of the Greeks was simple, they merely dropped the Hebrew terminology of names which referred to the Hebrew deity, and substituted the name, or letters, referring to the name of the supreme deity, Zeus. Thus Eliakim because AlcimUS, Elisha became EliSEUS, while Yahshua became (JeSUS) Iesous.[209]

The author later expounds on the chemistry that combines the name of a Babylonian "god of healing" and the name of the Greeks' supreme deity to create "the healing Zeus":

> When the name Jesus is broken down into its composite parts, as other sacred names can be, we find that it is made up of two words, "Ie" and "Sous," (Iesous, Greek). Now there was in the trinity of the gods of Babylon, one whose name was Ie (EA, the god of healing). Zeus, as we learned from Hislop, was the Greek Saviour, as well as Supreme deity, Ie (Ea) coupled with Sous, the Zeus terminal, gives us the Grecian form Iesous, "the healing Zeus," now called in English, Jesus. This is a peculiar way to pronounce the name of the Israelite leader, Joshua, or the Name of the Son of the Most High, Yahweh's Saviour.[210]

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[208] From the article "Is Jesus the Name?" by an anonymous author, published in *The Faith* magazine, Eaton Rapids, MI, Vol. 69, Number 1, 1-3, 2005 (this issue consisted of a reprint of *The Faith*, May – June 1980), pp. 7-8. NOTE: We fully addressed this article in chapter 4.
[209] Ibid, p. 8.
[210] Ibid, p. 9.

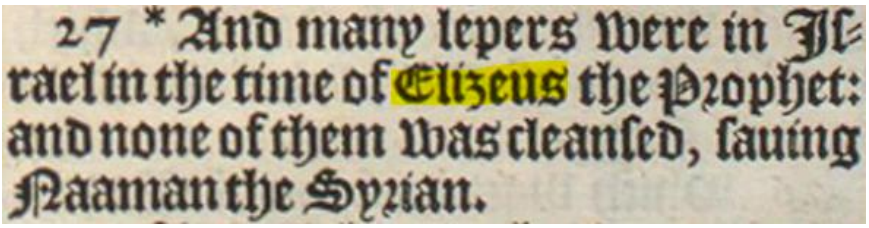
As you review the above explanation, please bear in mind that the thrust of our study has not really been to examine the *ending* of the Messiah's name. Our study has primarily focused on the first syllable (Yah / Ye). Curiously, the author of "Is Jesus the Name?" doesn't focus on the belief that the *Ie* of *Iesous* is the product of a Jewish scheme to subvert the pronunciation of the Creator's name; rather, he presents it as a substitution of a Babylonian idol's name (*Ie*) for *Yah*. He doesn't explain how the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint from Hebrew to Greek were able to successfully pull off a translation in which most of the names "apparently" give honor to Zeus, nor does he explain history's absence of any Jewish protests over this practice.

You may wonder on what basis the anonymous author concludes that names such as "Eliseus" mean "my El is Zeus." There is absolutely no evidence to support such a claim, which may explain why he doesn't offer any. For those would like to view the Greek text of Luke 4:27, you will notice that Elisha is rendered Έλισσαίου (Elissaiou), *not* Elizeus. The following Greek text with English transliteration is lifted from *Interlinear Scripture Analyzer 3*[211] :

4:27	και	πολλοι	λεπροι	ησαν	εν	τω	ισραηλ	επι	ελισαιου	του	προφητου	και	ουδεις	αυτων
	kai	polloi	leproi	Esan	en	tO	israEl	epi	elisaiou	tou	prophEtou	kai	oudeis	autOn
	and	many	lepers	were	in	the	Israel	on	Elisha	the	prophet	and	no-one	of-them

εκαθαρισθη	ει	μη	ναιμαν	ο	συρος
ekatharisthE	ei	mE	naiman	*ho*	suros
is-cleansed	if	no	Naaman	the	Syrian

Thus, it was an English translator, some 1,500 years *after* the New Testament was compiled, who came up with "Elizeus."[212]


27 * And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elizeus the Prophet: and none of them was cleansed, sauing Naaman the Syrian.

-- Luke 4:27 as it appears in the 1611 *King James Version*

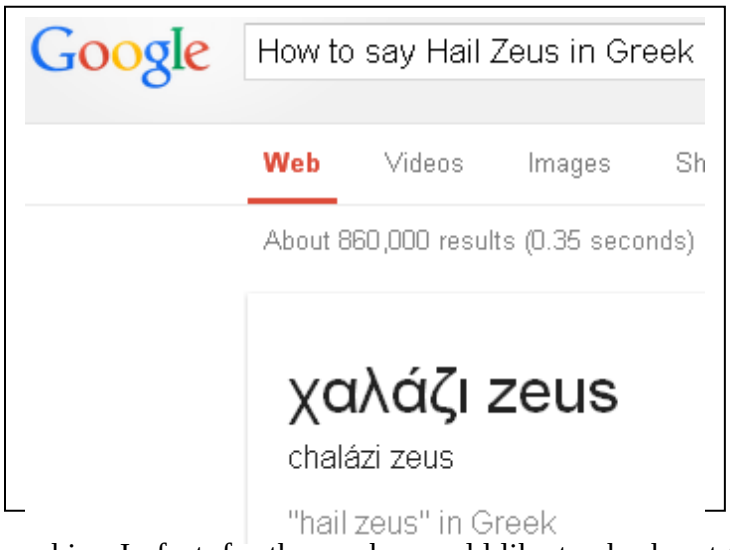
Sacred Name Movement author Les Aron Gosling, representing a group known as "Biblical Research Institute," expresses the view that "Iesous" means "Hail Zeus" and that *any* Greek name ending with –sus, sous, or –seus was given as a means of honoring Zeus. Here is what he writes:

> "Jesus" is supposed to be the Anglicised equivalent of the Greek *Iesous* but really, if it is, it is troubling to say the least. The English name "Jesus" stems etymologically from "Jupiter-Zeus" the chief god of the ancient Greek Olympus -- the coded occult appellation evolving from "J-Zeus"... "J-sus,"... "Je...sus," to "Jesus." Some authorities, who have spent their entire lives studying the origins of names believe (and they are without doubt quite correct) that "Jesus" actually means (according to the rules of the Greek language) -- "*Hail Zeus*!" For *Iesous* in Greek **IS** "Hail Zeus." That is, *Ie*

[211] From "Interlinear Scripture Analyzer 3" or "ISA3" © 2002-2015, Luke 4:27, Scripture4All Publishing, All Rights Reserved.
[212] The Great Bible translation of 1539 renders this name "Helyseus." The 1611 King James Version renders it "Elizeus."

> translates as "Hail" and *sous* or *sus* is Zeus. The Jesus of modern Christendom is nothing more than the Egyptian form of Jupiter-Zeus, Serapis.
>
> So, Tar***sus*** is the "sweat of Zeus," and other ancient sites also carry reference to the chief god of Mount Olympus ("Ephe***sus***" etc). Thus, Parnas***sus*** was a sacred mountain in Greece; "Diony***sus***" the son of Zeus, was a Greek deity of wine; Odys***seus*** was the Greek hero of the Trojan War, and rather surprisingly the pagan Greek god of healing was none other than Ieu***sues*** (a variant spelling of *Iesous*/Je***sus***).
>
> For those who would object, please refer to Professor J.C.J. Melford's ***Dictionary of Christian Lore and Legend*** (1983, 126) and note that he is quite explicit when he comes to the subject. Notice it now:
> "It is known that the Greek name endings with *sus*, *seus*, and *sous* [which are phonetic pronunciations for the chief Greek god of Olympus] were attached by the Greeks to names and geographical areas as means to give honour to their supreme deity, Zeus."[213]

We have no idea of how author Les Gosling reaches the conclusion that "Iesous" means "Hail Zeus." He expects us to trust his unspecified "authorities" without supplying his readers the benefit of a reference to validate his claim. To begin with, we invite you to research the Greek translation of the verb "hail." Our findings indicate that the Greek word for "hail" (the exclamation of respect, *not* the frozen precipitation) is "chálazi," not "ie." Thus, if you were to say, "Hail Zeus!" in Greek, you would say, "Chálazi Zeus!" *not* "Ie Zeus!" Since Gosling misses the mark with the translation of the word "hail," his other translation attempts are automatically suspect. Mr. Gosling also states that "Tarsus" means "sweat of Zeus." Our research indicates that it is actually "Tarsos" in Greek, which means either "a flat surface" or "a flat basket." We have no idea where Les Aron Gosling came up with "sweat of Zeus." According to *Strong's* Greek Dictionary of the New Testament, the Greek word translated "sweat" is *hidrōs* (word #2402). "Sweat of Zeus," in Greek, would be *hidrōs tŏu Zeus*, not "Tarsus." Mr. Gosling also associates the "sus" in "Dionysus" with Zeus; this, too, is a mistake. Believe it or not, it is actually the "Dio" in Dionysus that is traced to Zeus worship. In fact, for those who would like to check out the New Testament references to Zeus (Jupiter), you will find that the actual Greek name rendered Zeus (or Jupiter) is either *Dia* or *Diòs*.[214] The final portion of Dionysus' name ("nūsos") is considered to either be a reference to Mount Nysa (Dionysus'



[213] Les Aron Gosling, Rebbe, "'Yeshu' 'Yeshua' or 'Jesus' -- Which?" Biblical Research Institute, 1996, http://www.biblicalresearchinstitute.com/lectures/lec1.htm. As of August 2023, this article is no longer available for viewing online.

[214] *Cf.*, Acts 14:12, 13. According to 2 Maccabees 6:2, Antiochus Epiphanes changed the name of the temple to *Diòs Olumpiou*, and polluted it with "… riot and revelling by the Gentiles, who dallied with harlots, and had to do with women within the circuit of the holy places, and beside that brought in things that were not lawful" (2 Macc. 6:3).

birthplace) or a variant of the word "nũsa," which was an archaic word for "tree." With regard to Gosling's claim that the Greek deity of healing was *Ieusues*, we have no idea where he came up with this teaching. Again, he supplies no reference to validate his claim and we are unable to find any such deity in the Greek pantheon.

This brings us to Les Gosling's quote from Melford's *Dictionary of Christian Lore and Legend* in which the author claims that Greek name endings with *sus*, *seus* were attached by the Greeks to names and geographical areas as means to give honour to their supreme deity, Zeus. First, Gosling got the author's name wrong—it's J. C. J. Metford, not "Melford," and Mr. Metford's qualifications to make any claims about the Greek endings of names are dubious at best. We can only wonder about Metford's credentials and what qualifies him to make such a statement, especially in view of the fact that it was Hebrew scholars who rendered the name we know as "Joshua" *Iesous* when they translated Scripture into Greek over 250 years before the Messiah was even born. We would also like to know why there wasn't a universal Jewish outcry against this translation, presuming this and other names were truly given endings designed to honor Zeus.

There really shouldn't be any need for us to devote a large amount of space towards refuting the claim that *Jesus*, *Iesous* nor *Yeshua* are products of Greek idol worship. The late Voy Wilks, founder of the Assembly of Yahweh (7th Day) in Cisco, Texas, composed an independent study that we believe successfully refutes this belief. Voy, himself a supporter of the form *Yahshua* who espoused the Sacred Name Movement's claim that Judaism intentionally subverted the Messiah's name by removing the Father's name from the first syllable, nevertheless disputed the claim that *Jesus* and *Iesous* are derived from Greek idol worship. What follows is the brief study that Mr. Wilks wrote on this topic in 1992:

JESUS
Did This Name Derive From the Name Zeus?
By Voy Wilks
9\13\92

True, the name "Jesus" sounds so much like the name Zeus, that we have felt this could not be coincidence: Je-zeus. However, except for the relative sounds, all evidence we have seen up to the present moment seems inconclusive. Now I realize there has been evidence all along which MAY reveal that the name Jesus did NOT derive from the name Zeus. If true, this is good news. *

In the Greek New Testament the Savior's name is spelled Ἰησοῦς . When these Greek letters are transferred to English, they are usually represented by the letters, IESOUS. The Greek alphabet, though good in some ways, perhaps, is deficient in translating the Hebrew language. For example, there is no way to indicate the "SH" sound with Greek letters. For this reason, the Greek Scriptures could not correctly spell the Savior's true name YAHSHUA (or Yahoshua), simply because there were no Greek letters to indicate the "sh" sound; the "s" sound, yes, but not the "sh" sound.

We must keep in mind that the translators of the Septuagint Version (The LXX) were Jewish scholars. This translation was made from the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek language about 200 or 250 B.C.E. for the benefit of Greek speaking Jews who lived in Alexandria, Egypt. ** It is very significant that in this Greek Old Testament the name of the son of Nun (Joshua), is the very same name as that of the Savior, as written in the Greek New Testament. The names are spelled the same, with identical Greek letters: Ἰησοῦς .

Did the Jewish translators from Jerusalem purposely mislead their Egyptian brethren by replacing the name of Israel's greatest ARMY GENERAL with the name of the Greek god, Zeus? If so, why? What reason could they have for doing so? The answer seems certain. The Jewish scholars could have had no reason, no motive, to replace the name Joshua (Yahoshua) with the name Zeus when translating the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek language.

Therefore, we must conclude that the Jewish scholars made an honest effort to use Greek letters, inadequate though they were, which most closely carried the sound of the name JOSHUA (Iesous). If true, this indicates the name Iesous (Jesus) is NOT derived from the name Zeus.

* Note: Whatever the case, Jesus is not the Savior's name, so let us cease to call on this name. Instead, let us accept transliteration directly from the Hebrew Scriptures so that we can call on the Savior by his true name, YAHSHUA (Yahoshua).

** Josephus reported The LXX was translated for the universities of Egypt at the request of Ptolemy, the King of Egypt (Antq. 12.2. 1-15). Perhaps both views are correct. Whatever the case, Greek Versions of the Old Testament Scriptures dating to 100 B.C.E. have been found in the geniza (storage room for worn-out manuscripts) within the Jewish synagogue in Alexandria, Egypt. This indicates the Jews of that Community did indeed read the Scriptures in the Greek language.

15 [215]

[215] From "JESUS: Did This Name Derive From the Name Zeus?" by Voy Wilks, 09/13/1992. Mr. Wilks later attached this study to form a larger compiled study titled "The Name: From Yahshua to Jesus – How Did It Happen?" 12/06/1999, p. 15.

Mr. Wilks' article not only serves as a refutation for the *ending* of such Biblical names as *Eliseus* and *Iesous*, but for the *beginning* as well. He asks what motive would the Jewish translators have had for purposely misleading their Egyptian brethren by replacing the name of Israel's greatest Army general with the name of the Greek idol, Zeus. He answers his own question, and we agree with his answer. The translators had no reason to subvert the name of Israel's greatest Army general, nor could they have foreseen that either this same name (**יהוֹשֻׁע**) or its shortened form (**יֵשׁוּע**) would one day be the name given to Yahweh's Son.

The author of *The Faith* magazine's "Is Jesus the Name?" article cited above seems oblivious to the claim that the form *Yeshua* is the result of a Jewish scheme to subvert the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton in the Son's name. Instead, he depicts the "Ie" part of "Iesous" as having been derived from the name of a Babylonian healing deity. It is possible that the author of *The Faith* magazine article, which appeared in one of its 1980 issues, may not have been aware of the "ineffable name subversion" explanation that is currently taught by the Sacred Name Movement. So which is it? Does the *Ie* of *Iesous* come from a Babylonian idol named *Ie*? Or is *Ie* the result of a deliberate scheme to change the first-syllable "ah" in Hebrew names to "eh" as a means of preventing anyone from inadvertently blurting out the Sacred Name?[216]

"Careful Analysis" versus "Surface Research" confirms that Iesous is not connected to Zeus

If we only conduct "surface research," it might make sense to believe that since there is a phonetic similarity between "Zeus" and "Iesous," then there must be a connection. Sacred Name adherents tend to think of themselves as dedicated researchers, but when it comes to the topic of the Messiah's Name, their research often proves to be "*surface* research" instead of "*sound* research." When examining claims that "Jesus" and "Iesous" are derived from Zeus worship, one common denominator emerges: Those who make these claims are not knowledgeable in either Hebrew or Greek. While we are not about to present ourselves as experts in either language, we nevertheless have enough knowledge about linguistic associations to know that "Iesous" cannot possibly be connected to Zeus worship and those who *are* experts in either Hebrew or Greek will validate this fact. The easiest way to prove that Iesous was never associated with Zeus is to examine this name's use in the Septuagint (the LXX). The ancient Hebrew scholars who translated the LXX from Hebrew to Greek, upon coming to the name we know as Joshua (**יהוֹשֻׁע**), rendered it *Iesous*. Hypothetically-speaking, why would Hebrew scholars in their right minds agree that the best Greek transliteration of **יהוֹשֻׁע** is a name that is connected to Zeus worship? Nevertheless, many Sacred Name adherents, determined that there really *is* a connection, attempt to discredit the LXX for this very reason, even though it can be shown to have been the primary text from which New Testament authors quoted.

A friend named Chuck Henry was raised in the Sacred Name Movement and from his youth he had referred to the Messiah as either "Yahshua" or "Yahoshua." However, when he was confronted by a Sacred Name believer who dogmatically asserted that *Iesous* is connected to Zeus worship, Chuck

[216] The Sacred Name Movement teaching that *Iesous* is connected to Zeus worship certainly pre-dates the 1980 article from *The Faith* magazine. The following comes from the Preface of *The Holy Name Bible*, a version produced in 1963 by Scripture Research Association, Brandywine, Maryland, Revised by A. B. Traina: "The name of the Son, *Yahshua*, has been substituted by *Jesus*, *Iesus*, and *Ea-zeus* (Healing Zeus). Webster says that Zeus is the sky god and is also known as Deus (Latin), Dio (Italian), Dios (Spanish), Dayus (Sanskript), and Zeus Soter meaning Zeus the Saviour."

decided that it was time to take a closer look. Chuck's "careful analysis" approach resulted in the following two charts, one that examines the name *Iesous* (Ιησους), whereas the other one focuses on the name *Zeus* (Ζευς). In Chuck's "final analysis," he presents his conclusion that, contrary to the general Sacred Name Movement consensus, *Iesous* cannot in any way be connected to Zeus worship:

Iesous (Ιησους)

Strong's #2424 "of Hebrew origin"					
Ι	**η**	**σ**	**ο**	**υ**	**ς**
iota	eta	sigma	omicron	upsilon	final sigma
I	**e**	**s**	**o**	**u**	**s**
ee-	*ay-*	*s*	*oo*		*s*
No "Y" in the Greek alphabet, but *iota* carries the "y" sound. *Ie-* pronounced like the "yea" in "Yea, go team!"		No "*sh*" sound in Greek (see Notes below)[217]	--*oo* as in *too* (no problem)		Greek masculine ending (see Notes below)[218]
Later, in Latin, it became…					
I	**e**	**s**	**u**		**s**
…but still pronounced with the beginning "yay" sound.					
Eventually, it became…					
J	**e**	**s**	**u**		**s**
Though the "J" retained a "Y" pronunciation for a time, it eventually succumbed to the English sound of "J."					

[217] **Examples of Greek loss of "sh":** • Mosheh to Moses; • Shimshown to Samson; • Shemuw'el to Samuel; • Sha'uwl to Saul; • Shelomoh to Solomon.

[218] **Examples of Greek masculine ending with "s" (KJV spellings):** • Elijah to Elias (Matt. 11:14 KJV); • Elisha to Eliseus (Luke 4:27 KJV); • Isaiah to Esaias (Matt. 3:3 KJV); • Jeremiah to Jeremias (Matt. 16:14 KJV).

Zeus (Ζευς)

Strong's #2203 "the supreme deity of the Greeks"			
Ζ	**ε**	**υ**	**ς**
zeta	epsilon	upsilon	final sigma
Z	**e**	**u**	**s**

As you can see…

Ιησους	≠	**ΙηΖευς**
Iesous	≠	**IeZeus**
Jesus	≠	**JeZeus**

In summarizing the chart he completed, Chuck wrote the following:

> *Strong's* G2203 is used twice in the Bible, in close proximity to each other. Each time, it is translated "Jupiter" in the KJV:
>
> > **Acts 14:12-13 KJV**
> > 12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter [*Strong's* #2203]; and Paul, Mercurius [2060. *Hermes*], because he was the chief speaker.
> > 13 Then the priest of Jupiter [*Strong's* #2203], which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.
>
> Because the King's men chose to use "Jupiter" in the KJV text, many may overlook access to the word *Zeus* in *Strong's Dictionary* by way of word #2203, which notes that "Jupiter" comes from either *Zeus* (Ζευς) or *Dis* (Δίς). The Greek text shows the forms Δία (*Dia*) and Διὸς (*Dios*) in Acts 14:12-13 respectively. Nevertheless, the benefit of the Greek spelling of *Zeus* and its definition is still gained from its entry in *Strong's Dictionary*.
>
> It is evident that *Zeus* (Ζευς #2203) and *Iesous* (Ιησους #2424) are two completely different Greek words, with #2424 deriving from Hebrew origin and *not* from #2203.[219]

We are persuaded that Chuck's reasoning above is sound, leading to the conclusion that we both share.

[219] Chuck provided the charts presented here as well as the accompanying commentary in an e-mail that he sent us on 08/06/2013 (he also incorporated additional commentary for clarity on 09/23/2013).

12. Scholastic Dishonesty?

As we read earlier, Daniel Botkin addressed a problem exhibited by a certain anonymous Sacred Name author who, when confronted with a mistake he made in quoting from a reference titled Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, chose to ignore Mr. Botkin's letter to him. Perhaps, as we're about to see, the author Mr. Botkin wrote to is the same man who authored the Preface of *The Scriptures*.

The last thing we ever want to do is accuse any organization or individual of scholastic dishonesty, but I believe what we are about to show you must at the very ***least*** be considered *scholastic irresponsibility*. In the course of this study, we have occasionally provided quotations from the Preface of *The Scriptures*. What we are about to quote is, once again, taken from the Preface of *The Scriptures*. *The Scriptures* is considered by many to be the finest Sacred Name version of Yahweh's Word ever published, and we're not going to argue with them. No version is perfect, but *The Scriptures* offers a very accurate translation that simultaneously attempts to preserve both the name of the Heavenly Father and His Son.

If you have a 1998 version of *The Scriptures*, the page number of the Preface from which we are about to quote can be found on page xii. We have a photocopy of an earlier version, though, and this same basic quote, with a few minor changes, is found on page ten (Roman numeral "x"). Note what the author of this Preface wrote to explain the translators' choice of **יהושע** for the spelling of the Messiah's name:

> In the same way, the Messiah's Name in Hebrew **יהושע**, was chosen in order to avoid controversy. All the available authoritative sources and references are in agreement and clearly admit that our Messiah's Name was **יהושע** (see for instance Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, under *Iesous*).[220]

Okay, let's stop there for a moment. The above remark by the author of *The Scriptures'* Preface certainly seems authoritative and conclusive, and not only that, he provides a very authoritative and respected reference to back up his claim. Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* is considered a classic, and it is extensive, consisting of many volumes. Certainly, if Kittel states the Messiah's name was **יהושע**, then it ***must*** be true! How many people will take the time, though, to check out this reference to make certain the author of the Preface wasn't making any false claims?

Well, Kittel's section under the item *Iesous* is too lengthy to quote here in its entirety, so let's just read one sentence from his listing in order to discern whether or not the author of the Preface to *The Scriptures* was responsible in relaying to his reading audience the information found in Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. The following is found on page 289:

> 4. According to Mt. and Lk. the name **ישוע** = Ιησους is not accidental. It is given to the child of Mary by virtue of the divine promise.[221]

According to Kittel's own admission above, the name given to the Messiah at birth is spelled **ישוע**. Notice what Kittel offers on the following page of his work:

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[220] From *The Scriptures*, published by the Institute For Scripture Research, Republic of South Africa, p. x. This quotation comes from the 1993 edition of *The Scriptures*, and can be found on p. xii of the 1998 edition.

[221] From *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Volume III, edited by Gerhard Kittel, Wm. B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1965, p. 289.

> In any case, the formation of Ιησους for **ישוע** is centuries older than the Christian period. Early Christianity simply adopts the current Gk. form of the Hebrew name **ישוע**. It does this quite naturally and with no deliberate policy of choosing related and intelligible Gk. names after the manner of small Hellenising groups."

As you can see, Kittel, contrary to what we read in the Preface to *The Scriptures*, does not ***in any way, shape or fashion*** "clearly admit" that the Messiah's name is or was **יהושע**. Indeed, it is quite the opposite! What we believe the author to the Preface ***may*** have done is misunderstand the fact that Kittel recognizes **ישוע** as having descended from the original long form, **יהושע**. The author of the Preface then falsely rationalizes that, since the long form came first, this "must" mean it is the name given to the Messiah at birth. This, however, is NOT what Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* says at all, and the author of the Preface to *The Scriptures* must either be charged with scholastic dishonesty or irresponsible journalism, which in the eyes of folks like Daniel Botkin, gives Sacred Name Movement advocates a BAD NAME.

The author of the Preface to *The Scriptures* doesn't stop there, however. Let's go back to the Preface and read the next paragraph:

> Some prefer the short post-exilic form 'Yeshua' because the Shem-Tob Hebrew text of Mattithyahu renders it as such, as does the Hebrew translation of the 'New Testament' by Delitzsch. However, Dr. Solomon Zeitlin, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1970, p. 195, refutes the form 'Yeshua' and prefers **יהושע**.[222]

Again, this statement as found in the Preface of *The Scriptures* seems quite authoritative and convincing. Few individuals will take it upon themselves to locate the issue of *The Jewish Quarterly Review* cited by the author in order to check out the validity of his remark.

The author of the Preface to *The Scriptures* cites Dr. Solomon Zeitlin, who wrote an article titled "Judaism and Professors of Religion" that appeared in the January 1970 issue of *The Jewish Quarterly Review*. Zeitlin's article includes a review of a book named *Jesus*, written by David Flusser. In David Flusser's book, he offers a photographic reproduction of the form **ישוע** as it appears on an ossuary found near Jerusalem. Under the caption, Flusser wrote, "This is how Jesus wrote his name in Hebrew."

Dr. Zeitlin responded to Flusser's caption, and it is in Zeitlin's response that we find his commentary regarding the correct Hebrew spelling of the Messiah's name.

Shown on the following page is a photocopy of Dr. Solomon Zeitlin's actual discourse and commentary as it appeared in *The Jewish Quarterly Review* (p. 194) regarding how and why the form **יהושע** (Yahushua) is more correct than the short form **ישוע**:

First of all, though, let's examine what Zeitlin wrote on page 193:

> "There are a number of illustrations in the book [by Flusser] which have no place in a

[222] From *The Scriptures*, published by the Institute For Scripture Research, Republic of South Africa, p. x. This quotation comes from the 1993 edition of *The Scriptures*, and can be found on p. xii of the 1998 edition.

scholarly work on the life and mission of Jesus. On p. 12 is the following illustration:[223]

"This is how Jesus wrote his name in Hebrew."

The innocent reader would assume that this is the autograph of Jesus. ישוע is not Hebrew. In Hebrew the name is written יהושע.

At the end of the book there is an appendix called "Reflections", consisting of different views about Jesus. It begins with Paul and ends with Spengler. In this table are recorded the views of Sigmund Freud and Martin Buber. The following passage is quoted from Freud

The above copy supplies the extent of Dr. Solomon Zeitlin's commentary explaining why the form **יהוֹשע** is "more correct" than **יֹשוע**! That's right: A **one-line commentary**! If the author of the Preface to *The Scriptures* considers this his idea of "authoritative," then it appears that anyone having the title "Dr." associated with his name must be considered "authoritative" simply by issuing a one-line remark expressing his views on anything. On what basis does Dr. Zeitlin reject the form **יֹשוע**? We are left to guess.

Now please don't get us wrong. We're not trying to say, "My 'Dr.' is better than **your** 'Dr.'" Nevertheless, we do have information from other scholars who would dispute Solomon Zeitlin's remark. We will offer a commentary from one such scholar towards the end of this study. For now, we trust the information we have given you to this point at least serves to illustrate the danger in "just accepting" the testimony of ***any*** author.

[223] Zeitlin, Solomon, of Dropsie University, "Judaism and Professors of Religion," quoted from *The Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Volume of the Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. LX, The Dropsie University, Philadelphia, PA, January 1970, pp. 193-194.

13. The Validity of the Form יהוֹשע

In chapter ten of our study, we reproduced Daniel Botkin's article titled "The Messiah's Hebrew Name: 'Yeshua' or 'Yahshua'?" His article addresses some valid concerns about some widely held notions within the Sacred Name Movement, especially teachings upholding the belief that the Father's name must form a portion of the Messiah's name, as well as the pronunciation of the form **יהוֹשע**. As explained by Mr. Botkin, the "waw" in **יהוֹשע** <u>must</u> be pronounced, giving us either the form *Yehoshua* or *Yahushua*. Hebrew linguistics experts agree that the pronunciation *Yahshua* does not properly reflect the pronunciation of **יהוֹשע**.

