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## Facebook Rebuttal # 4 Are Christians Wrong For Calling Our Lord and Savior “Jesus” and Not “Yeshua?”

One of the most commonly posted attacks against Christians and/or Christianity is the notion that Christians are wrong in calling their Lord and Savior “**Jesus**” instead of his correct Hebrew name “*Yeshua*.”

To support their position, they quickly point out the fact that the letter “**J**” didn’t exist until the 16th Century, so Christians cannot be correct when they use the name “**Jesus**” for their Lord and Savior.

As usual, on the surface, it seems as though the critics have a valid point, especially to those not familiar with the languages used in the original manuscripts that are now translated into English.

To begin our study, there are two very important keys we must first understand, they are:

1. The original manuscripts for the Old Testament were written in Hebrew not Greek
2. The original manuscripts for the New Testament were written in Greek and a very small portion in Aramaic, not Hebrew.

In Jesus’ time, the first century, the Bible and/or scriptures used and quoted by the New Testament authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was the “*Septuagint*.” The common abbreviation for the “*Septuagint*” is “*LXX*,” which is the Roman numeral for 70. The number 70 comes from the belief that Septuagint was translated from Hebrew into Greek by 70 men.

The Septuagint was translated in piecemeal from approximately 250 to 150 B.C. The primary reason for the Septuagint was to accommodate the dispersed Jews who had lost the Hebrew language.

### **Here’s the points I want to make:**

1. When the New Testament authors wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they wrote in Greek and quoted the Septuagint which was also in Greek.

The name “*Yeshua*” is Hebrew, not Greek. In short, the name for Jesus (which is the same Hebrew name for Joshua) cannot be the same in both languages. Instead, what you find throughout the original Greek manuscripts is the Greek equivalent names for Jesus and others.

For example, “*Elijah*” (*Eliyahu* in Hebrew, meaning “*My God is Yahweh*” or “*My God is Jah*”) is called “*Elias*” in the Greek New Testament, which is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew name, “*Eliyahu*” (Elijah). This is nothing strange or unique to the bible. For example, the “*Quran*” refers to “*Elijah*” in Arabic as “*Lias*.”

In **Matthew 11:14** (KJV), Jesus said, “*And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come*” (from the KJV, see also, **Matthew 16:14, 17:3, 17:4, 17:10, 17:11** and **7:12**). So it’s clear then, all biblical names will differ according to the language the name is being translated into.

2. If we have a problem with names being spelled or pronounced differently in other languages, we must blame God. Here’s why, in **Genesis 11:1** (NIV) we read, “*Now the whole world had one language and a common speech.*”

In verse 9 we read, “*That is why it was called Babel - because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.*”

So it’s clear, God is the cause for the many different languages on the earth. That said, I’m sure God is fully aware of the fact that names, even Jesus’ name, would be spelled and pronounced differently in different languages. If God doesn’t have a problem with it, how dare any human to have a problem with it!!

3. The Greek spelling of our English name “**Jesus**” is “*Iesous*.” The biblical name “**Jesus**” is actually the Latin form of the Greek name. In Hebrew, the name “**Jesus**” comes from the name “*Yeshua*.” (It should be noted that “*Yeshua*” is a shortened form of the original name, “*Yehoshua*”)

The New Testament, contrary to the opinions of some, was written in Greek for the most part, a small portion in Aramaic. The Greek New Testament, that God allowed to be written in Greek, does not have the Hebrew name “*Yeshua*” in it. Therefore, since the Hebrew name “*Yeshua*” was not important enough for God to have the New Testament written in Hebrew or Aramaic to maintain it, why are some people

insisting Christians are wrong for not calling “Jesus” by the Hebrew name “Yeshua?”

The other claim is that the letter “J” being used in Jesus’ name is incorrect since it only came into existence in the 1600’s.

The Oxford Dictionary sheds light on the subject, it says, “*This tenth letter of the alphabet in English and other modern languages is, in its origin, a comparatively late modification of the letter I.*”

The Greek word from which we get the name “Jesus” is “Iesous” (this is one of the forms of the name). Therefore, “J” can go where the “I” goes and vice versa.

It is a known fact that throughout the medieval period, the forms of the modern “I” and “J” were used interchangeably, and both forms represented the same letter. Even as late as the 19th century, dictionaries commonly intermingled the “I” and “J” words in one series.

At the end of the day, the Bible does not stress the importance of which language we use to address the Savior, or on precisely how we spell or pronounce his name. The spelling and pronunciation will vary with each language, but refer to the same Jesus.

Once again, the “*Back Yard Bible Scholars*” have said a lot, but really nothing at all!!

God Bless,  
Bishop-Elect D. M. Duncan

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