

# The Name of the Messiah

An Explanation of Why We Use The Name “ישוע” (Yahshua from Yahushua)

The name Yahshua comes from the Hebrew word ישוע. The purpose for providing this explanation is to show that our use of the name Yahshua is based upon what they called the Messiah in the 1st century when he walked the earth, and to give evidence from the scriptures and archaeology of the fact that the name is associated with Yahushua.

It is important to note that ancient Israelites living in different regions whether in the land of Israel or outside the land of Israel pronounced words slightly different from each other. The same way in which someone from the Southern states of the USA may pronounce words a little different from someone of the Northern states of the USA. One example of this is found in Matthew 26:73. During his time in Jerusalem after the Messiah was arrested, Peter was identified as being from Galilee because the way he spoke marked him as a person from that region. With this in mind, we recognize that there are different ways in which Hebrew words may be pronounced, and in our explanation there may be more than one word used in pronouncing some of the Hebrew words we use.

First, the Hebrew word ישוע was the word used in the 1st century for the Messiah which has been pronounced “Yeshua” and “Yahshua”.

Second, the word ישוע is a short version of the Hebrew words יהושע and יהושוע. These Hebrew words יהושע and יהושוע have been translated historically as “Yahushua” and “Yehoshua”. According to the historical documents, the name ישוע was a common name for male Israelites. It was one of the top 6 male Hebrew names used among the Israelites in the first century. Even though the historical facts prove that ישוע was used more commonly than its longer originals יהושע and יהושוע, it was still possible for יהושע and יהושוע to have been used for names of male Israelites.

Third, the word ישוע was used on ossuaries of the 1st century discovered in archaeological findings. One of the most significant of these archaeological finds was the ossuary of Yacov. This ossuary provided possible evidence toward proving the existence of the Messiah based upon its inscription. The inscription on the ossuary written in the Aramaic Hebrew is seen in the following picture from the ossuary.



The translation of the inscription reads “Yacov son of Yosef, brother of Yahshua”. Since this inscription relates Yacov to both Yosef and Yahshua it makes a very strong case for us to prove the existence of the Messiah. However, as this discovery relates to the name of the Messiah, the inscription used for “Yahshua” is “ישוע”. This archaeological evidence provides us with another foundational reason for our use of “ישוע” for the name of the Messiah.

## Questions and Answers

*What about calling the Messiah “Jesus”?*

Among those who are English speaking, “Jesus” is the name by which the Messiah is commonly called. We do not believe that it is wrong to use it because it is the transliteration from Greek to Latin, and then Latin to English. The Greek word “Iesous” was translated to Latin as “Iesus”. The Latin “Iesus” was translated to English as “Jesus”. Some believe that “Iesous” means “Hail Zeus”. Equating “sous” of “Iesous” with the name “Zeus”. However, those who promote this appear to lack scholarship because “Zeus” begins with the letter “zeta” in Greek. “Zeus” is not spelled with the letter “sigma” as is used in the beginning of the partial word “sous”. The Israelite fathers of the 3rd century BCE used the Greek word “Iesous” when translating the Hebrew words יהושע and יהושע (being translated as “Joshua” from Hebrew to English). They also used the Greek word “Iesous” when translating the Hebrew word ישוע (being translated “Jeshua” in English in the book of Ezra). To sum it up, when these words were translated from Hebrew to Greek by the Israelite fathers, they transliterated most of the Hebrew letters to the equivalent Greek letters and gave a masculine word ending of “us” to preserve the male gender of the name in the Greek language.

*What about calling the Messiah “Yashaya”, “Yahawasha” and “Yahusha”?*

In the attempt to discover the most accurate way of pronouncing the name of the Messiah, a number of groups within the family of Messianic Israel have decided to use these names for the Messiah: Yahawasha, Yahusha and Yashaya. It is our aim never to condemn or put down ones attempt through applying study and research for truth. We believe that the intent of our brothers in the search comes from an honest heart. Therefore it is our goal to address this question by “speaking the truth in love”.

In looking at the name “Yashaya”, we note that it is the name “Isaiah” when translated into English. It is the Hebrew name for the book of the prophet Isaiah. Although it means “salvation is of YHWH”, it was not the name used for the Messiah in the first century.

