The Biblical Names of Christ

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El nombre de Jesucristo, la segunda Persona de la Santísima Trinidad, es reconocido en todo el mundo. Pero ¿es este nombre el único bajo el que Él aparece en la Biblia? Según algunos eruditos sólo hay dos nombres para Él, siendo uno ***Jesús*** *(que aparece alrededor de 500 veces en la Biblia) y el otro* ***Manuel****. Pero dado este aspecto onomástico hay una taxonomía de más o menos 200 títulos tales como:* ***Cristo, Señor, Dios, el Hijo de Dios, el Hombre, la Palabra, el Cordero de Dios, el Siervo, el Alfa y la Omega, el Rabino, el Pastor, la Puerta, la Viña, el Amén,*** *etc.*

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The second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God, is best known under the name of **Jesus Christ**. But besides this name He is also known under an array of names and titles. There are, depending on the criteria employed for defining a *name* or a *title* and according to the scholars investigating the Bible, hundreds of different references pointing to His person[1]. Thus in this brief essay would be impossible to cover all of them but I will mention some of them, starting, perhaps, with the most common ones or the most used ones.

1) The name *Jesus* appears in both gospels of Luke and Matthew. It is a name brought from Heavens by an angel to Mary (Luke 1:31) and Joseph (Mat. 1:21) in order to be bestowed to the child to be born into their household.

All the Indo-European varieties of His name claim their etymological roots either from the Latin form of Jesus, *Iesus* such as **Jesus** in English, German and Portuguese, **Jésus** in French, **Jesús** in Spanish, **Gesù** in Italian, etc. or from the Slavonic form of Jesus, *Иисусе* such as **Иисус** in Russian, **Исус** in Bulgarian and Serbian, **Iсус** in Byelorussian and Ukranian, **Isus** in Romanian, etc.

Today's translations of the Bible render the name of the Son of God, in Modern English, as *Jesus*. This word comes from the Early Middle English *Iesu* that resembled the Old French objective case, which, in turns, came from the Late Latin form of *Iesus*. The form *Iesu* has changed into *Jesus* during the Great Vowel Shift,

[1] According to the 1737 *Cruden's Concordance* (A Complete Concordance to the Holy Scriptures) there are 198 different names and titles of Jesus in the Bible, as listed in the index of the book *A collection of the Names and Titles given to Jesus Christ*. Some scholars argue that He has only two names, *Jesus* and *Emmanuel*, the rest being titles (though the name *Jesus* occurs around 500 times in the Holy Scriptures). Others considers as having more than two names taking into account, for example, even phrases such as *ἐγὼ εἰμι* (I AM).

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during the Late Middle English, when the Frenchman Pierre Ramus made clear the difference between the letters 'J' and 'I'.

The Vetus Latina form of *IESVS* is the transliteration form of the Koine Greek *IHCOYC*[2]. Both were written with majuscules, roughly up to the turn of the eight century when the minuscule letters were introduced and the letters 'U' and 'J' were invented in order to differentiate the vocalic and consonantal values in relation to 'V' and 'I', respectively. Thus in minuscule letters the name appeared, in Latin as *Jesus* and in Koine as *Ἰησοῦς*, both in nominative form.

The Koine form, in turns, represents the Septuagint transliterated version of the Hebrew word יֵשׁוּעַ (Yeshua) which is related to the theophoric name of יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (Yehoshua / Joshua / Jeshua), one of Moses' men who succeeded him as leader of Israel. (The first reference of Yehoshua appears in Exodus 17:9). The first part of this compound name has its root into the *Tetragrammaton* of יהוה (YHWH), which stands for the name of God of Israel.

Initially, the transposition of the meaning of YHWH into Old English was that of "saviour" (*hælend*) but later it would give rise to an array of interpretation such as: *saves, salvation, a saving cry, a cry for help, my help,* etc.

