

*"...Who has established all the ends of the earth?  
What is His name, and what is His Son's name if you know?"*  
*Proverbs 30:4*

*We'll be in DENVER (303)  
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## The Name!

The topics which we choose for our monthly letters to you, our beloved partners, are not random or capricious, but bathed in prayer. We try to follow the leading of the Ruach ha Kodesh, to the best of our ability to hear Him. This month's letter is a good example of the Lord's leading. For years we have been discussing the various opinions concerning the NAME of God and the NAME of our Saviour. We receive a considerable amount of mail on this topic. As Messianic Jews we are especially interested in seeking truth from a Hebrew roots perspective. However, wanting to avoid controversy, and desiring to promote unity, we have never addressed the issue of the NAME.

Last month, the letter you received from us went to the printer with a red heart that said: "Be Mine in '99, signed, Yeshua." It left the printers as: "Be Mine in '99, Yashua." We were shocked! How did the "e" become an "a"? And why? Then we realized that God was saying: Address the issue in your **next** letter. Jamie said to Neil, "O.K. Let's do it, but we must also tell them that a rose by any other name is still a rose!" That day Jamie opened a letter from a partner in Los Angeles, California, originally from Rosario, Argentina!, who began her letter to us as follows: "Greetings in the sweet name of Jesus – or Yeshua – A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." So, with that thought as an introduction, we will briefly delve into this challenging topic.

## The Father's Name

The name of the Heavenly Father in the original Hebrew Scriptures is represented by four Hebrew letters יהוה which in the original Hebrew had no vowels with them. These four letters are called the tetragrammaton, appearing in English as either YHVH or YHWH. This name of God, sometimes called the *Shem Hameforesh* or the "Essence Name of the Creator," appears 6,823 times in the Holy Scriptures.

How is YHVH or YHWH pronounced? No one knows for sure today. One Hebrew scholar that we consulted on the YHVH told us that two vowels were given to one letter in the NAME, making it impossible to pronounce. Another scholar stated that the vowel signs that had appeared above or below the consonants were replaced with the vowel signs for the Hebrew word *Adonai* by Jewish biblical scholars during the Middle Ages in an effort to hide this Name to make certain it would not be taken in vain or blasphemed. Since *Adonai* means Lord in Hebrew, whenever the sacred Tetragrammaton appears in Scripture, today's Bible says LORD in all capital letters. Jewish people do not even try to pronounce YHVH. They use *Adonai* when the NAME is indicated.

Traditional Jewish books such as **To Pray as a Jew** by Rabbi Donin, and Hebrew scholars such as Dr. Danny Ben-Gigi (former head of Hebrew programs at Arizona State University), maintain that the *Shem Hameforesh* is Y (yod) H (heh) V (vav) H (heh). Others such as Messianic believer Rav Rick Aharon Chaimberlin use YHWH for the Name of God, believing that the ancient ו (vav) had a "w" pronunciation and was changed by the Ashkenazic Jews hundreds of years ago. "Yah-way" would be a close approximation of the correct pronunciation of the tetragrammaton according to Rav Rick, the Jewish Encyclopedia and the Encyclopedia Britannica. According to Dr. Ben-Gigi, there is no way to know how YHVH is pronounced. He feels that just as it would be disrespectful for a son to call his father by his first name, it would be the same for God's children. Thus, there is no necessity to know how YHVH is pronounced.



Some scholars who maintain that YHVH is the ineffable name of God decided that it should be pronounced **Ye Ho Va H** (Yehovah). This is another possibility. In Anglicizing this to "Jehovah," other scholars erred since there is no "J" sound in Hebrew. (In fact, *J* was unknown in any alphabet until the 14th century.) Hence, Jehovah Jireh, as one of God's names, is a poor transliteration.

Those who pronounce the Name **YahWeH** always point out the direct reference to the Father's name in Psalm 68:4. In the New King James Version we read: "*Sing to God, sing praises to His name; Extol Him who rides on the clouds, by His name YAH, and rejoice before Him.*" YAH is considered to be a poetic abbreviation of the Tetragrammaton. Dr. Ben-Gigi strongly opposes this idea. He said that YAH does refer to God as in *Halleluyah*, but could not be proved to be part of the sacred Name.

