YAHSHUA TO JESUS:
EVOLUTION OF A NAME

By William Finck, © 2006

The purpose of this discussion is to show how the name *Jesus* came into existence. I am certainly not advocating that one should call upon the name of Yahshua Christ, the Redeemer of Israel, using the name *Jesus*, however there are serious misconceptions concerning the origin of this name which I am compelled to address.

In order to simplify the presentation here, it shall be taken for granted that the proper English representations of the names of our God are *Yahweh* and *Yahshua*, as they are transliterated from the Hebrew. I am aware of the Masoretic spellings found in *Strong's* Hebrew lexicon (i.e. *Yehowshua*, see #3091), yet I would dispute them. For *yeho-* names from the Old Testament became Ἰω - (*Iô-*) names in the *Septuagint* translation, and such is not the case with this name. For more information on this topic, see the recent pamphlet from this ministry entitled *Which Is It, "Lord" or "Yahweh"?* Furthermore, I am not going to make lengthy quotes from lexicons here, but shall be concise or even only paraphrase them where needed in my illustrations. Yet of course I shall cite my sources.

Many in Israel Identity purport that the corruption of *Yahshua* into *Jesus* was part of some overt conspiracy by a wicked 'church' to somehow replace Yahweh with the Greek Zeus. These people then claim in support of this contention that *Jesus* (*gee-zus*) and *Zeus* (actually pronounced *zooce*) are sound-alike words, yet actually they don't sound alike at all. There is no evidence that in ancient times, the first *s* in *Jesus* was ever pronounced like a *z*. Actually, the Hebrews, Greeks and Romans all had a letter *z*, and could have easily have used it if they so desired. Also, the Roman supreme god was not called *Zeus* but *Jupiter* (or also *Jove*), so for them any supposed connection is less likely. Romans always preferred their own names for the gods over the Greek names (Mars for Ares, Diana for Artemis, Mercury for Hermes, Juno for Hera, ad nauseum), and may even have been offended if compelled to use any form of the name of Zeus. Here I hope to demonstrate just how the name *Jesus* truly came into being.

Under the entry for Ἰησοῦς (the Greek name from which *Jesus* is derived), the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* edited by Gerhard Friedrich (hereinafter *TDNT*) explains that the early Hebrew *Yahshua* was after the return from Babylon shortened to *Yashua*. This is the same name as *Joshua* of the Old Testament. In the Greek *Septuagint* (hereinafter *LXX*), a book translated from Hebrew into Greek long before any organized "church" could have made a conspiracy, wherever the name Joshua appears we find some form of the Greek equivalent, Ἰησοῦς. Of the final ς here (which in Greek is written σ if it is not the last letter of a word) *TDNT* states "The LXX retained the later form [Yashua or Yeshua], and made it declinable by adding a Nominative ς."

First, the "Nominative ς." allows one writing in Greek to decline the noun Ἰησοῦς, meaning that the word may be represented in the various Greek cases, i.e. Ἰησοῦς (Nominative), Ἰησοῦ (Genitive), Ἰησοῖ or again Ἰησοῦ (Dative), and Ἰησοῦν (Accusative). Declensions are an important part of Greek grammar not fully utilized in

English (the *'s* is an example, somewhat representing the Genitive case in our language). So adding the *s* greatly assists the Greek writer. An example of an indeclinable noun in Greek is Δαυίδ (David), which may have been declinable if it were written Δαυιδός (Davidos) though it never was.

Secondly, it may be apparent that the final *a* sound in Yahshua was also dropped for Greek, so that Ἰησοῦς (*yay-soos*) is really only equivalent to *Yashu*. The only place in the *LXX* where the final vowel sound was retained is the Ἰησουέ of 1 Chron. 7:27, although some *LXX* versions have it in a couple of other places as well. In the Hebrew spelling, which has no true vowels, the *-ua* on the end of *Yahshua* comes from the letter *'Ayin*, and in later Hebrew (between 600 and 900 A.D.) vowel points were added, and here the *'Ayin* was accompanied with vowel points signifying that it is followed by an *a* sound. The letter *a* does not actually exist in the name.

Thirdly, the missing *h* must be addressed. In Greek, there is no letter equivalent to the letter *h (H, aitch)*. The symbol Η is there, but represents the uppercase vowel *eta*, which in lowercase is η. While there is a *ch* in Greek (χ, *chi*), a *th* (θ, *theta*) and a *ph* (ϕ, *phi*) neither is there an *sh* letter. While the Greeks designated an aspirant (*h* sound) before words which began with a vowel by using the symbol ^(‘) which denotes the presence of the sound, or ^(’) which denotes its absence, there was no way for the Greeks to put such a sound in the middle of a word, for they never did so but for one other exception, the double *r* sound which is beyond the scope of our discussion here. There is no way for the Greeks to represent an *sh* in writing.