Besides the Mark and Luke entries there are also in the Bible the following ones: **I, Jesus** (Rev 22:16), **a Saviour, Jesus** (Act 13:23), **the Saviour of the World** (1 John 4:14), **Jesus Christ** (Rev 1:5), **the Lord Jesus Christ** (Col 1:2), **our Lord Jesus Christ Himself** (2 Th 2:16), **Jesus the Christ** (Mat 16:20), **Jesus Christ the Righteous** (1 John 2:1), **Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever** (Hbr 13:8), **Lord Jesus** (Act 7:59), etc.

2) The title **Christ** comes from the Greek *Χριστός*[3], meaning *the anointed one*, which in turns is a literal translation of the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ (*Māšîaḥ*) - the English transliteration being *Messiah*.

The Greek word Χριστός was transliterated into Latin script as *Christus* and from here it sprung all the other similarly spellings into the rest of the Western European languages: **Christ** in English, **Christus** in German, **Cristo** in Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, **le Christ** in France, whilst in the Eastern European languages the Greek root gave the forms of **Hristos** in Romanian, **Христос** in Russian, Ukranian and Bulgarian, **Христ** in Serbian, **Хрыстос** in Byelorussian, etc.

Though initially the word *Christ* was a title bestowed upon Jesus later on, resembling the secular environment, it has acquired the connotation of a name. The synergy between the name *Jesus* and the title *Christ* resulted in one of the world's most known phrases or names, that of *Jesus Christ*, as though Christ stood for Jesus' "surname's" as His father, God, would be called Christ too!

Some of the references for Christ in the Bible are though: **Christ Jesus** (1 Ti 1:15), **Christ** (Mat 23:8), **Messiah, which is called Christ** (John 4:25), **Anointed** (Ps 2:2; Act 4:27), **Christ the Lord** (Luke 2:11), **the Lord Christ** (Col 3:24), **the**

[2] In Medieval Greek the letter 'C' stood for 'Σ'.

[3] In classical Greek it also stands literally for *covered in oil* .

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Christ of God (Luke 9:20), **the Lord's Christ** (Luke 2:26), **the Christ, the Son of the Blessed** (Mar 14:61), **the Christ, the Saviour of the World** (John 4:42), etc.

3) In the Jewish tradition the name of God could not be pronounced outside the Temple of Jerusalem[4], due to its holly meaning that it carried, thus a *tetragrammaton* was used in place of it, that of יהוה (YHWH – it was pronounced, according to the Tiberian vocalisation, as *Yehowah*). The tetragrammaton was derived from the Hebrew verb *to be* – היה. It means, according to the Hebrew verbal inflection system, in the *hifil* form *he who causes to exists/gives life*, and in the *qal* form (the basic stem of the verb), *he who is*/exists (for example as in Exodus 3:14 where the translation rendered is *I AM WHO I AM*). Some scholars suggest that a further anterior root of the word could be the verb *to breathe,* thus acquiring the meaning of *to live*.

The masoretes assigned to the tetragrammaton a set of vowels, יְהֹוָה, in order of it to be read as the phonic equivalent of the Hebrew word אֲדֹנָי, (*Adonai* – my Lord). This was due to the restriction in place at that time, within the Jewish society, regarding the utterance of God's name. Thus the Septuagint provided the Greek word *Κύριος* as a translation for the Hebrew Adonai. The following European translations followed the same pattern, resulting thus **Dominus** in Latin, **the Lord** in English, **der Herr** in German, **le Seigneur** in French, etc.

Therefore we have the following entrances into the Bible: **the Lord** (1Cor 12:3), **one Lord** (Eph 4:5), **God had made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ** (Act 2:36), **Lord of Lords** (Rev 17:14), **Lord both of the dead and livings** (Rom 14:9), **Lord of the Sabbath** (Luke 6:5), **Lord of Peace** (2Th 3:16), **Lord of all** (Act 10:36), etc.

4) In the Old Testament the most references regarding His name appear to be in the book of the prophet Isaiah. In 7:14 and 8:8 the prophet talks about **Emmanuel** (עִמָּנוּאֵל – *God is with us*) and in chapter 9 he calls Him **a great light, Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace**. In chapter 53 Isaiah names Him as a **Man of sorrows, a lamb and a Servant**. In 62:11 he uses the phrase *your salvation*, but not as an abstract noun but as a common one.

