

Why Do We Use the Form *Yeshua* When Referring to the Messiah?

By Larry and June Acheson

Back in 1997, June and I authored a fairly brief study outlining our reasons for believing that the Messiah's name is spelled a certain way in Hebrew. Of course, a different spelling often requires a different pronunciation as well, and such is the case with the spelling that we came across in our studies. At the time, we had no idea that our decision to refer to the Messiah as "Yeshua" instead of "Yahshua" or "Yahushua" would cause the friction that it did. Initially, it seemed as though the folks who disagreed with us really weren't interested in reviewing our evidence. Their approach seemed to be that we are simply wrong – no need to even give our reasoning any consideration. A few years later, I decided that maybe presenting our reasoning at a "Unity Conference" would generate a little more understanding of our position. Indeed, my presentation did garner the understanding of a few individuals who actually took the time to study this matter further and review our research on this topic. Others, however, remained adamant in their stand against the form "Yeshua" (pronounced *Yay-shua*) without exhibiting any signs that they are either interested in reviewing or considering our reasons for believing as we do. In spite of the evidence that we have found in our research, we continue to be regarded as being among those who seek to remove the Father's name from the Son's name or otherwise distort the Messiah's name. June and I continue our goal of striving to seek, learn and practice the truth in all areas of Biblical application, but when it comes to the Messiah's name, our current emphasis seems to be that of asking others to try to be a little more understanding. What started out as a brief study in 1997 has grown to a 100-page document titled [*The Name of the Messiah*](#), which we believe addresses all the arguments. The study you are now reading is the result of our latest challenge on this topic.

What seems to make this topic such a hot issue is the fact that some Sacred Name folks exhibit a condemning approach towards those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua* instead of the form they believe is "original and correct," which is *Yahushua*. In view of our observation that supporters of the forms Yahshua/Yahushua have done little (often nothing) to correct this approach suggests that there is an implied consent. Here is one of the condemning remarks that have been directed at those who use the form *Yeshua*:

As you know, the Holy Scripture was originally written without any vowel points. 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.

According to the above author, if you refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua*, salvation has been shut off from you. Since those who are not saved are condemned, this sounds like a condemning remark to me.

Other Sacred Name believers are more tolerant of those who use the form *Yeshua*, yet they insist that it is not correct and they maintain that referring to the Savior as *Yeshua* involves the same principle outlined by the above author – removing the Father's name from the Son's name.

What many Sacred Name believers do not understand is the fact that the Father's name is indeed **in** the name *Yeshua*. Of course, they will shake their heads and say, "You're wrong" without batting an eye

and often without lifting a finger to research my reasoning. The name *Yeshua*, in Hebrew, is spelled **ישוע**. The key to this name is the first letter, the *yod* (י). That (י), contrary to what some Sacred Namers are willing to admit, is the initial of the Father’s name. For those who are skeptics, all I have to do is provide an illustration of the name that Moses gave to the man commonly known as Joshua son of Nun. Before Joshua’s name was changed, his name was *Hoshea*. This name is spelled **הושע**, 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 **הושע** (Hoshea) became **יהושע** (Yahushua). 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.

Please bear in mind that the name *Hoshea* means “salvation.”¹ 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” →	הושע	Salvation
Name With the “Yod” Added →	יהושע	Yahweh is Salvation

You would think that those folks who continually harp that “the Father’s name is removed from the form pronounced *Yeshua*” would read the above commentary and at least understand that we have a valid point. Of course, some folks *do* understand that we have a point, so if you fall into that category, then I am not directing my comments to you. However, it seems that there are quite a few people out there who just don’t “get it.”

I recently had a phone conversation with a Sacred Name believer who told me that the reason he doesn’t use the form *Yeshua* is because he feels it is wrong to remove the Father’s name from the Son’s name. In response to his comment, I explained the above example involving Joshua son of Nun and how all Moses did was add a *yod* (י) to the name *Hoshea* to transform a name that means “salvation” into a name that means “Yahweh is Salvation.” The *yod*, then, was understood as representing the Father’s name when Moses added it to the name *Hoshea*. Once I explained this to the caller, he seemed to understand that it is not possible to have “removed” the Father’s name from the name *Yeshua* when all you need is the “yod” to represent the Father’s name (and *Yeshua* -- **ישוע** -- does indeed contain the *yod*).

¹ 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 way I look at it is like this: If using the *yod* (י) to represent the Father's name is sufficient for Yahweh, then who am I to say otherwise? Nevertheless, some Sacred Name folks, without really bearing down and diligently studying this matter, seem all too willing to say otherwise. Anyway, once I offered the above explanation to the caller, I thought we had resolved the issue.

