

ON THE PROPER PRONUNCIATION OF THE MASHIAH'S NAME

The Mashiah is called by many different names throughout the world, and there has remained a mystery as to the true pronunciation of His Name. A man upon asking the Holy Spirit as to the correct pronunciation of Adonoi's Name, found that the answer that he received was very much aligned with Holy Scripture whether that Scripture is in Greek or Syriac. The correct pronunciation of Mashiah's Name is "Yishu" (Ee-shoo), according to what has been revealed by the Holy Spirit.

When asking about the pronunciation of Mashiah's Name when He was here, a man was shown the Hebrew letters yod-shin-waw, with a shureq behind the waw. When shown how that would be explained in English he saw "Issou" and "Yishu," to be pronounced "Ee-shoo."

One familiar with Hebrew will ask, "Why would His Name start with an "Ee" sound if it begins with a yod (which is a "Y" sound in English)? This is a very good question; the answer to this is found in the time of YHWH Yishu's visitation, and with the people of His common tongue.

The Greek Septuagint is a translation of the Hebrew into Greek by Jewish scribes around 270 BC. Within the Septuagint there are certain names that have been transliterated; two examples are Isaiah and Jeremiah. In the Greek these names are Esaias (Ee-sai-ee-us) and Ieremias (Eer-eh-mee-us). These names both start with an "Ee" sound in the Greek, but in the Hebrew both begin with a yod (in Greek the "s" sound is added at the end to make the name nominative); modern Hebrew speakers call these men, "YashaYah" and "YirmeYah" respectively. In the time that these names were transliterated (circa 270 BC) a yod could also indicate an "Ee" sound when a name began with that sound (much like middle Egyptian hieroglyphs where the yod makes both a "y" sound and an "ee" sound depending on its placement). In modern Hebrew vocalization that would look like: When a hiriq yod is present under a yod that begins a proper name, that yod is silent. The most prominent example of this is found in the name "IsraEl" (Ees-ra-El). This word begins with a yod in Hebrew, but to this very day is pronounced with an "Ee" or "i" sound amongst Jews and Gentiles, in various languages, all over the world. So the names of those prophets in the ancient Hebrew would have probably sounded like Ee-sha-ee-yuh for Isaiah and Eer-eh-mee-yuh for Jeremiah.

The ancient Greek pronunciation has stayed with the Church due to the fact that the Septuagint is the source text for most Orthodox Churches, it was not until recently (500 years or so ago, with the invention of the printing press, the Protestant Reformation, and the discovery of the Americas) that the Hebrew manuscripts became the primary base text for the majority of Christian Bibles. So because of the Septuagint, Latin based languages (like English and Spanish) reflect the Greek transliterated pronunciation (as is the case for the names of Isaiah and Jeremiah) rather than the modern Hebrew pronunciation of these names.

In the time of YHWH Yishu's visitation, Galileans spoke a dialect of Hebrew which modern scholars label, "Jewish Palestinian Aramaic;" the Jerusalem Talmud, which is written in this dialect, refers to King Yishu as "Y'shu" (yod-shin-waw, the same spelling that was shown to the man by the Holy Spirit, pronounced today as "Y-shoo") a name that Jews still actively call Him throughout the world. As "Jewish Palestinian Aramaic" phased out, it was replaced by Arabic, and Arabic speaking Christians have traditionally pronounced Adonoi's name as "Yasu" (Ya-soo'), while Arabic speaking Muslims call Him "Isa" (Ee-suh). Syriac is a version of Aramaic, and Syriac Orthodox Christians call Mashiah "Isho (Ee-sho), which also reflects the "ee" sound. As we can clearly see there is not much difference in the pronunciation of YHWH Yishu's Name amongst these four groups; they all have in common a similar two syllable pronunciation, and they are all closely related languages. Conversely, some churches in India still maintain the correct pronunciation of YHWH Yishu's Name ([*Click this link to hear Adonoi's Name pronounced correctly in this wonderful Hindi Christian song.*](#))

The early church fathers Polycarp and Clement, both testify to the Greek spelling of King Yishu's Name as "Iesous" (Ee-uh-soos), we rely on Polycarp and Clement because the earliest Greek manuscripts only write Mashiah's Name as "IH" or "IHΣ" (the Megiddo Mosaic, circa 230, abbreviates His Name "IY," also an "ee" sound). It is important to note that when names that end in a vowel sound enter the Greek language an "s" sound is added to it to make it nominative. This has come down to us in the English as "Jesus" (Gee-sus) because the yod or "Y" sound was germanized to a "J" sound, but remember, the yod is silent! So "Esus" (Ee-sus) would be better... but remember, the "s" has only been added to make it nominative... so now we are left with "Esu" (Ee-suh, which mirrors the Arabic Islamic pronunciation). The transliterated name of Adonoi in Greek, "Iesous," without the nominative "s" would be Iesou (Ee-eh-soo) not far from the Hebrew-Aramaic, "Yishu (Ee-shoo). The "sh" sound is indicative of the Hebrew words for "to save" and "salvation."

Matthew 1:21 says of the angel, when speaking to Mary about what to name her child, *"And she will bring forth a son, and you shall call His name Yishu, for He will save His people from their sins."* The root word for "save" in Hebrew is spelled yod-shin-ayin (yasha); the root word for "salvation" in Hebrew is yod-shin-waw-ayin-hey (yeshua). Many have assumed Adonoi's Name is "Yeshua" because it is how you pronounce the root word for "salvation" in Biblical Hebrew. This is a mistake for two reasons: First, Yishu and His family did not speak Biblical Hebrew at home, but an Aramaic Hebrew known today as "Jewish Palestinian Aramaic," as discussed earlier. Secondly, even if Mary was spoken to in Biblical Hebrew by the angel, it is highly unlikely that the root word "yeshua" or "yasha" would have been used, instead a form of the word (as is found in Genesis 29 when Leah is naming her first four sons) would have been employed. The footnote in the Koren Tanack for Genesis 29 states: "62) The name Shimon resonates with shama (has heard). 63) The name Levi resonates with yillaveh (will walk with). 64) The name Yehuda resonates with odeh (I will praise)," and so on, and so on. This is the Biblical Hebrew pattern for naming children, and the angel Gabriel would have conveyed something similar to Mary when he said to her, *"Call His name Yishu, for He will save His people from their sins."*

Some have simply resorted to calling Adonoi, Yehoshua (Joshua) because in the Greek New Testament the word "Iesous" is used for King Yishu, as well as for Joshua ben Nun. On the surface this seems to be a simple and quick solution to resolving what the Name of Adonoi is, however when we see that authors such as Josephus call a number of different people "Iesous," and when we look back in the Old Testament Hebrew those individuals all have different names, and have different spellings of their names, we realize that we cannot end our search there, and secondly, Yehoshua is a four syllable word, a stark difference to the two syllable names that native speakers have employed for millenia.

When calling on Mashiah a two syllable name has always been used, regardless of language or belief system, over the last two thousand years, but regardless of whether you say "Y'shu," "Yasu," "Yishu," "Isho," or "Jesus," the most important thing is that you call on Him, the One who has paid the price, on the cross, for all the sins of humanity. Glory to His Name.

May you prayerfully digest, and may Adonoi add a blessing to you as you deepen your walk with Him.