

## *Is the name “Jesus” pagan?*

Messiah’s real and correct name is Yeshoshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ), usually shortened to Yeshua (יֵשׁוּעַ) (like Daniel to Dan or Sammy and Sam to Samuel). However because this knowledge is so important and connected to restoring the lost truth of Torah and Messiah’s faithfulness in these last days, Satan has encouraged many false prophets, false teachers, and erring teachers to attack this truth in many ways. An erring teacher is simply one who has stumbled into incorrect teaching. A false teacher is one that does not understand the good news of Messiah. A false prophet is someone who says that their error was revealed to them by the Almighty.

So first let us deal with the false teachers. The false teachers say that one must say the correct names and pronounce them correctly in order to be saved. They claim that anyone who does not say the names correctly is not saved. Let me say at the outset that if you teach this doctrine, then the chances that you know Messiah and understand his *hesed* lovingkindness and salvation are slim to none. If you believe this false doctrine, taught by these heretics, then chances are that you have put your security in your ability to believe particular truths or particular commandments, and have no abiding trusting faithfulness in Messiah Yeshua. Judge not lest you be judged, for what you require of others for salvation will be required of you. You learned the correct name. Well and good. Do you wish to be condemned for trivial ignorance? Then stop condemning others for trivial ignorance; repent and embrace the real loving *hesed* of Yahweh.

The Torah and Prophets teach only one requirement, “the righteous shall live by his faithfulness” (Hab. 2:4). This sums up the whole Torah and Prophets. If one loves Yahweh Almighty from their heart and is trustingly faithful to Adonai Yeshua, who is Elohim in the flesh, then one will be saved regardless of their ignorance of certain commandments and regardless of falling short of perfection or fully accurate knowledge of the truth. Of course anyone who learns the truth of a matter becomes responsible for it after learning it, who we

are not to say to those who have not learned everything we have that they are unsaved. They are merely the weaker brother. If you do not have this attitude of mercy on the weaker brother, then Yahweh will not have mercy on you!

Who can we really say is unsaved? We can only say that those who demonstrate a lack of faithfulness from the heart are unsaved, and this can only be determined by sins that are obvious to everyone including the sinner, immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of the Almighty.

What can we say about sins such as Shabbat breaking? I say that ignorance and false teaching is so common that there are many who break it without being consciously disloyal to Messiah. So they still have faithfulness. The only one's who may be judged as unfaithful in the heart are those who were once convicted to obey the commandment by the Ruakh, and then turned away from it exchanging the truth for a lawless theology. Many will be saved who have not kept one Shabbat. Many will be lost who have kept many Shabbats and then decided to condemn others just for their ignorance. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

There are those who teach that circumcision saves a person. There are those who teach that baptism saves a person. There are those who teach that believing certain doctrines, or believing them only once save a person, and that they cannot be lost after that. And there are those teaching that saying the sacred names correctly saves a person! Such doctrines are doctrines of demons and taught by wolves in sheeps clothing. The Torah presents us with the example of a man who was considered righteous for his faithfulness before he was perfected. For Avraham walked with the Almighty before he was circumcised, and before Yahweh had told him all his commandments. Avraham walked in faithfulness. Yahweh wants us to walk in faithfulness to only Him. So Messiah tells

us that we must place our ultimate trusting faithfulness in himself. This is what he desires. No substitutes will be accepted except complete loyalty from the heart. Those who make knowing certain truths the centerpiece of their salvation and neglect faithfulness, or who nullify the faithfulness of others less perfect will find that they do not have true trusting faithfulness in Messiah.

So now, Satan has sent many agent provocateurs among the house of Yisrael to lead the sheep away to destruction. Now we know that idolatry is a sin, and a person cannot be trustingly faithful to Messiah or be saved and be an idolator. Idolatry is serving or worshipping pagan deities. So it is necessary to deal with the false doctrine that the name “Jesus” is pagan, or that those using it are idolators. No they are not idolators. They are merely incorrect. I means those who demonstrate true trusting faithfulness to Messiah from the heart. I do not mean followers in name only who fail to show they actually love Messiah.