However, a few minutes later, the man offered another protest to the form "Yeshua." He said, "It seems to me that His name should be 'Yahushua' because isn't there a verse of Scripture where it says, 'My name is in him?'" (Exodus 23:21) In other words, once again, from the Sacred Name believer's perspective, with the form "Yeshua," the Father's name is *not* "in Him." We were back to "square one." Obviously, I was frustrated because I had to once again explain that the Father's name is indeed in the name *Yeshua*. Frankly, I don't think he ever understood, and I began to realize that he has been duly indoctrinated into the Sacred Name Movement mentality that the form Yeshua is the result of a Jewish conspiracy to remove the Father's name from the Son's name.

I'll Tell You How To Pronounce His Name – But I Won't Tell You What My Name Is!

Within a few weeks of the phone conversation described above, *another* Sacred Name believer called me to let me know that I don't know how to properly spell or pronounce the Messiah's name. He *insisted* that I go to www.eliyah.com and read this "new" article titled "Why Yahushua?" which (he says) proves beyond a shadow of doubt that the correct name for the Savior is *Yahushua*, which is spelled יהושע in Hebrew.² I skimmed the study while we visited over the phone (yes, it's that brief) and I quickly determined that it is a modification of the same article I have previously read from the same anonymous author.

For starters, I find it a bit strange that the author creates the impression that he doesn't really want the reader to know who he is. Granted, I already know the author's identity by virtue of the fact that I have known him since the early 1990's. When it comes to studying the issue of "names," it seems rather ironic that an individual would expend so much effort into promoting his view of how a certain name should be pronounced, yet he withholds his own name from his readers. I'm not so much opposed to anonymous authors as I am confused over why they find it sooooo important that people know how to identify the Creator (and His Son) by name – to the point of even pronouncing it a certain way – yet they don't want anyone to know their own name. It's like they're saying, "Hey, make sure you pronounce the Messiah's name the same way I do! Oh, by the way, I'm not going to tell you what my own name is!"

When you access the article, here is what you see (and what you don't see, i.e., no author's name):

Why Yahushua?

(Latest update 4/12/11 includes findings from the Dead Sea Scrolls)

Some have written me asking for an explanation of why I use the form "Yahushua" in reference to the Messiah while others use "Yahshua", "Yeshua" or "Yehoshua". The purpose of this study is to go through each of these pronunciations and determine which is the most correct.

This author explains why he uses "Yahushua" in reference to the Messiah, but he doesn't explain why he uses "no name" in reference to himself.

² Thomas Martincic's study, "Why Yahushua?" can be accessed online at the following URL:
<http://www.eliyah.com/yahushua.html>.

Although I may not be opposed to the writing of anonymous articles, per se, this is not to say that I support authoring anonymous articles, either, because I personally find it to be an indication that the author is afraid of something. I mean, if you don't want people to know who you are, doesn't that mean you're hiding or that you have something to hide? Some folks have told me they prefer to remain "modestly anonymous" because they don't want to parade their name before others, as though they might be regarded as seeking publicity for themselves. They feel that remaining anonymous reflects a humble approach. Right. I don't buy that explanation because, for one, choosing to remain "modestly anonymous" out of a desire to not be the recipient of the next Pulitzer Prize presumes that the content of the article is really that noteworthy or accurate. What if the content is shown to be inaccurate? Who is willing to assume responsibility for dispensing bogus information under the guise of truth? Certainly not the author of "Why Yahushua?" because he doesn't want anyone to know who he is. I might also add that I know the authors of Scripture in general identified themselves for their reading audience, and no one is about to accuse them of being proud or arrogant. The author of the book of Hebrews is an exception to this rule, so I suppose the author of "Why Yahushua?" prefers to be an "exception to the rule."

It was only after I completed the original version of this study that I found that the author does actually reveal his identity on his web site, but I only discovered this fact when I stumbled across it by accident. You might say it was "hiding in plain sight." If you scroll down to the link for "Who is EliYah?" you can learn that the author's birth name is Thomas Martincic. True to the typical explanation offered by anonymous authors of religious articles, Mr. Martincic explains that he doesn't make his name very prominent on his web site because he doesn't want to draw attention to himself. He doesn't address the fact that when *he* cites articles and books, he provides the names of the authors (which in turn gives his own articles a higher level of credibility), nor does he address the concerns of folks like us regarding how anonymity can be used as a clever means of evading accountability. It only seems fair that if Thomas needs the names of authors to add credibility to his own studies, he should provide his own name, not to draw attention to himself, but to make a clear statement that he is willing to accept responsibility for what he writes.

