Debunking the Myths of Sacred Namers

יְהֹוָה

Part III

By

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Myth # 5
Hebrew is a Sacred Language

Most sacred namers believe that Hebrew is the original language that God gave to man. They teach that the Hebrew of the patriarchs was pure and unadulterated--meaning that it included no words from other languages--and that the Old Testament was originally written in this "sacred" language. They claim that the hundreds of words from other languages that are found in the Hebrew text are evidence of the corruption of the original language. Because they view Hebrew as a divine language and all other languages as impure and defiled, they maintain that only Hebrew names should be used to refer to God.

The writings of C. J. Koster are representative of sacred namers. Koster writes for the Institute for Scripture Research, located in the Republic of South Africa. In his recent publication *Come Out of Her My People*, Koster calls upon Christians to come out of the pagan religion of the Great Whore, the Roman Catholic Church. He pleads for a return to the use of Hebrew names of God, which he believes are essential to the true worship of God. In presenting his views, he describes the Hebrew language as the language of God, delivered from heaven to His true people. The great irony is that Koster did not write his book in Hebrew but in the English language, which in his view is a perverted language. If he had used Hebrew, most readers would not understand a single word he had written.

In his book, Koster asserts that Hebrew was the language of God Himself. He writes, "**Hebrew was the only heavenly language**, spoken from Sinai, and all of Israel heard and understood it. Again, in the New Testament we read how Yahushua spoke to the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus in the Hebrew language, Acts 26:14. On the other hand, Greek, like **all the languages of the nations**, was a **pagan** language, its vocabulary being in existence long before the Glad Tidings reached them. Like **all the languages of the pagan nations**, its vocabulary consisted of many names of their deities. The reason? They were not guided by the Law of Yahuweh [notice this author spells Yahweh with the addition of a "u"] that prohibited His people, 'Make no mention of the names of other mighty ones, nor let it be heard from your mouth' (Exod. 23:13)" (*Come Out of Her My People*, pp. 77-78, emphasis added).

Because Hebrew was the language that God used at Sinai, Koster concludes that it is the language spoken in heaven. This line of reasoning has no basis in Scripture. Notice the apostle Paul's words to the Corinthians: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as*

sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (I Cor. 13:1). In this verse, Paul distinguishes between "tongues of men" and those of angels, showing that the languages of men are not spoken in the heavenlies but only on earth. Since Hebrew is one of the "tongues of men," it is not the language of God or His angels. Furthermore, Paul reveals that humans are forbidden to speak the language of heaven. In describing his being "caught up to the third heaven," where God Himself dwells, Paul states that he "heard **unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter**" (II Cor. 12:4). Paul's record of his supernatural experience shows the fallacy in claiming that any language spoken by men is a "heavenly language."

Although God and His angels speak a heavenly language, God uses the languages of men to communicate with those who dwell on earth. God used Hebrew to deliver His laws at Sinai because that was the language of the children of Israel. But Hebrew was not the only language of men that God used. When God delivers a message, He uses a language that will be understood by those to whom His message is directed. The prophet Daniel testifies that the hand of the Most High God engraved "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN" in stone at the great banquet of King Belshazzar of Babylon (Dan. 5:17-28). These words are not Hebrew but Chaldee, which was the language of the Babylonians. Since the Scriptures record that God used Chaldee as well as Hebrew, it is groundless to view God's use of a language as evidence that it is a "heavenly language."

Koster errs greatly in presenting Acts 26:14 as evidence that the Hebrew language is sacred. When he states that God spoke to the apostle Paul in Hebrew on the road to Damascus, he overlooks the fact that at that time Paul's name was Saul, which is a transliteration of the Hebrew name Shaul. God later changed Saul's name to the Greek equivalent Paul (Acts 13:9,13). God could have changed Saul's name to Shaul, but God did not choose to use this Hebrew name. Instead, He called His chosen apostle by the Greek name Paul. Since God used a Greek name for His apostle, it is evident that the Greek language was not pagan in God's eyes.