Let us start with the Greek word Ἰησοῦ. This word first appears in the Septuagint (LXX) about 250 B.C., long before the first people who called themselves Christians came on the scene. The scribes who translated the Hebrew Torah into Greek at Alexandria were Jews, and for Yehoshua (Joshua) they felt that was Ἰησοῦ acceptable. The Jews translated using this Greek word some 246x in the Torah and Prophets before there ever was a Catholic Church or even someone identifying as a follower of Yeshua the Messiah. Of course the false teachers will deny this. The cognitive dissonance of this one fact is too much for the paradigm they trust in. They will claim that the Septuagint is a conspiracy or that it did not exist before the pagan “Christians” corrupted it. If Ἰησοῦς was a pagan name, then why would Jewish scribes translate a Hebrew name this way into Greek?

Indeed, why would Jewish scribes translate any Hebrew at all into Greek? These false teachers seem to believe that the whole Greek language is pagan, and that no Torah observant Jew could possibly translate any Hebrew into Greek for Greek speaking Jews or non-Jews to read.

Now I am not legitimizing the use of this Greek name for Messiah. Only for יהושע בן־נון (Yehoshua ben Nun) and other persons who are not the Son of Elohim, but the point I am making is that Ἰησοῦς is not pagan. Not only did the Jewish scribes put it into the Greek translation of the Torah and Prophets, but also Josephus uses the term 124 times in his writings, including for the Cohen HaGadol (High Priest). Also Philo, and Alexandrian Jew uses the term 7 times in his works. All these Jews wrote Greek, and translated Scripture into Greek, and commentated and explained Scripture in Greek. Yet the false teachers who have us believe that no self respecting Jew would ever explain anything biblical in Greek.

Certainly Paul wrote nothing in Greek they will say. They will have us believe that the Sheliakh of the nations was only willing to write and speak with those people who knew Hebrew, and that somehow none of the Greek names that Paul uses for followers of Messiah were Greek.

Let us now look more closely at the method of their false doctrine. Their proof's all amount to showing similarities in the pronunciation between two words, and then suggesting that one word was meant to mean the other word because of the similarity. For example, they say that Ἰησοῦς is built on the meaning of Ζεὺς (Zeus) because the endings of the two words are pronounced the same "oos." This is even more stupid than saying "Tiger Woods" (a famous golf player) is named after a forest preserve in India where they keep tigers. Among those who rebel against Yahweh and his Messiah, there are those who aspire to be false teachers, and there is no limit to their false doctrine, because like immoral people he has rejected them and turned them over to vain thinking. We can only pity the foolishness they have fallen into, and rescue the innocent from their teaching.

Everyone who has any sense knows that similarites prove no connection. So why do people believe them? Because they have taken on the cloth of Torah observance and actually do teach other things that are correct. Also because they know how to sound and talk spiritually, even though they do not have the Spirit of the Almighty to guide them out of error! Satan

manifests himself as a shining angel of light. They also believe them because they have discovered some other truth of Torah or Messiah, and no one else around them seems to agree with it except the false teacher. So the false teacher is accorded authority and gains a following, and then the sheep are ensared and made to drink muddy water. Dear sheep, you need not to be following anyone as an authority when the authority cannot prove what they are saying. Ask the Ruakh Elohim (Spirit of the Almighty One) which is the way, and which is the right path, and what is faithfulness, and what is not. Test all things, and hold fast to that which is good.

They who back up their word by saying Yahweh has revealed it to them are false prophets if reason can show that the doctrine is false. I tell you that they are all false, and no legitimate prophet has arisen in Yisrael for many days. Yahweh expects us to understand what the old prophets have already said. As for any new prophets born among men, the Scripture says in the age to come even their own mother and father will put him to death (Zech. 13:3).