If you read Thomas Martincic's article, you will notice that the first three sections of his study are not really relevant to my reason for responding to it. The first section has to do with his belief that the Messiah's name is important, and we certainly agree with him on that point. The second section of Thomas's study addresses the origin of the form "Jesus," and I am encouraged by the report of his conclusion about this name. Many Sacred Name folks attempt to identify and vilify the name "Jesus" with the Greek idol Zeus, but Mr. Martincic rightly denounces that connection, even pointing out that the Greek form *Iesous*, from which "Jesus" is derived, was used in reference to Joshua son of Nun in the Greek Septuagint centuries before the Messiah was even born. Certainly the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint from Hebrew to Greek would not have selected a transliteration such as "Iesous" if they knew it has a pagan origin.

"Yehoshua"

Things start to get interesting in the next section of Thomas's article, which he simply titles "Yehoshua." Without going into a lot of detail, I will say that his premise may be correct, but I am at complete odds with his conclusion. What is his premise? *Originally* the Hebrew name יהושע was very likely pronounced *Yahushua* instead of *Yehoshua*. Since I wasn't present in the 5th century BCE to hear whether the vowel sound was an "ah" versus an "eh" sound, I have no choice but to acknowledge that Mr. Martincic's findings about the original pronunciation of the form *Yehoshua* may possibly be correct.

Nevertheless, regardless of how correct Thomas's premise is, I must report that his conclusion 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. Here is what Thomas wrote:

The Murashu texts, dated 5th century BCE and written on clay tablets in cuneiform script, lists the names of about 70 Jewish settlers in Persia. In these tablets, vowels are used. The Hebrew names which begin with יהי (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" notes on p. 87

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".

On the surface, Thomas's claim that we should pronounce the Messiah's name *Yahushua* because that's the way that name was originally vocalized seems reasonable. I say this even though Thomas doesn't explain how it is possible to determine what cuneiform vowels are, much less how to recognize the difference between a cuneiform "eh" sound symbol and a cuneiform "ah" sound symbol (how does a linguist point to a certain symbol and say with confidence, "That's an 'ah' sound"?). I checked out Thomas's reference and it was not helpful in answering my question. The book is actually titled *The "Higher Criticism" and the Verdict of the Monuments*. I'm not sure where Mr. Martincic came up with the notion that the quote from Sayce's book has anything to do with "notes on p. 87" because the quote appears within the body of the full text found on that page (not as a part of any notes or footnotes).

I personally question Thomas's decision to only offer his reading audience that one lone sentence from Sayce's book; however, I can see why, due to his 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 the one promoted by Thomas Martincic. Mr. Martinsic fully supports referring to the Creator with the name pronounced *Yahweh*.³ 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 Thomas promotes in his article, then we should refer to the Creator as *Yah vah*. In other words, Thomas employs a double standard when he uses 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 Thomas 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

³ Cf., Thomas 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>.

obscure, though we now know that the full form Yahveh, or rather Yah vah, 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.⁴

Upon reading the full quotation from Sayce's book, the obvious question is, "Why does Thomas Martincic believe A. H. Sayce's report that the first syllable of names beginning with יהי in Hebrew was anciently pronounced 'Yahu,' yet he ignores Sayce's additional report that the Tetragrammaton was anciently vocalized *Yah vah*?" This, of course, is an example of *selective citation*, whereby an author selects the portion of a reference that seems to offer support for his view while ignoring the portion that, by applying the same rule, would require him to change his view on something else. 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.

In spite of the awkward situation in which Mr. Martincic has placed himself, let's say that the experts in Semitic linguistics are indeed able to accurately determine how ancient words were pronounced by looking at "cuneiform vowels," and let's say that they confirm 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 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? Of course, Thomas believes that he achieves both goals with the form *Yahushua* (יהושע). However, we believe the historical evidence supports the Messiah having been given the name *Yeshua* (ישוע). Mr. Martincic ignores the historical evidence (which he feels was tampered with), instead citing his interpretation of a passage in Zechariah as evidence of the "prophetic name." We present detailed historical evidence about the Messiah's name while addressing Thomas's interpretation of the passage in Zechariah in our study *Name of the Messiah*.