This having been said, Mr. Botkin issues some incorrect information in his study that needs to be addressed and hopefully corrected. Mr. Botkin wrote, "Dr. Danny Ben-Gigi says of the *Yahshua* form that 'there is no such name in Hebrew' and that 'people invented it to fit their theology.'

The implication is that the people who invented *Yahshua* are the early pioneers of the Sacred Name Movement, especially when we skip ahead to a paragraph later on in Mr. Botkin's study. He writes,

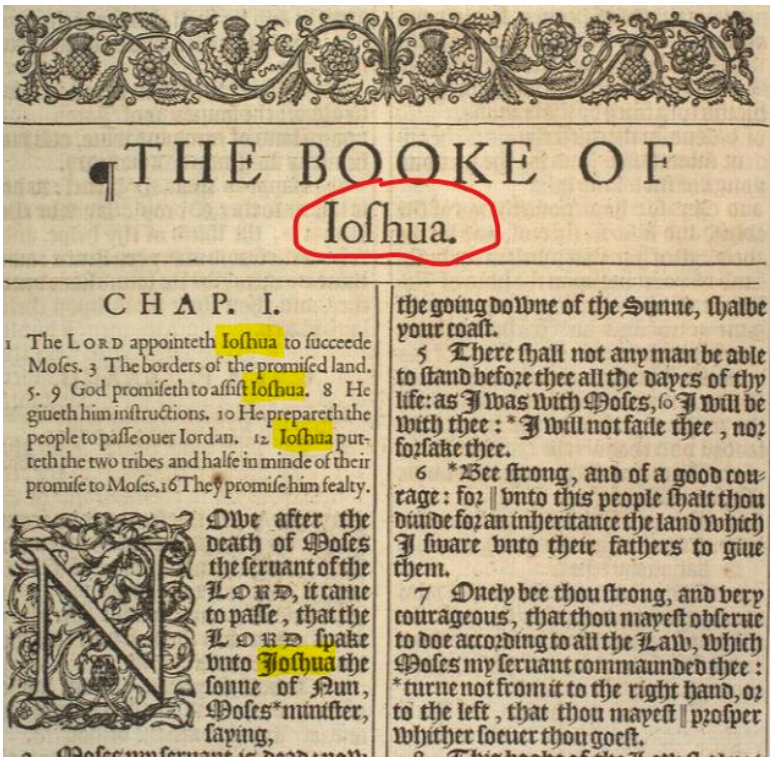
> So where did the transliteration *Yahshua* come from? This form of the name can be traced back to the beginnings of the Sacred Name movement, a movement that grew out of the Church of God, 7th Day, in the late 1930s. I have in my files an article entitled, 'A Brief History of the Name Movement in America' by L.D. Snow, a Sacred Name believer. According to this article, 'John Briggs and Paul Penn were the FIRST to pronounce and use the name Yahshua' (emphasis Snow's). This was in 1936 and in 1937, the article states. No information is given about how Briggs and Penn came up with this (mis)translation.

As Mr. Botkin clearly attempts to establish, prior to the inception of the Sacred Name Movement, no one ever pronounced the form *Yahshua*. Is this true? <u>No, it is not</u>. One of the photocopies included with this study is from a book I mentioned earlier titled *Story of the Letters and Figures* by Hubert Skinner. As clearly shown in his writing, Mr. Skinner produces the phonetic pronunciation for "Ya'shoo-ah" in a book first published in 1905, over **thirty years prior** to the alleged "first utterance" by John Briggs and Paul Penn!

Thus, either L.D. Snow or Daniel Botkin, or maybe *both* men, are mistaken in the notion that the form *Yahshua* was first spoken in 1936. Not having access to the work by L.D. Snow, I can only speculate that Mr. Botkin misunderstood Mr. Snow's intention, as certainly Mr. Snow wouldn't have believed Sacred Name folk were the first to ever utter the name *Yahshua*, would he? Sacred Name folk I've run into believe that those who use the form *Yahshua* are simply restoring a pronunciation that had either been lost or forgotten.

But let's not stop with the book mentioned above that was published in 1905! If you have a 1611 King James Bible, you know that it at least does not employ the "J" that is now in common use. Instead, the "Y" pronunciation is retained by its use of the letter "I." Look up the name of Joshua in the Old Testament of a 1611 King James Version of the Bible. You will note that the son of Nun's name is NOT spelled J-O-S-H-U-A, but **<u>I</u>**-O-S-H-U-A! And how do we pronounce the word ***Ioshua***? Well, that's another debate in and of itself. I would say it's pronounced "Yoe-shua," but others would argue it's pronounced ***Yahshua***. From my perspective, the same linguistic principle for "Yah-shua vs. Yeshua" should apply to "Yoe-shua vs. Yah-shua," i.e., mutual respect for each other's varying conclusions. A

screen capture taken from the first chapter of a 1611 King James Version Bible is displayed below:



¶THE BOOKE OF Ioſhua.

CHAP. I.

1 The LORD appointeth Ioſhua to ſucceede Moſes. 3 The borders of the promiſed land. 5. 9 God promiſeth to aſſiſt Ioſhua. 8 He giueth him inſtructions. 10 He prepareth the people to paſſe ouer Iordan. 12 Ioſhua putteth the two tribes and halfe in minde of their promiſe to Moſes. 16 They promiſe him fealty.

NOwe after the death of Moſes the ſeruant of the LORD, it came to paſſe, that the LORD ſpake vnto Ioſhua the ſonne of Nun, Moſes* miniſter, ſaying,

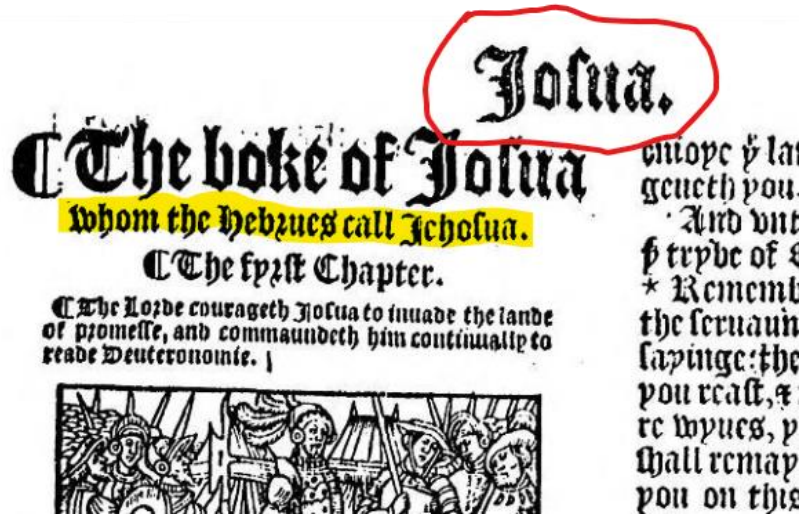
the going downe of the Sunne, ſhalbe your coaſt.

5 There ſhall not any man be able to ſtand before thee all the dayes of thy life: as I was with Moſes, ſo I will be with thee: * I will not faile thee, nor forſake thee.

6 * Bee ſtrong, and of a good courage: for ‖ vnto this people ſhalt thou diuide for an inheritance the land which I ſware vnto their fathers to giue them.

7 Onely bee thou ſtrong, and very courageous, that thou mayeſt obſerue to doe according to all the Law, which Moſes my ſeruant commaunded thee: * turne not from it to the right hand, or to the left, that thou mayeſt ‖ proſper whither ſoeuer thou goeſt.

If *Ioshua* is more correctly pronounced *Yahshua*, then this pronunciation can be traced ***at least*** as far back as 1611, and actually long before that, as this same rendering is also found in The Great Bible translation of 1539. The following was lifted from Internet Archive[224]:



Iosua.

¶ The boke of Iosua whom the Hebrues call Ichosua.

¶ The first Chapter.

¶ The Lorde courageth Iosua to inuade the lande of promesse, and commaundeth him continually to reade Deuteronomie.

I realize the beginning letter of the name *Iosua* in the above extraction looks more like a "J" than an "i." That's because, in the development of the letter "J" into the English alphabet, it was *originally* an "i."

[224] Great Bible, 1540 edition. Source: Internet Archive, https://archive.org/details/GreatBible1540/page/n93/mode/2up.

The elaborate tail forming what we now know as the letter "J" was intended as a "typographical embellishment"; it was still pronounced as an "i." Only *later* did the "J" sound emerge. Thus, if the son of Nun's name was pronounced *Iosua* in 1539, I'm willing to bet people were pronouncing his name this same way at least 100 years prior to the completion of The Great Bible, and who knows how long before that? W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, in their Gospel of Matthew commentary found in *The Anchor Bible*, offer a plausible explanation, though somewhat vague, of the transition from the long form, *Yehoshua*, to the short form *Yoshua*. What follows is their footnote given for Matthew 1:1:

> *Jesus*. The word is the Greek rendering of a well-known Hebrew name. It was *Yahōshû* first, then by inner Hebrew phonetic change it became *Yōshūa*, and by a still later northern dialectal shift, *Yeshūa*.[225]

If the information provided by *The Anchor Bible* is correct, then indeed the form *Yoshua* was regularly pronounced even before the form *Yeshua* became the normative pronunciation.[226] This, of course, would indicate evidence that this form was not only employed prior to 1539, but even **prior to the birth of the Messiah**! Perhaps some of you will be able to research this further and learn just exactly how far back we can trace documented pronunciations of the renderings *Yoshua* and *Yahshua*.

Does the fact that the pronunciation *Yahshua* may be traced back at least as early as 1539 prove that it is the most valid pronunciation of the Messiah's name? I do not believe it does, yet I believe it is equally wrong for me to dogmatically insist that the pronunciation I use is "the only valid one." While I appreciate most of the points brought out by Daniel Botkin in his study, I do not believe his remark that there is no such name in Hebrew, and that it was invented to fit Sacred Name Movement theology, is fair.

At the same time, I am very saddened that this man caught leaders within this circle of believers (Yahwists) committing what can only be termed ***scholastic irresponsibility*** at best and ***scholastic dishonesty*** at worst. Even worse, when it was pointed out to them, instead of responding and admitting their mistakes, they chose to ignore his letter. This is a very poor example for anyone to set, especially for men considered leaders over a flock.

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[225] From *The Anchor Bible*, "Matthew: Introduction, Translation, and Notes," By W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, Doubleday & Company, Inc. Garden City, New York, 1971, p. 2.

[226] It should be noted that authors W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann supply no validation that their statement is true; nevertheless, Sacred Name authors point to their statement as evidence that the pronunciation *Yahshua* or *Yahoshua* is the original pronunciation.

14. The Validity of the Form יהוֹשע: Prophetic Name of the Messiah?

Some Sacred Name adherents are persuaded that the form **יהוֹשע** is the "prophesied name of the Messiah," citing the prophecy found in Zechariah 6:9-13. As a corollary to their view that His name is prophesied in Zechariah, they also insist that this Hebrew name can only be correctly vocalized *Yahushua*. Such is the claim of one of the leading proponents of this pronunciation, Tom Martincic, whose reasoning, as we read in chapter nine, is primarily based on what he feels is evidence from cuneiform writings. Before we delve into Tom's "prophetic name" argument, we feel we should clarify at the outset that although we respect the pronunciation *Yahushua*, we personally have not seen compelling evidence to support it.

As I previously mentioned, Tom (under his pseudonym "EliYah") and I were engaged in a 1999 Web forum discourse regarding the Messiah's name. I had initiated the discussion as a result of some openly expressed hostility aimed at those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua*, and my commentary was specifically offered in response to an individual who wrote, "Accordingly, YEH-shua is also an erroneous name used often by Jewish people, and is consequently being repeated by some on this website. YEH-shua and YAH-shua are NOT the same names."[227]

During the course of our discussion, Tom conveyed one viewpoint well enough that, if I had nothing else to go on, it *might* serve to persuade me that the only legitimate Hebrew spelling of the Messiah's name is "yod, heh, waw, shin, ayin" (**יהוֹשע**), which, again, he insists can only be correctly pronounced *Yahushua*, in spite of the abundant linguistic evidence supporting the pronunciation *Yehoshua*. Incredibly, it is within this Zechariah 6 prophecy that Mr. Martincic not only finds support for the correct *spelling* of the Messiah's name, but also its correct *pronunciation*. Here is his explanation:

> Here are some scriptures that show the "Branch" to be the future Messiah:
>
> **Jeremiah 33:15 -** In those days, and at that time, will I cause the BRANCH of righteousness to grow up to David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.
> **16 -** In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell in safety: and this [is the name] by which she shall be called, Yahweh our righteousness.
>
> **Isaiah 11:1 -** And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a BRANCH shall grow out of his roots:
> **2 -** And the spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him, (see John 1:32) the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh;
> **3-** And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of Yahweh: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:
> **4-** But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.
> **5-** And righteousness shall be the belt of his loins, and faithfulness the belt of his reins.

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[227] From a posting submitted on 11-25-1999 by 06:18 PM EST in the forum thread titled "Who is 'haShem'?" by an individual who only identified himself with the pseudonym "Bosassyah." The entire forum discussion by be read online by accessing the following URL: http://www.eliyah.com/forum2/Forum1/HTML/001591.html.

Jeremiah 23:2- Therefore thus saith Yahweh Elohim of Israel against the shepherds that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith Yahweh.
3- And I will gather the remnant of my flock from all countries where I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.
4 - And I will set shepherds over them who shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith Yahweh.
5 - Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that I will raise to David a righteous BRANCH, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice upon the earth.
6 - In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell in safety: and this [is] his name by which he shall be called, YAHWEH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.
7 - Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that they shall no more say, Yahweh liveth, who brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;
8 - But, Yahweh liveth, who brought and who led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries where I have driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

Zechariah 3:8 - Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they [are] men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.

Here is Yahushua's name prophesied:

Zechariah 6:9 - And the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,
10 - Take of [them of] the captivity, [even] of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, who are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah;
11 - Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set [them] upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest;

Joshua is pronounced Yahushua in the original Hebrew and in this text we have the letters **יהושע**, that is, Yod, He, Waw, Shin, Ayin in Hebrew. This is the same way it is found 194 times in the Hebrew Masoretic text all throughout scripture. This is important to know because there is a key thing said about this name in the next verse:

Zechariah 6:12 - And speak to him, saying, Thus speaketh Yahweh of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of Yahweh:

So the Scripture is saying: 'Behold (or look upon) the man (Yahushua) whose NAME (**יהושע**) is the BRANCH.'

Therefore, the current High Priest of Judah in the days of Zechariah, Joshua (Yahshua), has the name of the 'BRANCH' or the coming Messiah.[228]

In his commentary above, author Tom Martincic, presents what, on the surface, appears to be a very compelling argument in favor of his position, an argument that I believe is at least worthy of examination.

[228] From a posting submitted on 12-02-1999 at 04:44 PM EST in the forum thread titled "Name of Our Messiah." This posting was submitted on www.eliyah.com by the internet forum board owner Thomas Martincic, who prefers to go by the pseudonym "EliYah." Mr. Martincic retained the entire forum discussion on his web site for several years, but by 2014 we noticed that it had been removed.

It is based on logic, and while we appreciate logic, at the same time, a doctrinal assertion really needs to rest on a solid foundation before it can be considered factual and true. Regrettably, there are some critical components missing from Tom Martincic's argument, each of which needs to be addressed. Here are a few things I feel we should all consider:

* He offers no evidence supporting why the pronunciation *Yehoshua* is wrong and why his pronunciation of choice (*Yahushua*) is correct. You may recall from chapter nine that we reviewed Tom's "cuneiform evidence," which he asserts proves the vocalization *Yahushua*, even though he doesn't explain how a linguistics expert in ancient languages could point to a certain cuneiform symbol and say with confidence, "That's an 'ah' sound." We could just as easily use Mr. Martincic's interpretation of the Zechariah 6 prophecy to uphold the view that the Messiah's name should be pronounced *Yehoshua*.

* Presuming that Mr. Martincic's pronunciation of choice is correct, if the passage regarding *Yahushua son of Josedech* represents a prophecy of the name of the Messiah, it is curious that no writers of the New Testament were influenced to mention such an important and significant prophecy. Numerous Old Testament prophecies are cited and explained in the New Testament, yet curiously, this particular one, considered **so important** by those who base their conclusion regarding the Messiah's name on its wording, goes unnoticed and unmentioned by the writers of the New Testament.

* It must be remembered that the writers of the Old Testament not only referred to Yehoshua son of Josedech with the long form of this name, but they ***also*** referred to him with the short form *Yeshua*. Yehoshua the son of Josedech is also referred to as Yeshua son of Jozadak in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. If we are to believe that both of these books of Scripture are inspired by Yahweh, then it is critical that we consider it "definitely acceptable" to refer to this one man as either "Yehoshua" or "Yeshua." Both names met Yahweh's approval, or else He would not have inspired them to be placed in the original texts. Of course, since Mr. Martincic believes the form *Yeshua* represents a subverted rendering of the long form, which he feels was perpetrated by uninspired men, his next logical step is to reject the authority of Ezra and Nehemiah. However, he stops short of doing so by explaining that he sees nothing wrong with shortening the names of *others* named Yahushua, so long as it's not the Messiah whose name is being shortened.[229]

* In spite of the Mr. Martincic's parenthetical insertion of **יהושע** in his commentary, the verse quoted above (Zech. 6:12) does *not* say, "His name shall be **יהושע**," nor does this name even ***appear*** in that verse. Instead, it says, "Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH." No one that we know of, not even those who stand behind this prophecy to justify their belief, is willing to take this as a <u>literal</u> prophecy, as no one we know of claims the Messiah's name as being ***Tsemakh***, which is the Hebrew word translated "Branch" in Zechariah 6:12. This word, צמח, is word #6780 in *Strong's*

[229] Ibid, from a posting submitted on 12-08-1999 at 12:34 PM EST, where Tom wrote: "I wish to express that I do not believe it was wrong of someone to shorten the name of Yahushua son of Yahutsadak to 'Yeshua'. The Messiah's name is certainly of higher importance due to the scriptural reasons I set forth at the beginning of the post."

Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary. We share the Sacred Name Movement view that names should be transliterated (not translated); hence, this Hebrew word, transliterated, is ***Tsemakh***. Consequently, if we promote the Messiah's name as being "the Branch," we must simultaneously refer to Him as ***Tsemakh***, in keeping with our understanding of the fact that the pronunciation of names carries over from one language to the next. Certainly no one in the New Testament ever referred to Him with such a name, thus leaving us with no precedent to do so ourselves.

* Finally, this is just a word of caution and a reminder of a point that we brought out back in chapter nine: Beware of the teaching that we should seek the most ancient pronunciation and/or spelling of the Messiah's name. We do not question that the most ancient spelling is **יהושע** and that originally (in spite of the dearth of evidence) it *may* have been pronounced *Yahushua*. However, if by all admission the name **יהושע** developed into the spelling **ישוע** well in advance of the Messiah's birth, then how are we to know that the Messiah wasn't given this shorter form as His name? The issue of which spelling is the most ancient is actually a "red herring" argument designed to throw us off track of the *real* issue. The issue isn't how this name was spelled or pronounced at the time of the Exodus from Egypt. The issue is how the Messiah's name was spelled and pronounced *during (and just prior to) the 1st century CE.*

Despite our not personally regarding Zechariah chapter 6 as a prophecy pertaining to the Hebrew spelling of the Messiah's name, we nevertheless understand and respect the rationale employed by those who do, and we do not wish to dogmatically assert that their interpretation of this prophecy is necessarily misguided or wrong. We *do* urge caution, though, in basing a doctrine upon one's interpretation of a prophecy, especially when there is some question as to whether or not this event qualifies as a Messianic prophecy. As mentioned earlier, if this passage in Zechariah represents a prophecy of the Messiah's name, it is not a significant enough prophecy to merit being quoted by any New Testament writers, yet it is significant enough in the minds of some Sacred Name folk to merit discrediting those who refer to the Messiah as Yeshua! This is in spite of the fact that the only prophetic "name" appearing in that verse is ***Tsemakh***. The bottom line assertion we wish to make here is this: If both forms of this name meet the approval of Yahweh, then that is fine with us, but we have a difficult time insisting that people accept ***our interpretation of a prophecy*** when the authors of the New Testament never even brought it up. We have an even more difficult time insisting that others accept our ***pronunciation of a Hebrew spelling***, even though evidence supporting that pronunciation is flimsy at best.

15. The Testimony of Some Modern Scholars

One of the scholars many Yahwists turn to in their attempt to persuade others of the pronunciation "Yahweh" is the late Professor Anson F. Rainey, who was a highly regarded professor of Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and Semitic linguistics at Tel Aviv University. A couple of the sheets included in this study (see the Appendix) consists of frequently-circulated photocopies exhibiting Mr. Rainey's detailed explanation of why the pronunciation *Yahweh* is the correct English transliteration of the Hebrew **יהוה**. The individual who sent us these photocopies is someone whose name you may recall from chapter three: Worley Maynard. You may remember our including Worley as one of the "dissenters," i.e., someone who is spiritually intolerant of the form *Yeshua*. Before sending us the photocopies of Professor Rainey's commentary, Mr. Maynard scribbled the following message in the lower right-hand corner of the first page: "He (Anson Rainey) has no ax to grind or hang up. He is speaking strictly from a scholarly point of view." Again, Worley mailed us (and other believers) the photocopies in an attempt to validate the pronunciation *Yahweh*. Since we agree that the preponderance of evidence supports the pronunciation *Yahweh*, Mr. Maynard was "preaching to the choir" by sharing those photocopies with us. Nevertheless, as we are about to see, Worley was none too pleased when he found out that Professor Rainey also shared our understanding that the Messiah's name is pronounced *Yeshua*.

How could a professor of Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and Semitic linguistics in Israel have no issues with referring to the Almighty as *Yahweh*, yet argue in favor of the Messiah's name being *Yeshua*? We will learn the answer to this question momentarily. First, however, in his commentary from the photocopies that Worley sent us, Professor Rainey explained how the false form *Jehovah* came into being. Here is a portion of what he wrote in a letter to the editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review*:

> The Anglicized form, Jehovah, is a "ghost word" based on the four consonants, YHWH, with the vowels of another word, *adonai*, meaning "my Lord." The Hebrew scribes of the Middle Ages put those vowels in to remind the reader to say *adonai* rather than pronounce the sacred Name. But in the first syllable, they nevertheless put in an "***e***" rather than an "***a***" so as not to cause anyone to inadvertently blurt out the sacred Name! This is just further proof of the correct first syllable, which in any case is confirmed by Greek spellings and the evidence of Hebrew linguistics. So Yahweh is not just some sort of "scholarly convention."

Professor Rainey pointed out the fact that scribes in the Middle Ages deliberately vowel-pointed the Tetragrammaton so as to make the first syllable of Yahweh's name an "**eh**" sound instead of the correct "**ah**" sound. Some folks within the Sacred Name Movement use this as evidence that the first syllable of the Messiah's name must ***also*** have an "ah" sound instead of the "eh" sound normally associated with the form *Yeshua*.

Curious to see exactly how Professor Rainey regards the pronunciation of the Messiah's name, I sent him an e-mail asking for his insights. His reply is shown below:

> **The two names are not related. Yahweh is one name, Yehoshua'/Yeshua' is another. The latter is actually vocalized with a sere, i.e. lengthened "i" vowel. It was apparently a standard variant in the second temple period.**
>
> **But the Septuagint writers used the same Greek spelling for both the name of the hero of the book of Joshua and also for some later priests mentioned in the Book of Chronicles. You should consult a concordance of the Septuagint.**

> **Yahweh as a name has nothing to do with Yeshua' or Yehoshua' except that the first component of the latter is Yeho, shortened from Yahaw. The 'a' in 'ya' became a shewa because the accent on the word moved to the end. A short vowel of any kind became shewa in an open syllable. When this shift took place in the Hebrew language is not at all clear. But the fact that the Greek transcriptions of the two names are both Iesous means that the sere was already pronounced. The eta of the Greek (instead of epsilon) proves that.**
>
> **Therefore, the first vowel in Yeshua' is surely a sere, not a shewa that came from "a."**[230]

As explained by Mr. Rainey, the pronunciation *Yeshua* was already in place during the time of the Messiah, and represents an accurate transliteration of the Messiah's name. As he added, "The two names are not related. Yahweh is one name, Yehoshua'/Yeshua' is another. The latter is actually vocalized with a **sere**, i.e. lengthened "i" vowel. It was apparently a standard variant in the second temple period."

It is helpful to know what a "**sere**" is in our attempt to learn exactly how Professor Rainey believes we should pronounce the Messiah's name. If you have a *Strong's Concordance*, you can turn to the front of the *Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*, on the page where it displays the Hebrew alphabet. The "sere" is found in section 3 of the "Hebrew Articulation" section, where it is identified as a vowel point. It is actually spelled ***Tserey*** in *Strong's*, and as you will note, it is a vowel pronounced as the "e" as *they*. Thus, as Professor Rainey asserts, this gives *Yeshua* the pronunciation "YAY'shua."

Many will protest the use of the ***sere***, insisting that vowel points, including the ***sere***, weren't added until the 7th century CE. Unfortunately, however, they miss Professor Rainey's "point"! He is not trying to establish a connection between the post-exilic rendering (**ישוע**) and the vowel pointings that were added centuries later; he is merely asserting that Greek transliterations establish that the vowel pointing ***sere*** provides an accurate Hebrew pronunciation of the short form – a pronunciation that apparently existed when the Septuagint was translated. Repeating Rainey's words, "... **the fact that the Greek transcriptions of the two names are both Iesous means that the *sere* was already pronounced**." In other words, he maintains that the pronunciation was already in place that would later be "vowel-pointed" with the ***sere***.

In the e-mail shown below, Professor Rainey repeats that it is the form ***Yeshua*** upon which the Greek rendering of the Messiah's name is based:

> **Subj: Re: Hebrew Spelling of Messiah's Name**
> **Date: 1/21/01 11:45:52 AM Central Standard Time**
> **From: rainey@post.tau.ac.il (Anson Rainey)**
> **Reply-to: rainey@post.tau.ac.il**
> **To: Seekutruth@aol.com**
>
> **Shalom rav!**
>
> **Any good Bible dictionary should have the details on the personal names in the Hebrew Bible, namely Yehoshua' and the late periods Yeshua' found in the Books of Chronicles. This latter was a later variant of the former. It seems to be that was the form that stands behind the Greek spellings in the Septuagint and the New Testament.**
>
> **Other than that, I have no information to offer you.**

[230] From an e-mail received from Anson F. Rainey on 01/21/01.

Faithfully,

Anson F. Rainey[231]

As Professor Rainey explained, *Yeshua* is a variant of *Yahushua* (or as he puts it, *Yehoshua*). He maintained that it is the form *Yeshua* upon which the Greek spellings in the New Testament are based. In our original study, we humbly suggested that those who insist that *Yahushua* is the more correct rendering take up the matter with Professor Rainey. Regrettably, Professor Rainey passed away on February 19, 2011.

We should reiterate that we personally support use of the forms *Yahushua* as well as *Yahshua*, in addition to the one that we personally lean towards believing was given to the Messiah at birth: *Yeshua*. If our personal conclusion is in error, we are nevertheless persuaded that it is based upon sound reasoning. Moreover, since our findings indicate that *Yeshua* is indeed interchangeable with the form *Yehoshua / Yahushua*, we maintain that there is nothing wrong with using ***either*** form of the Messiah's name.

Another Scholar's Input!

In 1992 a Danish scholar named Kai Kjaer-Hansen authored a study titled "An Introduction to the names: Yehoshua/Joshua, Yeshua, Jesus and Yeshu." Mr. Kjaer-Hansen earned his Ph.D. from Lund University, Sweden, on *Studies in the Name of Jesus* (1982). Like Professor Rainey, Mr. Kjaer-Hansen is not a member of the Sacred Name Movement, and he freely uses the form *Jesus*. Nevertheless, his research proves to be extensive, and therefore his insights are worthy of our attention.

Does Jewish literature aimed at disparaging the Messiah inadvertently offer evidence of His true name? As previously mentioned, some individuals regard the *Tol'doth Yeshu* as a valid reference supporting the Messiah's name as having originally been the long form, i.e., *Yehoshua* or *Yahushua*, which was subsequently shortened to *Yeshu*. Given the malevolent nature of this work, combined with its blatant inaccuracies and warped presentation of the Messiah, I expressed my reluctance to trust the words of such a hostile witness. Indeed, many of the Jewish faith down through the ages have produced literature refuting the ministry of the One we recognize as the Son of Yahweh, and <u>these</u> particular "hostile witnesses" have assigned Him the name *Yeshua*. The fact that these writers went to such great lengths to malign a man's name, in and of itself, serves as evidence validating that, indeed, this "disgraced name" is the name by which He was called. Kai Kjaer-Hansen, in his study, comments on this truth:

> This - and other circumstances - lead me to the assertion that today, and down through the ages, the Jewish refutation literature has helped to preserve, among Jews, the memory that Christianity's Saviour was called *Yeshua*. While the polemic literature has primarily used the form *Yeshu*, there has all along been an awareness that this was not Jesus' original Hebrew name. Maimonides appears to have used the form *Yeshua* in several writings, e.g. in his "*Epistle to Yemen*," even if the tradition of the text also has the form *Yeshu*, which has to be regarded as the secondary form (cp. A.S. Halkin (ed.), *Moses Maimonides' Epistle to Yemen*, New York, 1952, p. 12). Subsequent Jewish authorities refer specifically to Maimonides and claim that Jesus' original name was *Yeshua*, and then they go on to explain why they do not use it, none the less. Whatever reservations one might have towards J.A. Eisenmenger's book

[231] From another e-mail received from Anson F. Rainey on 01/21/01.