By talking about *His* reward and *His* work that *salvation* will bring it is obviously clear that the prophet talks about a person and not a concept, thus the prophet points at a *person*, he hints at Jesus.

In Habakkuk, 3:13, He is not named just as *salvation* but also as **Messiah**. In the Book of Psalms He appears described in Ps. 112:4 as a **light in the darkness**. In Jeremiah 23:15 He is a **righteous Branch**.

5) The Apostle John called Him in his gospel, in the opening verse, **the Word**. The original word employed in Koine was *λόγος*. It can be translated as *word* but beside this translation it renders other meanings too, due to its poly-semantic nature: *thought, speech, account, meaning, reason, proportion, principle, standard, or logic*, among other things. There is not a consensus among scholars and

[4] Thus not to break the commandment that forbade to take God's name in vain.

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translators as how should best be translated John 1:1 (the different numbers of interpretation in various Bibles proves this point).

Also John describes Him further in 1:1 as **the Word was with God** and as **the Word was God**. He appears as *the Word* also in other places in John, **the Word was made flesh** (1:14) and in the Book of Revelation, **the Word of God** (19:13). Furthermore He is the Word in the first book of John, **the Word of Life** (1John 1:1). Somehow along the same lines of λόγος He is **the Image of God** (2Cor 4:4), **the Image of the Invisible God** (Col 1:15), **the Express Image of His Person** (Hbr 1:3), **the Brightness of his Glory** (Hbr 1:3).

6) From a *hypostatical* point of view Jesus, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, has the name of *Son* (the divine one) often bestowed upon Him. When Peter had been asked by Him who he thought He was his reply came straight forward: *You are the Christ,* **the Son of the living God** (Matthew 16:16).

[the Son (1 Jo 4:14), **the Son of God** (John 1:34), **His only begotten Son** (John 3:16), **One Son** (Mark 12:6), **My Son** (Psa 2:7) **the Son of the Highest** (Luke 1:32), **the Son of the Blessed** (Mark 14:61), etc.**]**

The appellative *Son* is bestowed upon Him by an array of persons: *The Father* – **My beloved Son** (Mat 17:5), *Jesus Himself* – **I am the Son of God** (John 10:36), *The Holy Spirit* – **the Son of God** (Mark 1:1), *the archangel Gabriel* – **the Son of God** (Luke 1:35; 2:11), *John the Baptist* – **this is the Son of God** (John 1:34), *the apostle John* – **the Christ, the Son of God** (John 20:31), *the apostle Paul* – **He is the Son of God** (Act 9:20), *the disciples* – **You are the Son of God** (Mat 14:33), *Nathaniel* – **Rabbi, you are the Son of God** (John 1:49), *Martha* – **the Christ, the Son of God** (John 11:27), *the eunuch* – **Jesus Christ is the Son of God** (Act 8:37), *the centurion* – **truly this was the Son of God** (Mark 15:39), *the unclean spirits* – **You are the Son of God** (Mark 3:11), *the legion* – **You Son of the Most High God** (Mark 5:7), etc.

7) Not only His divine lineage is highlighted but also the human one, too, when He is referred to, for example, as **the Babe** (Luke 2:12), **the Child** (Isa 7:16), **the Son of man** (Mar 10:33), or **the Seed of the Woman** (Gen 3:15).

[the young Child (Mat 2:20), **a Child born** (Isa 9:6), **the Child Jesus** (Luke 2:43), **the first-born Son** (Luke 2:7), **the Son of Abraham** (Mat 1:1), **the Son of David** (Mat 1:1), **the Son of Mary** (Mar 6:3), **the Son of Joseph** (John 1:45), **the Carpenter's Son** (Mat 13:55), **the Seed of Abraham** (Gal 3:16), **of the Seed of David** (Rom 1:3), etc.**]**

8) From the point of view of His divine essence, His *ousia*, He is identified as **God** (Isa 40:3; Mat 1:23, John 1:1).