If the Messiah's given name at birth is ישוע, which is considered the "short form" of the longer form יהושע, then it only makes sense that we 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. Texts such as the Hebrew Matthew validate that His name was spelled *yod, shin, waw, ayin* (ישוע). Please note that this is *not* the spelling

⁴ 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.

advocated by many within the Sacred Name Movement, including Thomas. They insist that we should refer to Him with the long form (יהושע), which is vocalized *Yahushua*.

Therefore, as noble as Thomas'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, not on what the original form of that name is.

Presumption of Guilt

When it comes to pronouncing יהו as “*Yeho*” versus “*Yahu*” at the beginning of a person's name, Thomas Martincic follows the principle of “guilty until proven innocent.” He believes the scribes, who had already vowel-pointed the Tetragrammaton so as to not be pronounced “Yahweh,” did this same thing with any name starting with יהו:

Notice that there are other names listed in the Strong's concordance which contain the first three letters of Yahweh's name. And just like Yahweh's name which starts with the “*Yeho*” vowel points, they use the “*Yeho*” vowel points in “*Yehoram*”, “*Yehosheba*”, “*Yehoshaphat*” and numerous other names which contain the first part of Yahweh's name. The scribes apparently did not want anyone to accidentally pronounce the Heavenly Father's name when saying these other names, so they changed the vowel points of those names as well.

Notice Thomas's use of the word “apparently” within his statement that the scribes “apparently” didn't want anyone to accidentally pronounce the Heavenly Father's name when vocalizing a name that begins with יהו. Thomas is left with no choice but to use words such as “apparently” because he doesn't actually have any evidence to support his theory.

While it may possibly be true that in the most ancient of times these names carried the “*yahu*” pronunciation, scholars believe that by the time the Jews returned from the Babylonian exile, the “*yeho*” pronunciation was the accepted form. Not only that, but leading Hebrew scholars believe this form has the blessing of Yahweh. Nineteenth century Hebrew scholar Wilhelm Gesenius, in his *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, offers a pronunciation insight that many Sacred Name folks would consider to be downright offensive:

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., א, ע, צ, ק, ש (in which cases they made the best shifts they could).⁵

It goes without saying that, in general, the Greek transliteration of names beginning with יהו in Hebrew is the “*Yey*” sound, not the “*Yah*” sound as required by Sacred Name authors such as Thomas

⁵ From *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, Translated by Benjamin Davies, LL.D, Ira Bradley & Co., Boston, MA, 1880, p. 26.

Martincic. Curiously, those ancient Greek authors who wrote of the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton offered the “Yah” prefix, which is one of the major reasons that many scholars support the ancient pronunciation *Yahweh*. Sacred Name believers, who tend to not be proficient in Hebrew and frequently exhibit a lack of understanding about pronunciation nuances within any given language, feel that if the first syllable of the Creator's name is vocalized “Yah,” then *any* name beginning with יהו must likewise carry that same sound. Such a consistency requirement is not linguistically the way the Hebrew language works, and this is even the case within the parameters of our own English language. In the English language, there are common pronunciation inconsistencies, which is why we see words such as “break” vs. “streak,” “laughter” vs. “daughter,” “beard” vs. “heard,” “lost” vs. “post,” “worm” vs. “storm” and “monkey” vs. “donkey.”

We thus see that Thomas bases his conclusion on his unsubstantiated hunch that the scribes deliberately mis-vowel-pointed not only the Tetragrammaton, but also every name that begins with יהו in Hebrew. Wilhelm Gesenius differs with Thomas's conclusion, maintaining that the ancient Greek transliterations furnish “an older and more weighty tradition.”

“Yeshua”

This brings us to what we feel is the primary thrust of Thomas Martincic's argument – his “anti-Yeshua” commentary:

Much used by the Messianic movement, “Yeshua” is actually an Aramaic form of the Hebrew name “Yahushua”. In the Hebrew script, Yeshua ישוע is not spelled the same as Yahushua יהושע. The “Yeshua” name, spelled ישוע (Yod Shin Waw Ayin), is found in the books of Nehemiah and Ezra where it lists the names of those who returned from the Babylonian exile. One of them is called “Jeshua, the son of Jozadak”:

Ezra 3:2 Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the Elohim of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of Elohim.