> *Entdecktes Judenthum* (Konigsberg, 1711) from the beginning of the 18th century, it cannot be denied that he gives a good summary of the reasons why Jews do not use *Yeshua* but have cut off the letter Ayin and call him *Yeshu* instead.[232]

As cited by Kai Kjaer-Hansen, mainstream Judaism recognizes the form *Yeshua* as having originally been the Messiah's name, even though many nevertheless refer to Him as *Yeshu*. Mr. Kjaer-Hansen also makes allusion to the form *Yeshu* not having originally been a negative word. In his analysis of the book *Jesus in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* by David Flusser, he wrote:

> Flusser says about the name that *Jesus* is the common Greek form of the name Joshua, and that in Jesus' time the name was pronounced *Yeshua* and so we often find Jesus of Nazareth named in ancient Jewish literature. There he is also often named *Yeshu*. That, almost certainly, was the Galilean pronunciation.[233]

The following excerpt from Mr. Kjaer-Hansen's study serves to express the conclusion he has reached at this point, based on his research:

> In my judgement we have reason to believe that in New Testament times the short form *Yeshua* replaced the long form *Yehoshua*. I dare not claim that the long form cannot have been in use as a personal name in New Testament times. In the case of names, never say never. What is safe to say is that inscriptions and discoveries of ossuaries from Palestine show that the form *Yeshua* was a quite common personal name, and that this *Yeshua* corresponds to the Greek 'Iesous'... Taken together, our evidence clearly indicates that the name of Jesus of Nazareth was *Yeshua* and not *Yehoshua*....[234]

Although Mr. Kjaer-Hansen's research leads him to believe the name given to the Messiah is *Yeshua*, he does add the following disclaimer:

> My own hypothesis is not above criticism. The issue is far too complex for that, and we lack some historical data before we can conclude anything with certainty.[235]

If only those within the Sacred Name Movement were so willing to concede the possibility of being mistaken in their adamant stand regarding the Messiah's name! Instead, many will invariably point to Kjaer-Hansen's concession of uncertainty as a sign of weakness. We are personally encouraged by those who are willing to examine all available evidence and subsequently recognize that evidence as being inconclusive.

Does Kjaer-Hansen's commentary shed any new light on what we have already covered? Perhaps not,

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[232] From "An Introduction to the Names: Yehoshua/Joshua, Yeshua, Jesus and Yeshu," by Kai Kjaer-Hansen, March 1992, page 4. This study is now available online at the following link: http://www.jewsforjesus.org/answers/jesus/an-introduction-to-the-names-yehoshuajoshua-yeshua-jesus-and-yeshu.

[233] Ibid. You may recall that back on page 10, we quoted Flusser as stating that *Jeshua* was "most certainly" the Galilean pronunciation. Apparently, that particular rendering was a mistranslation of Flusser's work by the translator, Ronald Walls. This is pointed out by Kai Kjaer-Hansen on page 3 of his treatise, where he writes, "The English translation by Ronald Walls (*Jesus*, New York, 1969, p. 13) has a blatant mistake. The sentence, 'There [i.e. in ancient Jewish literature] he is also often name *Yeshu*', has disappeared. Consequently, Ronald Walls' translation says that *Yeshua* was the Galilean pronunciation! Which is nonsense. And which was not what Flusser wrote."

[234] Ibid, page 6 .

[235] Ibid, page 7.

but by virtue of the extensive research he has done on this subject, we can at the very least recognize that getting to the bottom of this issue is no easy task. In his study, Mr. Kjaer-Hansen remarked that he had not been able to trace an ossuary dating to the first century bearing an inscription of the long form *Yehoshua*. Of course, the absence of such an ossuary would not prove that the Messiah could not have been given that name and as you may recall from chapter ten, more recent finds have turned up an ossuary dating to the first century CE bearing the long form *Yehoshua*.[236] As significant as this find was, it does not prove one way or the other whether or not the Messiah was given the long form of this name at birth. This information only serves to validate the fact that both the long form and the short form were used during the first century.

Although Mr. Kjaer-Hansen's contribution to the research on this subject does not necessarily prove the name given to the Messiah, it nevertheless does offer many interesting and fascinating insights for us to consider in our own quest for answers. His research serves to further validate that the form *Yeshua* was much more common than the long form during the first century, and as we have demonstrated in this study, the Messiah was given a common name.

[236] Cf., *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel*, by L.Y. Rahmani, The Israel Antiquities Authority, Jerusalem, 1994, p. 92. An enlarged photocopy of this first-century inscription is shown on the inside cover of this study.

16. Esoteric Prophetic Interpretation?

In chapter 14, we displayed an individual's summary detailing why he believes Zechariah chapter six presents a prophecy of the Messiah's name. Although we certainly understand and appreciate the logic behind his reasoning, and we even respect this interpretation, we do not necessarily share his view, based on the reasons we listed in that portion of our study.

Another individual offered his own "prophetic interpretation" from a different passage of Scripture. The text in question involves a man from the book of I Samuel chapter six whose name was **יהוֹשע** (*Yehoshua / Yahushua*). Regrettably, the believer who presented his "prophetic interpretation" offers an interpretation that we feel is completely esoteric and not based upon any sound reasoning. In a booklet that June and I wrote on this subject a few years ago, we responded to his claim and we are presenting that response now as an illustration of how we need to be careful before basing any belief on the interpretation of a prophecy, especially one as esoteric as the passage mentioned below:

The Ark of the Covenant had been in the hands of the Philistines for seven months. To say this was one of the darkest periods in the history of Yahweh's people is an understatement. Not only had the Ark been captured seven months before, but 34,000 men of Israel had been slain in the process. At the news of its having been captured, Eli the high priest fell backwards from his seat and broke his neck. His daughter-in-law at the same time went into premature labor and died during childbirth. She named her son Ichabod, which means "There is no honor." She cried, "The honor is departed from Israel!"

Israel had been robbed of the lives of its most valiant men. Even more significantly, the very symbol of Yahweh's presence among them had been taken away. But on this day, seven months later, the Israelites were harvesting their wheat crop in Beth-Shemesh, doubtlessly thankful that Yahweh had at least seen to it that their food supply had been spared. As they reaped, some men noticed in the distance two oxen approaching, a cart rolling along behind them. There was no man to be seen driving the oxen; they drew nearer as if drawn there by some unknown force, finally coming to a halt in the field of Yehoshua (**יהוֹשע**) the Beth-shemite. Why were those oxen pulling that cart and what was in it?

When those oxen came to a halt at a great stone in the field of Yehoshua, so did those seven months of shame and indignity, for in that cart was none other than the beloved Ark of the Covenant. The rejoicing must have been spectacular! Yahweh had returned to Israel! To celebrate its return, they broke up the cart and used its wood to offer the oxen as a sacrifice to Yahweh. What a happy ending to their seven-month period of anguish and humiliation at the hands of the Philistines!

Could this joyous reunion have had a hidden significance? Could it be that there was a reason for those oxen coming to a halt in the field of Yehoshua that day? In defense of the Messiah's name being Yehoshua / Yahushua (**יהוֹשע**) instead of Yeshua (**יֵשׁוּע**), it has been suggested that this story demonstrates this very thing — that somehow the Ark of the Covenant coming to rest in, of all places, the field of Yehoshua corresponds to the "rest" that the Messiah gives to us when we come to Him. There may be additional significance to this story that I have left out, but hopefully you understand the logic behind this belief. Certainly the event is quite fascinating, and the slightest hint that it could somehow be written for our enlightenment concerning the Messiah's name is worthy of consideration.

Nevertheless, there are some 'negatives' about this event from the sixth chapter of I Samuel that cast a pall over any logic that this incident ties in with the name of the Messiah. Consider the fact that the Ark

of the Covenant's "rest" in the field of Yehoshua was very short-lived, as it was hastily removed from that place after Yahweh smote a large number of men for looking into the Ark. It was immediately removed and taken to the house of Abinadab in Kiriath-Jearim, where it remained for 20 years. Thus, this makes for a memorable and inspiring account involving the Ark of the Covenant, but this is where the significance stops. Without any substance from this passage to further substantiate a belief that the field of Yehoshua / Yahushua (**יהושע**) represents the name later given to the Messiah, we are left to dismiss it in favor of more substantial evidence that does not leave to chance the possibility that we are reading something into an account that simply is not there.

17. Addressing the Objections

My original presentation of "Name of the Messiah: יהושע? ישוע?" minus some of the enhancements added later, was given on Friday, August 3, 2001 at the seventeenth annual Unity Conference held at the Assembly of Yahweh (Seventh Day) in Cisco, Texas. During the question/answer session that followed, two questions were raised in support of believing that the Messiah's name should contain a portion of the Father's name (i.e., the first three letters of the Tetragrammaton). In recognition of those questions, I will now paraphrase them and respond accordingly.

A. ***Revelation 14:1 describes the 144,000 redeemed having the Father's name on their foreheads. Does it not follow that these redeemed <u>also</u> have the Son's name on their foreheads as well? And since "Yahushua" has the Father's name incorporated into it already, would this name not inclusively fit the parameters outlined in Revelation 14:1?***

In response to the above questions, we need to bear in mind that our Heavenly Father's name is *not* "Yahushua" (nor is it "Yehoshua," for that matter). The name "יהושע," despite containing the first syllable of the name "Yahweh," is a separate name apart from Yahweh. According to the King James Version's rendering of Revelation 14:1, only the Father's name is mentioned. It reads,

> [1] And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

As worded above, this verse plainly states that the redeemed have the name of the Lamb's Father written on their foreheads. This name, as we understand it, is *Yahweh*. There is no mention, as worded in the King James Version, that the redeemed also have the name of the Lamb on their foreheads. Therefore, as worded in the King James Version, I have to state that I believe the words of this verse as they are written, but I cannot necessarily believe or otherwise accept as valid the interpretations that people may come up with regarding this verse. There is nothing in this verse that leads me to believe the Father's name needs to be incorporated into the Son's name.

Furthermore, it is only fitting that I address the fact that many translations provide a significantly different rendering of Revelation 14:1 than does the King James Version. Notice how the New Revised Standard Version translates this verse:

> [1] Then I looked, and there was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion! And with him were one hundred forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.

Observe that not only do the redeemed have the *Father's* name on their foreheads, but they *also* have the name of the <u>Lamb</u> on their foreheads. Of course, the Lamb is none other than the Messiah, the son of Yahweh. Since this translation lists His name as being on the foreheads of the redeemed *in addition to the name of Yahweh*, this most definitely proves that the Father and the Son have separate names, which in turn demonstrates that Yahweh's name would by **no means** "have to" be incorporated into the name of the Messiah.

Some may question the validity of this particular translation as found in the New Revised Standard Version. Other versions indicating this rendering include the New International Version, the American Standard Version, the Living Bible, the Aramaic New Covenant, and the Hebraic-Roots Version "New

Testament."

Adam Clarke, in his *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, wrote the following regarding the translation of this verse:

> Almost every MS. of importance, as well as most of the versions and many of the fathers, read this clause thus: 'Having His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads.' This is undoubtedly the true reading, and is properly received by Griesbach into the text.[237]

For there to be a name for the Father and a name for the Son requires that there be separate names for both Individuals. Separate names means not having the same names. We thus see that there is absolutely no basis for using Revelation 14:1 as a proof text supporting the belief that the Messiah's name "must" contain a portion of the name *Yahweh.*

Finally, as we have previously pointed out in this study, the form *Yeshua* does indeed incorporate the Father's name because when Moses changed Hoshea son of Nun's name to *Yehoshua*, all he did was add a *yod* to the front of his name. A name that meant "salvation" suddenly meant *Yahweh is Salvation*, with only the addition of a simple *yod*. The shortened form of *Yehoshua* is *Yeshua*, and both names begin with that same *yod*. Both mean *Yahweh is Salvation*. We'll cover this aspect of the Messiah's name more fully in section C below.

B. ***According to Isaiah 9:6, the Messiah's name must contain a portion of the Father's name! In that verse, we are given the prophecy that "unto us a child is born, and His name shall be EVERLASTING FATHER." Only by incorporating the Father's name into His Son's name do we fully satisfy the realization of this prophecy.***

Before responding to the above commentary, let's examine the entire verse in question. Shown below is Isaiah 9:6 as found in the New Revised Standard Version:

> [6] For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Please note that this verse not only serves to indicate that the Messiah's name would be *Everlasting Father*, but ALSO *Wonderful Counselor*, *Mighty El*, and *Prince of Peace*. Any individuals insisting that the inclusion *Everlasting Father* proves that "Yah" must form a portion of the Messiah's name are also bound by the parameters of the *other* "names" listed in Isaiah 9:6. Somehow, we must "fit" *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty El*, and *Prince of Peace* into the Messiah's name as well. Thus far, those who insist that "Everlasting Father" = "Yah" (as in *Yahushua*) have not demonstrated how the other "names" can *also* be incorporated into the Messiah's name.

Finally, it is prudent to note that Isaiah 9:6 does not allude to the Messiah's name containing the "Yah" in *Yahweh*. The words "Everlasting Father" are *Ab-Ad* in Hebrew. No one that I am aware of has ever insisted that "*Ab-Ad*" form a portion of the Messiah's name, even though this construction would be

[237] From *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Holy Bible*, by Adam Clarke, Abridged by Ralph Earle, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, Kansas City, MO, 1985 (originally published in 1832), p. 1,347.

far more accurate than the formula proposed by those insisting on the interpretation that the appearance of *Ab-Ad* in Isaiah 9:6 proves that *Yah* must form a portion of the Messiah's name.

C. ***Does Referring to the Messiah as "Yeshua" Constitute a Violation of the Third Commandment?***

Way back in chapter three, within our samples of spiritual intolerance, we included a commentary authored and published by a well-respected member of the Sacred Name Movement. This author insisted that those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua* are not only following the misguided tradition of Judaism to subvert the Creator's name, but they are also guilty of breaking the Third Commandment. We are incorporating this author's commentary here in order to more completely address it. Here is an excerpt from his booklet "Orthodox Followers":

> A few Messianic Jewish groups still spell the Savior's name as "Yeshua" instead of the scholarly "Yahshua," perhaps to placate those who strive to conceal even the short form "Yah." We disagree with the wrong spelling "Yeshua" (instead of Yahshua) as it breaks the Third Commandment by replacing the short form YAH (as found in HalleluYAH), with the "yeh" prefix. Who would ever say, "HalleluYeh"? Whenever we attempt to cover up or set aside, or do away with Yahweh's name we are breaking the Third Commandment. Yahshua boldly proclaimed Yahweh's name, Psalm 22:22, John 17:6, 26.[238]

Before addressing the rationale used by the author to arrive at his conclusion, I believe it is necessary to point out the persuasive style he employs. Notice that "Yahshua" is referred to as "scholarly," whereas "Yeshua" is referred to as "the wrong spelling," even though he offered no explanation to justify his biased remark. Not offering his readers the benefit of an explanation as to how *Yahshua* is "scholarly," but *Yeshua* is "wrong," I am left to believe that he was merely expressing his extremely biased *opinion*. Above all, notice that the author ***presumes*** that those who spell the Messiah's name as *Yeshua* do so "to placate those who strive to conceal even the short form 'Yah!'" Of course, in introducing this reasoning, he mentioned that ***perhaps*** it is to placate those who strive to conceal the short form *Yah*. He thus introduced a ***possibility*** as to why some individuals spell the Messiah's name *Yeshua*. Not only did he fail to quote or otherwise reference any sources explaining how or why his conjecture has any merit, but he then proceeded to operate on this presumption as though it were factual. It is poor journalism, of course, to introduce a "perhaps" clause, and then proceed as though it is a "definite" clause. Upon presenting the possibility that people ***may*** use the *Yeshua* form in an attempt to conceal *Yah*, he promptly accused these same people of breaking the Third Commandment! As I hope to sufficiently demonstrate, the author's presumption is incorrect. Thus operating from a faulty premise, he arrived at an ill-advised, flawed conclusion.

As we analyze this man's commentary, there is one very important aspect that I feel should not be overlooked: Lack of documentation. He offered no footnotes, no guidance to any references substantiating his claims. His claims are apparently very significant, insofar as he obviously believes failure to heed his counsel will result in disobedience to the Third Commandment, yet he apparently did not feel his claims merited any scholarly research on his part or the need to fully demonstrate that his belief is valid.

Let us first turn to Scripture itself to determine if this man's words carry any weight. Is it true that

[238] From a booklet titled "Orthodox Followers," by the late Donald Mansager, published by Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, Kingdom City, MO, 2001, p. 7-8.

those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua* do so in an attempt to conceal *Yah*? The name "Yehoshua / Yahushua" first appears in Numbers 13:16, in what is known as the account of Moses changing Hoshea's name to Joshua. This, of course, is the same Joshua who led the Israelites into the Promised Land, and as we have already covered, his name is more correctly rendered "Yahushua" or "Yehoshua." This name is listed as word #3091 in *Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*. According to the pronunciation listed in *Strong's*, it is pronounced *Yehoshua*.

Before Yehoshua son of Nun's name was changed, as I have just mentioned, his name was *Hoshea*. This name is spelled **הוֹשֵׁע**, and is word #1954 in *Strong's*. Few people are aware that when Moses changed this man's name, all he did was add a *yod* (**י**) to it! Thus, the name **הוֹשֵׁע** (Hoshea) became **יהוֹשֵׁע** (Yehoshua). Observe, if you will, that Moses did ***not*** add "YAHU" (**יהו**) to the name *Hoshea*! All he added was a *yod*, which **by itself** represents the name *Yahweh*. This sufficiently demonstrates that the "yod" is and was considered the "initial" of Yahweh's name.

We hopefully all know that the name *Hoshea* means "salvation."[239] Simply by tacking on the Hebrew letter "yod" (**י**) to that name, we form a name meaning "Yahweh is salvation." Thus, we have just demonstrated that a name containing the *yod* prefix can be said to simultaneously contain the initial of Yahweh's name. The following chart vividly illustrates this point:

	NAME	MEANING
Name Without the "Yod" →	הוֹשֵׁע	Salvation
Name With the "Yod" Added →	יהוֹשֵׁע	**Yahweh** is Salvation

As demonstrated above, all it took to incorporate the name of the Father into the name **הוֹשֵׁע** was the addition of a single letter – the *yod* – the first letter of the Tetragrammaton. That's all it took.

Men who apparently feel they have a better understanding of Hebrew than did James Strong, the author of *Strong's Concordance*, attempt to persuade others that *Yehoshua* is not correct, as it needs to be *Yahushua* (or a pronunciation containing the *Yah* sound). As alluded to earlier, in Daniel Botkin's article, Mr. Botkin sufficiently addresses the points presented by individuals who attempt to refute *Strong's*:

> I have read a lot of literature from writers who seek to expose the "errors" of those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua*. The only thing these writers actually expose is their lack of knowledge. I could give several examples of statements which are absolutely ridiculous. I do not have

[239] For references substantiating that Hoshea means "salvation," please consult *Cruden's Complete Concordance*, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon* and *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 2, Frank E. Gæbelein, Gen. Editor, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1990, p. 806. Other references list such meanings as "help" and "deliverer."

> the space in this publication to give all the examples I have in my files, and I do not wish to embarrass sincere people for their honest but misguided efforts. There are some examples, though, that grossly misrepresent the facts, and some of these examples need to be exposed.[240]

Accusing anyone who refers to the Messiah as *Yeshua* as being guilty of breaking the Third Commandment is one of the examples of writings that "grossly misrepresent the facts," and this unfair accusation needs to be exposed. As previously summarized by Professor Anson F. Rainey, the "Yeh" prefix was already in place during the earthly ministry of the Messiah, demonstrating that the pronunciations *Yehoshua* and *Yeshua* were employed by the early believers. Just because a word or a name has the "yod" prefix does not mean the word must begin with a "Yah" sound. The Greek theologian Clement of Alexandria, for example, made reference to the Tetragrammaton's pronunciation as being *Iaoue* (pronounced "Yahweh").[241] Clearly, the first syllable of this name is attested to as being "Yah." Nevertheless, the Greeks pronounce Joshua's name with the "Yeh" prefix. Would the *Yahshua* proponents have us to believe that the Greeks understood how to sound out the first syllable of the Creator's name, but then they turned around and deliberately subverted the Messiah's name?

This whole dispute, of course, centers around the fact that the Hebrew language does not contain vowels. Thus, with the development of vowel points in the Middle Ages, some individuals question the time differential, maintaining that as the centuries went by, the language underwent some pronunciation changes, to the extent that we cannot trust the vowel points added by the Masoretes. Nevertheless, the vowel points they added to the prefix of the Messiah's name coincide with the Greek pronunciation of that same prefix. Thus, the Greeks recognized the transliteration of YHWH as being pronounced with a "Yah" prefix, but they did ***not*** carry across the same pronunciation in the prefix of the Messiah's name, as it contains the "Yeh" sound. Instead of accusing the Greeks of concealing the Father's name, though, it seems more appropriate to recognize the probability that they were merely transliterating the first syllable of the Messiah's name as they heard it vocalized in the Hebrew tongue.

Sadly, it appears that the author of the quotation in question wrote his commentary from the perspective that there is only one acceptable Hebrew spelling of the Messiah's name. As we have already successfully demonstrated in this study, there are at least two "acceptable Hebrew spellings." The one apparently recognized by the author is **יהושע** (which he feels is correctly transliterated as *Yahshua*). However, the form supported by all available manuscript evidence, including the *Peshitta* text of the New Testament, is the spelling **ישוע**, which, as explained by such experts as Professor Anson F. Rainey and Kai Kjaer-Hansen, is pronounced *Yeshua*. If the form **ישוע** represents an attempt to subvert or otherwise remove *Yah* from the Messiah's name, then it would never have been employed as an acceptable spelling for Joshua's name (Nehemiah 8:17), nor would it have been employed as an acceptable form for Joshua the High Priest in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. In view of these facts, we can only conclude that the author of the booklet "Orthodox Followers" unjustly accuses those who employ this pronunciation of

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[240] From the article "The Messiah's Hebrew Name: 'Yeshua' or 'Yahshua'?" by Daniel Botkin. This article can actually be found on the web, but it originally appeared in Volume 5, Number 5 of his bi-monthly publication *Gates of Eden*. His mailing address is: Gates of Eden, P.O. Box 2257, East Peoria, IL 61611-0257.

[241] For a commentary on Clement of Alexandria's remark, please refer to the "Queries & Comments" section of the Sept/Oct. 1994 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, p. 18. This section contains a letter / editorial contributed by Anson F. Rainey, professor of ancient Near Eastern cultures and Semitic linguistics at Tel Aviv University. A photocopy of this page can be found at the back of this study.

breaking the Third Commandment. The fact that the author chose to not document any of his remarks validates that his own conclusion is "unscholarly."

Finally, we have successfully demonstrated that the Hebrew letter *yod*, when placed at the beginning of a name, can properly serve as the initial of Yahweh's name, as it certainly changed the meaning of Hoshea's name from "salvation" to "Yahweh is salvation." For anyone to dogmatically assert or otherwise imply that additional Hebrew letters are required, or that those who employ the form *Yeshua* remove "Yah" from the Messiah's name, is to plainly misrepresent the facts.

D. *Don't New Testament Passages Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8 Prove the Messiah's Name Had to Be Identical With Joshua son of Nun?*

In order to properly and effectively deal with this question, we need to first display the two passages mentioned above:

> Acts 7:45 -- "Our ancestors in turn brought it (the tent of testimony) in with **Joshua** when they dispossessed the nations that Yahweh drove out before our ancestors."
>
> Hebrews 4:8 -- "For if **Joshua** had given them rest, Yahweh would not speak later about another day."

These two verses are well known for representing classic mistranslations in the King James Version. Since both Joshua's name (Yehoshua / Yahushua) and the Messiah's name are given the same, exact spelling in Greek, the translators of the King James Version goofed and rendered both "Joshuas" as "Jesus." Many regard the fact that both names are spelled the same in Greek (Ιησους) as proof that the Messiah's name "must" be spelled exactly the same as the long form of Joshua's name. In other words, Ιησους = Yahushua, but Ιησους CANNOT = Yeshua, in their estimation.

However, in so doing, these people overlook a very important and significant factor: Both *Yahushua* and *Yeshua* are given the <u>same</u> <u>spelling</u> in Greek! The four inserted sheets that follow this page serve to illustrate what I mean. If you can refer to them now, you will notice the following:

יהושע

Yahushua = Ιησοῦς in Greek

ישוע

Yeshua = Ιησοῦς in Greek

The Interlinear Bible

744 MATTHEW 9:3

Matthew 9:4

Be comforted, child. Your sins have been forgiven you. [3]And, behold, some of the scribes said within themselves, This one blasphemes. [4]And seeing their thoughts, Jesus said, Why do you think evil in your hearts? [5]For what is easier, to say, *Your* sins have been forgiven you; or to say, Rise up and walk? [6]But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins, then He said

3885 2293 5043 863 4671 266
παραλυτικῷ, Θάρσει, τέκνον· ἀφέωνταί σοι αἱ ἁμαρτίαι
paralytic, Be comforted, child; have been forgiven you the sins
4675 2400 5100 1122 2036 1722 1438
3 σου. καὶ ἰδού, τινὲς τῶν γραμματέων εἶπον ἐν ἑαυτοῖς,
of you. And behold, some of the scribes said within themselves,
3778 987 1492 2424 1761 848
4 Οὗτος βλασφημεῖ. καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν
This (one) blasphemes. And seeing Jesus the thoughts of them
2036 2424 5210 1760 4190 1722 2588 5216
εἶπεν, Ἱνατί ὑμεῖς ἐνθυμεῖσθε πονηρὰ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν;
He said, Why do you think evil in the hearts of you?
5101 1063 2076 2123 2036 863 4671
5 τί γάρ ἐστιν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν, Ἀφέωνταί σοι αἱ
what For is easier, to say, Have been forgiven you the
266 2228 2036 1453 4043 2443 1492
6 ἁμαρτίαι· ἢ εἰπεῖν, Ἔγειραι καὶ περιπάτει; ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε,
sins; or to say, Rise up and walk? that But you may know
3754 1849 2192 5207 444 1909 1093 863

The Interlinear Bible

Hebrews 4:8

They shall not enter into My rest." [6]Therefore, since it remains *for* some to enter into it, and those who formerly had the gospel preached did not enter in on account of disobedience. [7]He again marks out a certain day, saying in David, "Today"—after so long a time, according as He has said—"Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." [8]For if Joshua gave them rest, then He would not have afterwards spoken about another day. [9]So, then, there remains a rest to the people of God. [10]For He entering into His rest, *He* Himself also rested from His works, as God *had done* from His own.