Other records in the book of Acts contradict Koster's claim that Hebrew is a "heavenly language" and the languages of other nations are pagan. In the second chapter of Acts we read that on the day of Pentecost, each one who had journeyed to Jerusalem from "every nation under heaven" heard the apostles speak the gospel "in his own language" (Acts 2:4-6). It was God Who inspired the individuals who were listening to the apostles to hear these words each "in his own language." This evidence in the New Testament does not support Koster's claim that Hebrew is sacred and superior to all other languages. To the contrary, Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians states that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is "the gift of

tongues"--not the gift of "**the** tongue" (I Cor. 12:10).

Koster's belief that Hebrew is a sacred tongue has distorted his view of the Scriptures. He completely misinterprets the words of God in Exodus 23:13 and concludes that the languages of the nations are defiled because they contain the names of false gods. He states that "…all the languages of the pagan nations…consisted of many names of their deities. The reason? They were not guided by the Law of Yahuweh [Yahweh] that prohibited His people, 'Make no mention of the names of other mighty ones, nor let it be heard from your mouth' (Exod. 23:13)" (*Come Out of Her My People*, pp. 77-78).

Koster interprets Exodus 23:13 as a prohibition against even pronouncing the name of a false god. Yet in the book of Hosea, God Himself refers to pagan deities by name. After pronouncing a name that was used for false deities, God inspired the prophet Hosea to record His message in the Hebrew language. According to Koster's reasoning, this act was a defilement of the "sacred" language. Notice what God spoke through Hosea: "And I will visit upon her [Israel] the days of **Baalim**, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgat Me, saith the LORD" (Hos. 2:13).

God's condemnation of Israel in the following verses shows the true meaning of Exodus 23:13. Notice: "And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. For **I will take away the names of Baalim** [the Baals] **out of her mouth**, and they shall no more be remembered by their name" (Hos. 2:16-17).   Whereas God pronounced the name Baalim in condemnation, the people of Israel were pronouncing the names of Baalim in reverent worship of these false deities. It is this *idolatrous use* of the names that God prohibits in Exodus 23:13.

In condemning this idolatrous worship, the prophets of God were often inspired to refer to false deities by name. The Hebrew text of the Old Testament contains numerous references to the worship of Baal and other false gods and goddesses. The name Baalim, which is used twice in the book of Hosea, is plural and refers to the many pagan deities who were worshiped as Baal--including Baal-berith, Baal-Hamon, Baal-zephon, Baal-peor, Baal-zebub and other Baals that are named in the Old Testament. The name of the goddess Ashteroth is often found in conjunction with the name Baal. In addition, the text records the names of Dagon, Molech, Chemosh, Milcom and other pagan deities. Koster views these references as corruptions of the Hebrew and thus rejects the authority of the text that was canonized by Ezra, preserved by the Levitical Masoretes, and passed down to us through God's guidance and divine intervention.

Koster is not alone in his error. Many sacred namers believe that the Hebrew text was corrupted, and point to the words of the prophet Jeremiah as proof: "How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us? Lo, certainly **the false pen of the scribes worketh for falsehood** [marginal rendering]. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken; lo, **they have rejected the word of the LORD**: and what wisdom is in them?" (Jer. 8:8-9.)

Sacred namers interpret these verses as evidence that the scribes were corrupting the Hebrew text by introducing the names of pagan gods and other words derived from the languages of the heathen. The flaws in this interpretation are easily exposed when we examine the Scriptural and historical facts. When Jeremiah wrote this prophecy, the Hebrew text was not yet complete. Some of the books of the Old Testament did not yet exist and therefore could not have been corrupted by false scribes. Among these books are I and II Chronicles, which were written by Ezra approximately one hundred years after the time of Jeremiah. Ezra, the chief priest of his day, was descended from a long line of faithful priests (Ezra 7:1-5, Num. 25:10-13). As a priest, he had been instructed in the laws of God from the age of three (II Chron. 31:16). He was thoroughly trained in the Scriptures and was "a ready [skillful] scribe in the law of Moses" (Ezra 7:6). No one would accuse Ezra of being a false scribe, yet when we read the words that he wrote in the books of the Chronicles, we find more than a dozen references to pagan deities. Nearly all of these references identify the false deities by name (I Chron. 6:71, II Chron. 17:3, 6; 24:7, 18; 28:2; 33:3, 19; 34:3-4). Moreover, in the book of Jeremiah, which condemns the work of the false scribes, the name Baalim is used twice (Jer. 2:23, 9:14) and the name Baal is used ten times (Jer. 2:8; 7:9; 11:13, 17; 12:16; 19:5; 23:13; 32:29). Jeremiah would not have recorded these names if such usage was prohibited by God. Furthermore, the Scriptures testify that it was **God Himself Who spoke the names of these false deities and commanded Jeremiah to write them in a book** (Jer. 30:1-2). The fact that God commanded Jeremiah to record the names of these false gods shows the error in claiming that references to false deities are a corruption of the text.