In Thomas's writings, he emphasizes his belief that the form *Yeshua* is not “really” Hebrew, but that it is instead an Aramaic form of the longer form *Yahushua*. What is amazing is that he makes this claim while spelling this name in the “Hebrew script.” We understand that, upon the Jews' return from Babylonian exile in the 5th century BCE, there were some changes in the way they spelled some names, including the name *Yahushua*, as evidenced by the above reference taken from the book of Ezra. The fact that the form Yeshua was considered acceptable enough to nobly appear in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, including as a reference to Joshua son of Nun (Neh. 8:17), should be sufficient evidence that it is not regarded by Yahweh as being a corrupt or otherwise “messed up” form of Yahushua. Thomas, however, disagrees:

Should we shorten the name of the Messiah to the point where remove all reference to the Father and change the meaning altogether? Why mess with it, I would say we should leave it the way it is.⁶

Once again, we feel it is important to understand that the name *Yeshua* is widely recognized by scholars as being a shortened form of the original *Yahushua*. Since *Yahushua* is a Hebrew name and since *Yeshua* is a shortened form of that name, it should be clear that *Yeshua* is also a Hebrew name. The fact that this shortening occurred during the Babylonian Captivity may make for an interesting side note, but it is still spelled with Hebrew characters, and the fact that the Almighty has no problem in His inspired Word with shortening Joshua son of Nun's name to *Yeshua* should make it plain that Yahweh does not regard the shortening process as "messing with it."

Thomas's remark about messing with the form *Yahushua* was made back in 1999 (when he posted commentaries under the pseudonym "EliYah"), but his recent article indicates that he still casts the same rejection of the form *Yeshua* that he offered back then. Actually, in his 2011 article, Thomas paints an even more sinister picture of the form *Yeshua* than the one he offered in 1999. He opens his 2011 commentary by emphasizing the Aramaic influence on shortening the form *Yahushua* (יהושע) to *Yeshua* (ישוע):

"Jeshua the Son of Jozadak" is the same High Priest mentioned in Zechariah 6:

Zechariah 6:11 Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest;

Notice that in Zechariah, he is not called "Jeshua the son of Jozadak" but he is called "Joshua the son of Josedech" (Heb. *Yahushua* the son of *Yahutsadak*). This reflects the Hebrew spelling of the same name. So in Zechariah, he is called *Yahushua* but in Ezra he is called *Yeshua*. The book of Nehemiah also changes the name of Joshua the son of Nun to "Jeshua, the son of Nun":

Nehemiah 8:17 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 the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness.

The change in spelling to "Jeshua/Yeshua" (ישוע "Yod Shin Waw Ayin") is due to the Aramaic influence during the exile. In fact, parts of the book of Ezra are written in Aramaic. For confirmation, look at your Strong's Lexicon:

8442. יְשׁוּעַ *Yêshûwâ'*, *yay-shoo'-ah*; for 3091; he will save; *Jeshua*, the name of ten Isr., also of a place in Pal.:—*Jeshua*.
 8443. יְשׁוּעַ *Yêshûwâ'* (Chald.), *yay-shoo'-ah*; corresp. to 8442:—*Jeshua*.
 8444. יְשׁוּעָה *Yêshûwâ'h*, *yesh-oo'-aw*; fem. pass. part. of 8467; something saved, i.e. (abstr.) *deliverance*; hence *aid*, *victory*, *prosperity*:—*deliverance*, *health*, *help* (-ing), *salvation*, *save*, *saving* (health), *welfare*.

⁶ From a posting that Thomas Martincic submitted under the screen name "EliYah" on his EliYah's Forums web site on 11-28-1999. The name of the forum topic was "Name of Our Messiah," which may be accessed at the following URL: <http://www.eliyah.com/forum2/Forum1/HTML/001600.html>.

Notice that #3442 and #3443 are the same exact word with the same Hebrew spelling, but this lexicon lists them separately. Why is this? Well, if you looked up “Jeshua” in the concordance, you will notice that it lists “Jeshua” in Ezra 3:2 as coming from #3442 and “Jeshua” in Ezra 5:2 coming from #3443. The reason for the two different Strong's word numbers is Ezra 5:2 is a part of the book of Ezra which was written in Aramaic (Ezra 4:8 through 6:18; 7:12-26). This is why #3443 mentions “Yeshuwa” as coming from “Chaldean” in the above definition (3443. **ישוע** Yeshuwa' (Chald.)). Therefore, “Yeshua” is actually an Aramaic rendering of “Yahushua”.