2041 848 1722 5129 3825/1487 1525
5 τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἐν τούτῳ πάλιν, Εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς
the works of Him; and in this (place) again, If they shall enter into
2663 3450 1893/3767 620 5100 1525
6 τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου. ἐπεὶ οὖν ἀπολείπεται τινὰς εἰσελθεῖν
the rest of Me. Since therefore it remains (for) some to enter
1519 846 4386 2097 3756 1525 1223
εἰς αὐτήν, καὶ οἱ πρότερον εὐαγγελισθέντες οὐκ εἰσῆλθον δι'
into it, and those before having had the gospel preached not entered for
543 3825 5100 3724 2250 4594 1722 1138
7 ἀπείθειαν, πάλιν τινὰ ὁρίζει ἡμέραν, Σήμερον, ἐν Δαβὶδ
disobedience, again a certain marks out day: Today; in David
3004 3326 5118 5550 2531 2046 4594 1437
λέγων, μετὰ τοσοῦτον χρόνον, καθὼς εἴρηται, Σήμερον ἐὰν
saying after such a time, as He has said, Today, if
5468 848 191 3361 4645 2588
τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε, μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας
the voice of Him you hear, do not harden the hearts
5216/1487/1063/846 2424 2664 3756/302/4012/243
8 ὑμῶν. εἰ γὰρ αὐτοὺς Ἰησοῦς κατέπαυσεν, οὐκ ἂν περὶ ἄλλης
of you. if For them (Joshua) rested, not concerning another
2980 /3326 5023 2250 686 620 4520
9 ἐλάλει μετὰ ταῦτα ἡμέρας. ἄρα ἀπολείπεται σαββατισμὸς
he would after these things day. Then remains a sabbath rest
*2992 have spoken 2316 1063 1525/1519 2663 848
10 τῷ λαῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ. ὁ γὰρ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ
to the people of God. He For having entered into the rest of Him,
846 2664 575 2041 848 5618 575
καὶ αὐτὸς κατέπαυσεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ, ὥσπερ ἀπὸ
also Himself rested from the works of Him as from

The Inter linear Bible -- Joshua 5:13

"And it happened, when Joshua was beside Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked. And, behold! A Man stood opposite him, and His drawn sword *was* in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, Are You for us, or for our foes? "And He said, No, for I now come *as* the Commander of the army of Jehovah. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and worshiped. And *he* said to Him, What does my Lord say to His

	5869	5375	3405	3091	1961	1961											8141
13	עֵינָיו	וַיִּשָּׂא	בִּירִיחוֹ	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	בִּהְיוֹת	וַיְהִי											בְּשָׁנָה הַהִיא:
	his eyes	he lifted	that Jericho	beside	Joshua	was when	it was	And									in that year.
	32113	3027	8025		2719	504+8	5975				376	2009	7200				
	וַיֵּלֶךְ	יָדוֹ	שְׁלוּפָה	בְּיָדוֹ	וַחַרְבּוֹ	לְנֶגְדּוֹ	עֹמֵד				אִישׁ	וְהִנֵּה	וַיַּרְא				
	and went	His hand	(was) drawn	in	His sword	and	opposite him				stood	a Man	and behold	and looked			
	559		6902														3091
14	וַיֹּאמֶר		אַתָּה	אִם־לְצָרֵינוּ:													יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֵלָיו
	He said	And		our foes?	or	You	Are	us for	to	Him	said	and	to	Him			Joshua
	3091	5307	935		8258		3068		6635		8269						3808
	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	וַיִּפֹּל	בָּאתִי	עַתָּה			יְהוָה	צְבָא־	שַׂר־		אָנִי	כִּי	לֹא				
	Joshua	fell	And	have I	Now		Jehovah		the		the (am) I	for	No				

SEPTUAGINT → JOSHUA 5:13

ιν τῶν Φοινίκων ἐν τῷ ἑκαυτῷ ἐκείνῳ.
καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς ἦν Ἰησοῦς ἐν Ἱεριχώ, καὶ ἀναβλέψας τοῖς
ιλμοῖς εἶδεν ἄνθρωπον ἑστηκότα ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἡ
βαία ἐσπασμένη ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ· καὶ προσελθὼν Ἰησοῦς
αὐτῷ, ἡμέτερος εἶ, ἢ τῶν ὑπεναντίων; Ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ,
ἀρχιστράτηγος δυνάμεως Κυρίου, νυνὶ παραγέγονα. Καὶ
ὺς ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ,
ότα, τί προστάσσεις τῷ σῷ οἰκέτῃ; Καὶ λέγει ὁ ἀρχι-
τηγος Κυρίου πρὸς Ἰησοῦν, λύσαι τὸ ὑπόδημα ἐκ τῶν
ν σου, ὁ γὰρ τόπος ἐφ' ᾧ νῦν ἕστηκας ἐπ' αὐτοῦ, ἅγιός

αὶ Ἱεριχὼ συγκεκλεισμένη καὶ ὠχυρωμένη, καὶ οὐδεὶς
ρεύετο ἐξ αὐτῆς, οὐδὲ εἰσεπορεύετο. Καὶ εἶπε Κύριος
Ἰησοῦν, ἰδου ἐγὼ παραδίδωμι ὑποχείριόν σοι τὴν Ἱεριχὼ,
ὸν βασιλέα αὐτῆς τὸν ἐν αὐτῇ, δυνατοὺς ὄντας ἐν ἰσχύϊ.
ὺ δὲ περίστησον αὐτῇ τοὺς μαχίμους κύκλῳ. Καὶ ἔσται
ν σαλπίσητε τῇ σάλπιγγι, ἀνακραγέτω πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἅμα,
ἀνακραγόντων αὐτῶν πεσεῖται αὐτόματα τὰ τείχη τῆς
ος, καὶ εἰσελεύσεται πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ὁρμήσας ἕκαστος κατὰ
ωπον εἰς τὴν πόλιν.
αὶ εἰσῆλθεν Ἰησοῦς ὁ τοῦ Ναυῆ πρὸς τοὺς ἱερεῖς, καὶ

no longer had manna; and they took the fruits of the land of the Phœnicians in that year.

[13] And it came to pass when Joshua was in Jericho, that he looked up with his eyes and saw a man standing before him, and *there was* a drawn sword in his hand; and Joshua drew near and said to him, Art thou for us or on the side of our enemies? [14] And he said to him, I am now come, the chief captain of the host of the Lord. [15] And Joshua fell on his face upon the earth, and said to him, Lord, what commandest thou thy servant? [16] And the captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, Loose thy shoe off thy feet, for the place whereon thou now standest is holy.

Now Jericho was closely shut up and besieged, and none went out of it, and none came in. [2] And the Lord said to Joshua, Behold, I deliver Jericho into thy power, and its king in it, [δ] *and its* mighty men. [3] And do thou set the men of war round about it. [4] And it shall be *that* when ye shall sound with the trumpet, [θ] all the people shall shout together. [5] And when they have shouted, the walls of the city shall fall [λ] of themselves; and all the people shall enter, each one rushing direct into the city. [6] And Joshua the *son* of Naue went in to the priests, and spoke to them, saying, Charge

their minds or thoughts melted. γ *Gr.* from the face of. δ *Gr.* sitting. A frequent Hebraism. ζ *Gr.* mighty in strength.
θ *Gr.* let all the people, etc. λ *Or*, of their own accord.

Notice how the Hebrew word for "Joshua" is rendered in the Greek Septuagint.

The Interlinear Bible

Nehemiah 8:7

answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands. And they bowed and worshiped to Jehovah *with their* noses to the ground. 7And Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the Law. And the people *were* in their place. 8And they read aloud clearly in the Book of

6 13605 5030 11419 430 3068 5830 1288 6971
הָעָם׃ וַיְבָרֶךְ עֶזְרָא אֶת־יְהוָה הָאֱלֹהִים הַגָּדוֹל וַיַּעֲנוּ כָל־
all and great God the Jehovah Ezra And the
answered blessed people

639 3068 7812 6915 3027 4607 543 543 5971
הָעָם אָמֵן׀ אָמֵן בְּמֹעַל יְדֵיהֶם וַיִּקְּדוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לַיהוָה אַפַּיִם
(with) to and they and their in Amen Amen the
noses Jehovah worshiped bowed hands lifting people

7 941 7678 6128 3266 8274 1137 3442 776
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The Septugint : Nehemiah 8:7

5 Καὶ ἤνοιξεν Ἔσδρας τὸ βιβλίον ἐνώπιον παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ, ὅτι αὐτὸς ἦν ἐπάνω τοῦ λαοῦ· καὶ ἐγένετο ἡνίκα ἤνοιξεν αὐτό, 6 ἔστη πᾶς ὁ λαός. Καὶ ηὐλόγησεν Ἔσδρας Κύριον τὸν Θεὸν τὸν μέγαν· καὶ ἀπεκρίθη πᾶς ὁ λαὸς, καὶ εἶπαν, ἀμὴν, ἐπάραντες τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν· καὶ ἔκυψαν καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ Κυρίῳ 7 ἐπὶ πρόσωπον ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν. Καὶ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ Βαναΐας, καὶ Σαραβίας ἦσαν συνετίζοντες τὸν λαὸν εἰς τὸν νόμον· καὶ ὁ λαὸς 8 ἐν τῇ στάσει αὐτοῦ. Καὶ ἀνέγνωσαν ἐν βιβλίῳ νόμου τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἐδίδασκεν Ἔσδρας, καὶ διέστελλεν ἐν ἐπιστήμῃ Κυρίου, καὶ συνῆκεν ὁ λαὸς ἐν τῇ ἀναγνώσει.

9 Καὶ εἶπε Νεεμίας καὶ Ἔσδρας ὁ ἱερεὺς καὶ γραμματεὺς, καὶ οἱ Λευῖται, καὶ οἱ συνετίζοντες τὸν λαὸν, καὶ εἶπαν παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, ἡμέρα ἁγία ἐστὶ τῷ Κυρίῳ Θεῷ ἡμῶν, μὴ πενθεῖτε μηδὲ κλαίετε· ὅτι ἔκλαιε πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ὡς ἤκουσαν τοὺς λόγους τοῦ 10 νόμου. Καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, πορεύεσθε, φάγετε λιπάσματα, καὶ πίετε γλυκάσματα, καὶ ἀποστείλατε μερίδας τοῖς μὴ ἔχουσιν, ὅτι ἁγία ἐστὶν ἡ ἡμέρα τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν· καὶ μὴ διαπέσητε, 11 ὅτι ἐστὶ Κύριος ἰσχὺς ἡμῶν. Καὶ οἱ Λευῖται κατεσιώπων πάντα τὸν λαὸν, λέγοντες, σιωπᾶτε, ὅτι ἡμέρα ἁγία, καὶ μὴ 12 καταπίπτετε. Καὶ ἀπῆλθε πᾶς ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πιεῖν, καὶ ἀποστέλλειν μερίδας, καὶ ποιῆσαι εὐφροσύνην μεγάλην, ὅτι συνῆκαν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις οἷς ἐγνώρισεν αὐτοῖς.

opened the book before all the people, for he was above the people; and it came to pass when he had opened it, *that* all the people stood. 6 And Esdras blessed the Lord, the great God: and all the people answered, and said, Amen, lifting up their hands: and they bowed down and worshipped the Lord with their face to the ground. 7 And Jesus and Banaias and Sarabias instructed the people in the law, and the people *stood* in their place. 8 And they read in the book of the law of God, and Esdras taught, and instructed them distinctly in the knowledge of the Lord, and the people understood *the law* in the reading.

9 And Neemias, and Esdras the priest and scribe, and the Levites, and they that instructed the people, spoke and said to all the people, It is a holy day to the Lord our God; do not mourn, nor weep. For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. 10 And *the governor* said to them, Go, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions to them that have nothing: for the day is holy to our Lord: and faint not, for the Lord is our strength. 11 And the Levites caused all the people to be silent, saying, Be silent, for *it is* a holy day, and despond not. 12 So all the people departed to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, for they understood the words which he made known to them.

β *Gr.* of part. γ *Or.* golden vessels. δ *Gr.* sat, or settled. ζ *Note.*—In chap. vii. there are frequent slight variations in *Alex.* θ *Gr.* participle. λ *Gr.* on.

As we review the contents of the preceding pages, let's start with the Greek New Testament.[242] We can see from such passages as Matthew 9:4 that the Messiah's name is rendered Ιησους in Greek. In Hebrews 4:8, we see the reference to Joshua son of Nun, and as you can observe, his name is likewise rendered Ιησους in Greek. If we were to stop there, we might conclude that whenever we see the Greek name Ιησους, it can only represent the Greek rendering of the Hebrew form **יהושע**. However, when we examine the ensuing pages, we see another perspective begin to unfold.

The next page we display shows the Hebrew text of Joshua 5:13 as it appears in *The Interlinear Bible*.[243] Note how Joshua's name is spelled in the Hebrew (**יהושע**). This is what is termed "the long form" of the name in question, spelled "yod, he, waw, shin, ayin" in Hebrew. On the lower half of the page is this same passage as it appears in the Greek Septuagint[244]. As we can see, once again, Joshua's name is rendered Ιησους in Greek. We can thus discern that the Hebrew **יהושע** is indeed considered equivalent to the Greek Ιησους.

Again, if we stop right here, one might prematurely conclude that Ιησους can <u>only</u> be considered the Greek form of *Yehoshua / Yahushua*, NOT *Yeshua*. Now let's examine our final inserted page where we can see without a doubt that, indeed, the form *Yeshua* is ALSO rendered Ιησους in Greek! Shown at the top of the page is Nehemiah 8:7 as found in *The Interlinear Bible*. A man named *Jeshua*, or more properly *Yeshua*, is mentioned in this verse. In the Hebrew, this name is spelled **ישוע**.[245]

And now, note how "Jeshua" is rendered in the Greek! On the lower part of the page is a photocopy of Nehemiah 8:7 as it appears in the Septuagint. As is plainly shown, the Hebrew *Yeshua* is <u>ALSO</u> rendered Ιησους in Greek!

Once we examine this evidence, we can see that it is not accurate to state that the Messiah's name "must" be *Yehoshua / Yahushua* because of the fact that *Yehoshua / Yahushua* is rendered Ιησους in Greek. *Yeshua*, as we have just shown, is <u>also</u> rendered Ιησους in Greek!

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[242] The texts photocopied for each of these three inserted sheets, both Greek New Testament and Hebrew Interlinear, are all taken from *The Interlinear Bible*, Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1986.

[243] From *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew-Greek-English*, Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1985.

[244] From *The Septuagint With Apocrypha: Greek and English*, translated by Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton (Originally published by Samuel Bagster & Sons, Ltd., London, 1851), Hendrickson Publishers.

[245] Actually, what you see circled (on the photocopy) is a word spelled **וישוע.** The "waw" (**ו**) that begins this name's spelling is simply the Hebrew word "And," which they linguistically tack on to words. This is just a part of Hebrew grammar.

18. Accepting Dialectal Variety – With an Asterisk*

In our drive to encourage the acceptance and understanding of those who lean towards a different Hebrew spelling and pronunciation of the Messiah's name, we need to likewise be careful about drawing lines and telling others what the spelling and pronunciation *cannot* be. When June and I began referring to the Messiah as *Yeshua* instead of *Yahshua* in 1997, our relationship with the majority of Sacred Name movement advocates either ended or became strained. We found this puzzling in view of the fact that we have never asked anyone to change the way they pronounce the Messiah's name, nor have we ever presented a pronunciation that we feel *cannot* be correct.[246] The general response from our former Sacred Name Movement friends made it difficult to balance our love for the brethren with their expectation that we pronounce the Messiah's name exactly as they do. Authoring our study proved helpful in achieving the balance we need, but of course nothing is gained if folks don't take the time to read our perspective and many are not willing because they have already made up their minds.

Another Unity Conference Presentation

One of the brethren with whom I would have *least* expected to experience a rift over this issue is the man referenced in chapter five: Michael A. Banak. We have personally found Michael to be a very affable and gracious man who reveres the Almighty and exhibits a heart for service to Him. Michael is also a dedicated researcher and an eloquent speaker. He put together the initial rough draft of a then-planned 2014 Unity Conference "Elders Only" presentation addressing the Messiah's name in December 2013 and he asked me to review it. He wrote:

> If you have time, please review my write-up. It is painful to seek perfection, but this may be my only shot.[247]

Michael's rough draft essentially consisted of a commentary on author Werner Foerster's lengthy article on the Messiah's name as found in *Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. III. We gave Michael's treatise a ringing endorsement; he seemed to be one of the very few who is genuinely interested in seeking true unity on this topic. Here is an excerpt from his paper that we found particularly refreshing:

> This author maintains that, if any pronunciation comes from the Hebrew, and is linguistically possible, it has equivalent value to any other pronunciation before Heaven. Especially in light of how unlikely it is that anyone can articulate these Names perfectly after all this time. This includes short forms, long forms and in-between forms. (The seminar will recommend strategies for maintaining Divine Order in The Assemblies, in spite of these differences).[248]

At last, here was someone who agrees with our perspective that the unity we should each seek is not who has or doesn't have the Messiah's name 100% correct, but rather it should be the realization that we *all* recognize that He has a Hebrew name and consequently we are all doing our best to reverently use it. The solution is *not* putting one transliteration attempt above another, which makes camaraderie and fellowship next to impossible when we all find ourselves leaning in different directions. What made

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[246] *Jesus* is an exception to this rule, as agreed upon by all authorities, esp. since the *yod* in His name cannot produce a "J" sound.

[247] Excerpted from e-mail received from Michael Banak on 12/8/2013.

[248] From the Introduction to "A Review of Kittel's Article: Preparation for Messiah's Name Seminar," by Michael A. Banak, 12/08/2013, p. 1.

Michael's paper so refreshing was not only his presenting this topic from a different, yet similar, angle to the approach June and I have used for so long, but the fact that he so eloquently rephrased many of the points that we had attempted to convey to Sacred Name Movement readers. Even the title he came up with resonates with a *pizzazz* that is missing from our rather mundane "Name of the Messiah: An Appeal for Mutual Understanding and Acceptance of Those With Differing Ideas." Michael's title is more succinct and captivating: "The Messiah's Name: Accepting Dialectal Variety." His title suggests that he has the same message we do, but that he's going to present it in a more stimulating fashion and sure enough, June and I found his rough draft to be eloquent and, most important of all, *truthful*. Here's an excerpt from the response that I sent to Michael's rough draft:

> I would like to commend you for doing your "due diligence" in researching this topic from what appears to be a mostly unbiased perspective. Quite frankly, this is not the type of research that I am accustomed to seeing from members of what is known as the "Sacred Name Movement."[249]

We saw nothing in Michael Banak's rough draft that would indicate anything other than his established goal: Encouraging everyone to accept dialectal variety with the way different individuals pronounce the Messiah's name. His paper not only encouraged mutual acceptance and understanding, but he also deftly explained the unavoidable mechanics of vowel dissimilation and how they innocently impact this controversy in a way that I simply had not been able to adequately express. I still consider Michael to be an expert at explaining how vowel dissimilation works. However, things were about to change. The old cliché "it's too good to be true" certainly applies to Michael Banak's approach to accepting dialectal variety, as we are about to see.

Before we explore how the controversy surrounding the pronunciation of the Messiah's name led to the unraveling of our relationship with Mr. Banak, it might be helpful for you to know how and why he decided to give a Unity Conference presentation on this topic. What inspired him to give his presentation is definitely important and we will address our perspective of Michael's underlying motive later in this chapter. In one of his e-mails, Michael summarized what led to his decision to give his presentation:

> Please allow me to explain the Genesis of this.
>
> A few years ago, A minister associated with YRM[250] published an article against the Short-form. I rebutted it by email. It became a point of friendly controversy since them.
>
> So, I asked YRM Ministry for 5 years to to get to the bottom of this. We are now at approx year #3. I wanted to do a presentation at the Unity conference, but let YRM see the presentation first, so they were not blind-sided by it. At the 2013 Unity Conference, I was going to do a short talk, merely introducing the subject, so people could prepare for the full talk in 2014.
>
> Through a complicated series of events, Elohim blocked me from going to the UC 2013. So, I concluded that I was meant to handle this differently. Then I got the peace-inducing idea to go just to the elders, rather than "take it to the streets".
>
> In parallel with all this, brother Gerald Smith urged me to write an article BEFORE the UC presentation. I didn't want to do that, but I saw value in teasing the elders into deeper study before they show up. So I decided to use a review of Kittel's article as a vehicle for key topics and to toughen-up the elders before the live

[249] Excerpted from the e-mail I sent Michael Banak on 12/22/2013.
[250] Yahweh's Restoration Ministry, located in Holts Summit, Missouri.

> talk.[251]

Michael's reference to his affiliation with YRM (Yahweh's Restoration Ministry) is in our opinion key to determining why things eventually deteriorated between us, and although we *do* need to be careful about drawing premature conclusions, at the same time it is natural to wonder about what went wrong and why. It was only after Michael and I agreed to disagree and our communications ended that June and I were able to fit the missing pieces together. We will explore this aspect later.

Do Sheep Say, "Bah"?

After having reviewed and complimented Michael for his outstanding rough draft, he threw us a hint that maybe he didn't quite agree with the pronunciation that June and I have been using. In question is the first syllable of that name. We already know that the Sacred Name Movement demands that it be vocalized as *Yah*, but June and I have long pronounced it as *Yay* (as in *pray*). Although this is how we pronounce the first syllable of the Messiah's name, for some reason we compress the first syllable whenever we use that name in a sentence, so most people actually hear us say something more like *Yeh* (as in *yes*). This syllable-compression process is similar to how many of us pronounce the word "and" when we say "apples and oranges." We all hopefully know that the word "and" is pronounced "ænd," the "a" being vocalized as the "a" in the word "can." But when we put words such as "apples and oranges" together, the word "and" is compressed and pronounced "un." Only someone with near-perfect (maybe too perfect) diction will actually pronounce each of those three words with textbook accuracy. In fact, a common way of writing "apples and oranges" is "apples 'n' oranges." There are several examples of how this phonetic anomaly works, such as the term "rock 'n roll" instead of the more grammatically-correct "rock and roll." We might include the name of a famous rock 'n' roll music group known as "Guns n' Roses." In the same way, our research leads us to believe the Messiah's name as given to Him at birth is pronounced very close to "Yay'shua," but when we mention His name in a sentence, it usually comes out "Yeh'shua" (as in "yes"). Ironically, Michael doesn't take issue with the way we typically vocalize the Messiah's name within a sentence, but he sharply disagrees with how we say it by itself: "Yay'shua." It's such a subtle distinction, yet it caused a glaring disagreement.

Michael understands and agrees with June and me in that one of the best ways of knowing how a certain word was pronounced in Hebrew is to find out how that same word was pronounced in Greek,[252] so he uses what he feels is the ancient pronunciation of the Greek vowel *eta* (η) to determine how the Messiah's name (Ιησους, commonly transliterated *Iesous*) was anciently vocalized. Here is what he wrote:

> I own an old, rare copy of the grandaddy book on the subject of Greek and Latin pronunciation: "The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin" by Edgar Sturtevant.
>
> He claims the ancient sound of the "eta" did not sound like "ay" [Larry's note: "ay" as in *pray*] until after the first century. Anciently, *eta* sounded like something between "eh" and "ah."
>
> I think the pre-messianic brethren in Alexandria used the *eta* (instead of the

[251] Excerpted from e-mail received from Michael Banak on 12/23/2013.
[252] *Cf.*, chapter 4, "Evidence for the Messiah's Name: The Septuagint."

> *epsilon*) to allow variety in the articulation of the first syllable of **Ἰησους**.[253]

With that e-mail, the dynamics of our discussion began to change because it now appeared that Michael was reconsidering his original call for acceptance of dialectal variety. However, his last statement above, with its emphasis on *variety*, diminished the impact of his summary of author Edgar Sturtevant's conclusion to the extent that I was persuaded that Michael still had no issues with the pronunciation that June and I use. I might add that Michael had previously complimented us on our study and offered no disagreements to anything we had written, including how we presented the manner in which various scholars vocalize the Messiah's name. At that time, it just didn't click that the above commentary was actually intended to show us that he disagrees with the pronunciation we have used all these years. In fact, for some strange reason I thought Michael's reference to the "ay" sound *might* have been his way of reproducing the sound of the word "ay," as in the alternate spelling of the word "aye." I wasn't initially certain that he was referring to words that *end* in "-ay," such as "pray." Since the word "ay" as in "aye" carries the long "ī" sound, I would have agreed with Michael's comment that the ancient Greek *eta* most likely did not sound like "ay" as in "aye." I certainly *hoped* he wasn't about to infuse a claim that the Greek *eta* didn't anciently sound like the "ay" in *pray*, but just to be sure, here's how I replied:

> Of course, I am curious as to how Sturtevant was able to determine that anciently, the *eta* sounded like something between "eh" and "ah." I would also like to know how to vocalize such a sound. I know if I vocalize "Yeshua" SLOWLY, it comes out like "YAY-shua"["yay" as in "pray"], but in a sentence it sounds more like "Yeshua" ["Ye" as in "yes"]. If you would be able to somehow scan the appropriate page(s) from Sturtevant's book and e-mail them to us, that would be terrific! If you are unable to do so, we understand. I like the notion that pre-messianic brethren in Alexandria used the *eta* to allow articulatory variety. I am greatly persuaded that our Heavenly Father allows for considerably more variety than most believers are willing to give Him credit for![254]

My question to Michael was, "How did E. H. Sturtevant <u>know</u> that the ancient *eta* sounded like something between an "eh" and an "ah"? His answer, as we are about to see, is this: That's how the ancient Greeks transcribed the sound they heard from a bleating sheep, and sheep don't say, "baa" as in "bay." Therefore, concludes Michael Banak, *eta* could not have carried the *ay* sound (as in "pray") in the distant past. Here is his response:

> Small world about Sturtevant! The link below will take you to an early edition, where he cites three (3) ... yes three ancient authors, who describe the sound of a sheep using the eta. The [author] states that the sound must be between an alpha and an epsilon.
>
> The link below takes you right to the pertinent page.
>
> Enjoy!
> Michael B.
> https://archive.org/stream/pronunciationgr00unkngoog#page/n140/mode/2up[255]

[253] Excerpted from e-mail received from Michael Banak on 12/22/2013.
[254] Excerpted from the e-mail I sent Michael Banak on 12/22/2013.
[255] Excerpted from e-mail received from Michael Banak on 12/22/2013.

E-mail Sent to "File 13"

I was immediately concerned about Michael's new finding. Does the ancient transliteration of a sheep's cry prove how the first syllable of the Messiah's name was pronounced? First, the question begging for an answer is, "If you're going to give the *eta* an 'ah' sound (which is what Michael does with how he pronounces *Yahshua*), then what sound is represented by the ancient Greek *alpha*?" Michael has never answered this question. Second, since sheep actually say, "baaa" as in "mad," how could this be considered evidence that the ancient Greek *eta* was pronounced as "ah" as in "Yah"? These are two different vowel sounds. One is phonetically rendered "æ,"[256] which is truly a sound "between an alpha and an epsilon." The other is phonetically written (in the Universal Phonetic Alphabet) as "ā" ("ah" as in "Yah"), so they are not the same. Michael has never answered this question, either. I first addressed these two concerns in December 2013. Michael never directly responded to the following e-mail:

> Thank you for sharing the link to E. H. Sturdevant's work. I am persuaded that there should indeed be some "wiggle room" when it comes to how the *eta* was originally pronounced, especially if one considers that *eta* was once used to reproduce the sound of a sheep. The sheep we used to raise would make the "baaa" sound as in "mad." That may have been a difficult vowel for which to create an adequate symbol. I mean, you have the *alpha* (*a* as in "father") and the epsilon (*e* as in "met"), so maybe the *eta* served as a "go-between."
>
> By the way, do you have any idea what sound is represented by the *eta* with this symbol (circumflex) hovering over it?
>
> ῆ
>
> Just curious, since that is what is actually represented with the sheep's cry (p. 123 of Sturdevant's work):
>
> βῆ βῆ (Note to reader: these are the Greek letters *Beta* and *eta*)
>
> I found the following two quotes interesting:
>
> **Page 126:** "In the first century B.C. Dionysius of Halicarnassus finds η the most pleasant in sound of all the vowels except α, while ι is the least pleasant." (This clearly shows that there was a distinction of some sort between the *alpha* and the *eta* during that time period).
>
> **Page 127:** "Oriental loan-words indicate that Greek η continued to be an *e*-vowel in the East from Alexander's time until long after the beginning of the Christian Era." (Do Sacred-Namers understand that the Greek "e-vowel" is pronounced "ay" (as in "pray"?)
>
> I know there must have been a difference between the η and the α for the Greek writer to have selected the α (as opposed to the η) to represent the "Yah" sound in ἀλληλουΐα [Alleluia] (instead of ἀλληλουΐη [Alleluyeh]). More relevant to this discussion, it would have been a simple matter to have written the Messiah's name as Ἰασους, but that isn't what was done. Let's face it: The Sacred Name Movement wants to *at least* see Ἰασους, and the fact that they see something else has contributed to what you yourself referred to as "Mickey Mouse linguistics."

[256] The æ" is sometimes referred to as the "ash" symbol. According to the online *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries,* definition #6 for the word "ash," it is "the letter æ, used in Old English, and as a phonetic symbol to represent the vowel sound in *cat*." http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/ash_1 © 2015 Oxford University Press.

> I hope you understand where I'm coming from.[257]

I find it absolutely fascinating that Michael never responded to the above e-mail. Never. In fact, we didn't hear from him again until four months later, when he sent us an updated rough draft of his pre-presentation. At the time, I thought he must have been so busy with job responsibilities and the burden of compiling information for his then-upcoming Unity Conference presentation that he didn't have time to respond. I am now persuaded that he is unable to satisfactorily answer the questions and concerns raised in the above e-mail, so he decided to relegate my e-mail to "File 13."

The questions and concerns addressed in my e-mail are truly disconcerting when it comes to his apparent conclusion that the sound made by a bleating sheep proves the ancient Greek *eta* sounded like an "ah" as in "Yah." What I find from both Michael's responses and the questions that he leaves unanswered is this bottom line summary: Michael very passionately wants and desires to find examples of ancient Greeks having spelled the Messiah's name as Ίασους instead of Ίησους, but in the absence of any such evidence, he is pulling all the stops he can to give the ancient *eta* the desired "ah" sound that he and his Sacred Name Movement counterparts need to produce the pronunciation they want. In essence, Michael tweaks the vowel sound heard from bleating sheep to make it fit his paradigm. If Michael can supply us with a satisfactory explanation that dissuades us from this "bottom line summary" of his approach, we would love to see it.