Hebrew Words Derived from Other Languages

If the names of pagan deities were the only words in the text that were borrowed from other languages, Koster's assertion that the Hebrew text was corrupted might appear to be plausible. To the contrary, most words in the text that were borrowed or derived from other languages are simple, everyday terms that have nothing to do with idolatry or paganism. The text of the Old Testament contains many common terms that originated in the languages of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Chaldeans, Arameans, Persians and Greeks. This fact can easily be verified by

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examining a Hebrew lexicon. The following examples, which are found in the book of Genesis, have been selected from the *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* by Brown, Driver and Briggs. (Italicized words following the Hebrew characters are English transliterations of the Hebrew. The superscripted number after each transliteration is a universal reference number used in concordances and lexicons.)

Hebrew words that were borrowed or derived from other cultures are found very early in the text. The first chapter in the book of Genesis uses a common term that is not of Hebrew origin: "And God said, 'Let there be **light**': and there was **light**" (Gen. 1:3). The word "light" in this verse is translated from the Hebrew noun אוֹר *ohr* [216], which is derived from the ancient Assyrian word *urru.* The Hebrew language was influenced very early by the Assyrians, who were descendants of Asshur, a son of Shem. The Assyrians were cousins of the Hebrews, who were descendants of Shem's great-grandson Eber. Although their languages differed after the Tower of Babel, the Assyrians and the Hebrews remained in close communication because Asshur was allied with his father Shem in combating the tyranny of Nimrod and Semiramis.

The book of Genesis also uses a word for "light" that is derived from the Arabic language. Genesis 44:3 states, "As soon as the morning was **light**, the men were sent away, they and their asses." The word "light" in this verse is translated from the Hebrew verb אוֹר *ohr* [215] (spelled the same as the noun). This Hebrew verb, which means to be or become light, is derived from an ancient Arabic verb, which was itself derived from the Assyrian noun *urru.*

The influence of the Arabic language on ancient Hebrew is not surprising. The Hebrews lived in close proximity with the Arabs, who were descendants of Abraham through Ishmael. The account of Joseph being sold to Ishmaelite merchants by his brothers shows that the children of Israel had no difficulty communicating with the Ishmaelites: "And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry *it* down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, 'What profit *is it* if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for *he* is our brother *and* our flesh.' And his brethren…sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty *pieces* of silver…" (Gen. 37:25-27). This Scriptural record makes it clear that there was no language barrier between the Hebrews and their Arabic cousins.

The book of Genesis also uses words from languages of people who were not related to the Hebrews. The first example is found in Genesis 1:5, which states,

"And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the **first** day."   The word "first" is translated from the Hebrew אֶחָד *ehad* [259], which literally means "one." This Hebrew adjective is derived from the ancient Phoenician language. Another word in the book of Genesis that is derived from ancient Phoenician is אָדָם *adam* [120], which is translated "man" (Gen. 1:27 and 2:5).

   Genesis 10 contains yet more Phoenician words. The name **Kittim** כִּתִּים [3794] in Verse 4 is derived from the Phoenician word *Kheta*. The word Chittim is also found in the book of Daniel (Dan. 11:30). The name **Mizraim** (Hebrew מִצְרַיִם *Mitz-rah'-yim* [4714] in Verse 6 of Genesis 10 is another word of Phoenician origin.

   Words that come from ancient Nabataean, Old Persian and ancient Egyptian are also found in Genesis 10. The name Noah (Hebrew נֹחַ *Noh'agh* [5146]) in the first verse of the chapter comes from ancient Nabataean. The name **Madai** (Hebrew מָדַי *Mah-dah'y* [4074]) in the second verse comes from Old Persian. The name **Cush** (Hebrew כּוּשׁ *Koosh* [3568]) in the sixth verse is derived from the ancient Egyptian word *Kos*.