Yet this is not a problem for the Hebrew speaker, since as can be seen in the "Hebrew Articulation" section of the Hebrew dictionary which accompanies *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, in Hebrew the same letter represents both the *s* and *sh* sounds. It would not be a problem at all for a Hebrew reader writing in Greek to see the Hebrew letter *Siyn* (or *Shiyn*) and write a Greek *sigma* (ϲ).

So that Ἰησοῦς is a natural transliteration into Greek of the Hebrew name Yahshua is easily understood once the conventions of the languages are understood. *TDNT* observes: "The evidence of the NT is to the same effect [as the *LXX*]. In Ac 7:45 and Hb 4:8 there is a reference to Ἰησοῦς, i.e. Joshua the son of Nun."

Now hopefully having established that Ἰησοῦς is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew form of *Yahshua*, and sufficiently explaining how that may be so, attention may be turned to the Greek, Latin and English.

The Greek *eta* (Η, η) is a difficult vowel, since it has no direct equivalent in Latin or English. Although the majority of scholars usually represent it in transliterations of names with an *e* (or *ê*), there are many who more often represent it with an *a*. Examples of the η changing among the languages are evident in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, where the Hebrew word for *Mede* is transliterated by Strong as *Maday* (Hebrew #4075) and the Greek word, no different in the NT than in all classical Greek, is Μῆδος (Greek #3370), which Strong transliterates *Mēdŏs* and pronounces *may´-dos*. In Genesis 10:2, the word at Strong's Hebrew #4074 was rendered in the A.V. as *Madai*. So we need not look far to see that the *a* and the *e* are both interchangeable with the Greek η.

The letter *i* at the beginning of a word, when followed by a vowel, James Strong represents with a double *e* in all of his pronunciations in his Greek lexicon. This is correct, although for practical purposes the *i* becomes equivalent to the spoken English *y* in these instances, and this is true for the Latin as well, neither Greek nor Latin having

a letter *y* as we know it. In Greek the symbol ϒ represented the uppercase *upsilon*, lowercase υ, and the equivalent of our own *u* although it is transliterated most often with a *y* (examples being the prefixes *hyper-* and *hypo-*). In the *New College Latin & English Dictionary* by John C. Traupman, Ph. D. (hereinafter *TNCLED*) it is explained that in Latin the letter ϒ was "adopted from the Greek into the Roman alphabet for the transliteration of words containing an upsilon (*for which u was used earlier*), and pronounced approximate as German *ü* ... but its use was restricted to foreign words." So while the Hebrew had a *y*, the *yowd*, neither Latin nor Greek had an exact equivalent, both using an *i* in words where today in English we use a *j*, such as in *Jerusalem*, *Joppa*, or *Jacob*, all of which may be discerned from *Strong's* concordance.

 When the Roman Latin speakers encountered the Greek Ἰησοῦς, which would have been pronounced *yay-soos*, or as Strong has it, *ee-ay-soos*, they wrote *Iesus*. As we have seen, the *e* is a fair representation of the Greek η. Checking *Strong's* Greek lexicon and the "Greek Articulation" section at its beginning, the *ou* dipthong in Greek is pronounced as the *ou* in the English word *through*. In the pronunciation section of *TNCLED* on page 4, there is no *ou* dipthong in Latin, yet the Latin *u* is by itself able to represent the same sound ("ū *u* in r**u**de") as the Greek *ou*, and so the Latin *Iesus* is a fair representation of the Greek Ἰησοῦς. Again checking *TNCLED*, the *i* in Latin would be treated no differently as it would be in Greek, "ī *ee* in k**ee**n", as Strong represents it as *ee* where it begins a word and is followed by another vowel.

 Here it must be pointed out that the pronunciation guide in *TNCLED* is split into two sections, the "Classical Method", and the "Ecclesiastical Method" which became extant among the clergy in the Medieval period. At the letter *s* under "Classical Method" it states "always *s* in **s**ing", but under "Ecclesiastical Method" it states "*s* in **s**ing ... but when standing between two vowels or when final and preceded by a voiced consonant = *z* in do**z**en." So we see that in the Latin of the later 'church', *Iesus* began to be pronounced *yay-zus*, yet bear in mind that this change affected a large number of Latin words, and not just this one name.