The Messiah's Name in the Jewish Catacombs at Rome's Villa Torlonia

In the above paragraph, I went out on a limb by expressing my fervent opinion that Michael very passionately wants to find and produce examples of ancient Greeks having spelled the Messiah's name as Ίασους instead of Ίησους. Interestingly, Michael has indeed exposed a strong desire to at least see the Messiah's name spelled with the "Ία" prefix instead of "Ιη" in a separate e-mail:

> Even though this paper and the seminar are mostly a defense of the short form, I must provide support for the form "Yahshua," for the sake of balance if nothing else. The new draft reluctantly has this matter expanded.
>
> It can be noted for now that Kittel cites a transliteration in the catacombs, which begins with Iota-alpha (Ia). You will find this in the large paste-in, around page 18 of my paper, the citation with blue and red underline.[258]

It turns out the Greek inscription on the catacombs is rendered **Ίάσων**. The finding of Greek inscriptions with the Messiah's name written "Ίάσων" (pronounced *Yahsohn*) instead of Ίησους is certainly noteworthy, but that's essentially where the news quietly fades. Author Werner Foerster, in *Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*,[259] mentions this inscription having been found in

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[257] Excerpted from the e-mail I sent Michael Banak on 12/23/2013.

[258] Banak, Michael A., Response to our revision/correction suggestions, a pdf document dated March 26, 2014, p. 1.

[259] *Theological Dictionary of The New Testament*, Vol. III, edited by Gerhard Kittel, Translator and Editor, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, article "Ιησους," by Werner Foerster, originally published in 1933, pp. 286. The exact quote reads: "With the 2nd century A.D. **ישוע** or Ίησους disappears as a proper name. In Rabbinic literature **ישוע** is found only as the name of the 9th priestly class; elsewhere we always have the full **יהושוע**, which is borne by quite a number of rabbis. In the Greek field,

Roman catacombs. Catacombs, by the way, are underground cemeteries consisting of intricate labyrinths or tunnels with recesses for burial chambers. The catacombs in question are found in Rome and may be as old as the first century CE, though they are mostly dated from the end of the second to the early fifth century CE.[260] Since the precise dating is open to debate and speculation, let's assume that the inscriptions referred to by Kittel[261] date to the first century CE. The following question arises: If Greek-speaking Jews of that time period spelled the name of Joshua son of Nun and the Messiah's name as Ἰάσων (pronounced *Yahsohn*), would this indicate that the correct pronunciation of that first syllable is "Yah" or would it demonstrate the acceptance of dialectal variety with its counterpart Ἰησους? And if both forms existed at the same time, should we assume that both were pronounced the same? Wouldn't there have been a distinction of sorts? Also noteworthy is the late Greek scholar and author W. Sidney Allen's comment that any unique characteristics distinguishing the catacomb inscriptions from other Greek writings "may be dismissed as peculiarities of the dialect of the Jewish community."[262]

For the record (which we probably need to repeat over and over again), June and I have no problem with those who prefer to pronounce the Messiah's name with the first-syllable "Yah," and in fact we wouldn't be surprised if there were 1st century believers who pronounced it that way. Maybe everyone did. Nevertheless, this is not the pronunciation that we have found in our personal research. Regrettably, those who prefer the "Yah" pronunciation typically don't feel the same way about the pronunciation that June and I feel led to use. So hey, if Michael wants to put in a defense of the pronunciation *Yahshua* while encouraging acceptance of enough dialectal variety to include folks like June and me in the circle of believers, we're all for it. However, as we will soon see, he does not do this. As our discussion waned, Michael once again brought up the spelling of the Messiah's name as found in the catacombs:

> My defense of the "ah" forms has changed significantly over time, but it has always been trimmed back. I'm not sure whether I want people to notice that or not. Maybe I just don't care anymore. Example: I purposely left off mention of transcriptions in the catacombs, where The Messiah's Name is spelled with an Alpha. You will find it in Foerster's article in Kittel's Dictionary, if you look. For somebody back then, the resemblance in sound was close enough. If I secretly wanted to advance the "ah" sound, I would have imported that data. I still forgive you for your speculative mischaracterization of me and my motives.[263]

Let's consider for a moment Michael's claim that Greek inscriptions found in the Roman catacombs

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however, Ἰάσων may still be found in the catacombs. Ἰησους, on the other hand, is not found there, although the form Gesua and the feminine Gesues occur in Venusia in the 6th century A.D." It should be noted that although Ἰάσων could certainly be considered an acceptable form of the Messiah's name, author Werner Foerster doesn't give us the exact quote or even the context behind the use of this form in the catacombs. *Do we know that it was used in reference to the Messiah?* Keep in mind that the common English transliteration of Ἰάσων is "Jason."

[260] *Cf., The Jerusalem Post*, "Jewish catacombs at Rome's Villa Torlonia," by Irving Spitz, 07/18/2010. Although author Irving Spitz states that the catacombs date from the end of the second to the early fifth century CE, he also points out that radiocarbon dating shows the catacombs were constructed around 100 BCE, and Jewish use of the catacombs for burying their dead came into general use in the first century and predate Christian catacombs by at least 100 years. However, W. Sidney Allen, in *Vox Graeca: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Classical Greek*, 3rd ed., Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 24, 31, 80, dates these catacombs inscriptions to the 2nd and 3rd centuries C.E.

[261] Actually, the author being cited is Werner Foerster, who contributed the article to Kittel's work. According to author Werner Foerster, *op. cit.*, the Greek form of the Messiah's name found in the catacombs is "Ἰάσων." See also footnote #24 in Kittel's work.

[262] W. Sidney Allen, *Vox Graeca: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Classical Greek*, 3rd ed., Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 1987, p. 24.

[263] Excerpted from e-mail received from Michael Banak on 02/21/2015.

validate the understanding that the Greeks vocalized the Messiah's name with the first-syllable pronunciation *Yah* instead of *Yay* (as in "pray"). Since Michael says the resemblance in sound between the Greek *eta* and *alpha* was "close enough," and since he also believes the ancient *eta* was closer to an *alpha* than to the "*ay* as in *pray*," this means, using his line of reasoning, that the "Yah" comes closest to being the original pronunciation of that first syllable. As we will see later, he *does not* believe *Yay* represents the way anyone anciently vocalized the first syllable of the Messiah's name. This conclusion is certainly at odds with the conclusion of most scholars, but more significantly, it also happens to clash with Michael's call for the acceptance of *dialectal variety*.

Our society as a whole seems to be more tolerant of dialectal variety than the level exhibited by Michael Banak, both in his presentation and private e-mails. Please allow me to give a modern-day example of what I mean by this. I currently work for a third-party company that supplies products such as toothbrushes and dental floss to various dental offices. Members of our department are on the phone a lot with these dental offices and I overhear some of the things they say. One of my co-workers simply does not pronounce the word "floss" the way most people do. It always comes out "flohce" (rhymes with "gross") instead of "flahce." Nevertheless, because our society in general accepts dialectal variety, I have never once overheard anyone correcting his pronunciation of the word "floss." I need to emphasize that in our profession, this word is used frequently with customers. Another co-worker loves to shop at Wal-Mart; however, she never pronounces the *r* in "mart." She always pronounces the name of this department store chain "Wal-Mott." But everyone knows what she's talking about and no one offers to give her diction lessons.

Just as some folks are unable to frame words such as "floss" the same way others do, could it be that some Greek people vocalized the Messiah's name "Yahsohn" while others said, "Yey-soun"? Could it be that no one complained? Finally, since Ἰάσων is commonly transliterated *Jason*, could it be that someone else, apart from the Messiah, was actually referenced in the catacombs inscriptions? Without a frame of reference to give us the context that we need, how can we know for sure?

Regardless of who is being referenced by the form Ἰάσων in the Roman catacombs, we are persuaded that the ancients gave a much wider berth to allow for dialectal variety of the Messiah's name than Michael is willing to give, the name of his presentation notwithstanding. In fact, it would seem that the only ones complaining about precise pronunciations of the Messiah's name (or lack thereof) are Sacred Name Movement adherents. As we will see shortly, Michael Banak has joined the ranks.

Let's quickly review the concerns I presented to Michael in my previously-referenced e-mail:

- The sound made by a bleating sheep is "baaa" as in "mad," yet Michael never once in his writings or presentation so much as *hints* that the Messiah's name might be more correctly vocalized *Yashua* as in *Nashua* (the city in New Hampshire). He *does*, however, use the sound made by a bleating sheep to justify the legitimacy of the pronunciation "Yahshua." This approach smacks of the infamous "bait and switch" scheme. We're baited with the sound of a bleating sheep, then we're switched to a different sound.
- If the variety of sounds carried by the ancient Greek *eta* included "ah" as in "Yah," then what sound did the Greek *alpha* carry? Unless anyone can show differently, it has always carried either the "ah" as in "Yah" sound or "a" as in "man." What did ancient Greeks do with the *eta*?
- Was there a pronunciation change when the ancient Greek eta (η) had a circumflex (ῆ) over it? Could that sound have represented the short "a" as in "mad"? Since the circumflex is used to

denote stress, it is my understanding that this can indeed result in a pronunciation change. And just exactly when did man start putting a circumflex over the *eta*? In fact, our understanding is that the use of the lower-case symbol (η) for *eta* is a relatively modern innovation because in ancient Greek writings, only upper-case characters were used. The upper-case symbol for *eta* is **H** (no circumflex). The lower-case characters were gradually developed by Christian scribes in monasteries.

- If author E. H. Sturtevant claims that anciently the Greek *eta* vowel resembled that of a bleating sheep, why does he then go on to make the claim that the Greek *eta* was an "*e*-vowel" (vocalized as "ay" as in "pray") from the time of Alexander the Great until long after the beginning of the Christian era? And isn't our concern about how that letter was pronounced during the Messiah's earthly ministry?

Unbiased or In Denial?

It was only after he had already given his Unity Conference presentation that Michael attempted to answer any of the above questions, and that was an attempt to refute Sturtevant's claim that the Greek *eta* carried the *e*-sound from the time of Alexander the Great until the beginning of the Christian era. Please keep in mind that through all this, Michael remains adamant that he is not in any way, shape or form *biased*. During one of our e-mail exchanges, I let him know that I cannot help but detect some bias in his writings. I did this primarily to give him the opportunity to demonstrate how and why I may have misinterpreted something from what he had written. He did not take my observation very well. In fact, I found his reaction to be a bit on the strange side. Instead of explaining himself and offering clarifications, he became defensive and offered an esoteric explanation of a bias that is apparently "hidden in plain sight." Here is what he wrote:

> I must be a better reporter than I thought. If you perceive a bias in me for the classical sn form then I have done a dandy job of disguising my true bias.
>
> Maybe I will gin up the merve to announce my bias before I die. Until then I delight in the fact that u and so many others cannot seem to figure this out. I know that u havent figured it out based on remarks yiu have made.
>
> I think it sufficient to say 2 things foe now about my bias. One... nearly all my reviewers and editors have a bias. It is their writongs ... not mine ... which state words like Best and Most. Second. Second ... I do have a bias and it is in plain site. Byt the only way fit readers to discover it is to fotsake their own bias.
>
> I look forward to rereading you latest message at a better time. For now I set the stage with a wuestion. If Yahsua was keltic, would I be required to pronounce his name with an irish brogue?[264]
>
> Most affectionately
>
> Michael b[265]

[264] I answer this question in the conclusion of our study.
[265] Excerpted from e-mail received from Michael Banak on 11/06/2014.

I answered Michael's above question, but he never responded to my follow-up e-mail, so it apparently didn't bring us any closer to a resolution. My answer, by the way, can be found in the conclusion to this study. For some reason, Michael formed the impression that I was trying to figure out whether or not he's biased. However, that isn't the enigma I was actually trying to resolve. What I was really trying to determine is, "*Why isn't Michael able to see it for himself*?" It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that when he determines that the cry of a sheep validates the *Yah* sound in *Yahshua* – even though a sheep doesn't even say, "Bah" as in "Yah" – that he's biased. Nor does it take a skilled investigator to deduce that it is *bias* that causes Michael to ignore (then later attempt to refute) Sturtevant's claim that regardless of how the ancient Greeks once transliterated the sound made by a sheep, by the time of Alexander the Great and going forward from there until the beginning of the Christian era, it was pronounced with the *e*-sound. When you factor in these two items, the word *bias* not only comes to mind, it resonates.

One of the most vivid examples of Michael's bias was found in one of his later rough drafts of his seminar pre-presentation. Thankfully, the following commentary was edited from his actual presentation. Nevertheless, he composed it and we only supply it here because he so steadfastly denies having any bias and the following commentary most certainly demonstrates otherwise:

> It has been a long-standing uncertainty whether the name "Joseph" begins with a Theophoric. The construct can go either way. It can mean either "Let him add" or maybe "Yahweh will add." Rachel's remarks suggest it is a Theophoric in the beginning.
>
> Gen 30:24 And she called his name Joseph; and said, Yahweh shall add to me another son.
>
> Throughout The Scriptures the Holy Theophoric is "Yo" in Joseph's name, with one exception. In Psalms 81:5, it is spelled once as "Yehoseph." In other words, the Trigram "Yeho" appears, rather than the Yo-form. The Psalmist asserts the Theophoric with literary exaggeration.
>
> This is remarkable evidence to consider. This unique, expanded spelling in the Psalms suggests a Heavenly-ordained permission to amplify the Theophoric, if we are doing it in the right spirit, of course.
>
> Standing on this example, one may choose to amplify the Theophoric and say "Yah-shua," with an emphasis on the "Yah." When this author has heard that done, it was always in a spirit of reverence or celebration. Never in a spirit of blasphemy. If one were a Pastor, he may even ask members of his congregation to use that pronunciation when everyone sings and worships together. But we cannot make a high doctrine out of this preference, to the detriment of other pronunciations.[266]

If you're a Sacred Name Movement adherent, you're probably wondering, "Where's the bias in Michael's commentary?" That would be because you've been programmed to believe that unless the "Yah" pronunciation is present in a name, it has <u>no</u> theophoric element. In the above commentary, Michael encourages this "Yah preference," though he quickly discourages making a high doctrine out of it. Note that he had initially identified both "Yo" and "Yeho" as Theophoric (having an element of the

[266] Banak, Michael A., "Approaching The Messiah's Name Through A Scholarly Source: Preparation for Messiah's Name Seminar," 04/23/2014, p. 28.

Creator's name included within a person's name). But then he switched to suggesting that you *amplify* the Theophoric (*i.e.*, make it even better) by using "Yah." Clearly, Michael assigned the "Yah" pronunciation a higher level of honor and acceptance than other potential pronunciations. There's a word for that; it's called *bias*. With all this having been said, June and I need to quickly point out that we're not opposed to bias, since we *all* must lean one way or another. It's just that Michael writes things such as the above, then expects everyone to not detect any bias.

June and I recognize and admit our own bias, but we do so while simultaneously encouraging others to join our call for all believers to exhibit mutual *understanding* and *acceptance* of those who lean towards different pronunciations than the one we use. We have done this since day one. Michael, on the other hand, pleads for acceptance of "dialectal variety," which is great, but then he belies his acceptance of dialectal variety by flat-out *rejecting* and publicly *denouncing* the pronunciation that June and I have used for many years which, ironically, happens to be supported by many scholars. Sadly, we are left to conclude that Michael, in spite of his outstanding research skills, sends out a tangled web of contradictions.

On With the Show and Boycotting the Unity Conference

June and I did not attend the 2014 Unity Conference to hear Michael's presentation. We can understand why some may wonder why, if I attended the 2001 Unity Conference, at which I delivered my presentation on this same topic, then why would I collaborate with Michael on his 2014 presentation, yet not attend? For those who might wonder, there is a reason for this and I will here offer a brief explanation. June and I had been boycotting the Unity Conference since our "last straw" experience in 2006, when a local elder passionately argued with me over the legitimacy of wearing tzizits (tassels) in these last days. He later wrote me a letter informing me that if I'm going to keep all of Torah, then I'd better build a parapet on the roof of our home. Needless to say, he does not support wearing tassels. But even before his ill-advised remark about building parapets on our roofs, which we feel actually applies to those who build homes with flat roofs, we had already noticed other Unity Conference leadership behaviors that we found to be unappealing, such as two overseers accepting or rejecting speakers based on whether or not they (the overseers) wanted a certain topic to be presented. The topic of lunar sabbaths was banned. The topic of sacrificing a lamb for Passover was banned. A Sabbathkeeping Mormon was denied a speaking opportunity out of concern that he might attempt to infuse his Mormon beliefs. While we are at odds with those who support any of these three aforementioned beliefs, we nevertheless support giving those who *do* a once-per-year venue to present their findings. After all, isn't learning from each other the purpose of a Unity Conference?

Sadly, when I called the main overseer to request a speaking turn at that 2006 Unity Conference, it took him several moments of indecision before he finally agreed to allow me to present the topic "Is the Torah Relevant Today?" After a lengthy pause, he prefaced his reluctant authorization by stating, "I was really hoping that only the *elders* would speak this year …." In case you're wondering, I don't consider myself an elder, primarily due to the fact that it has become a title that many feel commands respect instead of being a mark of servitude. Anyway, I got the message: I wasn't really welcome as a speaker. With this increasing level of censorship and discrimination, June and I understand why one Sacred Name

Movement newsletter reported the following about the latest Unity Conference: "Each year, they just seem to keep getting better and better." If speakers only present topics that everyone already agrees on, there can't help but be more and more unity each year! Having lost all enthusiasm about the positive aspects of Unity Conferences, June and I decided to no longer attend. I made an exception by attending the 2019 Unity Conference in Sterling, Illinois.

It wasn't until three months after having given his 2014 Unity Conference presentation that Michael put together a YouTube video presentation, and he e-mailed the link to several individuals (presumably elders who attended his presentation). He graciously copied me. A few days later, I accessed the link and listened to the entire two and a quarter hour-long lecture. Right away, Michael dubs his presentation "a recapitulation of the presentation given to the elders only at the Sacred Name Unity Conference 2014 in Sterling, Illinois." His next remark, though refreshing to hear, turned out to be very misleading. He asserts, "Before we begin, I need to make some things clear: We will not be urging anyone to change the pronunciations they use for the holy names. Not at all! I respect everybody's pronunciation. You all have some very good reasons for saying the names the way you do."[267]

The next one hour and 49 minutes of Michael's presentation were, in my estimation, packed with relevant information offered in a very informative and captivating manner. For example, Michael gives his audience a clinic on the role different dialects play in creating a phenomenon known as "vowel dissimilation," which is instrumental in the gradual shift from the long form *Yehoshua* to the short form *Yeshua*. But as the two-hour mark of his presentation approaches and Michael begins offering a letter-by-letter Greek equivalent to the Hebrew short form **יֹשׁוּע**, a question emerges as to whether or not the pronunciation can possibly be *Yeshua* (as in *Yay-shua*). At the 1:49:20 mark of his presentation, Michael sends his first clue, veiled though it is, that his "dialectal variety" meter has limits. In addressing the first-syllable *eta* of the Greek *Iesous*, Michael states, "The Greek-speaking, pre-messianic brethren render it with an 'eta.' And the 'eta' had a rainbow of sounds – anywhere from an 'eh' (as in 'met') to an 'ah' (as in 'Yah')." It should be noted that Michael does not incorporate the "baaa" (as in "bad") sound made by sheep, nor does he include the sound of "ay" as in "pray" into his rainbow. Let's face it: If we can imitate the vowel sound produced by bleating sheep, distinguishing the "æ" sound from the "ah" sound, and if that is the sound represented by the ancient Greek *eta* (η), then why doesn't Michael at the very least mention *that* pronunciation as being inclusive with his "rainbow of sounds"? And if many scholars assert that by the time of the Messiah's birth the Greek *eta* carried the "ay" sound (as in "pray"), then why won't Michael include *that* pronunciation in his "rainbow of sounds"? Indeed, based on the sounds that Michael offers for the *eta*, it is at best a three-colored rainbow.

In his entire two hour and 14-minute presentation, Michael never addresses the actual sound made by bleating sheep. Maybe that's because Michael has never raised sheep. Maybe he has never even *listened* to bleating sheep. Maybe *you* have never listened to bleating sheep. For those who have never listened to bleating sheep, this would be an excellent opportunity to pause and listen to this audio file:

We can *almost* understand Michael's oversight in glossing over the actual vowel sound produced by bleating sheep, especially when we recognize that his entire presentation would have been stamped a failure by his "Yah-sound-only" Sacred Name Movement audience if he had focused on that particular sound above and beyond other sounds. However, one might say that Michael covered for himself by throwing in his "rainbow of sounds" comment. Certainly, I think we would be safe in concluding that if

[267] You can listen to and view the first five and a half minutes of Michael's presentation by accessing this link:

he had been asked, Michael likely would have included the actual sound produced by bleating sheep in his "rainbow of sounds" that he attributes to the ancient Greek letter *eta*, so he would most likely offer an approving nod to brethren who feel led to pronounce the Messiah's name as "Yashua" (as in *Nashua*). So thus far, in spite of Michael's glossing over any potential thoughts about the Messiah's name having been originally vocalized "Yashua," no harm has been done because I think everyone would feel safe in agreeing that he would include that pronunciation in his rainbow.

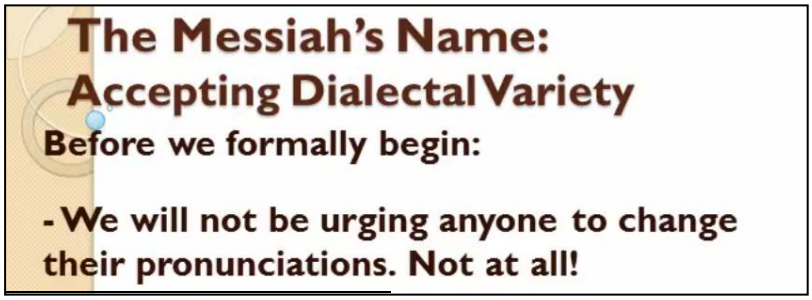
However, this is where Michael's rainbow ends and his spiritual intolerance begins. As referenced earlier, many scholars are persuaded that by the time of the Messiah's birth the predominant sound attributed to the Greek *eta* is "ay" as in "pray." You can find this pronunciation indicated in such highly-respected references as *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew English Lexicon*, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* and *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. But according to Michael Banak, their listed pronunciation is not correct. His research trumps their expertise. The following commentary comes at the 1:50:26 mark of his presentation:

> Now let's talk about the "eta" (η) first in this Greek form of *Iesous* (Ιησους). Now today people are saying it was pronounced "YAY-soos," but anciently, when it was first rendered, the *eta* didn't sound like "ay" (as in "pray"). In Edgar Sturtevant's book about Greek – and you'll find this in the reading assignment – he cites three historical references of people who make the sound … record the sound … of a sheep crying, and they use the *eta* to spell that. They spell it "*beta eta*." You'll have to look real closely here. We have three historical references of it, and Edgar Sturtevant makes the claim that this is going to sound, you know, as like an "ah" or an "uh," an "ehh," but NOT as an "ay." Now the sound of a sheep crying might have some variability to it, but it doesn't sound like "bay." So this is evidence that the sound of the *eta* is going to be somewhere between an "ah" and an "ehhh." "Ah" and an "ehhh" (as in *met*). Not an "ay" (as in "pray"). Not that long vowel "ay." So this lends weight to the existence of that short form "Yahshua" existing before the apostolic era.[268]

As you read the above, please bear in mind that this is the same individual who had earlier assured his listeners that he would not be urging anyone to change the pronunciations they use for the holy names. So what's it called when he tells June, me and others of our persuasion that the pronunciation we use for the Messiah's name could *not* have been the way the ancients pronounced it?

Unity Conference Betrayal: "Never Out to Unify the Brethren on Pronunciations"

In view of the preconceived alliance that Michael and I once had regarding this issue and the agreement we shared that we should all make room for "dialectal variety," I was literally devastated when I heard the above commentary. I had to listen to it again and again just to make certain I wasn't misunderstanding his words. Sadly, his words bring forth the clear understanding (from his perspective) that



[268] Banak, Michael A., from his August 2, 2014 "Elders-Only" Unity Conference presentation titled "The Messiah's Name: Accepting Dialectal Variety," Sterling, IL, commentary given from 1:50:26 - 1:51:34. A video excerpt may be reviewed at this link:

the ancient Greek *eta* was pronounced with virtually every conceivable vowel sound – *except* for the one that June and I have used all these years! What happened to Michael's plea for acceptance of "dialectal variety"? I feared that, contrary to what I had previously been led to believe, Michael doesn't *really* share our view that we should be understanding and respectful of *all* earnest attempts at learning and vocalizing the Messiah by the name He was called at birth. I had to know whether or not my fears were based on reality, so I decided to e-mail my concerns to Michael. Shown below is one of several e-mails I sent him. It took him a few e-mails before I was able to get him to grasp that in his presentation he had spoken against the very pronunciation of the Messiah's name that June and I have used for many years:

> **From:** [redacted]
> **To:** [redacted]
> **Sent:** Monday, February 2, 2015 7:09 AM
> **Subject:** Re: Reload: How to Access The Final Version of MABanak's "Messiah's Name Semi...
>
> Shalom, Michael,
> You are a great guy with a heart that I believe loves Yahweh and His son Yahshua. I wish resolving this disagreement could be resolved by sending each other one-liner e-mails. I highly doubt that it will. Please do not lose sight of the fact that I have told you that your presentation has many, many wonderful attributes. In many ways, it is a masterpiece and a brilliant expose on how the short form developed. It appears that you are not aware that in your presrntation you attempt to invalidate the pronunciation of that short form that June and I use. If I am able to find time, I will supply exsct quotes, The very concerns I had when I first read your "cry of the sheep" addition have been realized. If necessary, I will demonstrate that in your drive to encourage acceptance of dialectal variety, you managed to weave in non-acceptance of the pronuniation Yey'shua. This is the pronuniation that June and I have personally and respectfully used since '97. Granted, with dissimilation, the pronunciation often comes out Yeshua (e as in "bet"), but the sound I always try to produce is "ey" as in "they." I have never tried to make this an issue, but others have. I was hoping like crazy that you wouldn't go there, I tried expressing my concerns, but I never felt that you grasped the significance of my concerns, so here we are.
> I still love you as a brother.
> May Yahweh bless.
> Larry
>
> Sent from AOL Mobile Mail

Once I made it abundantly clear that Michael had indeed spoken against the pronunciation that June and I have personally used for all these years, I actually expected him to step back and acknowledge with regret what he had done, then in his characteristically humble manner, graciously apologize and issue a retraction. Of course, that would have included e-mailing a correction to the same elders to whom he had e-mailed the link to his YouTube presentation. After all, wouldn't that be a demonstration of truly recognizing and allowing "dialectal variety"? However, instead of working to achieve spiritual unity with us, Michael acknowledged (much to our surprise) that his goal all along had *never* been to achieve unity on the topic of pronunciations. He then decided to take a closer look at our study and find out where, in his estimation, June and I had made the wrong turn.

You may recall that at the outset of his presentation, Michael assured his audience that he would not be urging anyone to change the pronunciations they use for the holy names. "Not at all!" he exclaimed. "I respect everybody's pronunciation. You all have some very good reasons for saying the names the way you do." Michael undermined and contradicted this assurance in his e-mail response to me, where he not only affirmed his disagreement with the pronunciation *Yay'shua*, but he also admitted that he had never been out to unify the brethren on pronunciations:

> I have failed to clarify my objectives. My initial approach bears repeating.
> I don't suppose I was ever trying to unify brethren on pronunciations. I wanted to equip THE SHEPHERDS on how to do that. Hope you discern the difference. Guys like you and me are supposed to find a ministry we can work with, and then use the pronunciations they use.[269]

June and I have three concerns about the above approach. First, Michael betrays the commitment that he made in his presentation to not urge anyone to change the pronunciations of the holy names that they use. Or maybe it's dialectal variety with an asterisk – that the pronunciations used by anyone in the room when he gave his presentation were okay and folks like Larry and June don't count. He now feels at liberty to define the parameters of "dialectal variety" and summarily reject anything that doesn't fit his pre-established mold. Since Michael follows up this claim with an attempt to disprove the pronunciation that June and I use, I think it's safe to say he attempts to change the pronunciation we use.

Secondly, Michael now seems to express regret in having involved me in his presentation since, after all, he was only really interested in equipping *shepherds* (hence the "elders only" aspect), which obviously excludes me. Since I don't really qualify as a "shepherd" in Michael's book, he creates the impression that he now feels that it was a mistake involving me in the first place. I would answer that he should be careful about who he defines as "shepherds" and that all earnest objections should be earnestly considered, regardless of who the critic is. I might add that his excusing himself by stating that he was equipping shepherds on how to unify the brethren is actually a cop-out because the bottom line is, he was attempting to equip elders on where to "draw the line" when accepting his version of "dialectal variety," and he gave them the "green light" to exclude the pronunciation that folks like June and I use. In the end, it's all the same result (presuming they buy into his reasoning).

Finally, June and I completely disagree with Michael's approach of "finding a ministry we can work with, then adapting to the pronunciations they use" for the Creator and his Son. We're all for being respectful of other pronunciations, even in disagreement, but we would never ask others to pronounce the Names the way we do if they want to associate with us "for the sake of unity," nor would we care to associate with a ministry that expects the same of those who attend.