   In the final verses of Genesis 10, we find one more name that was derived from another language. Verse 28 lists the name **Abimael** among the sons of Joktan. Abimael is a transliteration of the Hebrew word אֲבִימָאֵל *Abee-mãh-eehl'* [39], which comes from Southern Arabic.

The Tower of Babel

   Sacred namers believe and teach that the original language of humanity was Hebrew and that after Babel this "heavenly language" was given to the Hebrew peoples. Let us examine the account of God's intervention at Babel to see if the Scriptures support this teaching:

   "And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, 'Behold, the people *is* one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let Us go down, and there **confound their language**, that they may not understand one another's speech.' So the LORD scattered *them* abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there **confound the language of all the earth**: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (Gen. 11:5-9).

The word "confound" in this account is translated from the Hebrew בָּלַל *bãh-lal'* [1101]. The Hebrew word *bãh-lal'* expresses a mixing of elements to produce something that is completely new. The use of this word in the Hebrew text shows that God scrambled the language that He had originally given to man, taking its elements and restructuring them in a variety of ways to produce a totally new "batch" of languages.

The Scriptural account clearly states that God "confounded," or confused, the language of "**all the earth**." That includes every race and every people, including the descendants of the patriarch Eber, who were called Hebrews. The very reason that God confused the language was to prevent the people from carrying out their plans. Allowing one group to retain the original language would have enabled that group to continue the old ways and carry on with the plans of pre-Babel society.

At the time of the confusion of the languages, the Hebrews had not yet become a people. Eber's only descendants were his two sons, neither of whom had reached manhood. In Genesis 10:25 we read, "And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided; and his brother's name was Joktan." Peleg was a mere lad, only eleven or twelve years of age, and his brother Joktan was even younger. In the generations that followed, Peleg's descendants became the Israelites, and Joktan's became the Chaldeans.

Genesis 11 lists Eber's descendants through Peleg down to Terah and his three sons (v. 26). His son Abram, whom God later named Abraham, is the first in Scripture to be called a Hebrew (Gen. 14:13). Abraham spoke the Hebrew language, which he had inherited from his ancestor Eber, who had received it at the Tower of Babel. It is evident that Eber passed on this language to both of his sons, and that Peleg and Joktan spoke the same language after the Tower of Babel. This fact is attested by the striking similarity of Hebrew, the language of Peleg's descendants, and Chaldee, the language of Joktan's descendants. Sacred namers ignore the close kinship of the two languages when they claim that Chaldee is pagan but Hebrew is divine.

Borrowed Words in the Story of Abraham

Genesis 14 relates the story of Abraham and his rescue of Lot, who was taken captive during the battle of the kings. This Scriptural account uses a number of words that were derived from other languages. The account begins by listing the kings who were allied against the cities of the plains: "And it came to pass in the days of **Amraphel** king of Shinar, **Arioch** king of Ellasar, **Chedorlaomer** king of

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Elam, and **Tidal** king of nations…" (verse 1).

The Hebrew name **Amraphel** אַמְרָפֶל *Am-raah-phel'* [569] is derived from the ancient Babylonian language. The Hebrew word **Arioch** אַרְיוֹךְ *Ar-yohch* [746] is derived from the ancient Babylonian word *Iri-Aku*. Ancient tablets from that period reveal that the mother of *Iri-Aku*, or Arioch, was the sister of Chedorlaomer king of Elam. The Elamites were the ancestors of the Persians. This same name appears in the book of Daniel, which was written in the days of the Babylonian and Persian empires: "Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to **Arioch** the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon" (Dan. 2:14).

Notice the sources of the names of the remaining kings: **Chedorlaomer** כְּדָרְלָעֹמֶר *K'dor-lah-goh'-mer* [3540], the name of the powerful king of Elam (the land of the ancient Persians) is derived from ancient Babylonian--*Kudar-Laga [mar]*. The name **Tidal** תִּדְעָל *Tid-gahl'* [8413], king of nations," was borrowed from the ancient Babylonian word *Tudhula*.