Thomas Martincic, in his commentary above, seems to expend a great deal of effort in attempting to prove that the form *Yeshua* isn't really Hebrew at all, but rather an “Aramaic rendering.” In spite of his efforts to disparage the form *Yeshua*, Mr. Martincic fails to answer how and why Yahweh would approve of the shortened form **ישוע** appearing in His Word. If the authors of Ezra and Nehemiah wrongly shortened or, as Thomas puts it, “messed up” *Yahushua* so as to produce the hybrid *Yeshua*, then does Thomas consider those two books to be a part of the inspired Word of Yahweh? He stops short of claiming that they are not; however, in our study *Name of the Messiah*, we address the assertion from a leader within the Sacred Name Movement that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are “not books necessarily of inspiration.”

Since it is true that the form *Yeshua* (**ישוע**) didn't appear within the framework of the Hebrew language until the Jews' return from their seventy-year period of Babylonian Captivity, we can agree with Thomas that there was an Aramaic influence that resulted in the name *Yahushua* being shortened to *Yeshua*. Our disagreement, then, lies with whether or not this same form was used over 500 years later in naming the Son of Yahweh. Thomas doesn't seem to have so much of a problem with shortening the name as he does with allowing such a “messed up” form to be given to the Son of the Most High:

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. The name “Yeshua” (technically meaning 'Salvation', not 'he is salvation') is certainly not inherently evil.⁷

The above is an excerpt from a commentary that Thomas submitted to a forum discussion back in 1999. We thus see that Thomas doesn't really mind the shortening of *Yahushua* to *Yeshua*, so long as this process is not applied to the Messiah's name. Of course, this is Thomas Martincic's opinion; regrettably, his opinion is not supported either by Scripture or the record of history. Thomas does not bill himself as a Hebrew scholar, yet in the above commentary, as he also does in his “Why Yahushua?” study, he nevertheless asserts himself as though he is an expert in Hebrew semantics. A novice Bible student would likely form the impression that Thomas is a Hebrew scholar. As we are about to see, Mr. Martincic inadvertently exposes his lack of expertise in Hebrew semantics by drawing a biased conclusion that clashes with the conclusion shared by qualified Hebrew scholars.

⁷ From a posting that Thomas Martincic submitted under the screen name “EliYah” on his EliYah's Forums web site on 12-08-1999. The name of the forum topic was “Name of Our Messiah,” which may be accessed at the following URL: <http://www.eliyah.com/forum2/Forum1/HTML/001600-4.html>.

In the above 1999 commentary, Thomas asserted that “Yeshua” technically means “Salvation,” *not* “He is Salvation.” Coming from a non-Hebrew scholar, we would expect him to back up his commentary with evidence supported by experts in the Hebrew language. However, he chose not to do so.

Now, in 2011, Thomas attempts to malign the meaning of “Yeshua,” asserting that it doesn’t even mean “salvation” at all! Here is what he now writes:

Now, some claim that Yeshua **ישוע** is a pure Hebrew word which isn't derived from “Yahushua” at all, but that it is a Hebrew word meaning “Salvation”. The problem with that is the Hebrew word for “Salvation” is not **ישוע** (yeshua) at all! The Hebrew word for “Salvation” is word number #3444.

We find the above commentary to be very strange. First, Thomas mentions that some folks claim Yeshua (**ישוע**) is a pure Hebrew word which isn't derived from “Yahushua” at all. In all our years of studying the issue of the Messiah’s name, we have never heard anyone make this claim. Where did Thomas hear of it? He doesn’t share his source, so we are left to take his word for it. Mr. Martincic proceeds to take another giant leap by declaring that *Yeshua* doesn’t even mean “salvation.” We find it interesting that someone who takes such leaps in asserting themselves as experts in Hebrew would go from writing that *Yeshua* means “salvation” (in 1999) to declaring that it *doesn't* mean “salvation” at all (in 2011). Does Thomas *really* know what **ישוע** means? Why has this “expert” in Hebrew semantics deviated from believing that **ישוע** means “salvation” to now insisting that it doesn’t?

The name *Yeshua*, as exhibited by the *Strong’s Concordance* listing that Thomas supplied above, means “He will save.” “Salvation,” then, is inherent in the meaning of this word. Thomas disagreed with the meaning supplied by *Strong’s* back in 1999 and now he believes “salvation” should be completely removed from consideration as a possible meaning for this name! Does Thomas *really* believe he is more qualified in Hebrew semantics than James Strong, who compiled *Strong’s Concordance*? That is the impression we are left with. We might think that Thomas really does know something that James Strong didn’t if it weren’t for the fact that other Hebrew scholars also clash with Mr. Martincic’s conclusion.