[the Mighty God (Isa 9:6), **the everlasting God** (Isa 40:28), **the true God** (1Jo 5:20), **the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob** (Exd 3:2), **my Lord and my God** (John 20:28), **God my Saviour** (Luke 1:47), **God blessed forever** (Rom 9:5), **the God of the whole earth** (Isa 54:5), **God manifested in the flesh** (1Ti 3:16), **our God and Saviour** (2Pe 1:1), **the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ** (Tts 2:13), **Emanuel, God with us** (Mat 1:23), etc.**]**

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9) In addition to His divine essence it is also acknowledged in the Bible His human essence, when He is referred to as **the Man** (John 19:5).

[the **Man Christ Jesus** (1 Ti 2:5), **a Man approved of God** (Act 2:22), **the second Man, the Lord from Heaven** (1 Cr 15:47)**]**

10) According to some divine attributes He is **the Almighty, which is, and which was, and which is to come** (Rev 1:8), **the Beginning and the Ending** (Rev 1:8), **the Alpha and the Omega** (Rev 1:8), **the First and the Last** (Rev 1:17), **that Eternal Life which was with the Father** (Rev 1:18), **Wisdom** (Pro 8:12), **the Wisdom of God** (1Cor 1:24), **the Power of God** (1Cor 1:24), etc.

11) Regarding some of His qualities Jesus appears as **My Messenger** (Isa 42:19), **the Messenger of the Covenant** (Mal 3:1), **the Angel of Jehovah** (Gen 22:15), **the Angel of God** (Gen 31:11; Exd 14:19), **the Angel of His presence** (Isa 63:9), **the Sent of the Father** (John 10:36), **the Apostle** (Hbr 3:1), **a Prophet** (Act 3:22), **a great Prophet** (Luke 7:14), **a prophet mighty in deed and word** (Luke 24:19), **Rabbi** (Mat 23:8), etc.

12) It is obvious that He did not come into this world *to be served* but *to serve* thus He is **a Servant** (Phl 2:7).

[the Servant of the Father (Mat 12:18), **my Servant, O Israel** (Isa 49:3), **my Servant, the Branch** (Zec 3:8) **my righteous Servant** (Isa 53:11) **a Servant of Rulers** (Isa 49:7), etc.**]**

13) His origin or mundane profession is underlined in the following verse: **the Prophet of Nazareth** (Mat 21:11).

[a Nazarene, or Nazarite (Mat 2:23), **the Carpenter** (Mar 6:3), **the Carpenter's Son** (Mat 13:55).**]**

14) As He is divine and humane He comes as submissive as *a lamb*, fulfilling His Father's will and teaching us the virtue of humbleness: **the Lamb of God** (John 1:29).

[a Lamb without blemish and without spot (1Pe 1:19), **the Lamb that was slain** (Rev 5:12), **the Lamb in the midst of the throne** (Rev 7:17), etc.**]**

15) But also He comes as *a Shepherd* in order to guide and gather His flock into the Father's pen: **One Shepherd** (John 10:16).

[Jehovah's Shepherd (Zec 13:7), **the Shepherd of the sheep** (Hbr 13:20), **the Door of the Sheep** (John 10:7), **the Shepherd of Israel** (Eze 34:23), **the Shepherd and Bishop of Souls** (1Pe 2:25), **the Good Shepherd** (John 10:11), **the Great Shepherd** (Hbr 13:20), **the Chief Shepherd** (1Pe 5:4), etc.**]**

16) He is not just *a servant* or *a teacher* He is also **the Offerer** (Hbr 7:27) and **the Offering** (Eph 5:2). **The Sacrifice** (Eph 5:2), **a Ransom** (Mar 10:49), **the Priest** (Hbr 5:6), **the High Priest** (Hbr 3:1), **the Mediator** (1 Ti 2:5), **the Interpreter** (Job 33:23), **the Intercessor** (Hbr 7:25), **the Advocate** (1John 2:1), **the Bridegroom** (John 3:29), etc.

17) He is the uncontested head of the Church, He is **the Head** (Eph 4:15).