Many more words in the following chapters of Genesis were borrowed or derived from other languages. Three examples have been selected to show the different languages from which these words originated. In Genesis 20:2 we find the name of Abimelech, a king who ruled in the days of Abraham. **Abimelech** אֲבִימֶלֶךְ *abee-me-lech* [40] is an ancient Philistine name meaning "Father-king" or "Pharaoh." In Genesis 28:22, we find the word אֶבֶן, *eh'-ven* [68], which means "stone" or "the sharp, projecting stone." This Hebrew word comes from the Assyrian word *abnu*. The word that is translated "father" in Genesis 44:19 is the Hebrew אָב *ab* [1], which comes from ancient Phoenician.

The numerous borrowed words that are used in the book of Genesis testify that these words were part of the Hebrew language from the earliest times. Genesis, the first book in the Hebrew text, was compiled by Moses from the most ancient Hebrew records. Since idolatry and paganism did not dominate Hebrew culture in those days, these borrowed words cannot be attributed to the corruption of the Hebrew language.

The Testimony of the Prophet Daniel

The Scriptures record that paganism began to corrupt the Hebrews soon after they took possession of the promised land under the leadership of Joshua. The idolatrous worship of Baal was widely practiced by the generation that arose after

Joshua's death (Judges 2:8-13). Each judgment from God brought temporary repentance but was soon followed by deeper corruption. After many warnings through His prophets, God imposed the judgment of war and captivity, as stipulated in the covenant. The kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians, and the kingdom of Judah to the Babylonians.

Daniel, a young member of the royal family of Judah, was probably taken captive in 609 B.C., when Judah was invaded by the army of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. During his years in captivity, Daniel received a number of prophetic visions, which he recorded in a book. God revealed to Daniel that the words in this book would be preserved "to the time of the end" (Dan. 12:4). God ensured their preservation by inspiring Ezra to include the book of Daniel in the text of the Old Testament. Since Daniel finished his book only a few years before the time of Ezra, there was no gap of centuries that would allow the book of Daniel to be corrupted before it was canonized and preserved in the Hebrew text. Without question, the words that are recorded in the Hebrew text are the original words of Daniel.

When we examine the book of Daniel in the Hebrew text, we find many words that come from the languages of the Chaldeans, Persians, Syrians and others. In fact, a large portion of the book of Daniel (Dan. 2:4-7:28) is written in Syriac, which is an Aramaic language. The word "Syriack" in Daniel 2:4 is translated from the Hebrew word אֲרָמִית *aramith* [762], which means Aramaic. The following verses in Daniel 2, and the next five chapters, are written in Syriac, the Western dialect of Aramaic. Many words from Chaldee, the Eastern dialect of Aramaic, are included in these chapters. The italicized words listed below are some of the Chaldee terms used in Daniel 2:4 through 7:28. Definitions of these words may be obtained from a Hebrew lexicon.

Chaldee words found in Daniel 2: *n^ebizbah* (verse 6); *beshta* (verse 10); *chakam* (verse 12); *elah*, a name of God (verse 18); *raz* (verse 18); *g^ebar* (verse 25); *anasha* (verse 38); *kum* (verse 39); *r^ea* and *r^ebiaya* (verse 40); *tin* (verse 41); *min*, *k^etzath* and *t^ebar* (verse 42); *signin* (verse 48).

Chaldee words found in Daniel 3: *karoza*, which is derived from the old Persian *khresic*, meaning crier (verse 4); *shaah* (verse 6); *anash* (verse 10); *k^ephath* (verse 20); *haddabrin* (verse 24).

Chaldee words found in Daniel 4: *Elaha*, a name of God (verse 2); *elahin*, referring to gods (verse 8); *ir* (Dan. 4:13); *p^erak* (verse 27), which is equivalent to the Hebrew *parak* (Gen. 27:40), meaning to break off; *tzidkah* (verse 27), which is

equivalent to the Hebrew *tz^edakah*.

Chaldee words found in Daniel 5: *chamra*, which is equivalent to the Hebrew *chemer*, and r*abr^eban* (verse 1); *enash* (verse 5); *ruach* (verse 11); *mare* (verse 23), which is equivalent to the Hebrew *Adonai*, meaning the Lord; *nishma* (verse 23); *mene mene t^ekel upharsin* (verse 25); *k^etal* (verse 30); *k^ebal* (verse 31).

Chaldee words found in Daniel 6: *ashith* (verse 3); *esar* (verse 7); *aman* (verse 23); *t^eam* (verse 26).

