

# 119

## MINISTRIES

*“The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below.”*

### **The Messiah’s Name in Hebrew**

Many Christians are calling Jesus “Yeshua.” Why is that? Well, the historical Jesus of Scripture was Jewish. He observed the commands of the Torah, including the Sabbath, festivals, and food laws. He was circumcised on the eighth day of birth, and he spoke Hebrew and Aramaic.

Also, Yeshua’s original followers were Jews too. Later, when Gentiles began professing faith in this Jewish Messiah and becoming his followers, they were essentially joining a Jewish sect. This sect, made up of Jewish and Gentile followers of Yeshua, gathered in the synagogue every Sabbath to hear the Torah proclaimed (Acts 15:21). The early Christian movement was deeply rooted in the world of Second-Temple Judaism.

Tragically, modern Christianity has largely severed itself from its historical and theological roots. But a growing number of believers are now grabbing hold of those roots. This desire to connect with the Jesus of Scripture and history is expressed in various ways, including recognizing that his name was *not* actually Jesus. There is nothing wrong with using the English name Jesus, of course. But that is not the name his contemporaries would have used. They would have used his Hebrew name. Hence, many people today are now calling him Yeshua, the same name that his mother, brothers, and original followers would have used for him.

### **How do we know his name was Yeshua?**

In the New Testament, the Messiah’s name does not appear as “Yeshua.” That is because the New Testament was written in Greek. In the Greek of the New Testament, the Messiah’s name is written as Ἰησοῦς. Here is one example:

#### **Matthew 3:13**

Then **Jesus** came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him.

Greek:

τότε παραγίνεται ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰορδάνην πρὸς τὸν Ἰωάννην τοῦ βαπτισθῆναι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ

Over time, the name Ἰησοῦς evolved into “Jesus” in English. But Ἰησοῦς was not the Messiah’s name; it is a transliteration of his name. The Messiah was a Jew, born to Jewish parents, and given a Hebrew name. So, how do we know what the Messiah’s Hebrew name was?

We find the answer by looking at the Septuagint. The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. We can look at where the name Ἰησοῦς appears in the Septuagint and determine the corresponding Hebrew name being translated. When we do that, we discover that Ἰησοῦς is the translation of the Hebrew name Yehoshua, as well as the short form of that same name, Yeshua. Both versions of this name are translated into English as “Joshua” and “Jeshua.” For example:

### Joshua 1:10

And **Joshua** commanded the officers of the people...

Hebrew:

וַיֹּצֵא יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת־שָׂרֵי הָעָם לְאָמֹר:

Greek:

καὶ ἐνετείλατο Ἰησοῦς τοῖς γραμματεῦσιν τοῦ λαοῦ λέγων

Here, we find the Hebrew name Yehoshua translated into Greek as Ἰησοῦς. The following is an example of the short form of the name—Yeshua—also being translated into Greek as Ἰησοῦς:

### Ezra 3:2

Then arose **Jeshua** the son of Jozadak, with his fellow priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel with his kinsmen, and they built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the Law of Moses the man of God.

Hebrew:

וַיָּקָם יֵשׁוּעַ בֶּן־יֹאָדָק וְאֶחָיו הַכֹּהֲנִים וְזֵרֻבָבֶל  
בֶּן־שְׁעַלְתִּיאל וְאֶחָיו חֲבֵנּוּ אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
לְהַעֲלוֹת עָלָיו עֹלוֹת כַּכְּתוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה  
אִישׁ־הָאֱלֹהִים:

Greek:

καὶ ἀνέστη Ἰησοῦς ὁ τοῦ Ἰωσεδεκ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ ἱερεῖς καὶ Ζοροβαβελ ὁ τοῦ Σαλαθιηλ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ᾠκοδόμησαν τὸ θυσιαστήριον θεοῦ Ἰσραηλ τοῦ ἀνεύγκαι ἐπ’ αὐτὸ ὀλοκαυτώσεις κατὰ τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐν νόμῳ Μωσῆ ἄνθρωπου τοῦ θεοῦ