Reprising the "My Scholar is Smarter Than Your Scholar" Approach

Now that we have established that Michael was never really intent on unifying anyone on pronunciations, we can now proceed with addressing his rationale for disagreeing with the pronunciation that June and I personally use in reference to the Messiah. You may recall from chapter 15 of our study ("The Testimony of Some Modern Scholars") that we quoted the late Professor Anson Rainey, who was a highly regarded professor of Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and Semitic linguistics at Tel Aviv University. Sadly, Professor Rainey passed away in 2011, so he is obviously unavailable for further consultation. You may recall that many Sacred Name Movement advocates turned

3442. יֵשׁוּעַ Yêshûwa', ~~yay-shoo'-ah;~~ for 3091; ✓
he will save; Jeshua, the name of ten
Isr., also of a place in Pal.:—Jeshua.

[269] Excerpted from e-mail received from Michael Banak on 02/04/2015.

to Dr. Rainey, flaunting his credentials, regarding his support of the pronunciation *Yahweh* for the Tetragrammaton. In 2001, I decided to contact Professor Rainey to see what he would have to say about the Messiah's name, and as you hopefully read in chapter 15, he supported the pronunciation *Yay'shua*, which happens to match the pronunciation listed in *Strong's* Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary.

Michael Banak challenges Professor Rainey's expertise in determining how the Messiah's name would have been pronounced during and before the 1st century C.E. Now we're not saying that we should blindly accept testimony from any scholar; nevertheless, Rainey's qualifications in this area speak for themselves. But don't take our word for it. Check out what others (including his former colleagues and students) had to say about him. Here's one that you may find interesting from a professor at UCLA. Based on his credentials and knowledge of ancient Semitic linguistics, I would say that Professor Anson Rainey knew a thing or two about how the Messiah's name was likely pronounced during the 1st century C.E. (allowing for dialectal variety, of course). Let's just say that we are persuaded that he knew considerably more than Michael Banak is willing to give him credit for. Once Michael realized that June and I are at odds with his stand against the Greek *eta* having been pronounced as the "ay" in "pray," he took a step back, re-examined our study through a different lens, and honed in on Professor Rainey's response to our 2001 inquiry. Here is Michael's reaction:

> OK. I see the from Rainey quote [from chapter 15 of our study], in one version of your article:
>
> "The eta of the Greek (instead of epsilon) proves that."
>
> This explains your concern over Sturtevant's contribution.[270]

Later, in the same e-mail, Michael writes:

> I do not hesitate to rebut the Scholars, if I have solid data. Rainey is speaking to Septuagint Greek. The Mainland Greek eta did not sound like a *sere*[271] until later. Stutevant places that change at 200BC to 1BC. W. Sidney Allen's later book (*Vox Graeca*) places that change in the 1st century AD.
>
> They were both speaking to mainland Greek. Faraway places, like Alexandria, take longer to catch up, ... if at all. Faraway places often "bake-in" an old dialect. This is a well known phenomenon.
>
> In the visual presentation you saw, I showed Jewish Bone boxes, in Greek, where several of them were abandoning the eta, and going with nothing, or else an epsilon.[272]

So was Professor Anson Rainey speaking only to how the Greek *eta* was pronounced when the Greek Septuagint was translated in Alexandria, Egypt and not to how it was pronounced in mainland Greece? During the 3rd century B.C.E., did the Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria pronounce the first syllable of the name Ίησους as "Yay," whereas mainland Greeks pronounced it "Yah"? That is what Michael

[270] Excerpted from e-mail received from Michael Banak on 02/03/2015.
[271] The *sere* is a Hebrew vowel point that carries the pronunciation "ay" as in "pray." Although Hebrew vowel points weren't contrived until the 7th century C.E., the fact is, when they were devised, the *sere* (pronounced "sir'ay") was selected for the first syllable of the Messiah's name because "ay" is the pronunciation of that syllable as passed down to the Masoretic scribes. Many Greek scholars are persuaded that the ancient Greek *eta* carries this same basic pronunciation. Michael Banak claims that when the Septuagint was translated in the 3rd century B.C.E. the Greek *eta* was pronounced more like the "ah" in "Yah."
[272] Excerpted from e-mail received from Michael Banak on 02/03/2015.

apparently expects us to believe. According to Michael's reasoning, Professor Anson Rainey should have clarified that the Greek *eta* in the Septuagint proves that the Messiah's name was pronounced "Yay'shua" in Alexandria, but that up in mainland Greece, they were pronouncing it "Yah'shua." Of course, if we truly follow through on Michael's "cry of the sheep" claim, those mainland Greeks would have been pronouncing the Messiah's name "Yashua" (as in Nashua). Nevertheless, to address Michael's point, was Anson Rainey thus mistaken about how the Greek *eta* was pronounced during the time the Messiah walked this earth as a flesh and blood human? No, he was not.

The easiest way to know that the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint gave this name the same basic Greek transliteration of what they knew from Hebrew lies in the fact that they travelled from Jerusalem to Alexandria to perform the translation. Their rendering of Hebrew names into Greek had nothing to do with any parts of the Greek empire needing to "catch up" because they supplied the best transliterations of Judean Hebrew they could in spite of the limited parameters of Greek linguistics. They would have transliterated into the Greek language what they knew and heard right there in Jerusalem. And what they heard was not "Yah'shua," but "Yay'shua" or "Yeh'shua." Or possibly "Yay'shu / "Yeh'shu" (again, allowing for dialectal variety). If they had heard the pronunciation "Yah'shua," they would certainly have transliterated His name as Ίασους instead of Ίησους. That the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint journeyed from Jerusalem to Alexandria, Egypt to accomplish this work in and of itself demonstrates that they were supplying transliterations of names that they heard in their native Judea. Our point is this: The Hebrew scholars who translated the Scriptures into Greek were not translating it for just the Greeks in Alexandria, Egypt but for *anyone* able to read the Greek language. Upon reading it, all would have a general understanding of how the Jews pronounced the various names (allowing of course for the natural shortcomings of the Greek language).

Equipped with the preceding information, we can see that if Anson Rainey was mistaken in his conclusion that the Septuagint validates the pronunciation "Yay'shua," then so are many other Greek experts. Let's start with *Strong's Concordance*, specifically Strong's "A Concise Dictionary of the words in the Greek New Testament" as found at the end of every *Strong's Concordance*. Let's keep in mind that James Strong wrote the following in his "Plan of the Book":

> 2. Immediately after each word is given its exact equivalent in English letters, according to the system of transliteration laid down in the scheme here following, which is substantially that adopted in the Common English Version, only more consistently and uniformly carried out; so that the word could readily be turned back again into Greek from the form thus given it.
> 3. Next follows the precise pronunciation, according to the usual English mode of sounding syllables, so plainly indicated that none can fail to apprehend and apply it. The most approved sounds are adopted, and in such a way that any good Græcist would immediately recognize the word if so pronounced, notwithstanding the minor variations current among scholars in this respect.[273]

The above serves to establish the integrity of James Strong as he presented his famous concordance to the world. While he certainly makes allowance for "minor variations" among scholars and we will see that scholars universally recognize that there have *always* been different dialects within individual languages, including Greek, there is nevertheless a general standard and that is what he, James Strong, worked to provide his readers. My point is this: the value that James Strong gives to the pronunciation of

[273] From *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, "A Concise Dictionary of the words in the Greek New Testament," Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1990 (orig. copyright by James Strong in 1890), p. 5.

the Greek *eta* (ē as in "they") is the one that Michael Banak *rejects*. What follows is *Strong's* "Greek Articulation" pronunciation guide:

GREEK ARTICULATION

THE following explanations are sufficient to show the mode of writing and pronouncing Greek words in English adopted in this *Dictionary*.

1. The *Alphabet* is as follows:

No.	Form.	Name.	Transliteration and Power.
1.	**Α α**	Alpha (*al'-fah*)	**a**, as in A*rm* or [*m*A*n**
2.	**Β β**	Bēta (*bay'-tah)*	**b**
3.	**Γ γ**	Gamma (*gam'-mah*)	**g** hard†
4.	**Δ δ**	Dĕlta (*del'-tah*)	**d**
5.	**Ε ε**	Ĕpsilŏn (*ep'-see-lon*)	**ĕ**, as in *m*E*t*
6.	**Ζ ζ**	Zēta (*dzay'-tah*)	**z**, as in *a*DZ*e*‡
7.	**Η η**	Ēta (*ay'-tah*)	**ē**, as in *th*E*y*
8.	**Θ θ** or **ϑ**	Thēta (*thay'-tah*)	**th**, as in TH*in*§
9.	**Ι ι**	Iōta (*ee-o'-tah*)	**i**, as in *mach*I*ne*
10.	**Κ κ** or **ϰ**	Kappa (*cap'-pah*)	**k**
11.	**Λ λ**	Lambda (*lamb'-dah*)	**l**
12.	**Μ μ**	Mu (*moo*)	**m**
13.	**Ν ν**	Nu (*noo*)	**n**
14.	**Ξ ξ**	Xi (*ksee*)	**x** = *ks*
15.	**Ο ο**	Omicrŏn (*om'-e-cron*)	**ŏ**, as in *not*
16.	**Π π**	Pi (*pee*)	**P**
17.	**Ρ ρ**	Rhō (*hro*)	**r**
18.	**Σ σ**, final **ς**	Sigma (*sig'-mah*)	**s** sharp
19.	**Τ τ**	Tau (*tŏw*)	**t** ¶
20.	**Υ υ**	Upsilŏn (*u'-pse-lon*)	**u**, as in *f*U*ll*
21.	**Φ φ**	Phi (*fee*)	**ph** = *f*
22.	**Χ χ**	Chi (*khee*)	German **ch***
23.	**Ψ ψ**	Psi (*psee*)	**ps**
24.	**Ω ω**	Oměga (*o'-meg-ah*)	**ō**, as in no.[274]

Please bear in mind that Michael Banak is persuaded that his research invalidates *Strong's* pronunciation of the Greek *eta*. According to Michael, the ancient *eta* had a "rainbow of sounds," but "ē as in they" was not among those sounds. Who is right? Shown below is the pronunciation offered by *Strong's* Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary for the Hebrew name יֵשׁוּעַ. Note the pronunciation *Strong's* gives for the first syllable of the Messiah's name:

> **3442. יֵשׁוּעַ Yêshûwaʿ**, *yay-shoo'-ah;* for 3091; *he will save; Jeshua*, the name of ten Isr., also of a place in Pal.:—Jeshua.

We have already established that Michael disagrees with the above pronunciation as listed by

[274] Ibid.

Strong's. We can respect his disagreement because, as we've previously pointed out, we all must lean one way or another, so Michael leans another way. June and I are truly willing to allow our definition of "dialectal variety" to include pronunciations such as the one that Michael personally chooses. Our concern, then, is not that Michael leans another way; our concern is that Michael emphatically attempts to publicly *eliminate* the pronunciation listed by *Strong's* from his supposedly wide-berth definition of "dialectal variety." We also need to include *Strong's* pronunciation of the Greek form of the Messiah's name:

> *2424.* **Ἰησοῦς** **Iēsŏus**, *ee-ay-sooce';* of Heb. or. [3091]; *Jesus* (i.e. *Jehoshua*), the name of our Lord and two (three) other Isr.:—Jesus.

As *Strong's* does with the first syllable of the Hebrew form יֵשׁוּעַ, so he does with the first syllable of the *Greek* form – he transliterates that first syllable vowel "ay" as in "pray." It turns out that other linguistics experts, such as Anson Rainey, happen to agree with James Strong's rendering. June and I have never claimed to be linguistics experts, but when we turn to those who specialized in this field, we find plenty of scholarly support for the first syllable pronunciation of *"Yay"* as in "pray."

Is scholarly support for anciently having vocalized the first-syllable of the Messiah's name as "*Yay*" unanimous? No, it is not. Since there is some disagreement among scholars, this opens the door for Sacred Name Movement adherents such as Michael Banak to select the one that best fits their predetermined parameters and promote that scholar's view as truth. It is truly ironic that Michael would pursue such a course, especially in view of a comment he made within the first six minutes of his presentation:

> Another big mistake is to take linguistic theory and scholarly opinion and catapult that to the level of high doctrine. Dividing brethren! These scholars and these linguists, they don't give a rip about your salvation, but we're giving them an alarming level of influence over the unity of the brethren.[275]

Michael makes it clear that taking scholarly opinion and elevating it to "high doctrine" – dividing the brethren – is a *big mistake*. Privately (and ironically), however, Michael cites the scholar whose findings best line up with his linguistic preference, then uses that resulting conclusion in an attempt to refute the pronunciation that June and I have personally used for many years (all the while claiming he's not out to get anyone to change the pronunciation they've been using). Here is an excerpt from the e-mail exchange that Michael and I had following our review of his Unity Conference presentation. Michael writes:

> I think it's OK to assess evidence. Don't you? Rainey has fallen short. I am trying hard, as I do with all such material, to make it fit. And the only place I can stick Yey-shua on the timeline is possibly some transitional phase in the first century. I am thinking hard about how I could move this from "plausible" to "possible." Think of me as an advocate lawyer in executive-session with you, OK?
>
> [I had written:] but now you're telling me that the "ey" as in "they" was *never part of the rainbow*, at least not when the LXX was translated and apparently not until at least the 1st century CE

[275] Banak, Michael A., from his August 2, 2014 "Elders-Only" Unity Conference presentation titled "The Messiah's Name: Accepting Dialectal Variety," Sterling, IL, commentary given from 00:05:51. A video excerpt may be reviewed at the following link:

> No, Larry, I am citing scholars. What else am I supposed to do?[276]

If I may borrow one of Michael's lines from his Unity Conference presentation, I am concerned that he gives scholars an alarming level of influence over the unity of the brethren. As we have already seen, Michael carelessly cites scholar Edgar Sturtevant, claiming that the "cry of the sheep" validates believing that the Greek *eta* was anciently pronounced akin to "ah" as in "Yah," even though a sheep doesn't say "baaa" as in "Yah." Michael also conveniently overlooks/avoids Sturtevant's follow-up remark that by the time of Alexander the Great (4th century B.C.E.), the *eta* carried the long ē sound (which would be the "ey" as in "they" sound, see *Strong's* "Greek Articulation" above). When I pointed this information out to Michael, instead of admitting to any error, he turns to yet *another* scholar who, in his estimation, validates his personal conclusion. Would Michael claim that he *doesn't* allow the scholars he cites to give an "alarming level of influence over the unity of the brethren"? Or will he minimize his reliance on individual scholars by stating, "I'm citing scholars. What else am I supposed to do?"

My answer to the above: When citing scholars, we need to be careful to avoid "selective citation" – quoting the words or phrases from a scholar that appeal to our personal view while conveniently avoiding that same scholar's other words that would serve to contradict our desired conclusion. Michael quoted those portions from Edgar Sturtevant that [seemingly] suited his desire to promote the pronunciation *Yah'shua*, while ignoring Sturtevant's *other* statements that would lend support to the pronunciation *Yay'shua*.

When I protested Michael's apparently intentional avoidance of Sturtevant's claim that by the 4th century B.C.E. and continuing forward the general Greek understanding was that the *eta* was pronounced as a long ē, he responded with an attempt to demonstrate that I had cited Sturtevant's original edition, whereas in his second edition Sturtevant concedes that the change took place in the 2nd century (after the Septuagint had already been translated). Such a later date would lend credence to the belief that the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint understood the pronunciation *Yashua* (as in *Nashua*) or, as Michael <u>actually</u> prefers, *Yahshua* (as in *Yah*, even though a sheep doesn't say "bah"). Here's what he wrote:

> You have been using the first edition of Sturtevant's book, while I have used the second edition (from 20 yrs. later). I have attached copies of the pertinent pages. It is there that he leaves open the possibility of that sheep cry *maybe* sounding like "Bah". That is what I was citing, plus references to a long a here and there in his book.[277]

Once again, Michael quotes what might seemingly be regarded as scholarly support for his position, but he conveniently ignores anything that contradicts his position. First, regardless of what sound Sturtevant might appear to be giving to sheep, the fact remains that sheep in any country say the same thing and it is *not* "bah," so the above "possibility" that sheep *maybe* cried out something like "Bah" is simply a false observation. Even in Sturtevant's second edition, he states that by 400 B.C.E. the Greek *eta* carried the long ē sound, which Sturtevant compares to the "a" in the word "care." If there is a difference between the sound of the "a" as in "care" and "ey" as in "they," it is quite minute. Here's the quote that you won't see cited by Michael Banak:

> **33.** In Attic Greek of 400 B.C. η was an open *ē*, similar to the French è or even to English *a* in

[276] Excerpted from e-mail received from Michael Banak on 02/04/2015.
[277] Excerpted from e-mail received from Michael Banak on 02/21/2015.

> *care*; ε was a short vowel with about the quality of French é, and much like the first vowel of Eng. *vacation*; ει was a long vowel of the same quality of ε.[278]

In his drive to exclude the "ay" as in "pray" sound from the ancient pronunciation of the Greek *eta*, Michael ignores the above while directing his focus instead on the French word *tête*, which is translated "head" in English. Having studied French, I am well aware that this word is often pronounced so as to rhyme with the word "pet," and that is obviously the sound that Michael has in mind with the link he supplies to the pronunciation of the word *tête*. Displayed below is a screen capture lifted from the attachment that Michael sent us:

33. In Attic Greek of 400 B.C. η was an open *ē*, similar to French *è* or even to English *a* in *care*; ε was a short vowel with about the quality of French *é*, and much like the first vowel of Eng. *vacation*; ει was a long vowel of the same quality as ε. In brief, η = [ε·]; ε = [e]; ει = [e·].

From his pronunciation guide, this symbol is defined through a well-known French word, "tete". The dot means it is a long version of that sound. HEAR: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlgBbJhjEjl

ε Fr. tête

languages in inherited

As displayed above, Michael ignores Sturtevant's claim that the ancient *eta* produced a sound similar to the *a* in the word "care." Instead, he wants us to focus on the French word *tête* and offers the following link to help us understand how this word is pronounced: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlgBbJhjEjl. We are unable to access the link he supplied; nevertheless, it would most likely correspond to the pronunciation found at this link. We won't deny that the French word *tête* is usually vocalized at the above link rhymes with "pet," but can it *also* rhyme with the word "date"? Please listen to the online *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries* pronunciation and decide for yourself whether or not there is room in the rainbow for *both* sounds. Upon accessing the above web site, click on the speaker icon ( ) to hear the pronunciation of the French expression *tête à tête*:

tête-à-tête

Syllabification: tête-à-tête

Pronunciation: /ˌtāt ə ˈtāt/ /ˌtet ə ˈtet/

If you are unable to access the recorded pronunciation at the above link, you should find the following "words that rhyme with tête à tête" helpful (it's located on the same page as the above pronunciation link):[279]

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[278] Sturtevant, Edgar H., *The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin*, 2nd ed., Linguistic Society of America, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, 1940, p. 41.

[279] *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries,* © 2015 Oxford University Press. http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/t%C3%AAte-%C3%A0-t%C3%AAte

Words that rhyme with tête-à-tête

abate, ablate, aerate, ait, await, backdate, bait, bate, berate, castrate, collate, conflate, crate, create, cremate, date, deflate, dictate, dilate, distraite, donate, downstate, eight, elate, equate, estate, fate, fête, fixate, freight, frustrate, gait, gate, gestate, gradate, grate, great, gyrate, hate, hydrate, inflate, innate, interrelate, interstate, irate, Kate, Kuwait, lactate, late, locate, lustrate, mandate, mate, migrate, misdate, misstate, mistranslate, mutate, narrate, negate, notate, orate, ornate, Pate, placate, plate, prate, prorate, prostrate, pulsate, pupate, quadrate, rate, rotate, sate, sedate, serrate, short weight, skate, slate, spate, spectate, spruit, stagnate, state, straight, strait, Tate, Thwaite, translate, translocate, transmigrate, truncate, underrate, understate, underweight, update, uprate, upstate, up-to-date, vacate, vibrate, wait, weight

As demonstrated above by *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries*, the French word "tête," depending on dialect, can rhyme with such words as "great," which means its vowel can be pronounced the same as the "ay" in *pray*. If this is true, this in turn means, contrary to Michael Banak's attempts to prove otherwise, that the ancient Greek *eta* certainly could have included this sound in its "rainbow of sounds."

Weighing the Testimony of Greek Scholars

We have already demonstrated that not only do Michael Banak's credentials pale in comparison to those of the noted linguists whose findings he attempts to refute, but he also exhibits a bias that leads him to both ignore and misrepresent the findings of one whose scholarship he apparently respects, Edgar A. Sturtevant. Let's suffice it to say that Michael's focus has not been that of becoming proficient in ancient Greek; rather, he is intent on justifying a pronunciation of the Messiah's name that just happens to line up with the pronunciation promoted by the group with which he is currently associated. The pronunciation listed by *Strong's Concordance* doesn't match up with that assembly's pronunciation, so he rejects it; Professor Anson Rainey didn't pass Michael's litmus test, either; sadly, only those who might (with some linguistic liberties taken) seem to justify his pronunciation of choice are worthy of Michael's honorable mention. If you rely on Michael's Unity Conference presentation, that scholar *might* appear to be an early 20th century scholar by the name of Edgar H. Sturtevant, but once we privately pointed out that Michael misrepresented Sturtevant (in more ways than one), Michael turned to yet *another* scholar in his ongoing attempt to justify his pronunciation of choice. That scholar is the late W. Sidney Allen.

W. Sidney Allen authored one of the most highly-respected books on the ancient Greek available today, titled *Vox Graeca: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Classical Gree*k, published in 1968, with his 3rd edition, from which Michael Banak quotes, published in 1987.

In examining W. Sidney Allen's findings, one of the first items that we need to address is a comparison between the two Greek "e" vowels, namely, the *epsilon* and the *eta*. W. Sidney Allen makes it clear that the *epsilon* has always carried the "e" sound as in "pet":

> **ε, ο** There is no reason to think that the sounds represented by these letters were ever other than short mid vowels, front and back respectively, i.e. rather like the vowels of English *pet* and German *Gott*. The view that they were of a specially close mid quality, i.e. [e̝], [o̝], as in French *gai*, *beau*, is probably mistaken.[280]

Please note that W. Sidney Allen does not address the Greek *eta* above; rather, he addresses the *epsilon*, to which he attributes the "e" sound as in *pet*. Notice also that he states there is no reason to think this *epsilon* was ever represented by anything other than a short mid vowel, such as the *e* in the English word *pet*. This is significant because, as you may recall, Michael Banak goes to some pains to attribute this same vowel sound to the French word *tête*. But the ancient Greek vowel that scholars liken to the vowel in *tête* is not *epsilon* (ε), but the Greek *eta* (η). If the vowels in the words *tête* and *pet* are pronounced nearly the same, if not precisely so, then why assign separate Greek vowel sounds to each word? This would be akin to telling someone the vowel sound in the word *flew* is pronounced like the vowel sound in *flu*, but the vowel sound in the word *due* is pronounced like the vowel sound in the word *boo*. Since they all rhyme, what's the difference? But if there really *is* more than a slight pronunciation difference between the words *tête* and *pet*, then it makes sense to point out a distinction. It only makes sense to apply different Greek vowels to the two words if there is a distinction in the vowel pronunciations of these two words. As we noted earlier, the French word *tête* may be vocalized as "tate." Such cannot be said of the word *pet*.

Another way of phrasing our concern expressed above would be to ask, "Michael, if you believe the ancient *eta* was closer to the '*e*' in "pet," then what was the difference between the pronunciation of the *eta* and the *epsilon*?"

Here is something from W. Sidney Allen's book that Michael Banak really needs to bear in mind before dogmatically asserting how the Greek *eta* (η) was or was not pronounced in ancient times:

> **η** and **ει** There is little external evidence to establish positive values for these symbols in Classical Attic. That they were different is shown by the fact that they later develop differently, the sound represented by ει soon becoming a close long front vowel [ī], whereas the sound of η remains for some time in the mid region. These developments further indicate that the sound of ει was always closer than that of η. This situation is reflected in the transcription of Greek words in Latin, where η is represented by ē until a late date, whereas ει is represented by ι (e.g. *sēpia*[281] = σηπία, *pīrāta* = πειρατής , and *Aristīdēs* = 'Αριστείδης).[282]

Please note the above comparison of the Greek words *sēpia* and *pīrāta*. *Sēpia*, which is spelled with the *eta* (σηπία), is pronounced "say'pia" and *pīrāta*, which is spelled with the letters *epsilon iota* (ει), is pronounced *pie'rahta*. But just in case someone may form the impression that we're dogmatically

[280] Allen, W. Sidney, *Vox Graeca: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Classical Greek*, 3rd ed., Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 1987, p. 63.
[281] The Greek word *sēpia* is pronounced "say′peeya." An audio pronunciation is available at the following link: http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/sepia.
[282] Allen, W. Sidney, *Vox Graeca: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Classical Greek*, 3rd ed., Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 1987, pp. 69-70.

asserting the ancient *eta* to have only carried the "ay" as in "pray" sound, I deliberately highlighted the first sentence of the above paragraph. Even the acclaimed expert is hesitant about dogmatically asserting "positive values" for the ancient Greek letters η and ει, so who are we to assert how they *couldn't* have been pronounced? Isn't that the same as "dogmatically asserting"? We are concerned that Michael may have lost sight of the fact that whenever there is little external evidence to establish positive values for Greek symbols, this is a call to allow for *dialectal variety*. We understand that Michael knows how to *preach* the need for allowing dialectal variety; our concern after listening to his presentation is, "Does he understand how to *practice* it?"

I underlined a key phrase in the above citation from W. Sidney Allen's book – a phrase that Michael Banak chooses to ignore: According to Allen, when Greek words were transcribed in Latin, the η was represented by ē "until a late date." For those who need assistance with phonetic symbols, you may recall the table from *Strong's Greek Dictionary*, where the ē is listed as **ē**, as in *thEy*. In other words, if we can further clarify the information from W. Sidney Allen's book, before a certain "late date" the Greek *eta* was pronounced as the **ē** as in *thEy*. This is critical information, especially when you consider Michael's dogmatic assertion:

> So this is evidence that the sound of the *eta* is going to be somewhere between an "ah" and an "ehhh." "Ah" and an "ehhh" (as in *met*). Not an "ay" (as in "pray"). Not that long vowel "ay."

The Inscriptions on Indian Coins

One piece of evidence supporting the ancient Greek *eta* having been pronounced *ay* as in "pray" stems from the Indian transliterations of the names of Seleucid kings during the 1st and 2nd centuries B.C.E. These names were inscribed on ancient Indian coins. We were first introduced to this information by E. H. Sturtevant, which we briefly covered in chapter 5 as follows:

> Oriental loan-words indicate that Greek η continued to be an *e*-vowel in the East from Alexander's time until long after the beginning of the Christian Era. Indian coins have *Heliyak-reyasa* = Ἡλιοκλέους and Diyamedasa for Διομήδου, while Greek Μηρός and Χάβηρις represent Indian *Mērusẹ* and *Kāvērī*.[283] In Armenian of the fifth century A.D. η is represented by *ĕ* twenty-five times, by *e* three times, and by *i* only six times.[284] Even at the present day η is an *e*-vowel under some conditions in Pontic Greek.[285]

First, notice from the above that the Greek *eta* (η) continued to be an *e*-vowel (not an *a*-vowel) in the East from Alexander's time until long after the beginning of the Christian Era. You might also notice the transliteration of names *Mērusẹ* and *Kāvērī*. The *ē* in those names carries the "ay" as in "pray" sound and the Greek letter used for this *ē* is the Greek *eta*. Author W. Sidney Allen further elaborates on the evidence of the pronunciation of the ancient *eta* (η) from Indian coins:

> When, at the end of the 4 c., Attic [ẹ̄] also began to close to [ī], it is possible that [ẹ̄] too may

[283] E. H. Sturtevant's footnote: "Kern, *Ellas*, I, 186; Gardner, Percy, *Indian Coins*, pp. 23, 31, etc." Note: The book *Indian Coins* is currently available for reading online under the full name *Catalogue of Indian Coins in the British Museum: Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India*, by Percy Gardner, London, Longmans & Co., 1886. Here's a link to the book.
[284] E. H. Sturtevant's footnote: Thumb, *Bys. Z.*, IX, 394-96.
[285] E. H. Sturtevant, *The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, Published September 1920, p. 127. This page may be accessed online at the following link: https://archive.org/stream/pronunciationgr00unkngoog#page/n144/mode/2up

> have tended to become closer. Its representation by *e* on Indian coins of the 2 c. B.C., however, (as well as in Latin: cf. p. 70) shows that it remained a mid vowel, and had not yet become [ī] as in modern Greek. In the 1 c. B.C. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (†*De Comp.* xiv, pp. 51 f. UR) still distinguishes between η and ι, and the fact that he describes the former as more euphonious suggests that he is referring to their sound and not simply to their graphic form.
>
> Confusion between η and ι in Attic inscriptions begins around 150 A.D., but some confusion with ε also continues to be found. In some areas the mid value of the Koine η may have been preserved even longer, since, whereas the Gothic spelling of Wulfila confuses ει and ī as *ei*, η is still represented as *e*."[286]

We can extrapolate from W. Sidney Allen's commentary above that the ancient Greek *eta* was certainly used to represent the *e* vowel as inscribed on ancient Indian coins. Whether that *e* was long or short isn't really the point, or at least it shouldn't be, especially since confusion existed even during the 2nd century about its proper pronunciation. The question is, "Can the 'ay' as in 'pray' sound be included in the 'rainbow of possible sounds'?" We are persuaded that the answer is yes, as were the likes of Wilhelm Gesenius, James Strong and yes, even Professor Anson Rainey.