In looking at the names “Yahawasha” and “Yahusha”, we note that these names are two different ways of pronouncing the Hebrew word יהושע with the understanding that there were no other vowel sounds added to Hebrew words other than what was presented by the letters of the word. Many who have this understanding do so purposefully to oppose to the addition of the “nikkud” or the vowel designations to the Hebrew Scriptures made by the Masoretes of the 5th century CE. They believe that the addition of vowel designations is a corruption of the way the

original Hebrew was pronounced. The Masoretes testify that the reason for adding the “nikkud” was to preserve the way Hebrew was pronounced because it was ceasing to be a living language. Their reason is plausible. However, it only works in preserving the way Hebrew was pronounced by the Israelite community from which the Masoretes descended and had association which was based in Rabbinic Judaism. There were other Israelite communities that pronounced Hebrew differently such as the Samaritan Israelites among others. Therefore to say that the “nikkud” corrupts the way the ancient Hebrew was pronounced is inappropriate and subjective. The addition of the “nikkud” was a major Israelite community’s way of preserving how they have been taught to speak and pronounce Hebrew. However, those who pronounce יהושע as “Yahawasha” and “Yahusha” must be aware that the sound of the “waw” (ו) was pronounced between the “shin” (ש) and the “ayin” (ע). This would cause the name to be pronounced “Yahawashua” and “Yahushua”. At this point, it is necessary to provide evidences from the Hebrew Scriptures.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 3:21 uses the word יהושע is used, and Devarim (Deuteronomy) 3:28 uses the word יהושע for the name of Joshua the son of Nun.

*“And I commanded Joshua (יהושע) at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that YHWH your Elohim hath done unto these two kings: so shall YHWH do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest” (Deut. 3:21).*

*“But charge Joshua (יהושע), and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see” (Deut. 3:28).*

In Shophtim (Judges) 2:7, both words יהושע and יהושע are used to for the name of Joshua the son of Nun.

*“And the people served YHWH all the days of Joshua (יהושע), and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua (יהושע), who had seen all the great works of YHWH, that he did for Israel” (Judges 2:7).*

These verses prove that the words יהושע and יהושע are interchangeable referring to the same person. This is the case because יהושע was pronounce “Yahushua” in the ancient time where it was common to pronounce a word with a letter sound being missing. In this case, the “waw” (ו) was pronounce while being missing between the “shin” (ש) and the “ayin” (ע).

In Nehemiah 8:17, the word ישוע is another word that is interchangeable with יהושע and is used to refer to Joshua the son of Nun but is translated as Yeshua/Jeshua.

*“And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua (ישוע) the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness” (Nehemiah 8:17).*

There are more scriptural evidence showing that the words יהושע and ישוע are interchangeable when referring to Joshua son of Jehozadek (Yehuzadek).

*“Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown, and set it on the head of Joshua ( יהושע ) , the son of Jehozadak, the high priest” (Zech. 611).*

*“Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua ( יהושע ) the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of YHWH their Elohim, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as YHWH their Elohim had sent him; and the people feared the presence of YHWH” (Haggai 1:12).*

*“Then Jeshua ( ישוע ) the son of Jozadak and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and built the altar of the Elohim of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the Law of Moses the man of Elohim” (Ezra 3:2).*

I trust that this information has provided a balanced perspective regarding the name of the Messiah.

While there are a number of translated names for Yahshua/Yahushua among the nations, I strongly encourage all Messianic Israelites to use the original Hebrew name for Messiah. The basis for this is because the Most High is going to restore the pure ancient language to man when the kingdom is restored on earth. Look at Zephaniah 3:9.

*“For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, That they all may call on the name of YHWH, to serve Him with one accord” (Zephaniah 3:9).*

It should be noted that when Elohim confounded the languages at the tower of Babel, that he did not change the language of Shem (the Father of the Shemetic peoples) which was Paleo Hebrew. He confounded only the language among those who were in rebellion to way of Elohim demonstrated by the building of the tower.

Hopefully this information will provide guidance in declaring and using our Messiah's name.