So, was the Messiah’s name in Hebrew Yehoshua or Yeshua? The answer is both. These are two variations of the same name, similar to “Mike” and “Michael.” Yehoshua represents an earlier form of the name. For instance, in the book of Joshua, Yehoshua is the name used for Joshua son of Nun. But this longer version of the name is not used as often later in Israel’s history. The short form, Yeshua, became more common after the Babylonian exile. For instance, in Nehemiah 8:17, the same Joshua son of Nun is mentioned again, but in this case, the short form of the name is used:

### Nehemiah 8:17

And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in the booths, for from the days of **Jeshua** the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing.

Hebrew:

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָל־הַקְּהָל הַלְּשָׁבִים מִן־הַשָּׁבִי סִכּוֹת  
וַיָּשָׁבוּ בַסִּכּוֹת כִּי לֹא־עָשׂוּ מִימֵי יֵשׁוּעַ בְּרִנּוֹן כִּן בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְהוּא וַתְּהִי שְׁמִתָּה גְדוֹלָה מְאֹד:

As we mentioned, the short form of the name—Yeshua—gained popularity after the Babylonian exile. Once we get to the first century, we find that “Yeshua” is by far the most widely attested form of the name, according to textual and archaeological evidence from that period (See Richard Bauckham, “The Names on the Ossuaries,” in *Buried Hope or Risen Savior: In Search for the Jesus Tomb* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2008), 69-112).

Thus, the Messiah’s contemporaries likely referred to him as Yeshua.

Now, before we move on, it should be noted that there is some debate over the last syllable of Yeshua’s name. Some scholars think that the “ah” sound at the end was pronounced much more subtly in the first century, resulting in a name that was pronounced more like “Yeshu’.” However, this idea is speculative and is based on limited evidence that mostly comes from the medieval period (See Eran Shuali “Yešū or Yešua’? A Sketch of the History of Jesus’ Names in Hebrew from Antiquity to the Present,” *Revue de études juives* 179 (2020), 169-170.)

According to the Masoretic text, the “ah” sound at the end of the name is fully pronounced, and most scholars contend that this pronunciation is an accurate representation of how the name was pronounced in the first century.

## What about Yahusha (or Yahshua, Yahushua, etc.)?

There are some modern versions of the Messiah’s name circulating on the internet, and some people claim that these versions represent the Messiah’s true Hebrew name instead of Yeshua. For instance, you might have heard the name Yahusha. This version of the Messiah’s name was popularized by Sacred Name teachers in the late 90’s and early 2000’s. You might also have heard the name pronounced as Yahshua, Yahoshua, Yahushua, and so forth.

However, in the Bible itself, the Hebrew names Yehoshua and Yeshua are never pronounced in such a way. The first part of the Messiah’s name is never pronounced as “Yah.” This can be proven by simply looking at the vowel that is used in both Hebrew and Greek. As we mentioned earlier, in Greek, the Messiah’s name is represented as Ἰησοῦς. This Greek name translates the Hebrew names Yeshua and Yehoshua in the Septuagint.

Throughout the Old Testament, the name Yeshua looks like this in Hebrew: יֵשׁוּעַ

The first letter to the farthest right is called a yod. It makes a “y” sound, as in “yellow.” Under the yod are two horizontal dots. This is a vowel called a tzere. This vowel makes a long “a” sound, as in “say.” The yod and tzere together make Ye. Hence, Yeshua.

Now let’s look at the earlier version of the name, Yehoshua. Yehoshua looks like this in Hebrew: יְהוֹשֻׁעַ

Here, the two vertical dots under the yod form a vowel called a shva. When this vowel appears at the beginning of words, it makes a short “e” sound, as in “men.” Hence, Yehoshua.