Chaldee words found in Daniel 7: *kodam* (verse 7); *gateek*, translated "the Ancient of days" (verse 9); *rooagh* (verse 15), which is equivalent to the Hebrew *ruach*; *yazib* (verse 16); *elyonin*, translated "the Most High" (verse 18), which is equivalent to the Hebrew *elyon*.

These Chaldee words are all found in the Aramaic chapters of Daniel's book. In the other chapters, which are written in Hebrew, Daniel also used many Chaldee words, as well as words from Persian, Greek and Syriac. The Persian or Aryan word *path-bag'* [6598] is used in Daniel 1: "And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat [*pathbag*]" (verse 5). The Chaldee names Belteshazzar [1095], Shadrach [7714], Meshach [4335] and Abednego [5664] are also found in the first chapter (verse 7).

In the third chapter, Daniel uses a number of Chaldee musical terms that were derived from Syriac and Greek. These terms are all found in Verse 5: "Then an herald cried aloud, 'To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, *that* at what time ye hear the sound of the **cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer**, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up." The term **cornet** in this verse is the Chaldee *keh'ren* [7162], derived from the Syriac word *sambuke*. The term **flute** is the Chaldee *mash-roh-kee-thah* [4953], which also comes from Syriac. The term **harp** is the Chaldee *kee-thah-rohs'* [7030], which was derived from the Greek word κιθαρις. The term **sackbut** is the Chaldee *sab-b chah'* [5443], which comes from Syriac. The term **psaltery** is the Chaldee *sab-teh-reen'* [6460], derived from the Greek word ψαλτηριον. The term **dulcimer** is the Chaldee *soom-poh-n yah'* [5481], which comes from the Greek word συμφωνια.

Later chapters in the book of Daniel contain several words of Persian origin. The name Cyrus in the first verse of Daniel 10 is a transliteration of the Persian *K'ur'us*. The name "Persia," also found in this verse, comes from the Old Persian

Parsa. The name Darius in Daniel 11 is a transliteration of the Old Persian *Dara-yava'ush*. This verse also uses the term "Mede," which comes from the Old Persian *Mada*.

As these examples show, Daniel used numerous words from other languages in writing his book. These words cannot be attributed to the corrupting influences of the pagan cultures of his day. Although Daniel spent many years in captivity among the Babylonians, and many more years among the Medes and the Persians, not once did he succumb to the idolatrous influences of these Gentile nations. Speaking through the prophet Ezekiel, God Himself testified of Daniel's faithfulness: "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD" (Ezk. 14:14). God spoke a second time through Ezekiel, testifying that Daniel was a righteous man: "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness" (verse 20).

Daniel, a man "greatly beloved" by God, cannot be accused of corrupting the Hebrew language by introducing words from the languages of the pagan nations of his day. Nor did Ezra view these words as desecrations when he included them in the Hebrew text, only a few years after Daniel completed his book. It was the will of God that these words be preserved "to the time of the end," and they stand today as a witness against the false claims of sacred namers.

Ezra and Nehemiah

As Daniel's life was coming to a close, God raised up Ezra and Nehemiah to fulfill His words to Daniel concerning the restoration of Jerusalem. In the sixth century B.C., Nehemiah was sent by the Babylonian and Persian governments to be governor of Palestine. His task, as prophesied by Daniel, was to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and to resettle the city. The book of Nehemiah records the offerings that were given for these undertakings: "And some of the chief of the fathers gave unto the work. The Tirshatha [governor] gave to the treasure a thousand **drams** of gold, fifty basons, five hundred and thirty priests' garments. And some of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the work twenty thousand **drams** of gold, and two thousand and two hundred pound of silver. And *that* which the rest of the People gave *was* twenty thousand **drams** of gold, and two thousand pounds of silver, and threescore and seven priests' garments" (Neh. 7:70-72).

When he wrote this account in Hebrew, Nehemiah used a number of words that were borrowed from other languages. The word **dram** is דַּרְכְּמוֹנִים *dar-k'mõh-*

neem' [1871]. This Hebrew word was borrowed from the Chaldeans, who had borrowed the word *daric* from the Persians, who had borrowed the Greek word δαρεικος *dareikos*. This borrowing of words among the Chaldeans, Persians and Greeks is not surprising when we realize that these peoples were engaged in widespread commerce. The Chaldee word *dar-k'mõh-neem'* [1871] is found in the above verses in Nehemiah 7 and in Ezra 2:69. The Hebrew אֲדַרְכֹּנִים *adar-kõh-neem'*, another word for dram which comes from the Persian *daric*, is found in I Chronicles 29:7 and Ezra 8:27.