In examining this subject we need to remember that language has a dynamic nature. Pronunciation and meaning change with time and location. No one knows for sure how the vowels and consonants of ancient Hebrew were pronounced. The Holy Scriptures tell us of differences in pronunciation between the tribes of Israel as early as the "time of the Judges." (See Judges 12:6)

After considerable research, we have concluded that this side of Heaven we will not know exactly how the NAME was pronounced in Temple times. What we do know is that when the *Shem Hameforash* was uttered by the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) in the Temple once a year on *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement), the children of Israel would prostrate themselves and say: **BARUCH SHEM KVOD MALKHUTO L'OLAM VAED** "Blessed is the name of His Glorious Majesty forever and ever."

### The Son's Name

When the angel Gabriel gave Yosef, Miriam's fiancé, the name of the Son of God he said: "...*she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Yud-shin-vav-ayin for He will save His people from their sins.*" (Matthew 1:21)

What name did the angel give? What language would a twelve year old girl in Israel have understood?

Miriam (Mary) understood Hebrew. The Hebrew word for "he will save" is *yoshia*. The Messiah's name given before His birth is related to what He would do — **save** His people from their sins. *Yeshua* as a name comes from the same root as *yoshia* (yud-shin-ayin) and is actually a contraction of the Hebrew name *Y'hoshua* (English: Joshua) which means "YHVH saves." *Yeshua* is also the masculine form of the Hebrew word *yeshu'ah* which means salvation. [See Jewish New Testament Commentary by David H. Stern].

What about *Yahshua*? Some say that *Yahshua* is a shortened form of *Yahoshua*. Dr. Ben-Gigi, says there is no such name in Hebrew and that people invented the name to fit their theology. Other scholars believe that either *Yashua* or *Yahoshua* are more accurate than *Yeshua* since *Yah* is included in the name and thus the Son's name would contain the name of His Father. This is a nice thought but we can't be sure it is the truth.

We do know that the word for salvation in Hebrew is *yeshu'ah* and that it means divine deliverance from suffering, oppression, and exile. It is also linked with the concept of Messianic redemption. We also know that in the Hebrew before the Babylonian exile *Yehoshua* was used, while after the exile the name became *Yeshua*.

*Y'Shua* eliminates the vowel and is another possibility. *Shua* is the part of the name that indicates salvation, so either *Y'Shua* or *Yeshua* also include salvation in the name of the Savior. This is consistent with verses such as Acts 4:12: "**Nor is there *salvation* in any other; for there is no other *name* under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved.**"



What about "Jesus"? Although the name Jesus is precious to millions of believers, some scholars say that it is not the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew for salvation. They maintain that the Greek *lesous* from which Jesus is derived and the Hebrew *Ye'hoshua* may not be related at all. (Although **Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words** says that *lesous* is a transliteration of the Hebrew "Joshua.") Was *lesous* derived from the name of a Greek goddess of healing, *leso*, as some believe? Possibly. Will the Messiah still answer if you call Him Jesus? (or Jesús? or Jesu?) Of course! **He** is the real healer, not *leso*! (When we were both "born again," Jesus was the name we called upon.)

### More Names

The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not limit Himself to one name. He revealed Himself to His people by using many different names which reflect different aspects of His nature as well as relationships with things and people. Below are a few examples of these names.:

*Elohim*: "God," in Hebrew. The only name for God in the first chapter of Genesis. A plural noun, also used in a lower sense to refer to the many heathen "gods." Elohim is formed from the Hebrew word, *Alah*, to swear and describes One who is a covenant keeper, bound by an oath.

*El Shaddai*: "Almighty God"; Shaddai comes from shad or breast; the giver, pourer forth for others, mother like nature of God. *El* ("God") means might or power. God is mighty to bless His children, mighty in bountiful, self-sacrificing love. (Genesis 17:1)

*El Elyon*: "Most High God"; revealed in connection with Melchisedek; God as Possessor of heaven and earth. The God in whom all things consist. The One in whom we live, and move and have our being is The One who is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. (Genesis 14:18)

*Adonai*: "Lord." Occurs approximately 300 times in the Tenach. Plural of Hebrew *Adon* meaning Lord or Master. Indicates relationship, i.e. like that of human master/servants or husband/wife. The God who can be depended upon, trusted to sustain, help, keep – our Good Master and loving Heavenly Bridegroom. (Genesis 15:1)

### Other Ways To Address God

Hebrew is a language (and a culture) that emphasizes relationships and action. The story of the departure from Egypt, as told in the Hebrew Scriptures, begins with the people being called the "Children of Israel" (Exodus 1:1), and their God being called the YHVH of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 3:6). The emphasis is on RELATIONSHIP. The story unfolds through ten plagues and ten commandments and God now identifies Himself as "The YHVH who brought you out of Egypt." (ACTION)

Throughout the Holy Scriptures many names are used for God. Below are some of these names given to God by men.