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[the Head of the Body, the Church (Col 1:18), **the Head over all things to the Church** (Eph 1:22), **the Head of every Man** (1 Cor 11:3), **the Head of all Princilality and Power** (Col 2:10), etc.**]**

18) He is **the Light** (John 12:35).

[the True Light (John 1:9), **a Great Light** (Isa 9:2), **the Light of the world** (John 8:12), **the Light of Men** (John 1:4), **a Light to lighten the Gentiles** (Luke 2:32), **a Star** (Num 24:17), **the Morning Star** (Rev 2:28), **the Sun of Righteousness** (Mal 4:2), etc.**]**

19) His figure is associated, compared with things resembling life, with things that belonging into the vegetal kingdom as, for example, **the Root of David** (Rev 5:5), **the Branch of the Lord** (Isa. 4:2), **the Branch of Righteousness** (Jer 33:15), **the Vine** (John 15:5), **the True Vine** (John 15:1), **the Tree of Life** (Rev 2:7), **the Corn of Wheat** (John 12:24), **the Bread of God** (John 6:33), **the True Bread from Heaven** (John 6:32), **the Bread of Life** (John 6:35), **the Living Bread** (John 6:51), **the Hidden Manna** (Rev 2:17), **a Plant of Renown** (Eze 34:29), **the Rose of Sharon** (Sgs 2:1), **the Lily of the Valley** (Sgs 2:1), **a Bundle of Myrrh** (Sgs 1:13), **a Cluster of Camphire** (Sgs 1:14), etc.

20) He is **the Strength of the children of Israel** (Joe 3:12-16), **a Strength to the Poor** (Isa 25:4), **a Strength to the needy in distress** (Isa 25:4), **a Refuge from the Storm** (Isa 25:4), **a Covert from the Tempest** (Isa 32:2), **the Hope of His people** (Joe 3:12-16), **a Horn of Salvation** (Luke 1:69), etc.

21) In semblance to the mineral kingdom He is **the Rock (Mat 16:18),**

[the Stone (Isa 28:16), **a Living Stone** (1Pe 2:4), **the Rejected Stone** (Mark 12:10), **the Cornerstone** (Mark 12:10), **a Chief Corner-Stone** (1Pe 2:6), **a Stone cut out without hands** (Dan 2:34-35), **that spiritual Rock** (1Cor 10:4)**]**.

Or to the trade that uses the rock as a building material He is **the Buider** (Mat 16:18), **the Foundation** (1Cor 3:11), or **the Temple** (Rev 21:22), **a Sanctuary** (Isa 8:14), **the Altar** (Hbr 13:10), etc.

22) He is also **the Prince of Life** (Act 3:15)

[the Messiah the Prince (Dan 9:25), **the Prince of Peace** (Isa 9:6), **the Prince of Princes** (Dan 8:25), **the Prince of the Kings of the earth** (Rev 1:5)**].**

Or **the King** (Zec 14:16)

[the Kings of Kings (Rev 19:16), **the King of** Israel (John 1:49), **King of the daughter of Zion** (John 12:15), **the King of the Jews** (Mat 2:2; 15:2; John 19:19), **the King of Saints** (Rev 15:3), **the King of Peace** (Hbr 7:2), **the King of Glory** (Psa 24:10), etc.**]**

23) His last (but not least) name and office is that of **the Judge** (Act 17:31), **the Righteous Judge** (2Ti 4:8).

24) In addition to all of these names and titles He is also **Crowned with a Crown of Thorns** (John 19:2), **Crowned with Glory and Honour** (Hbr 2:9), **Crowned with many Crowns** (Rev 19:12), **the Gift of God** (John 4:10), **His Unspeakable Gift** (2Cor 9:15), **Holy, Holy, Holy** (Isa 6:13; John 12:41), **the Just One** (Act 7:52), **the Last Adam** (1Cor 15:45), **the Author and Finisher of Faith**

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(Hbr 12:2), **the Lion of the Tribe of Judah** (Rev 5:5), **the Shield** (Psa 84:9), **a Sceptre** (out of Israel) (Num 24:17), **the Resurrection** (John 11:25), **The Amen** (Rev 3:14)**.**

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