The name Ἰησοῦς was the way the Greek Jew represented the Hebrew *Yeshua*, and neither they nor the other Greeks saw any pagan connection. It is no different than saying “Nathan” in English, and “Netanyahu” in Hebrew. The form of the name Ἰησοῦς is easily explained by anyone who knows both the Greek and the Hebrew

1. First the Greeks always represented the “Y” sound using a “I”, and when a Greek would say it, it would come out sounding like “EE”; The Greeks simply did not make use of the “Y” sound as we know it in Hebrew and English.

2. The Greeks represented the “SH” sound with an “S”; this is because in Greek there is no “SH”. Indeed, even for a time in Yisrael there were those from the tribe of Ephrayim that could not say “SH” (see Judges 12:6).

3. *Yeshua* has a waw “oo” sound in it. This part of the Greek word that is rendered correctly. The “OU” in the Greek Ἰησοῦς actually is pronounced exactly the same as the Hebrew.

4. The ending of the Greek word “S” is purely a grammatical inflexion that occurs on all Greek words of the nominative case to show that it is the subject of the sentence.

5. The “H” letter in IHSOUS represents the Hebrew vowel Tsere. It is also pronounced the same way as the Hebrew vowel, “ay” or “ae” or “e” as in the word “they.”

Note then that two of the sounds in the Greek name are rendered correctly: **IHSOUS**, highlighted in red. Note that two more sounds do not represent the Hebrew exactly, but they are the best Greeks could do: **IHSOUS**, highlighted in blue. The final sound “S” is merely a grammatical ending common to a multitude of Greek words. It has no semantic meaning.

Finally, though we have proved that the Greek rendition of Yeshua is not pagan, nevertheless, the Apostolic Writings do not use the Greek version in the earliest texts. A symbolic rendition of the name is used. It thus appears as **IC** in the texts,<sup>1</sup> and not as **IHCOPYC**. After the 4th century AD, Catholic scribes had replaced all the early symbols with the spelled out name: **IHCOPYC**. Modern texts print this Ἰησοῦς. The purpose of the shortened form with the line over the top would not be known by the average Greek scribe or literate person who was not a follower of Messiah. The only reason that makes any sense at all is that the form signified two things. 1. The divine status of the name, and 2. that Hebrew should be substituted for the symbol if the reader knew the Hebrew. Otherwise they would have to say the closest thing they knew in Greek. Modern scholars call this form of the name in the text *nomina sacra*, or sacred name.

Not only is the symbol for *Yeshua* so marked in the texts. The words Father, Son, and Spirit are also marked, indicating *Abba*, *Ben Elohim*, and *Rukah*. Also the word for Messiah is marked, indicating *Mashikah*, and the word typically translated “Lord” is marked indicating *Yahweh*, *Adonai*, or *Adon*. Finally, the Greek word for God does not occur the texts,

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<sup>1</sup> Variations occur for all the different case endings in Greek.

but another nomina sacra symbol is used, which indicates *Elohim* meaning Almighty. I would say that it is of lesser importance to insist on reading the nomina sacra that are just titles into the text or so translating with the exact Hebrew all the time as it is with the personal names, Yeshua (or Yehoshua), and Yahweh. It is likely that the nomina sacra would permit Adonai to be used at times instead of Yahweh, though where the Torah and Prophets are being quoted, this substitution would not be sanctioned as perfect.

After the 2nd to 4th century AD the scribes no longer understood what the nomina sacra were for, they therefore replaced the symbols with the spelled out Greek names. Also when the Latin translation was made the nomina sacra were not transferred. The Latin rendered the name Yeshua as Iesu, and this eventually found its way into German as Jesu (pronounced Yesu) and then French altered the J to the familiar sound in Jesus, which was introduced into English along with a restoration of the Greek case ending “s.” So the name Jesus is not page. It is just the result of linguistic change by people who did not realize that the Apostles preferred that they learn the Hebrew forms.

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