

You Shall Call His Name Yeshua

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Yeshua:

It is said by the Jewish rabbis that parents receive a glimmer of divine inspiration when they give their child a Hebrew name.ⁱ We can see evidence of this in scripture, *"But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins'"* (Matthew 1:20-21, NKJV).ⁱⁱ

Jewish baby boys are traditionally named at their *brit* (circumcision). If the child is a firstborn male and they are obligated to redeem him—and the circumcision must be delayed—then he is given a name at the time of the *pidyon haben* (redemption of the firstborn ceremony).ⁱⁱⁱ So, there are three related and vital issues for us to explore here: The name of the child and its spiritual significance, the correlation between the circumcision and naming ceremony, and the correlation to the redemption of the firstborn.

What is in a name? To the Lord, quite a bit. So much so that He dedicated an entire chapter in the book of Exodus called *Shemot* (names). *"Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt"* (Exodus 1:1). Names have meaning and power. *"Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light"* (Genesis 1:1), for by His spoken word, the Lord God created the universe. And names have authority. *"What a word this is! For with authority and power, He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out"* (Luke 4:36).

The Hebrew language of the *Torah* (the books of Moses) is called the "holy tongue." It was the language used in creation. Therefore, all created things are directly affected by their Hebrew names—and since Hebrew is a root language—they are also affected by the component letters of their names.^{iv}

Many Hebrew names in the Bible contain *Yah* or *Yahu*, part of God's four-letter name. For example, *Yehoshua* (יהושע), Anglicized as Joshua, was the Hebrew name given to Jesus. The name combines two Hebrew elements: *Yeho* (יהו), a common abbreviation for the Tetragrammaton, and *Shua* (שוע) related to the Hebrew verb *yasha*, which means "to save" or "to deliver." Therefore, *Yehoshua* can be interpreted as "God is salvation" or "God is my salvation." This early Biblical Hebrew name underwent a shortening into the later name of *Yeshua* (ישוע). *Yeshua* means "salvation" in Hebrew, from the verb "to save" (*lehoshiah*). The Septuagint

transliterated *Yeshua* from Hebrew into Koine Greek in the second or third century B.C., resulting in *Ἰησοῦς* (*Iēsoús*). The name was translated from Greek to Latin sometime before the fourth century A.D.

Contrary to what some believe, the modern English name "Jesus" ('*dʒi:zəs*) does not directly evolve from the Early Middle English Anglo-Saxon name *Iesu*. Instead, both names have their roots in the same source—the Latin name *Iesus*, which itself is derived from the Greek name *Ἰησοῦς* (*Iēsoús*). This Greek name is a Hellenized form of the Hebrew name *Yeshua* or *Yehoshua*. The transition from Latin to Old English led to variations in spelling and pronunciation, giving rise to the name *Iesu* in Early Middle English. Over time, as the English language evolved, the spelling and pronunciation shifted, leading to the modern English form "Jesus." While the current English name "Jesus" and the Early Middle English name *Iesu* are related, they both trace their origins back to the same Latin and Greek roots rather than one directly evolving from the other.

Therefore, Jesus's Biblical name is either *Yeshua* or *Yehoshua*. So, Matthew should more accurately read, "*And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name [Yeshua—Salvation], for He will save His people from their sins [for He is my Yehoshua—He is my salvation]*" (Matthew 1:21), emphasis added.

But wait! Just two verses later, we read, "*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,*" which is translated, "*God with us*" (Matthew 1:23). I thought His name was *Yeshua*. Now they are calling Him *Immanuel*? The truth is there are 198 different names and titles of *Yeshua* in the Bible. These are listed in Cruden's Concordance, first published in 1737. Here are five examples in one verse, "*For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God [El Gibor], Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*" (Isaiah 9:6). But why so many names and titles?

Because God is the infinite, unsearchable, and unknowable God, He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.^v Names and titles are like garments. They describe God's attributes but can never fully reveal His face—the hidden essence of who He is.

The Hebrew word *lefanav*, translated "before him," stems from the root *panim*, meaning "face" or "countenance."^{vi} Therefore, when we pray, "*The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you [show you His mercy]; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace*" (Numbers 6:25-26), we are asking the Lord to reveal to us more than His names and titles. We are asking Him to reveal the essence of who He is. We find God's essence entirely in the person of *Yeshua*, "*and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14). "*And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:7).