Nehemiah also used a word that was borrowed from the Assyrians. In Nehemiah 2:8 we find the Hebrew word אִגֶּרֶה *ig-geh'-reth* [107], which means "letter" or "letter-missive." This Hebrew word was derived from the Assyrian word *egirtu*. This word from the ancient Assyrians, and all the borrowed words in the book of Nehemiah, bear witness to the fact that Hebrew was not sacred and superior to other languages.

There is great significance in the fact that words from many different languages are used in the book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah wrote his book in the ancient Hebrew script, which was later replaced by the square script of Ezra. The presence of these borrowed words in the ancient script shows that they were in use very early among the Hebrews.

By the time of Ezra, the use of Hebrew as a spoken language had all but ceased. Aramaic was the language of the common people, who had forgotten their former tongue. Much of the book of Ezra is written in Aramaic (Ezra 4:8-6:18 and 7:12-26). It is evident that the people who had returned to Jerusalem with Ezra and Nehemiah did not understand Hebrew, as Ezra and the priests had to interpret the words in the Hebrew text for them. The book of Nehemiah records this event: "And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: and Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshiped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground. Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people *stood* in their place. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading" (Neh. 8:5-8).

Although Hebrew was no longer spoken by the people, the priests continued to use it in the temple services. Hebrew became strictly a liturgical language, preserved and safeguarded in the text of the Old Testament. As our examination of the text has demonstrated, ancient Hebrew included many words that originated

in other languages. It would be a monumental task to give a complete listing of the hundreds and hundreds of Hebrew words that were either borrowed or derived from other languages.

Like all languages of men, Hebrew was formed by mixing the elements of the original language that God had given to Adam and Eve. The Hebrew language was first spoken by Eber and his two sons, who lived at the time of the Tower of Babel. In the following centuries, the Hebrew-speaking people adopted many words from other languages and made them part of their own language. This interaction was possible because the languages of all nations were formed from the same elements. Since all languages on earth have the same origin, it is totally illogical to claim that the Hebrew language is sacred and other languages are pagan.

Hebrew the Future Language of the World?

Sacred namers assert that an uncorrupted, pure Hebrew will be the future language of all peoples of the world. They teach that Biblical Hebrew, which they believe was corrupted by other languages, will be purged and restored to its original purity, and that all peoples will know God only by one Hebrew name. Koster expresses these views in the following paragraph:

"The prophecy for the end-time comes to us clearly in Zeph. 3:9, 'For then will I change to the peoples a pure lip, that all of them may call upon the Name of Yahuweh, to serve Him with one consent' (Hebrew text). It is well known that a 'pure lip' is a Hebrew idiom for the Hebrew language. In that day all the peoples of the world will know Him by the One Name (Zech. 14:9) which He revealed to Israel, and which His Son, Yahushua, made known to His disciples (John 17:6). Yahushua also promised to make it known to us too (John 17:26)" (Koster, *Come Out of Her My People*, p. 80).

Koster errs greatly in his interpretation of Zephaniah 3:9. While it is true that the phrase "pure lip" is an idiom, it is not an idiom for the Hebrew language. Let us examine this phrase as it is translated in the King James Version: "For then will I turn to the people a pure language [Hebrew שָׂפָה *sãh-phãh* [8193]], that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one consent" (Zeph. 3:9).

The context reveals that the time setting is the return of Jesus Christ and the pouring out of God's wrath upon the nations, which will take place at the Battle of Armageddon (verse 8). Those who remain will "all call upon the name of the LORD" and will "serve Him with **one consent**" (verse 9). Zephaniah does not state that they will serve God with one language, as sacred namers assert, but with

"**one consent**." The focus in Zephaniah's prophecy is the attitude of the heart--not the pronunciation of words. Zephaniah foresaw a future time when all nations will offer praises to God as they worship Him with willing hearts, or "one consent." No longer will they use their lips to honor and worship false gods.

