



"The wise speak only of what they know."
—J.R.R. Tolkien

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What Is the Prophesied 'Pure Language'? (Part Three)

Beginning with the Feast of Pentecost in AD 31, [God](#) opened salvation to those of *any* human language He chose to call. The miracle of languages seen in the apostles demonstrates that God can overcome any language barrier to enable His chosen people to call on His name in any language of men, as long as there is a new heart—a new spirit. As we saw in Part Two, what His people need are spiritual lips, speaking from a new heart, not carnal lips speaking Hebrew.

Notice how the apostle Paul begins his first epistle to the Corinthians:

To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all who in every place call on the name of [Jesus Christ](#) our Lord, both theirs and ours. ([I Corinthians 1:2](#))

Paul wrote his letter in Greek to a majority Greek audience—certainly, to Greek-speakers. If we were to look at the epistle's manuscripts, we would see that they are entirely in Greek; they are not interspersed with Hebrew names for Deity.

The apostle refers to those who are sanctified in *Christos Iesous*, as "Christ Jesus" is transliterated from the Greek. Then he mentions all who call on the name of *Iesous Christos*. When the angel appeared to Mary, he told her that she should call her son *Iesous* ([Matthew 1:21](#); [Luke 1:31](#)). Obviously, this is not a Hebrew (or Aramaic) word, and it differs from the names of God that the heroes of [faith](#) would have known.

For instance, unless Abraham had an unrecorded vision of the future, he never heard the word *Iesous*. Instead, he knew *Yahweh El Elyown*, the Lord God Most High. On the other hand, Philip never had a chance to instruct the Ethiopian eunuch how to pronounce YHWH:

And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that *Iesous Christos* is the Son of *Theos*." ([Acts 8:36-37](#); emphasis and the insertion of transliterations of God's names in Greek are ours throughout)

The eunuch's faith, given by God, provided him with the heart—and thus lips—to call on the name of the Lord, which He did in Greek, not Hebrew.

Romans 10 appears amid a long teaching about Israel's place in God's plan. Notice what Paul focuses on in this letter, also written in Greek:

If you confess with your mouth the Lord *Iesous* and believe in your heart that *Theos* has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the *heart* one believes unto righteousness, and with the *mouth* confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For *there is no distinction between Jew and Greek*, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." ([Romans 10:9-13](#))

There is not one word in the whole Book about Jews and Greeks having to learn each other's languages in order to [worship God](#)! There *is* tremendous

value in understanding the names and titles of God, as they describe His character, but what He requires is a different heart that can appreciate, value, and *desire* that character.

This passage also shows that [Zephaniah 3:9](#) was *already* being fulfilled, in part, because these Corinthians were calling on the name of the Lord. With [repentance](#), [baptism](#), and the receipt of the Holy Spirit, a cleansing takes place and a new heart is given—a heart that will teach the lips to speak in a way that reflects a new spiritual reality. The speech of one who is being converted becomes pure, not merely by avoiding foul language, but also by speaking truth. A Christian's speech increases in purity as it reflects more of the culture of the [Kingdom of God](#) and less of the culture of carnal mankind that is passing away.

"Calling on the name of the Lord" is simply another way of describing true worship. Abraham and [Isaac](#) are shown calling on the name of the Lord in the context of building altars ([Genesis 12:8](#); [13:4](#); [26:25](#)). Combining this with the instructions given later for sacrifices—principles the patriarchs undoubtedly knew well—we can understand that calling on God's name involves recognizing the need for a payment for [sin](#), at the very least. It also encompasses committing oneself to complete devotion to God and to fellow man and celebrating [peace](#) with God with thanksgiving.

Elijah called on the name of the Lord in front of an altar, with a brief prayer in which he acknowledged God's sovereignty and asked that the Israelites be turned back to God ([I Kings 18:24-37](#)). The psalms show that calling on the name of the Lord involves remembering and proclaiming His mighty works ([Psalm 80:18](#); [99:6](#); [105:1](#); [116:4-17](#)). In short, calling on the name of the Lord is honoring and beseeching God because of His fundamental nature and character. The actual calling or speaking may be a singular event, but a great deal of spiritual preparation *always* takes place before it can be done.

Pure lips, and thus a [pure heart](#), are required for this because only when the heart is cleansed can it begin to recognize the truth of God and thus speak what is true. A cleansed heart is turned toward God. With that change in focus and direction, a person's whole life begins to change, and what comes out of his mouth will show that, regardless of his native tongue.

Beyond what is said, a pure heart will be reflected in the life that is lived, for a change of heart affects far more than just a person's words. So, Peter writes that, after conversion, other people will think it strange that we do not continue in sin with them, and they will speak evil of us ([I Peter 4:4](#)). What now motivates us is different from what motivates them, even though we are still using the same human tongue. Our lives are a testimony either of God or of [the world](#), no matter what we profess verbally or what language we use.

The Day is approaching when Israel, Judah, and other peoples will be brought through a purifying fire. In the aftermath, the cleansed and humbled peoples will speak a pure language, indicating that they have different hearts. But spiritual Israel has already undergone a cleansing and received access to a pure heart. Yet, despite already having what it takes to call on the name of the Lord, we still have plenty of work to do in purifying our hearts so our King will accept our culture—our way of life—when He returns.

- David C. Grabbe

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Faith, Hope, and the Worship of God \(Part Three\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

The rules for making the calendar, a very complex activity, are not contained in the Bible. To put ones efforts into such a project (especially with limited or elementary knowledge of astronomy or mathematics) constitutes foolish, misguided zeal. Using errant human assumption, some in the greater church of God have concocted no less than nine conflicting calendars. The preservation of the oracles (including the keeping of the calendar) has not been entrusted to the church but to the tribe of Judah (Romans 3:2). Some of the anti-Jewish bias in the would-be calendar makers smacks of anti-Semitism. We need to have faith in God's ability to preserve a working calendar, believing Him unconditionally as Abraham did.

From the Archives: Featured Article

The Plain Truth About the "Sacred Name"

by Herbert W. Armstrong

Advocates of this belief claim is that the names of the Creator-Father, and of His Son the Savior, are "sacred" only in the Hebrew language. The truth is, the names of God or of Christ are as sacred in one language as another, and there is no scripture to the contrary!

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