 This leaves us with the English letter *j*. According to the table entitled "Development of the Alphabet" on p. XXXIV in the opening pages of *The American Heritage College Dictionary*, third edition (hereinafter *AH*), the *j* appeared in the miniscule script which was prevalent from 300-700 A.D., and the Carolingian script from circa 800 A.D., along with later scripts. But of our language *AH* states that "The English alphabet reached its total of 26 letters only after medieval scribes added *w* (originally written *uu*) and Renaissance printers separated the variant pairs i/j and u/v." And so we see that in English, *j* became a distinct letter only during the Renaissance, which began in the 14th century, and that the letter was a variant of the letter *i*.

 However, just because in some European scripts we have a *j* at an early time, that does not mean that the letter was pronounced then as we pronounce it today, as we do the soft *g* (i.e. gentle, germaine) which seems to have come from the French (where it is represented by a *zh* in pronunciations of French words which appear in *AH*), although I have by no means fully researched the matter. The Spanish pronounce the *j* as an English *h*. In the pronunciation guide to *TNCLED* on page 5 we find that the *j* of Medieval (and Ecclesiastical) Latin (for *AH* attests that Classical Rome did not know the letter) was pronounced like the "*y* in **y**es." Even closer to our language is German, which

pronounces the *j* as a *y*, and so *Jesus* in German would sound much the same as it did in Latin, or in Greek.

Checking *AH* for the pronunciation of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung's last name, we find *yoong*, and the Swiss city Jungfrau is *yoong-frou*. A Junker, a member of the old Prussian aristocracy, is a *yoong-ker*. (In all three cases the *oo* is said to be pronounced as the *oo* in our word took.) In *AH* the name of the sea bird called a jaeger, named from the German word for *hunter*, is pronounced *ya-ger*. It is common knowledge that the popular German name *Johann*, our *John*, is pronounced *yo-hann*. The Greek spelling is Ἰωάννες (Iôannes).

Beyond the purpose of this document, it must suffice to say that, in spite of the Jews' and Arabs' insistence to the contrary, the Gospels were originally written in Greek. While a form of Hebrew (or perhaps Aramaic) was spoken in first century Palestine, Greek was the common language even there, as the historical and archaeological records also attest. The internal evidence, both textually and contextually, leaves no doubt in the mind of the Greek reader that such was the language they were written in. And so it should be evident that Ἰησοῦς was the name which Yahshua Christ was called by and responded to during His walk upon this earth.

Here it should be manifest that *Jesus*, or the Latin *Iesus*, evolved naturally from Ἰησοῦς, having suffered several incremental alterations with changes in language and dialect, and so *Jesus* is not a name produced by some conspiracy, although it should be kept in mind that Ἰησοῦς, *Iesus* and *Jesus* were all originally pronounced *yay-soos* (or *yay-sooce*), or at least something quite similar. Stripping away the final *s*, added for the benefit of the Greek (and later Latin) grammar, all of these versions may be represented by the simple *Yesu*, a form known to Identity scholars in the 19th century, evidenced in the work of E. O. Gordon (*Prehistoric London*) and others. As we have seen, *Yesu* is only a Hellenized form of the Hebrew *Yahshua*, without the final *a*.

Evident in many places, today's 'Jews' prefer the spelling *Yeshua*, and in recent times it is a common name among them, though *TDNT* states that "With the 2nd century A.D., ... Ἰησοῦς disappears as a proper name", it seems to have revived since the founding of the artificial zionist state in Palestine. I feel quite safe in stating that even in Identity, a writer who uses the form *Yeshua* has been heavily influenced by Jewish literature, and one should view his work in that context, for it may well be suspect. Non-Judaized Israel Identity writers generally use the form *Yahshua*.

While I cannot disparage the forms *Jesus*, *Yesu*, et al., knowing how those forms came to be, yet in my own writings I use the form *Yahshua*, and I believe that I have good reason for so doing. First, in English there are not the limitations in pronunciation or spelling which the Greek language imposed, which made the form *Iesus* necessary in the first place. Secondly, the form *Yahshua* represents a meaning absent in *Jesus*, its component parts being derived from the words *Yahweh* (that name which the 'Jews' despise, and thus avoid), and a form of a word meaning *salvation* or *to be saved*. So *Yahshua* conveys a meaning which is not evident in the other forms: *Yahweh*, *Savior* or *Yahweh Saves*, descriptive of the very purpose of Yahshua Christ in the first place, and also of His very essence.