Now, at this point, someone might say that we cannot trust the accuracy of the vowel points in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. Those who make this objection think the Masoretes were unreliable. The Masoretes were the Jewish scribes who developed the vowel system in order to preserve the pronunciation of biblical Hebrew after it ceased to be a commonly spoken language. Some argue that the Masoretes either got it wrong or were intentionally hiding the “true” pronunciation of this Hebrew name for some reason.

However, we don’t have to rely upon the Masoretes alone for this pronunciation. The Septuagint predates the first century, and it uses the same first vowel for the Messiah’s name as the Masoretic text does. Again, whenever the name Yeshua or Yehoshua is translated into Greek in the Septuagint, the translators always render it as Ἰησοῦς. Notice the second letter in this Greek name. This letter is a vowel known as an eta, and it makes the long “a” sound, which is the same sound the Hebrew vowel tzere makes. If the name were pronounced something like “Yahusha,” the Greek translators would have used an alpha instead of an eta. The fact that they used an eta proves that the beginning of the Messiah’s name is not “Yah.”

The bottom line is that every ancient text says “Yeshua.” No ancient text says “Yahusha” or any other similar variation. Names other than Yeshua are 20<sup>th</sup> century English inventions, not ancient Hebrew pronunciations. Therefore, we call Jesus by his Hebrew name Yeshua because all the best information and oldest texts indicate that to be his name.

## **Why does it matter?**

Some might say that the difference between “Ye” and “Yah” is a trivial issue. In one sense, we agree. There are those who put too much emphasis on the topic of names and use it as an excuse to cause strife and division among believers. We want to make it clear that this is not an issue worth dividing over. Nobody is sinning by pronouncing the name wrong. And God knows our thoughts and intentions; he knows who we’re talking about, even if we mangle the pronunciation of the Messiah’s name out of ignorance. God isn’t sitting in heaven waiting to smite people for uttering the wrong vowel. So, we should not use this topic as an excuse to be unloving.

Having said that, this topic *is* important for two reasons: First, truth matters. If the truth can be determined—and in this case, it *can*—then we should believe and practice the truth. Why continue in error when you can learn what’s right? After all, if you were mispronouncing anyone else’s name, you would certainly want to be corrected so you could be more accurate when referring to them, wouldn’t you?

Second, if a person is using a name that is easily proven to be fabricated, it may lead to a loss of credibility and harm their witness. Suppose you are sharing the Gospel with a religious Jew, a native Israeli, or someone who has basic knowledge of Hebrew. If, in your presentation, you use a made-up name for the Messiah lacking any basis in Hebrew, it could greatly diminish the impact of your message. Your audience may think you can’t be trusted about *anything* if you proclaim the Messiah’s Hebrew name while getting it horribly wrong. In my personal experience, I have seen some informed Christians cite the mispronunciation of Hebrew names by believers as a reason they don’t take the Torah movement seriously. Do we really want this matter to become a reason for people to reject our message? Isn’t it worth it to remove this potential stumbling block? We think it is, which is why we encourage believers to be accurate if they wish to use the Messiah’s Hebrew name.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the Messiah's name in Hebrew is Yeshua. This is determined by the fact that the Septuagint translates Yehoshua and Yeshua as Ἰησοῦς, which is the name used for the Messiah in the Greek New Testament. Yehoshua and Yeshua represent the same name, with Yeshua being the more common form during the Messiah's time. Despite those who insist upon names like Yahusha, both the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible indicate that the name does not start with "Yah."

Before we end this teaching, we want to emphasize again that we should not use this issue as a reason to exclude other believers. But since we can know the truth about this matter, we should strive to be accurate.

*We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)*

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

**EMAIL:** Info@119ministries.com

**FACEBOOK:** www.facebook.com/119Ministries

**WEBSITE:** www.TestEverything.net & www.ExaminaloTodo.net

**TWITTER:** [www.twitter.com/119Ministries#](https://twitter.com/119Ministries#)