In addition to being at odds with James Strong, Thomas’s conclusion that *Yeshua* doesn’t carry the meaning “salvation” contradicts the explanation offered by Benjamin Davidson, author of *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*. We might ask if Thomas Martincic is more qualified in Hebrew semantics than Benjamin Davidson. Davidson’s lexicon presents the name *Yeshua* as meaning “*he shall be a deliverance, i.e. deliverer.*”⁸ Please note that “deliverer” is synonymous with “savior.” According to *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*, this same name is presented alongside the long forms **יהושוע** and **יהושע** and means “י is salvation.”⁹ As we demonstrated earlier, the Hebrew “י” is used to represent the name “Yahweh.” Contrary to what some folks may believe, it is no worse to use the abbreviated י as a designation of Yahweh’s name than it is to use the abbreviated יהו.

The above-listed authorities on Hebrew semantics, in stark contrast to Thomas Martincic, hold that the meaning of “salvation” is inherent in the Hebrew name **ישוע**. We hope you understand why we put

⁸ Cf., *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* by Benjamin Davidson, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1986 (orig. published in 1848), p. 354.

⁹ Cf., *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*, by Francis Brown, D.D., D.Litt., with the cooperation of S. R. Driver, D.D., Litt.D. and Charles A. Briggs, D.D., D.Litt., Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1979 (orig. published in 1907), p. 221.

more stock in the meaning as presented by these Hebrew scholars as opposed to the meaning offered by Thomas Martincic (a.k.a. “EliYah”), who is not a qualified Hebrew scholar. This is not to say that June and I are qualified Hebrew scholars; however, as we have demonstrated, those who *are* qualified are in agreement that **ישוע** does indeed mean “He will save.”

First-century Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria also bears witness to the ancient understanding that “salvation” is inherent in the name *Yeshua*. In his treatise titled “On the Change of Names,” Philo explains that this name means “the salvation of the Lord.”¹⁰ What makes Philo’s commentary so interesting is the fact that he never used the form *Yahushua* in his writings. Philo wrote in Greek and used the Greek form *Ἰησοῦς* (*Iesous*, pronounced *Yey-soos*). Many Sacred Name believers utterly reject the form *Ἰησοῦς* as an outright butchering of the form *Yahushua*. While we understand their concern, it can be demonstrated that the Greeks were only transliterating the form *Yeshua* within the limited parameters of their language, which doesn’t have a “sh” sound, and masculine names generally end in an “n” or an “s.” The resulting form, pronounced *Iesous*, is not such a distorted rendering when viewed from this perspective.

For Philo to write that *Ἰησοῦς* means “salvation of the Lord” is significant in that this first-century author, who was a contemporary with the Messiah, understood that the name **ישוע** does indeed carry the intrinsic meaning of salvation. Even more significant is the fact that Philo, while not using the Tetragrammaton in his writings, regarded the form *Ἰησοῦς* as meaning “salvation of Yahweh.” Remember, when Moses changed the name **הושע** (Hoshea) to **יהושע** (Yahushua), all he did was add a *yod* to transform a name meaning “salvation” to a name that means “Yahweh is salvation.” Thus, it is reasonable to believe that Philo saw the Tetragrammaton in the name *Ἰησοῦς*, which means he in turn saw it in the form *Yeshua* (**ישוע**). The *Wikipedia* article “Names of Jesus and his family” echoes this same understanding:

By the time of the 1st century, many were interpreting this (the Messiah’s name) as “Yahweh saves” or “May Yahweh save.” This understanding is attested in the work of the philosopher [Philo](#): “Joshua [*Ἰησοῦς*] means ‘the salvation [*ישוע*] of the Lord.’” This popular etymology is also implied in [Matthew 1:21](#).¹¹

Please bear in mind that the Greek language makes no distinction between the long form and the short form of the name **יהושע**. Both forms are rendered *Ἰησοῦς*. While we appreciate Thomas Martincic’s apparent desire to honor our Heavenly Father to the extent of incorporating the first three letters of the Tetragrammaton into His Son’s name, his bias does not seem to allow him room to see that even a first-century scholar contradicts his understanding of Hebrew semantics. Although Thomas is not really a Hebrew scholar, he once again expounds on Hebrew linguistics as though he is, this time incorporating the modern Hebrew vowel points into his argument:

Take a look again in the above lexicon graphic and see the differences between 3442/3443 and 3444. They are:

- There is an additional Hebrew letter at the end (the “Heh”). **ישוע** uses the silent (but anciently guttural) “Ayin” letter to end the word, but #3444 ends in the letter “Heh”. While

¹⁰ From *The Works of Philo*, by Philo of Alexandria, “On the Change of Names,” ch. XXI (122).