The Sacred Name Movement's Dogmatic Assertions vs. Scholarly Uncertainty

We really need to compare Sacred Name Movement proponent Michael Banak's expounding of ancient Greek pronunciations with the claims of actual Greek scholars. Michael comes across in his presentation as being well-studied and certain of how the Greek *eta* could *not* have been pronounced. The Greek scholars, on the other hand, freely admit that "there is little external evidence to establish positive values for these symbols."

For the record, the late W. Sidney Allen was Professor of Comparative Philology at Cambridge University. His successor is a man named Geoffrey Horrocks, who has also authored a book on ancient Greek. His book is titled *Greek: A History of the Language and Its Speakers*. In his book, Horrocks identifies the ancient 5th/4th century BCE pronunciation of *eta* as having been "ey" as in "they." Professor Horrocks supplies his readers with a helpful chart, which is displayed below:[287]

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[286] Allen, W. Sidney, *Vox Graeca: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Classical Greek*, 3rd ed., Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 1987, pp. 74-75.

[287] From *Greek: A History of the Language and Its Speakers*, by Geoffrey Horrocks, 2nd ed., Wiley-Blackwell Publishers, 2010, p. xviii.

Greek letter		Ancient pronunciation (5th/4th century BC)	Modern pronunciation
Αα	(alpha)[1]	[a]	[a]
Ββ	(beta)	[b]	[b]
Γγ	(gamma)	[g]	[ɣ, j]
Δδ	(delta)	[d]	[ð]
Εε	(epsilon)	[e]	[e]
Ζζ	(zeta)	[zd]	[z]
Ηη	(eta)	[ɛː]	[i]
Θθ	(theta)	[tʰ]	[θ]

If you're not well-versed in phonetic symbols, you might wonder how the above **ɛː** can be considered the equivalent of the "ey" in "they." Shown below is the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), where the **ɛː** symbol is listed as being pronounced "ei" as in "heir" (which is pretty close to the "ey" in "they"):

Help:IPA for Greek

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The charts below show the way in which the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) represents Ancient Greek and Modern Greek pronunciations in Wikipedia articles. The Ancient Greek pronunciation shown here is a reconstruction of the Attic dialect in the 5th century BC.

See Ancient Greek phonology and Modern Greek phonology for a more thorough look at the sounds of these languages.

Consonants[1]

IPA	AG	MG	Example	English approximation
c		κ	κιόλας[2]	skew
k	κ, ξ		κατά, ξένος[3][2]	scar
kʰ	χ		χάρης[2]	car
x		χ		similar to hat, Scottish English loch
ç			χέρι[2]	hue

Vowels

Monophthongs

IPA	AG	MG	Example	English approximation
a	ᾰ	α	άρτος	cut
aː	ᾱ		χώρᾱ	father
ɛː	η		ψυχή[8]	heir
e	ε[9]		θεός	met
eː	ει		εἶμι[8]	similar to kid

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When we combine Horrocks' chart illustrating his understanding that the ancient Greek *eta* (η) was pronounced **ɛː** with the fact that this symbol carries the "ei" as in "heir" sound, it becomes clear that deriving the "ay" as in "pray" sound for the ancient *eta* is, at worst, a very, very close approximation.

We realize that Sacred Name Movement advocates will remain skeptical, so I decided to try

[288] *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia,* Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., "Help:IPA for Greek," last updated April 17, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA_for_Greek.

contacting author Geoffrey Horrocks to see if he could confirm our own findings. Here is what I wrote:

> Dear Professor Horrocks,
>
> My name is Larry Acheson and I am hopeful that you can assist me with a bit of pronunciation research. I am trying to determine an approximate time frame for when the Greek "eta" began to be pronounced "ey" as in "beta." Could you please assist?
>
> I appreciate any assistance that you can provide.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Larry Acheson[289]

To my surprise, Professor Horrocks replied to my inquiry. Here is his response:

> Thanks for your query. The original pronunciation was like a long French e-grave (as in 'there'), which passed through a long French e-acute sound in Hellenistic times into an i-sound (as in 'machine') in the Roman era - by which time there were no longer contrasts of vowel length. The American pronunciation 'bayta' ('beeta' in the UK) is an approximation to the middle stage.
>
> Hope that helps - the dates are very approximate because there were significant differences in the progress of the sound change by region and social class.
>
> Best wishes,
>
> Geoff Horrocks[290]

Professor Horrocks summarizes three stages in the development of the ancient Greek *eta*. The middle stage, which encompasses Hellenistic times, falls during the years leading up to the birth of Yeshua. According to Horrocks' research, during that time period the *eta* carried a long French "e-acute sound." For those who have not studied French, the "e-acute sound" is the "ay as in bayta" sound.[291] Our point: Even IF author/professor W. Sidney Allen agreed with Michael Banak's findings, his successor at Cambridge University does not. Let's suffice it to say that Professor Horrocks is considerably more proficient in Greek than we are, and I dare say this includes the likes of Michael Banak. Let's also suffice it to say that Professor Horrocks is considerably more receptive to the possibility (and likelihood) that the ancient *eta*, by the 4th century BCE, was pronounced "ay" as in "pray." We cautiously state the above

[289] From the e-mail I sent Professor Geoffrey Horrocks on 2/8/2015.
[290] From the e-mail I received from Professor Geoffrey Horrocks on 2/8/2015.
[291] You can view and listen to examples of how the "e-acute" ("é," also known as the *accent aigu*) is pronounced at virtually any French tutorial. Here's one that we found online: http://www.frenchtutorial.com/en/learn-french/pronunciation/eacute. For a YouTube tutorial on pronouncing the various "e" accents in French, go to the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6L3opwbpVxk.

because we are not trying to prove exactly how the ancient *eta* was universally pronounced; rather, we regard the "*ay* as in *pray*" as one of the *possibilities* instead of excluding it as Michael Banak does. Finally, please also note Professor Horrocks' call for allowing dialectal variety: "The dates are very approximate because there were significant differences in the progress of the sound change by region and social class."

Further cementing the need to truly allow dialectal variety with the ancient pronunciation of the Greek *eta* (with no exceptions or asterisks) is the fact that even trained linguists do not agree on how it was pronounced. Having determined that Michael exhibits a clear bias supportive of pronouncing the Messiah's name the way the group he associates with does, I decided to submit inquiries to various scholars around the globe to see what answers I could come up with. Since I did not request permission to use these scholars' names, I will supply their quotes alongside the universities where they teach, but I will leave their identities anonymous. First, here's the question I posed:

> Dear (Name of Professor),
>
> Could you please assist me with some research into the ancient pronunciation of the Greek letter "*eta*"? I have a *Strong's* Concordance, and on his Greek Articulation page in the back of the book it lists the pronunciation of "eta" as being "ey" as in "they." However, I recently learned that in an ancient Greek play the sound made by a sheep (which we know is "baaa" as in "bad") was written "*Beta Eta*." This would indicate that *eta* at one time may have carried the sound æ. I understand that there were likely several Greek dialects during and before the 1st century, but I am trying to determine a general, approximate time frame for when the Greek "*eta*" began to be pronounced "*ey*" as in "they." Could you please assist?
>
> I appreciate any information that you can provide. Thank you very much!
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Larry Acheson

Here's the response I received from a professor at Baylor University:

> Dear Larry Acheson,
> While our standard "classroom" pronunciation is of the first variety you mention (basically same as English long "a," as in "way"), I was taught by linguists that the actual pronunciation was closer to your second mentioned variety (English short "a" as in "bad," keeping in mind that there is a wide variation in how this vowel is pronounced by native English speakers!).
> As for dialects…
> There were several major dialects up to and through the time of Christ. The dialects in which the above pronunciation of eta applies would be the Attic/Ionic dialects (eta was far less commonly used in other dialects). The koine of the Septuagint and NT is mostly descended form that Attic/Ionic branch of Greek.
> _*But*_
> By the time of Christ, turns out that many of the old vowels were already being pronounced quite differently form their classical-period values. Eta changed to something very close to the modern pronunciation (like English long "e" as in "bee"). We can detect this shift by the number of spelling errors that occur in writing of that period.
> Hope this helps.[292]

[292] E-mail received 04/08/2015 from a professor at Baylor University.

According to the above professor, the Greek *eta* was pronounced "ee" as in "bee" by the time of Messiah. Before that time, he agrees that the "cry of the sheep" validates that the *eta* was pronounced "a" as in "bad." I replied to his e-mail and suggested that if the *eta* carried the sound of *ee* during the time of the Messiah, then the "Jee" in "Jesus" might possibly represent the correct vowel sound in the first syllable of His name. Here was the Baylor professor's swift reply:

> Wait!
> You have to take into consideration that the spelling of the name Jesus/Joshua (they are the same name) in Greek would have happened prior to the writing of the NT. The spelling of that name in the NT therefore is going to tend to represent an older pronunciation. Compare: No one today pronounces the "h" in "John." But clearly that spelling reflects a time when the name's pronunciation was different.
> Also to consider: Jesus probably did not go around answering to a Greek version of his name.
> And third to consider: some Hebrew names were adjusted significantly when transliterated into Greek, often due to Greek speakers' inability to pronounce Hebrew names properly. That's how we get the Greek name "Simon" from the Hebrew name "Shim'on" (and also explains why there are two variants of the name in Greek and later languages, i.e., "Simon" and "Simeon"). So Jesus' Hebrew name would be pronounced something like "yehoshu'a" or "yeshu'a" but it ends up in Greek as "yesus" with an "s" sound at the end. Why? Because that helps the name fit the grammatical endings of Greek better.
> All of which is to say that you should _*not*_ use the Greek versions of these names as a guide to the actual pronunciation of the original Hebrew names.
> Final note: the sound changes I discussed in the previous email were gradual, and were not universally applied until later. It is impossible to know the precise circumstances.[293]

The above professor certainly offers some valuable information and it should be a given that there were adjustments to Hebrew names when transliterated into Greek, but as with all answers, we need to be careful not to blindly accept everything he says as "gospel." For example, the Baylor University scholar exhibits little regard for Greek transliterations of names. On the other hand, Wilhelm Gesenius, widely regarded as one of the foremost Hebrew scholars of his time extends a much higher value for Greek transliterations. Here's what he wrote:

> The manner in which the Septuagint (LXX) wrote Hebrew proper names in Greek letters, furnishes an older and more weighty tradition. Several, however, of the Hebrew sounds they were unable to represent for want of corresponding characters in the Greek language, e.g., **ט**, **ע**, **צ**, **ק**, **שׂ** (in which cases they made the best shifts they could).[294]

In spite of any concerns we may have about the conclusions reached by the Baylor University scholar cited above, he nevertheless shares the Cambridge professor's view about dialectal variety: "*The sound changes I discussed in the previous email were gradual, and were not universally applied until later. It is impossible to know the precise circumstances.*"

Here's the response I received from a professor at Oxford University:

[293] E-mail received 04/09/2015 from a professor at Baylor University.
[294] From *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, Translated by Benjamin Davies, LL.D, Ira Bradley & Co., Boston, MA, 1880, p. 26.

> I think the straight answer is that we don't know, or at least we know only that there were variations in both dialect and period: by the early CE period a lot of vowels and diphthongs had come to be pronounced more or less the same, as a long -ee- sound. I was myself taught at school the -ey- pronunciation, but it is true that most professionals, me included, now use the -air or -æ, sounding indeed surprisingly like sheep. Baa is of course not very accurate for a sheep sound, but then woof isn't for dogs either: the Greek rendering au au is more accurate there.

First, please note that the Oxford University professor presents us with a statement that Michael Banak, in his most distinguished, scholarly approach, dares not offer: "We don't know." Secondly, much to Michael's chagrin, the above professor doesn't mention the *eta* having ever been pronounced the way Michael presents it ("ah" as in "Yah"). He lists three options, none of which include the "ah" as in "Yah" sound, most likely because this sound is and always has been represented by the Greek letter *alpha*. While we hardly believe the Messiah would be offended by the Sacred Name Movement's attempt to incorporate such a theophoric pronunciation into His name, we are nevertheless persuaded that such a heartfelt gesture requires a pronunciation of the Greek *eta* that is unfounded by any evidence we have ever seen, whether it be linguistic or historical. If ancient Greek writers such as Philo understood the theophoric element in the name **יהושע**, and if the initial vowel in this name *had* to be vocalized as the "ah as in Yah," then why didn't they spell this name *Iasous*?

Although I reached out to several university professors, only a few responded, likely because they didn't want to become embroiled in a controversy regarding the precise pronunciation of a certain ancient vowel, especially in view of the fact that even the top experts express uncertainty. One of the few that responded was a representative from the University of Athens. I realized that contacting someone in Greece might result in a confusing response, since our language barrier might pose a hindrance to effective communication. Indeed, the response I received was less than clear:

> I understand the pronunciation could be close to a double e (the pronunciation of e we get in them - as if we could have a long e in them: the-em)![295]

We're not sure how the above representative gets a double e pronunciation in the first syllable of the word *them*. Nevertheless, if he understands the ancient *eta* to have been pronounced as the "e" in the English word "them," we certainly respect that sound, especially since that is the sound that most frequently comes from our own lips.

Finally, here's the response I received from a professor at University of California Berkeley, who has authored a textbook on Attic Greek:

> *Eta* is a long vowel, so it is a long version of something close to the vowel in *tête*. The sound in they corresponds, in contrast, to the assumed classical pronunction of the epsilon-iota combination. In reality, however, many modern students and teachers barely make any distinction in pronunciation between eta and epsilon-iota, because the distinction of two types of long e is not very natural to English-speakers.[296]

I primarily find the above professor's response intriguing because he gives a completely different response than the one offered by W. Sidney Allen in his book *Vox Graeca: A Guide to the Pronunciation*

[295] E-mail received 04/09/2015 from a representative of the University of Athens (Greece).
[296] E-mail received 04/04/2015 from a professor at University of California Berkeley.

of Classical Greek. According to the above UC Berkeley professor, the *eta* was pronounced as the "ê" in "tête" and the *epsilon-iota* (ει) carried the "ey" as in "they" sound. As you may recall, Allen writes that the *eta* was_represented by ē (as in "they") until a late date, whereas ει is represented by ι (as in "machine").

There are reasons for why we e-mailed various Greek professors. First, we do not know Greek, nor are we persuaded that anyone investigating this issue should feel compelled to learn Greek. If we want answers, we should feel at liberty to contact the experts, preferably multiple experts so as to avoid reliance on any one individual for our conclusion. Secondly, if all the Greek experts unanimously supported Michael Banak's conclusion, then we would be compelled to admit that the pronunciation we've used for all these years is apparently not based on sound evidence. On that basis, we would likewise be compelled to go with one of the options that fits within Michael's "rainbow of sounds," and that would be fine with us. Finally, we knew that if there was disagreement or uncertainty among the trained scholars, then we would have no business imposing our personal view of what could or could not have been the ancient *eta* pronunciation on others. After all, *we weren't there*! In this case, there is no scholarly consensus about how the ancient *eta* was pronounced. I regard that as a sign that we should be lenient and tolerant of how others think the *eta* was pronounced during the 1st century. Sadly, we find that Michael Banak takes it upon himself to disqualify the "ay as in pray" pronunciation of the ancient *eta*, using the scholar whose findings he finds the most appealing, then he tweaks the vowel sound uttered by a bleating sheep to produce the sound he wants. In deriving his "ah" pronunciation of the ancient *eta*, he certainly does not have the backing of any Greek scholars that we are aware of; indeed, we aren't aware of *any* Greek scholars who would agree with his inclusion of the first-syllable pronunciation "Yah" of the Messiah's name as being among *eta*'s "rainbow of sounds." Nevertheless, is Michael is truly bent on pronouncing the Messiah's name the way it was pronounced when He walked this earth as a flesh and blood human and his best effort leads him to believe it was *Yahshua*, then I respect that and I believe the Messiah is honored by his best efforts to get it right.

For his part, we are thankful to report that Michael, unlike many Sacred Name Movement adherents, does not regard June and me as denying the Father's name in the Son's name. I was compelled to ask him his impression due to his approach in his Unity Conference presentation, which left that question unanswered. In a separate e-mail, he supplied the following response:

> Your pronunciation, Larry, assuming it is valid, was ultimately derived from the long form. So, the meanings are all inherited. Therefore, you are not denying the Almighty's Name.[297]

Of course, Michael is not persuaded that the pronunciation June and I use is valid; nevertheless, we are somewhat reassured that he at least does not regard us as denying the Father's name in the Son's name. As we read in chapter three, this approach deviates from the typical Sacred Name Movement adherent's view.

[297] Excerpt from an e-mail received from Michael Banak on 02/04/2015.

Were You There?

Although we are gratified that Michael doesn't hold a condemning view of those who pronounce the Messiah's name as June and I do, he nevertheless uses a classic "straw man" approach to validating his own pronunciation of choice while attempting to eliminate the one he doesn't like. The "straw man" approach essentially creates an unrealistic, false impression of the argument that is being attacked (this false impression is the "straw man"), then disproves that argument. The unsuspecting audience, not really keenly aware of all the facts, seeing the utter destruction of the "straw man," is persuaded that the one presenting the argument must be correct – *unless* the other party is able to demonstrate how a false impression was created by his crafty opponent. Michael Banak's "straw man" is the argument that anyone expressing support for a certain pronunciation of the Messiah's name must be prepared to demonstrate which group of people in antiquity used that pronunciation. Not only that, but they must give the time period when it was used *and* the specific geographical location of the tribe that used it. This requirement presumes that Michael himself knows for certain that the pronunciation "Yahshua" is what the angel told Joseph to name the Son to Whom Mary would give birth at the appointed time. Michael mentions the above "requirement" in his Unity Conference presentation, then he repeats it an e-mail to me as follows:

> Maybe I can make you my first practice forum for a new approach I require in all such conversations.
>
> You believe the sound "Yay-shua" is correct. OK. Here goes:
>
> - Who said it that way?
> - What time in history did they live?
> - What is their Geographical location?
> - What is the tribal affiliation[298]

The first item that Michael just never could seem to grasp, even after having read our study, is that June and I refer to the pronunciation we use as our *personal choice*, which is not to be confused with the dogmatic "no other option" approach that is so typical of Sacred Name Movement constituents. While we lean towards the pronunciation "Yay-shua," this should by no means be construed as a foregone conclusion that we are correct and all other pronunciation options are wrong. This is the very approach that we've been up against since the beginning of this journey, yet Michael attempts to depict **<u>us</u>** as being the dogmatically assertive ones. Notwithstanding, for Michael to ask the above questions assumes that he either believes he knows what the answers *are* or else he knows what the answers *aren't*. Does he know for sure? Let's face it: *The scholars I queried don't!*

So at first it might appear that we are stymied by Michael's four questions, but once we recognize the "Straw Man Argument" that he presents, we defuse the argument by asking Michael the following question: *Were you there?* And that is the whole point of this entire study. None of us were there, so we are all (hopefully) doing the best we can with the information made available to us. Indeed, this is what the Greek scholars are also doing, it's just that they have expended considerably more time and effort into research and study of both modern and ancient languages than most of us are able to hope to accomplish in our lifetimes. When those who have spent countless hours learning the language and researching its development through the ages conclude that they really aren't certain how the ancient Greek *eta* was pronounced during the days leading up to the Messiah's birth, this should cause us to seriously ponder the

[298] Excerpt from an e-mail received from Michael Banak on 02/03/2015.

attitude we exhibit towards those who don't pronounce the Messiah's name quite the same way we do.

Since we have no indication that Michael Banak was present during the days when Yeshua the Messiah walked this earth in fleshly form, we can only conclude that he bases his rejection of the pronunciation "Yay-shua" on the conclusions reached by scholars, namely the ones whose arguments seem the most plausible to him. In fact, as we saw earlier, this is what Michael admits in an e-mail that he sent me:

> No, Larry, I am citing scholars. What else am I supposed to do?

We can only suggest that Michael take a cue from his own presentation:

> These scholars and these linguists, they don't give a rip about your salvation, but we're giving them an alarming level of influence over the unity of the brethren.

Might this be an example of the "pot calling the kettle black"?

"You guys pronounce the Messiah's name correctly, but you misspell it!"

From the title page of the article as found at www.yrm.com.

As we mentioned early in this chapter, we are persuaded that there is an important, underlying factor that motivated Michael to give his presentation. Of course, Michael has already shared that the genesis of his presentation was an article authored by a minister associated with Yahweh's Restoration Ministry, an organization based in Missouri. Michael is affiliated with this same ministry. Two months after my e-mail discussion with Michael concluded, I decided to access this group's web site. Lo and behold, I found the very article that Michael referenced. It is not merely an article designed to repudiate the short form of the Messiah's name, but it specifically targets the forms *Y'shua* and *Yeshua*. Here's an excerpt from the study titled "Yahshua: Let's put Yah back in Y'shua":

> Judaism has for centuries sought to cover up the true pronunciation of Yahweh's Name. That same false notion has been perpetuated today by those who insist on using the altered form Yeshua, rather than the correct and proper form, Yahshua. Yahshua is truth while Yeshua is error. Our Savior said that His disciples are sanctified by the Truth, John 17:17.[299]

Sadly, not only does the above author misrepresent the record of history while simultaneously infusing his lack of expertise in the area of Hebrew linguistics upon his reading audience, but if you access the article and read the preceding paragraph, you will find that he lumps those who refer to the Messiah as "Yeshua" in with the "synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 3:8-9). The reason we accessed this group's web site was to see if Michael Banak's presentation had any effect on the group with which he is affiliated. Although as of this writing eight months had elapsed from the date of Michael's Unity

[299] Wirl, Bob, "Yahshua: Let's put Yah back in Y'shua," Yahweh's Restoration Ministry, Holts Summit, MO, https://yrm.org/lets-put-yah-back-yeshua. Originally accessed on 04/26/2015; the study has since been moved to the afore-listed link and renamed "Yahshua: Let's put Yah back in Yeshua."

Conference presentation, there is no visible sign that it had any effect on those responsible for updating the group's web site. We might add that Yahweh's Restoration Ministry goes to considerable lengths to promote the long form of the Messiah's name (**יהושע**) over and above the short form (**ישוע**). Here's their banner:

In view of the fact that Yahweh's Restoration Ministry has made no changes to their view regarding the spelling and pronunciation of the Messiah's name subsequent to Michael Banak's presentation, it appears that they are not currently willing to budge from their position. It appears that Michael, in spite of his attachment to this organization, recognizes a linguistic quandary insofar as the Hebrew spelling of the Messiah's name that's promoted by Yahweh's Restoration Ministry and how they pronounce that name. Those who have studied basic Hebrew know that it is linguistically impossible to derive the pronunciation "Yahshua" from the spelling **יהושע** because the "waw" (**ו**) cannot be silent and must be pronounced, leaving us with either the pronunciation *Yehoshua* or possibly *Yahushua*.[300] It is therefore rather obvious that the current leadership of Yahweh's Restoration Ministry is not well-versed in Hebrew linguistics, yet they are too set in their ways to accept any evidence that contradicts their belief structure. We are also left with the impression that Michael Banak knows enough Hebrew to recognize that this group mispronounces the Messiah's name as it is currently spelled on their banner. Such being the case, we can only speculate that Michael's end goal in delivering his presentation was to send the following message to his Yahweh's Restoration Ministry elders: "You guys pronounce the Messiah's name correctly, but you misspell it on your banner!" We are therefore persuaded that Michael's desired result was for Yahweh's Restoration Ministry to change the spelling of the Messiah's name as found on their banner to **ישוע**, all the while retaining the pronunciation "Yahshua." If our speculation comes close to being correct, it appears that June and I may not be the only ones who are dissatisfied with Michael's presentation. Both Yahweh's Restoration Ministry and I are less than pleased, but for different reasons. It is possible that Michael may have furthered the cause of unity regarding the Messiah's name among a few Sacred Name Movement adherents, but for June and me the end result was additional discord on top of what had previously been sown.

[300] *Cf.* Chapter 10, specifically Daniel Botkins' article "The Messiah's Hebrew Name: 'Yeshua' Or 'Yahshua'?" where this Hebrew linguistics rule is explained in detail.

Conclusion

Although we have reached the end of the pages offered in this present study, this by no means should serve to indicate an end to our search. We hope to gather more evidence as time marches on, and as it comes in we intend to expand this study. When I first composed the preceding sentence, this study consisted of 57 pages. The combination of additional evidence accumulated since that time, combined with the ongoing disputations that we also address, has caused the length of this study to more than triple. While we concede that we have presented a case in defense of the way we personally lean regarding the Messiah's name, we hope we have likewise made it clear that we do not and will not intentionally direct any negative criticism towards those who non-dogmatically embrace a different view, especially in view of the established fact that the Hebrew spellings of the Messiah's name are interchangeable. We hope we can all work ***together*** as we strive to achieve a spirit of unity on this topic. Let us continue to study the evidence, including the historical evidence, and pour through Scripture, not only to enhance our knowledge, understanding and reverence of the Messiah's name, but also to learn how we can better serve Him as we simultaneously deal with those who do not share our views. Let us continue to pursue scholarly inquiry and the respectful sharing of ideas and beliefs.

Many readers will access this section of our study before reading the actual contents in their entirety, thus essentially short-circuiting the process. Those who read only this conclusion will be sorely disappointed because the typical expectation is that of finding which pronunciation June and I lean towards and then either inwardly rejoicing that our conclusion matches theirs or immediate rejection when noticing that our conclusion is, from their perspective, "off-kilter." Many Sacred Name Movement proponents will rejoice when they read the evidence supportive of the long form **יהוֹשע**, but then they will feel a twinge of disappointment and maybe even some anger when they read our report that there is no tangible evidence supporting the belief that either form ever had a first-syllable pronunciation of "Yah." Those who have long been fed up with typical Sacred Name Movement false propaganda involving everything from deriving the "original pronunciation" from cuneiform writings to tracing the Greek form *Iesous* to Zeus worship will shrug their shoulders when they read information from such credible references as *The Anchor Bible* that this name was initially vocalized *Yahōshû* before a transition to the form *Yeshua*.

Thirteen years after my Unity Conference presentation, another gentleman, Michael Banak, delivered his own appeal for mutual understanding at the 2014 Unity Conference held in Sterling, Illinois. Pardon the pun, but after having read Michael's PowerPoint presentation, I felt he gave a "sterling" performance. However, when I listened to his audio presentation as posted on YouTube and discovered that he rejects that pronunciation that June and I have used for years as being a potential candidate for the way the Messiah's name was pronounced back in the 1st century, I realized we were once again faced with yet another version of spiritual intolerance. Further contemplation led me to the inescapable conclusion that Michael had ulterior motives in delivering his presentation. His end goal was likely to demonstrate to the leadership of the group with which he associates that they *pronounce* the Messiah's name correctly, but they *spell* it wrong, all the while promoting the acceptance of dialectal variety of a few other variants. Using the cry of the sheep as his foundational argument, he tweaks that vowel sound to produce the sound that fits his paradigm.

Michael also goes to considerable length to portray himself as being completely unbiased about how the Messiah's name should be pronounced. We see nothing wrong with studying to show oneself approved, which inevitably leads to the formation of a conclusion. The challenge, as June and I see it, is that of how we conduct ourselves *after* forming our (biased) conclusions. As a whole, we feel the Sacred

Name Movement's conduct in this area reflects poorly on the Person Whose name they so passionately promote. There are always exceptions, but if you read our chapter titled "Stand Taken by the Sacred Name Movement," you know that the very leaders of these organizations are the ones who set the examples for their respective flocks. Sadly, they are often negative examples.

My Version of the Attitude We Should All Have

When I find myself in a discussion about the Messiah's name, sometimes the question of whether or not it's okay for us to form a biased conclusion based upon earnest research comes up. It's not a common question, but sometimes it does come up. When that question arises, the discussion occasionally gets bogged down in the details, such as whether or not we should allow for dialectical variety when it comes to correctly pronouncing the Messiah's name. In an e-mail exchange that I had with Michael Banak leading up to his Unity Conference presentation, this topic came up and Michael asked me the following question: "If [the Messiah] was Keltic, would I be required to pronounce his name with an Irish brogue?" In other words, if the Messiah speaks with a Keltic accent, should we be required to mimic that accent when uttering His name or else run the risk of pronouncing it wrong? The answer I gave Michael, in my opinion, expresses the proper attitude that each of us should have when it comes to forming our personal conclusion:

In my response, I shared a true story about my experience while visiting a foreign country. Back in 1990, I spent a month of study in Spain with a group of around 15 other students from Fairfield University out of Bridgeport, Connecticut. While there, a young woman named Sonia served as our escort/guide. Her official title was "ayudante madrileña." Sonia was fairly bilingual, but it was clear that she struggled with the English language. I also found her to be very altruistic, always eager to assist anyone. Bless her heart, in spite of her best efforts, Sonia couldn't quite get my name right. She saw it in written form and automatically pronounced it "Lah'rrree," even though I had introduced myself to her as "Larry." I really and truly didn't mind her mispronunciation, even though she consistently mispronounced the "a" vowel (the Spanish "a" is always an "ah" sound). I didn't even attempt to correct Sonia because, quite frankly, I am not one of those persnickety types who gets bent out of shape when his name isn't pronounced just so.