Moses called Him YHVH Ne-see, "the LORD our (victory) banner." (Exodus 17:16)

Gideon called Him YHVH Shalom, "the LORD our Peace." (Judges 6:24)

David called Him YHVH Ro-ee, "the LORD our Shepherd." (Psalm 23:1)

The following is a list of other Hebrew words from the Scriptures that we can use to address God:

Nor-ah ("Awesome One")	Gi-bor ("Mighty One")	Sar Shalom ("Prince of Peace")
Ka-dosh ("Holy One")	Yah-chid ("One and Only")	Ga-eh ("Exalted One")
Pe-leh ("Wonderful")	Yo-ets ("Counselor")	Avi-ahd ("Everlasting Father")

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## Our Personal Opinion

If we would all call our Heavenly Father *Abba* (Hebrew for Daddy/Father), He would probably be thrilled! Even more intimate would be *Avi* "my Daddy/Father." This is the relationship that has been opened to us through the Messiah Yeshua. When Jamie's father died a few years ago, she was still calling him "Daddy." It didn't matter that "Daddy" might not have been the most appropriate name for a woman in her forties to use. But love and relationship was what mattered.

As for the Son, we prefer to call Him Yeshua since:

1) Archeologists have discovered the name Yeshua inscribed in stone from the time the Messiah walked on earth. It was a fairly popular name in His day.

2) It is an accurate name. It reminds us of who He is as a person – God's **Yes** to the deepest desires of the human heart, (2 Cor. 1:20) and the One who saved us from our sins.

While we appreciate the earnest search for truth and accuracy in dealing with the **Name** of God, we choose to focus first and foremost on His **Person**. If we misspell or mispronounce His Name but have the right Spirit and genuine Love for Him in our hearts, we believe that God will forgive us and our ignorance.

We have no problem with believers who choose to use the names Yashua, Yehoshuah, Yahweh, or Jesus. One name may very well be more "accurate" than another but no one knows for sure. Transliteration is the process of changing a word from one alphabet to another. There are no absolutes. It is subject to the bias of the transliterator, and is especially difficult when dealing with cultural and geographical nuances of pronunciation. We feel that believers should seek the Lord and address God as the *Ruach HaKodesh* leads them.

**A WARNING:** We do have problems with those who become dogmatic and insist that they know how God's Name is **really pronounced**. We sense in this the danger of being prideful, divisive, unloving, and cultish. Psalm 138:2 tells us that God has magnified His **word** above His **name**. Remember, an emphasis on names reflects a Greek/Western mindset. The Hebrew mindset focuses on relationships and action. Focus on what God has done for you, and how you are related to Him.

Ask God to show you the truth through His Word. He is Faithful to do just that.

**He Is "The LAMB"**

*Passover begins at sundown  
on March 31, 1999*

This is the nuptial name of our Messiah. Soon we will rejoice with Him at the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb." Passover is a little foretaste of that great event. At Pesach we celebrate Israel's deliverance through the blood of the Passover lambs. We also celebrate our own personal redemption from spiritual Egypt through the blood of God's perfect Lamb, Yeshua Ha Mashiach.

Right at the beginning of His ministry, Yeshua was recognized as the "Lamb of God." Yohanan said of him: "*Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.*" (John 1:29)

How about you? Has He taken away **your** sin? Have you made Yeshua **your** lamb?  
Can you call God "*Abba*?" If not, 1999 is the year of your redemption.  
Passover is the season of your deliverance. Today is the day of your salvation.

*Open your heart, bow your will, and confess: "I believe that Yeshua is the Messiah, God's Son, the Lamb of God, and the One who made atonement for my sin. I now receive Him as my personal Saviour and Lord. I am sorry for all my sins and desire to turn from them to the living God, and follow Him from now on by the power of His Spirit." AMEN*  
*Passover Blessings! Ver\* Jamie*