Now, let us talk about circumcision. "*If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. And on*

the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised" (Leviticus 12:2-3). Why seven and eight days, respectively? Because seven is the number of completion, for, in seven days, the heavens and the earth and all their host were created. "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done" (Genesis 2:2).

But God was not finished with His creation, for *"if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:7). God rested on the seventh day, but on the eighth—the Sunday after the Sabbath, the Feast of Firstfruits, and the first day of a new week—He brought forth His Son from the grave. Therefore, the sons of the promise are circumcised on the eighth day and not the seventh. It would also be fitting for the baby's name—by divine inspiration—to be given on the day of his circumcision. "You shall be called by a new name, Which the mouth of the Lord will name" (Isaiah 62:2). "And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it" (Revelation 2:17).*

And lastly, let us discuss the redemption of the firstborn ceremony. This ceremony is usually held on the thirty-first day after the boy's birth. *"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine'" (Exodus 13:1-2). All firstborn has a special place in God's kingdom, and Yeshua is the most special of all—for He is the firstborn among many brethren.^{vii} "You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet" (Psalm 85-6). And Israel is the firstborn among many nations.^{viii}*

But the more profound picture here is redemption, as the Lord has raised a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David.^{ix} *"Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord [as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"] (Luke 2:22-23).*

During a modern-day redemption ceremony—after the assembled have washed their hands and broken bread—the father brings the firstborn before the *Kohen* (the priest) and five *sela'im* (shekels) of silver or their equivalent. The priest then recites a blessing over a cup of wine and drinks from the cup. You can see here both elements of our communion—bread and wine—the same elements Yeshua officiated in giving the New Covenant on the Feast of the Passover. This ceremony, therefore, symbolizes our redemption from the bondage of sin and death, *"for He [Yeshua] will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people" (Luke 1:68).*

Therefore, *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:5-11).

And, we also now have the first fruits of the Spirit, so that we are like a firstborn from among all His creation—eagerly waiting for the adoption and the redemption of our body.^x God has not only visited us, but He has revealed His face to us. More than just a name, God has shown the essence of who He is. God has circumcised our hearts and made us a new creation in Him. He has filled us with His Holy Spirit and joined us in Holy matrimony. *“O Lord, You are my God. I will exalt You, I will praise Your name, For You have done wonderful things” (Isaiah 25:1).* Yeshua, Yehoshua, Immanuel, Jesus, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace—whatever name you call Him, no matter what language, translation, or transliteration; praise the name of the Lord, for His name, is great and greatly to be praised!^{xi} Isaac Wimberly writes:

“He sent His Son Jesus Christ as the word, living proof that He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for by Him all things were created, giving nothingness, formation. And, by His word, He sustains in the power of His name. For He is before all things, and above all things, He reigns. Holy is His name!

So praise Him for His life! The way He persevered in strife. The humble Son of God becoming the perfect sacrifice.

Praise Him for His death! He willingly stood in our place, lovingly endured the grave that He battled our enemy, and on the third day rose in victory. He is everything that was promised.

Praise Him as the risen King! Lift your voice and sing, for one day, He will return for us, and we will finally be united with our Savior for eternity! Eternity!

So, it is not just words that I proclaim, for my words point to The Word, and The Word has a name. Hope has a name, Joy has a name, Peace has a name, Love has a name, and that name is (Yeshua—Messiah) Jesus Christ!

Praise His name forever!”^{xii}

Amen!

ⁱ *The Laws of Jewish Names—Parshat Shemot.* Chabad.org.

ⁱⁱ All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

ⁱⁱⁱ Wilhelm, Zushe. *When a Boy Is to Be Named.* Chabad.org.

^{iv} The Tanya of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, elucidated by Rabbi Yosef Wineberg. Translated from Yiddish by Rabbi Levy Wineberg and Rabbi Sholom B. Wineberg. Edited by Uri Kaploun. Published and copyrighted by Kehot Publication Society. Chabad. Org.

v Revelation 1:8.

vi Ibid, Tanya.

vii Romans 8:29.

viii Exodus 4:22, Jeremiah 31:9.

ix Luke 1:69.

x Romans 8:23.

xi 1 Chronicles 16:25.

xii Wimberly, Isaac. *Jesus is Forever*. Poem from Kari Jobe's Forever Album.