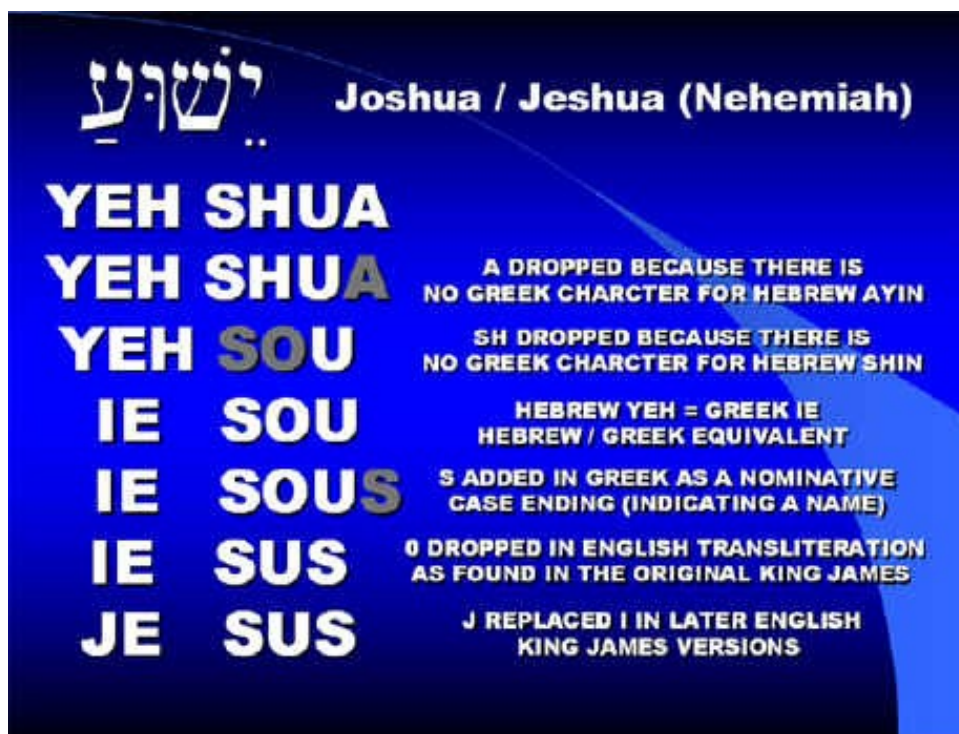


Is Jesus Zeus? This debate arose from a previous contention of the 1980s and '90s as to whether the correct name of our Savior is Yeshua, Yahshua, Joshua, or Jesus. The argument is irrelevant because all four of these names mean “salvation of Yahweh” (YHWH Tetragrammaton Ex.3:15). All these pronunciations are just fine in prayer usage or praise in worship as it is the divine meaning that is important and not the bickering over exact pronunciations of which today we can never be 100% sure. We know that the Old Testament writings were written in ancient Hebrew and some in Aramaic, and that the New Testament writings were written in 1st century Greek. Some scholars contend for the possibility that the Book of Matthew was written in Aramaic although no definitive proof has been forthcoming.

Moving on from this debate a new proposition arose claiming that the name Jesus is derived from a pagan god, Zeus. This is a supposition based on complete ignorance of even a basic understanding of the Bible Greek text. At this point we could digress into a pages long explanation of the ancient Greek alphabet text and show from a diligently examined scholastic viewpoint why Jesus does not mean Zeus. However this article will not enter into that quite provable lengthy discourse but instead will offer below a simple, clear cut, and direct capsule explanation that will do just fine for a primer as to the matter. Here’s why the claim that Jesus means Zeus is inaccurate:



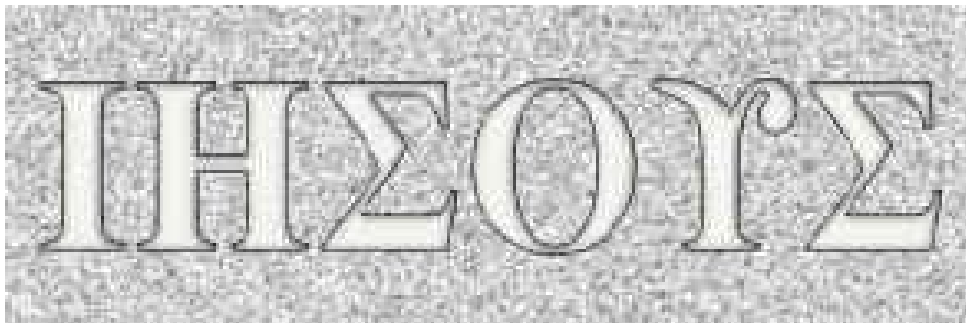
[credit R. Rives Bible linguist & educator for above diagram]

Furthermore let's consider the below comparison of the names Jesus and Zeus in the 1st century Greek of the New Testament. We shall see that these names have nothing to do with each other and look nothing alike at all as written in Greek. Below: Ancient temple stone engraving of "Zeus".



[photo credit R. Rives with the 1st letter Delta as "D" that most recognize]

Above we see "ZEUS" as appears at an ancient Greek temple. It is pronounced DIOS in English with Strong's #2203 having it as "DEECE". Thus "Zeus" wasn't even pronounced "Zeus" back in 1st century pagan Greece. "Zeus" was a much later rendition of this pagan god. Now look at the below photo 1st century Greek spelling of Jesus and it is obvious that it is spelled nothing at all like "Zeus" above. [note: Strong's Concordance lists all Greek Bible text using the modern cursive Greek which didn't appear until between the 7th and 9th century AD. Greek was previously "block" type. Strong's at #2203 lists two definitions for "Zeus" (the Roman Jupiter). The first definition has it as "Zeus" in the cursive from about the 7th century; while the original "obsolete" text is shown as DEECE, close to DIOS of the above temple photo. Thus the "Jesus critics" have it backwards --- Jesus didn't come from Zeus --- Zeus came from Jesus some 7 hundred years after Christ as pagans heard of Jesus' miracles. Before Jesus arrived their male god was named DIOS, changed later to Zeus.]



[photo credit R. Rives]

This NT spelling of Jesus is from the exact same Greek alphabet and same time period as the name above for Zeus (actually DIOS) and they are nothing alike in the least. One does not have to be a Greek language scholar to see that the name Jesus did not originate from the name Dios/Zeus. The mistaken deduction was hastily arrived at.

Our Savior's name in Hebrew is Yeshua or Yahshua depending on a slight variation of dialect; and it is Jesus in English which is the same name as Yahshua in Hebrew. The distinction is not worth debating and becoming divisive over.