¹¹ *Wikipedia* article “Names of Jesus and his family,” cited 07/22/2011. The article may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_Jesus_and_his_family#cite_note-0.

vowel letters under both words indicate they have have a similar sounding ending, the different spelling indicates they are two different words.

- In #3444 (Yeshuwah) there is a different vowel pointing under the first Hebrew letter (Yod [remember Hebrew reads from right to left]). 3442/3443 (YESHUA) has 2 horizontal dots underneath the first letter like this: יְ. These two horizontal dots represent the Hebrew Vowel point “Tserere” (pronounced Tsey-rey) which produces the “ey” sound as in the English word “Hey”. But #3444 has two vertical dots underneath the first letter like this יִ. The two vertical dots represent the Hebrew vowel point “Sheva” which is a very short “e”, somewhat like our “E” sound in the word “Average” (Check the first page of your Strong's Hebrew Lexicon for verification of this).

Incidentally, the יִ (Sheva) is also the vowel point used by the scribes in “Yehoshua” and it is why you will sometimes see “Yehoshua” or “Yeshua” written as “Y’hoshua” and “Y’shua”. The purpose of the יִ is to indicate the presence of the sheva vowel point in Hebrew. But as you can see, “Yeshua” does not contain that vowel point at all. “Yeshua” uses the “Tserere” Hebrew vowel point which produces an “ey” sound. So Yeshua and Y’shuah are actually pronounced differently. The Strong's Lexicon indicated this when it gave the pronunciation of יְשׁוּעַ as 'yay-shoo-ah', but #3444 as 'yesh-oo-aw'.

So the name “Yeshua” and the Hebrew word “Y’shuah” are not the same. “Yeshua” is the Aramaic form of “Yahushua” and “Y’shuah” is the Hebrew word for “Salvation”. Therefore, in spite of what some may say, I find no evidence to suggest that יְשׁוּעַ (“Yeshua”) means “Salvation” in Hebrew. “Yeshua” is actually not an authentic Hebrew word meaning “salvation”. For it to mean “Salvation” it would have to have the Hebrew letter “heh” added to the end of it, changing the spelling to יְשׁוּעַהּ (Yod Shin Waw Ayin Heh) and it would need to have the יִ “Sheva” vowel point under the Yod. These things further indicate that “Yeshua” isn’t from Hebrew, but is an Aramaic form of “Yahushua”.

All the above commentary amounts to is the testimony of a non-qualified Hebrew student who now asserts his position based on Hebrew vowel points, which weren’t even contrived until their appearance during the Middle Ages by the Masoretes. Thomas somehow manages to incorporate his “vowel point reasoning” into his argument and conclude, contrary to the meanings specifically listed by James Strong, Benjamin Davidson and *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*, that יְשׁוּעַ doesn’t really mean “salvation” or “He will save.” Certainly, those Sacred Name adherents who agree with Thomas’s bias can be expected to jump on his bandwagon, which explains why the Sacred Name believer that I mentioned earlier called my attention to Mr. Martincic’s article.

Having thus presented his position from a biased, ill-founded premise, Thomas Martincic offers the following conclusion:

Since the Heavenly Father's name (Yahweh) is a Hebrew name, I would not expect to see His Son's name coming from some other language, whether it be Greek, Latin, Aramaic or English. I realize that the other forms seem to be more popular, but “Yeshua” is no more correct than “Jesus?” If neither of these languages do it right, why not return to the original and correct form?

In response to Thomas's conclusion, I feel I should point out that we have established that, in fact, the form **ישוע**, pronounced *Yeshua* (or as Thomas points out, “*yay-shoo-ah*”) is indeed a Hebrew name, which is shortened from the longer form **יהושע**. Regardless of the Aramaic influence, this shortened form had the blessing of Yahweh insofar as being used in reference to Joshua son of Nun (Neh. 8:17), and the historical evidence supports that this same shortened form was also used in reference to the Son of Yahweh. Like it or not, this form appears in the Hebrew Matthew documents.

The study of the Messiah's name is really not very complicated, but Sacred Name believers such as Thomas Martincic seem intent on making it that way. The record of Scripture, combined with historical evidence, support the understanding that the Son of the Most High was given the name **ישוע** at birth. Thomas says, “No, that can't be right because **ישוע** isn't a Hebrew name – it's Aramaic!” 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 that has been handed down to us.

In our full-length study, we cover many of the same points addressed here, as well as all the other arguments that Thomas raises in support of his belief that the only possible name for the Messiah is *Yahushua*.

08/06/2011