The Hebrew word *sãh-phãh*, which is translated "language" in Zephaniah 3:9, may also be translated "lip" or "speech." The expression "a pure language" does not refer to Hebrew or any other language but to speech fit for the worship of the Father and Jesus Christ. That this is so is shown by the very next clause, "that they may all call upon the name of the LORD." Humans with a pure heart may call upon God in any language.

The words of the prophet Isaiah clearly express the meaning of the Hebrew word *sãh-phãh*: "Then said I, 'Woe is me! for I am undone; because **I am a man of unclean lips** [Hebrew שָׂפָה *sãh-phãh* [8193]], and **I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips:** for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts' " (Isa. 6:5).

Isaiah spoke these words in the Hebrew language and later recorded them in Hebrew. But Isaiah's lips were not unclean because he was using a "corrupted" Hebrew. God did not cleanse Isaiah's lips by giving him a new, purified Hebrew language to speak, but by purging his lips of words that had been spoken from a sinful heart. Notice: "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, 'Lo, this hath touched thy lips, **and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged**' " (verses 6-7).

Hebrew as a language is not pure or impure. What is spoken and written in Hebrew can have pure or impure meanings, but the words themselves are not impure. This is true of all languages. A man speaking in Hebrew, or any other language, will be speaking with unclean lips if his thoughts are wrong and his statements are false.

Only One Name for God?

Koster asserts that when the kingdom of God comes to earth, all the peoples of the world will know God by one name. He bases this assertion on Zechariah 14:9, which states, "And the LORD shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and His name one."

When we examine this Scripture, we find that the word "one" is translated from

the Hebrew word אחד *ehad*. The meaning of the word *ehad* is explained by Bullinger in *The Companion Bible*: "**one**. Heb. *'ehad* = a compound unity (Lat. *unus*), one made up of others: Gen. 1:5, one of seven; 2:11, one of four; 2:21, one of twenty-four; 2:24, one made up of two; 3:22, one of the three: 49:16, one of twelve; Num. 13:23, one of a cluster. So Ps. 34:20, & c. It is not *yahid*, which is (Lat.) *unicus*, unique--a single, or only one…." (p. 247).

Because *ehad* expresses a **compound unity**, it is a mistake to interpret its meaning in Zechariah 14:9 as "the One Name," as Koster does. The error in this interpretation is exposed by the book of Revelation, which records more than two dozen names of Jesus Christ--the LORD Who will become "King over all the earth." Notice the many names that are ascribed to this King in the book of Revelation: "the faithful Witness, *and* the First Begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth" (1:5); "Alpha and Omega…the Almighty" (1:8); "the Son of Man" (1:13); "the First and the Last (2:8); "the Son of God" (2:18); "He That is Holy, He That is True" (3:7); "the Amen" (3:14); "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" (5:5); "the Lamb" (5:8); "Lord" (6:10); "Christ" (11:15); "Lord of lords, and King of kings" (17:14); "Faithful and True" (19:11); "the Word of God" (19:13); "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (19:16); "the Temple" (21:22); "the LORD God" (22:5-6); "the Beginning and the End" (22:13); "the Offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning Star" (22:16).

Many of these names in the book of Revelation can be found in the Old Testament. The prophets and saints of old used them, and they will be used by the saints in the kingdom of God. These names will never be extinguished because they describe the attributes of God, Who is eternal. The presence of these names in the prophetic book of Revelation clearly contradicts the assertion that God will be known by "the One Name."

The book of Revelation also shows that the words "one LORD" in Zechariah 14:9 do not refer to only one divine Being. In Revelation 11:15, the word "LORD" is used to name the Father. In Revelation 19:16, the word "LORD" is used as a title of Jesus Christ. In both verses, the word "LORD" is translated from the Greek Κυριος K*urios* [2962], which is the equivalent of the Hebrew יְהֹוָה *J'hõh-vãh'* [3068], found in Zechariah 14:9 and throughout the Old Testament.

The Scriptural usage of the word "LORD" clearly expresses the compound unity of the Hebrew word *ehad* in Zechariah 14:9. Both the Father and the Son will be worshiped as "LORD" in the kingdom of God, and both will be worshiped by their other names as well. The names of false gods will be forgotten, and all nations will praise and glorify the LORD of heaven and "the King over all the earth.