The expression *Jesus Christ*

Through the ages the churches have deliberately fostered the idea that the expression *Jesus Christ* is the name of the central figure in the New Testament, and it is exclusive to him.

The expression *Jesus Christ* is not a name at all, but an amalgam of a name *(Jesus)* and a title *(christ).* Neither the name nor the title is exclusive to *Jesus of Nazareth*, far from it.

Even in today's literate world, there is widespread ignorance of the fact that in the Bible there are others with the same name as *Jesus* and other *christs*. This ignorance has been nurtured and sustained by methodically inconsistent translations of these two words in the Bible.

When it is understood that information about something so basic and simple as the term *Jesus Christ* has been distorted, then it may come as no surprise to learn that through the ages other information about Jesus has been distorted beyond recognition, such as the accounts of his birth.

Seminarians and students of Bible Studies, but not the ordinary churchgoer, are familiar with the following information about the expression *Jesus Christ*.

The name *Jesus*

Jesus is the Latinised Greek form of the Hebrew name *Yehoshua* and its later variant *Yeshua*. Where the two Hebrew forms of the name appear in the Old Testament they are shown in our English Bibles as *Joshua* and *Jeshua* respectively. *Jesus*, *Joshua* and *Jeshua* are different forms of the same name with the same meaning.

Few churchgoers know that there are multiple persons in the Old Testament with the same name as Jesus, as attested to in the following references:

Catholic Encyclopedia [1]

"The word **Jesus is the Latin form** of the Greek *Iesous*, which in turn is the transliteration of the Hebrew *Jeshua*, or Joshua, or again *Jehoshua*, meaning "Jehovah is salvation". Though the name in one form or another occurs frequently in the Old Testament**…**"

The New Bible Dictionary [2]

"**JESHUA**. This is a late form of the name Joshua (the same individual is called Jeshua in Nehemiah and Ezra, and Joshua in Haggai and Zechariah)."

"It is clear that the name was a common one at the time of the return from the Exile."

Catholic Encyclopedia [3]

"**Josue (Joshua)** The name of eight persons in the Old Testament, and of one of the Sacred Books."

Abingdon Bible Handbook [4]

"The name Joshua (Hebrew, *Yehoshua* or *Yeshua*) means "Yahweh is salvation." The Greek form of the name is *Iesous* (English, Jesus). There are two great Joshuas in Judeo-Christian literature, the second being **Joshua of Nazareth**."

In addition, ordinary churchgoers have never been enlightened that there are four persons named Jesus mentioned in the New Testament. They are:

- Jesus of Nazareth, the central figure of the New Testament. *(Luke 3:23, etc)*

- Jesus, an ancestor of Jesus of Nazareth. *(Luke 3:29)*

- Jesus, the Old Testament figure whose name is usually translated as "Joshua". *(Acts 7:45, Hebrews 4:8)*

- Jesus, an otherwise anonymous person mentioned in one of Paul's letters. *(Colossians 4:11)*

In many Bibles, translators have deliberately concealed this fact of the New Testament by giving **different translations of the Greek word for "Jesus"** according to whether it refers to Jesus of Nazareth or another Jesus. This is particularly so in *Luke 3:29, Acts 7:45, and Hebrews 4:8*.

The title *christ*

It would never occur to ordinary churchgoers that they have been conditioned to react to a word in a foreign language of which they do not know the meaning. But this is what has happened with the word *christ*.

The word *christ* is simply the Latinising of a Greek word that means *anointed*. The equivalent term *messiah* is from a Hebrew word that means *anointed*.

Again, the translators have manipulated words to make it appear that in the Bible the words *christ* and *messiah* are exclusive to *Jesus of Nazareth*.

Jesus is not the only *christ* or *messiah* in the Bible. These words are left untranslated only where they refer to Jesus. For example, Cyrus the Mede is described as the Lord's "anointed". If the word had been left untranslated (as in the case of Jesus) then our Bibles would read that Cyrus was the Lord's "messiah". *(Isaiah 45:1)*

On the other hand, if the translators had been consistent and translated "christ" into English wherever it occurs, then our Bibles would read "**anointed Jesus**" and "**the anointed**" rather than "Jesus Christ" and "the Christ". *(Mark 8:29, 12:35, John 1:41, 17:3)*

The misrepresentation, deliberately fostered, that the word *christ* refers only to Jesus, deceives and misleads the public and misrepresents Jesus of Nazareth. His singularity depends on his commitment to fundamental and timeless values, not upon a word which has no singular reference to him, as a word.

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2006

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[1] Catholic Encyclopedia: Article "Origin of the Name of Jesus Christ"

[2] The New Bible Dictionary: Organizing Editor J. D. Douglas, 1962: Article "Jeshua"

[3] Catholic Encyclopedia: Article "Josue (Joshua)"

[4] Abingdon Bible Handbook, Edward P. Blair, 1975: Chapter 16 "Joshua"