One day, however, Sonia asked if she was pronouncing my name correctly and I had to smile and tell her that she didn't <u>quite</u> pronounce it correctly. She could have stopped right then and there and I would have been fine. But no, she wanted to know *precisely* how to correctly pronounce it. So I vocalized my name s-l-o-w-l-y. Amazingly, she <u>still</u> couldn't frame the pronunciation. Sonia kept trying and trying, but her "a" always came out as an "ah" instead of an "ay" as in "hay," presumably because her brain could only process the Spanish "a" as in "ah" in the spelling "Larry." On top of that, she kept trilling the "rr" in my name. I could see that we really weren't making any significant progress, but finally I decided to write my name with a Spanish phonetic spelling of "L-E-R-I" – "Leri." Since the Spanish "e" is always vocalized as "ay," I thought that maybe supplying Sonia with a phonetic representation to accommodate her Spanish thought processes might possibly achieve my goal. Indeed, that is what solved the problem! As soon as Sonia saw the new spelling, she immediately got it 99% right. She came very, very close.

Here's the moral of the story: I didn't really expect Sonia to go to such great lengths to try and pronounce my name correctly, but I would be lying if I told you I wasn't impressed by her labor of love. I

was actually fine with her initial (mis)pronunciation of "Lah'rrree," but I was blown away by the diligence that led to her eventually getting it 99% right. There was no requirement on my part for Sonia to pronounce my name a certain way. Nevertheless, I was surely blessed by the heartfelt effort that she put into getting it right. In fact, she was also blessed when she saw my reaction to her getting it right. *It was truly a mutual blessing!*

I realize this was an earthly example, but I hope it serves to give us all a heavenly glimpse at how our loving and merciful Heavenly Father and His Son regard those of us who struggle with Their names. We persist in striving to get Their names right and when we realize we were looking for answers in the wrong places, we don't despair. Instead, we plug away, continuing to strive to get Their names right to the best of our abilities. I don't believe our Heavenly Father and His Son expect us to get things 100% right, but I am persuaded that They are impressed when we nevertheless *try*, not because it makes us any better than anyone else, but simply because They know we are only trying to please Them. Of course, there will always be someone to accuse us of putting more emphasis on pronouncing Their names correctly than actually abiding by Their teachings, and we will not argue that our greater focus should indeed be that of emulating our Heavenly Father and His Son by living righteously. We're just trying to honor Them in every way that we, as humans, possibly can and that includes striving to learn how to spell and pronounce their names. Honoring Them in every way possible is what it's all about or at least that's what it *should* be all about. With all this in mind, if I find that you lean a certain way, I *do* want to know how and why, not because I want to prove you wrong, but because I want to see if you have anything to share that will help bring me closer to pronouncing the Messiah's name correctly.

6 And hee buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, ouer against Beth-Peor: but no man knoweth of his Sepulchre vnto this day

7 ¶ And Moses was an hundred and twentie yeeres olde when he died: his eye was not dimme, nor his †naturall force †abated.

† Hebr. moisture.
† Hebr. fled.

8 ¶ And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plaines of Moab thirty dayes: So the dayes of weeping *and* mourning for Moses were ended.

9 ¶ And Ioshua the sonne of Nun *was* full of the Spirit of wisedome: for Moses had layd his handes vpon him, and the children of Israel hearkened vnto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

10 ¶ And there arose not a Prophet since in Israel like vnto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face:

11 In al the signes and the wonders which the LORD sent him to doe in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his seruants, and to all his land,

12 And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terrour, which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.

¶ THE BOOKE OF Iosh ua.

CHAP. I.

1 The LORD appointeth Ioshua to succeede Moses. 3 The borders of the promised land. 5 God promiseth to assist Ioshua. 8 He giueth him instructions. 10 He prepareth the people to passe ouer Iordan. 12 Ioshua putteth the two tribes and halfe in minde of their promise to Moses. 16 They promise him fealty.

NOwe after the death of Moses the seruant of the LORD, it came to passe, that the LORD spake vnto Ioshua the sonne of Nun, Moses * minister, saying,

* Deut. 1. 38.

2 Moses my seruant is dead: now therefore arise, goe ouer this Iordan, thou, and all this people, vnto the land which I doe giue to them, *euen* to the children of Israel.

3 * Euery place that the sole of your foote shall tread vpon, that haue I giuen vnto you, as I said vnto Moses.

* Deut. 11. 24. chap. 14. 9.

4 From the wildernesse and this Lebanon, euen vnto the great Riuer, the riuer Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and vnto the great sea, toward the going downe of the Sunne, shalbe your coast.

5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the dayes of thy life: as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with thee: * I will not faile thee, nor forsake thee.

* Heb. 13. 6.

6 * Bee strong, and of a good courage: for ‖vnto this people shalt thou diuide for an inheritance the land which I sware vnto their fathers to giue them.

* Deut. 31. 23.
‖ Or, thou shalt cause this people to inherite the land, &c.

7 Onely bee thou strong, and very courageous, that thou mayest obserue to doe according to all the Law, which Moses my seruant commaunded thee: * turne not from it to the right hand, or to the left, that thou mayest ‖prosper whither soeuer thou goest.

* Deu. 5. 32. and 28. 14.
‖ Or, doe wisely.

8 This booke of the Law shal not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest obserue to doe according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt ‖haue good successe.

‖ Or, doe wisely.

9 Haue not I commanded thee? be strong, and of a good courage, bee not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee, whither soeuer thou goest.

10 ¶ Then

They make boothes. Chap.ix. A folemne faſt.

the people, said vnto all the people. This day is holy vnto the LORD your God, mourne not, nor weepe: for all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.

10 Then hee sayd vnto them, Goe your way, eat the fat, & drinke the sweet, and send portions vnto them, for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy vnto our LORD: neither be ye sory, for the ioy of the LORD is your strength.

11 So the Leuites stilled all the people, saying, Holde your peace, for the day is holy, neither be ye grieued.

12 And all the people went their way to eate, and to drinke, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had vnderstood the wordes that were declared vnto them.

13 ¶ And on the second day were gathered together the chiefe of the fathers of all the people, the Priestes and the Leuites, vnto Ezra the Scribe, euen ‖ to vnderstand the wordes of the LAW.

‖ Or, that they might instruct in the words of the Law.

14 And they found written in the Law whith the LORD had commanded † by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in * boothes, in the feast of the seuenth moneth:

† Heb. by the hand of.
* Leuit. 23. 34. deut. 16. 13.

15 And that they should publish and proclaime in all their cities, and in Ierusalem, saying, Goe foorth vnto the mount, and fetch Oliue branches, and Pine branches, and Myrtle branches, and Palme branches, and branches of thicke trees, to make boothes, as it is written.

16 So the people went foorth, and brought *them*, and made themselues boothes, euery one vpon the roofe of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the streete of the water-gate, and in the streete of the gate of Ephraim.

17 And all the congregation of them that were come againe out of the captiuitie, made boothes, and sate vnder the boothes: for since the dayes of Ieshua the sonne of Nun, vnto that day, had not the children of Israel done so: and there was very great gladnesse.

18 Also day by day from the first day vnto the last day, he read in the booke of the Law of God: and they kept the feast seuen dayes, and on the eight day *was* † a solemne assembly according vnto the maner.

† Heb. a restraint.

CHAP. IX.

1 A solemne Fast, and repentance of the people. 4 The Leuites make a religious confession of Gods goodnes, and their wickednes.

NOw in the * twentie and fourth day of this moneth, the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, & with sackclothes, and earth vpon them.

* Chap. 8. 2

2 And the seede of Israel separated themselues from all † strangers, and stood and confessed their sinnes, and the iniquities of their fathers.

† Heb. strange children.

3 And they stood vp in their place, and read in the booke of the Law of the LORD their God, *one* fourth part of the day, and *another* fourth part they confessed and worshipped the LORD their God.

4 ¶ Then stoode vp, vpon the ‖ staires of the Leuites, Ieshua and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, *and* Chenani, and cryed with a loude voice vnto the LORD their God.

‖ Or, consfold.

5 Then the Leuites, Ieshua and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodiiah, Shebaniah, *and* Pethahiah, sayde, Stand vp, *and* blesse the LORD your God for euer and euer, and blessed bee thy glorious Name, which is exalted aboue all blessing and praise.

6 Thou, *euen* thou art LORD alone, * thou hast made heauen, the heauen of heauens, with all their hoste, the earth, and all things that *are* therein, the seas, and all that *is* therin, and thou preseruest them all, and the hoste of heauen worshippeth thee.

* Gen. 1. 1.

7 Thou art the LORD the God, who diddest choose * Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Vr of the Caldees, and gauest him the name of Abraham:

* Gen. 11. 31. and 12. 1. & 17. 5.

8 And foundest his heart * faithfull before thee, & madest a * couenant with him, to giue the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Iebusites, and the Girgashites, to giue *it*, *I say*, to his seed, and hast performed thy words, for thou *art* righteous,

* Gen. 15. 6.
* Gen. 12. 17. and 15. 18. & 17. 9.

9 * And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the red Sea,

* Exod. 3. 7. and 5. & 10.

10 And shewedst signes * and wonders

* Exod. 7. 8. 9. 10. 12. & 14. chapters

A note of explanation regarding the scanned copies on these two pages: The gentleman who sent me these photocopies, Worley Maynard, underlined virtually everything that Anson Rainey said regarding the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton and made sure everyone knows that Professor Rainey "has no ax to grind." However, when it comes to the Messiah's name, Rainey personally informed me that he believes it is pronounced *Yeshua*. Worley Maynard makes it clear that he now disagrees with Anson Rainey with regard to the pronunciation of the Messiah's name. How is it that Worley expects everyone to *unquestioningly* accept Rainey's testimony regarding the Creator's name, but Mr. Rainey is suddenly not so smart when it comes to the Messiah's name? In 2015, another Sacred Name advocate spoke out against Rainey's scholarship.

German Influence on the J & the V

From the Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition.

Jehovah - *"Yahweh or Yahwe is the spelling generally adopted by scholars; the older Jahveh is a Germanism." Yah, the brief form, appears about 40 times in the O.T. An example is found in Ex. 15:2, "Yah is my strength and my song ..."*

Queries & Comments

Continued from p. 25

HOW WAS THE TETRAGRAMMATON PRONOUNCED?

To the Editor:

An editorial note in BAR, November/December 1984, states that the pronunciation Yahweh for the Tetragrammaton is "by scholarly convention." It should be noted that there are many strong linguistic and epigraphic arguments in favor of Yahweh as the correct form. There are Greek transcriptions from religious papyri in Egypt; there are personal names in Biblical Hebrew ending in *-yahu*, which is the typical "short form" (jussive, i.e., commands, and past tense) for verb forms of the particular type in which the last two consonants were originally *waw* (w) and *yod* (y). The "long form" of those same verbs ends in -eh. The Anglicized form, Jehovah, is a "ghost word" based on the four consonants, YHWH, with the vowels of another word, *adonai*, meaning, "my Lord." The Hebrew scribes of the Middle Ages put those vowels in to remind the reader to say *adonai* rather than pronounce the sacred Name. But in the first syllable, they nevertheless put in an *e* rather than an *a* so as not to cause anyone to see the syllable *ya-* and inadvertently blurt out the sacred Name! This is just further proof of the correct first syllable, which in any case is confirmed by Greek spellings and the evidence of Hebrew linguistics. So *Yahweh* is not just some sort of "scholarly convention."

Professor Anson F. Rainey
Tel Aviv University
Tel Aviv, Israel

From:
Biblical Archaeology Review
July/August, 1985, Page 78

Nov\Dec 1994, Page 5

Does the inscription recently uncovered at Tel Dan refer to the "House of David" or not? Not believing in King David's existence (at least as described in the Bible), Philip Davies disputed the reading of the inscription as bearing the first extra-Biblical reference to the "House of David" ("'House of David' Built on Sand," July/Aug. 1994). Now Anson Rainey counters that such a dismissal is typical of the "deconstructionist school" of Bible critics. Davies is an "amateur standing on the sidelines of epigraphical scholarship who can safely be ignored," writes Rainey in "The 'House of David' and the House of the Deconstructionists," p. 47.

RAINEY

Rainey is professor of ancient Near Eastern cultures and Semitic linguistics at Tel Aviv University. A leading archaeologist and teacher for nearly 30 years, he has published on such topics as the ancient city of Ugarit, the language of the el-Amarna letters and the historical geography of the Biblical period. Rainey has also excavated at Lachish, Arad, Beer-Sheva and Tel Gerisa.

OVER

He has no axe to grind or hang up. He is speaking strictly from a scholarly point of view.

QUERIES & COMMENTS

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY REVIEW

How Yahweh Was Pronounced

Ya done it again! In a footnote to J. Glen Taylor's article (May/June 1994, p. 53), you say:

> "No one knows how YHWH was pronounced, but it is usually vocalized as Yahweh."

This, despite the fact that you had published my letter, "How was the Tetragrammaton Pronounced?" (July/August 1985, pp. 78-79), in which I gave the epigraphic and linguistic evidence in support of the pronunciation "Yahweh" (I'm still getting correspondence from all over the world in response to that letter).

END

all the arguments for over 20 years, I am convinced that those negative arguments are specious and that the Biblical testimony to both events is reliable, historically and chronologically. One may refer to maps 126 through 130 in the new revision of *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*.

Anson F. Rainey
Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and Semitic Linguistics
Tel Aviv University

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1994

First, I mentioned the evidence from Greek transcriptions in religious papyri found in Egypt. The best of these is *Iaōouē* (London Papyri, xlvi, 446-482). Clement of Alexandria said: "The mystic name which is called the tetragrammaton... is pronounced *Iaoue*, which means 'Who is, and who shall be.'"

The internal evidence from the Hebrew language is equally strong and confirms the accuracy of the Greek transcriptions. *Yahweh* is from a verbal root **hwy*, "to be." This root usually shows up in Hebrew as **hyy*. It is a verbal root developed from the third person pronoun, **huwa/*hiya*. The grammatical form of Yahweh is the third person masculine singular of prefix conjugation. The *ya-* is the third person masculine singular prefix.

In Jewish tradition, it is forbidden to pronounce the Sacred Name and its true pronunciation is supposed to remain a secret. The fact is that Jewish tradents (who put the vowel points in the Hebrew text) borrowed the vowels from another word, either **ʿdōnai* "my lord(s)," or **lōhim* "God." They avoided the very short *a* vowel in this borrowing because it might have led the synagogue reader to make a mistake and pronounce the correct first syllable of the Sacred Name, namely *-ya*. The vocalized form one finds in the Hebrew Bible is usually *Yᵉhōwāh*, from which we get in English the form *Jehovah*. *Yᵉhōwāh/Jehovah* is nothing but an artificial ghost word; it was never used in antiquity. The synagogue reader saw *Yᵉhōwāh* in his text and read it **ʿdōnai*.

The final syllable of *Yahweh*, *-eʰ* is normal for the imperfect indicative form (present-future or past continuous). A form like *yahweh* developed from **yahwiyu*. This development of *-iyu* to *eʰ* is thoroughly demonstrated for the verbal system in general. The form *yahweh* seems to be from the causative stem (hif'il), and apparently means "He causes to become/be."

The theophoric component on so many personal names in Judah (i.e., *-yāhū*, in such names as *Hizqiyāhū* [Hezekiah]) is the normal shortened form of a verb like *yahweh*. For example, the verb "to do obeisance" in the imperfect is *yiṣtaḥᵃwᵉʰ*, while the shortened form (for preterit or jussive) is *yiṣtaḥū*. In other words *yiṣtaḥū* is to *yiṣtaḥᵃwᵉʰ* as *yāhū* is to *yahwᵉʰ*. This is not hocus-pocus. Any layman can readily comprehend the equation.

You don't like to put linguistic details in BAR. They're "too technical." But this does not prevent you from printing various items of linguistic misinformation without warning your readership. Here I refer to the description of the final -*W* component (not a suffix but a component) in personal names found in seal impressions from Dan (March/April 1994, pp. 28, 30). The theophoric component in Northern Israelite personal names, written *-YW* on epigraphic texts, was never pronounced *-yō*! The final *W* did not come into use as a marker for a final *ō* vowel until the post-Exilic period. In the eighth and seventh centuries when we have these personal names ending in *-YW*, the *W* was a consonant and the pronunciation was *-yaw* (or *yau*). So anyone can see that the difference between northern *-yaw* and southern *-yāhū* is not so great, especially since the *-h-* in the southern form was fairly weak.

Israeli archaeologists avoid Hebrew linguistics like it was poison ivy. Thus, on the basis of modern pronunciation, without asking any linguist, they have created ghost words like *Immadiyo*, *zkryo* or *Gaddiyo* (in the Samaria Ostraca) in your Dan article cited above. The *-W* in those names should be pronounced like the *-W* in words like *reglāw* "his (two) feet" (written *rglyw*), cf. Genesis 24:32 *et passim*. Israelis, of course, pronounce that form *reglav* because of the European background of many "revivers" of modern Hebrew. Incidently, that same European background is where we get the *V* in *Jehovah* instead of the original *W*.

Obviously, my letter in 1985 did not impress you. But the evidence for *Yahweh* as the correct pronunciation for the Sacred Name is at least as strong as the view that Sennacherib destroyed Lachish Stratum III. The same can be said for the pronunciation *-yaw* and not *-yo*. At least you should ask a scholar whose opinion you *do* appreciate, such as Frank Cross or Joseph Naveh or André Lemaire.

Speaking of Lemaire, I heartily endorse his new reading of *byytwd*, "House of David" on the Mesha stele ("'House of David' Restored in Moabite Inscription," May/June 1994). Furthermore, I have a gut feeling that both the Mesha and the Dan inscriptions have to do with events in 853-851 B.C.E., namely the battle in which Ahab, king of Israel, died while his ally, Jehoshaphat, escaped unharmed, and the later invasion of Moab. I think the king of Damascus (not a vassal of his—as pointed out recently by S. Ahituv in the *Israel Exploration Journal*) set up the stele in Dan to commemorate that victory. Likewise, the closing lines of the Mesha stele probably have to do with the invasion of Moab by Jehoshaphat and Ahab's son Joram, as depicted in 2 Kings 3. Many Bible scholars deny that Ahab died a violent death or that Jehoshaphat took part in the war recounted in 2 Kings 3. After pouring over all the evidence and

* An asterisk before a word indicates an undocumented reconstruction (hypothetical).

See "end."

The Story of Letters and Figures
By Hubert M. Skinner, Ph. D.
Orville Brewing Publishing Company
Chicago, 1905, Republished in 1971

letter by making it longer; and the long form has become our letter *J*.

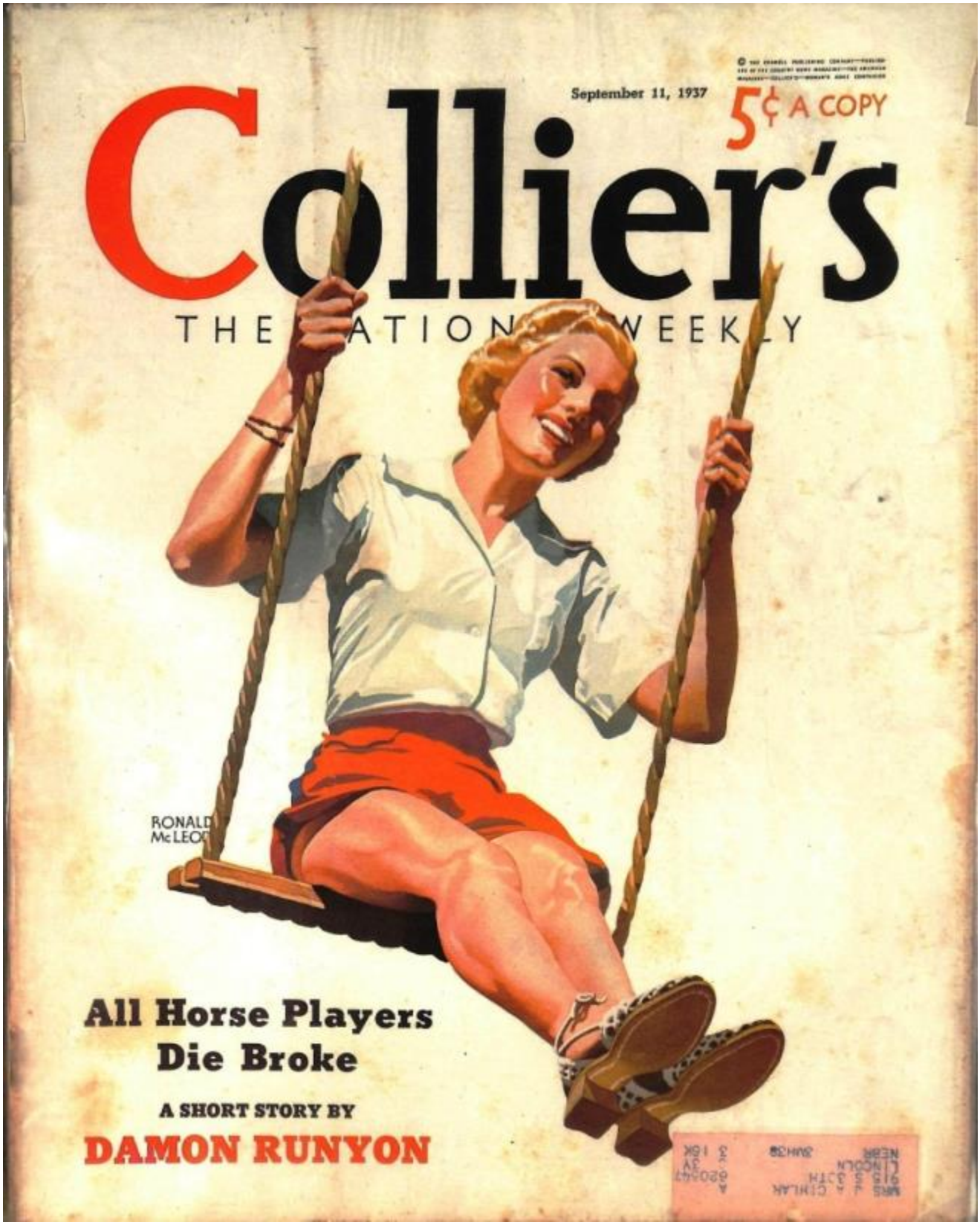
I and *J* were practically one and the same letter, and for a long time were written exactly alike in English.

In some way, various modern peoples who received the *J* from the Romans have lost the original sound, and have substituted something very different. We retain the former sound in our word *hallelujah*, but we generally give the letter the disagreeable soft sound of *G*. The French and the Portuguese give it a more softened but still inelegant sound, which we represent by *S* in the word *embrasure*.

In Spanish, *J* represents a rather strong aspirate. The use of the letter has become familiar in the United States, owing to the fact that we have various names of cities that were Spanish in their origin; for instance, San Jose, San Juan, La Junta, etc.

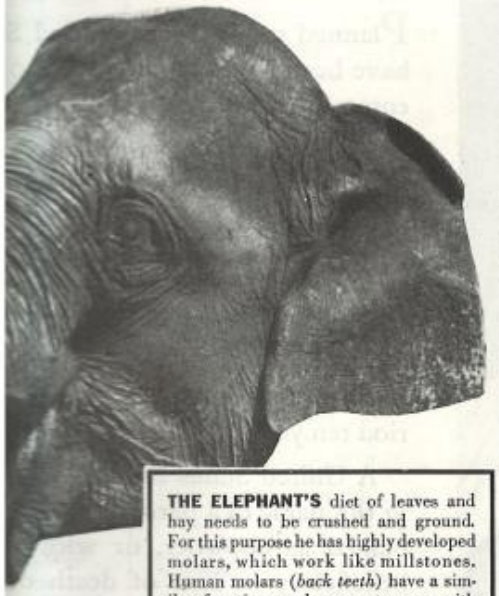
For centuries the *J* and the *X* have been used interchangeably in the spelling of Spanish proper names with which we are more or less familiar, since the *X* may represent in Spanish the same aspirate sound. We are more accustomed to such spelling as *Mexico, Don Quixote, Xeres, Guadalaxara, etc.*, than to *Mejico, Don Quijote, Jeres, Guadalajara*, etc., because the former are the older forms; but the latter have generally the preference now, among the Spanish.

Yod is the initial of the name *Jesus*. It is unfortunate that a name so dear and so sacred is pronounced in a manner so different from that of the original word. The latter sounded very much as if it were Ya′ shoo-ah, and was agreeable to the ear.



Name of the Messiah: יהושע? ישוע?

RM OF DENTAL CREAM



THE ELEPHANT'S diet of leaves and hay needs to be crushed and ground. For this purpose he has highly developed molars, which work like millstones. Human molars (*back teeth*) have a similar function, and grow stronger with the exercise of chewing. Be sure to give your molars special attention every time you brush your teeth.

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Paste. It
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Helps pro-
ing acids.
this tooth

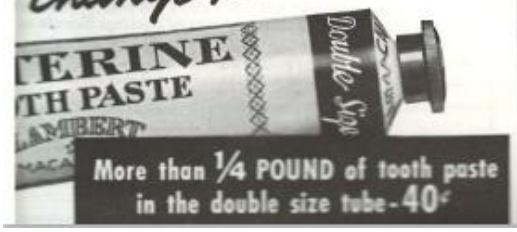
paste contains no pumice, grit, or harmful abrasives. Contains no soap, which many dentists believe to be harmful to the gums.

Get the economical double-size tube of Listerine Tooth Paste at any drug counter. You will be pleased because it works so fast. And you will like that brisk, clean, glad-to-be-alive taste which starts the day right for millions of users every morning.

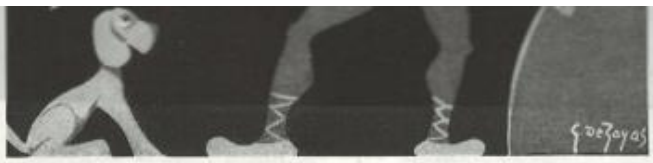
LAMBERT PHARMACAL CO., *St. Louis, Mo.*

ERINE TOOTH PASTE...

change for the better



More than ¼ POUND of tooth paste in the double size tube - 40¢



KEEP UP WITH THE WORLD

By Freling Foster P. 6

Many centuries ago, when a fine sword was among man's most cherished possessions, these weapons were frequently given names, many of which are recorded in history. "Crocea Mors" was owned by Cæsar, "Al Battar" by Mohammed, "Flamberge" by Charlemagne and "Curta'na" by Edward the Confessor.

Sir Samuel Hoare, Britain's recent Secretary of State for India, spent a record amount of time and energy in successfully piloting his India Bill to its place on the Statute Roll. During the more than seven years before it was passed, he made 600 speeches, answered 15,000 questions, read 25,000 pages of reports and entered into debates which comprised 15,500,000 words.—*By Marshall Greenspon, Hartford, Connecticut.*

The Founder of Christianity probably never heard himself called Jesus Christ. During His life, He was known only by His original Hebrew name Joshua. After the crucifixion, He was referred to as Joshua the Messiah until the time, many years later, when this name was changed into Greek and became Jesus the Christ.—*By Paul Parnell, Cliffside Park, New Jersey.*

Paradoxically, the employment of spies during a war is held to be legitimate by all nations, but the spy himself is regarded as an outlaw.

In Paris a concern profitably trades in secondhand, life-sized marble statues of historical personages. Its stock includes a nice line of kings, reasonably priced for bargain hunters.

In the theater projection of sound moving pictures, the picture on a 24-foot screen is approximately 100,000 times larger than the picture on the film.—*By Francis W. Simpson, Greer, South Carolina.*

All of our numerals and ordinals up to a million are Anglo-Saxon, with the exception of the word Second, which is French. The Anglo-Saxon word for Second was Other, as First, Other, Third, etc.

Streets occupy more than one third of the developed area of the average American city.—*By Eldridge Lovelace, Lansing, Michigan.*

In some South American countries, it is not unusual to see a sign over a store reading "Butcher Shop of the Holy Spirit," a bottle label identifying "The Wine of the Last Supper" or a billboard sign depicting Judas smoking and endorsing a certain cigarette.—*By Robert Reynolds, Los Angeles, California.*

One of America's newest games is three-dimensional chess, which is played on eight boards at a time, one above the other, and contains 512 instead of the regular 64 checkered squares.—*By Dr. W. F. H. Godson, Jr., Norwood, Pennsylvania.*

Fourteen states in this country now require visiting motorists to register and obtain a permit if they expect to stay for some time. These permits, which must be secured from within a few hours to thirty days and are issued without charge in eleven states, are good for periods ranging from 25 days to four or more months.—*By Larston Dawn Farrar, Birmingham, Alabama.*

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