

[Answers to tough questions in Zephaniah](#)

1. How much validity can be given to the interpretation of 3:9, “I will restore to the peoples a pure language,” as a prophetic anticipation of God’s restoration of a universal language?

Although some have taken this phrase to refer to an undoing of God’s decision to confuse the languages at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1–9), the context of the phrase does not lend much support to that interpretation. Although it is true that the word language in Zephaniah is identical to the one used in Genesis, the overall context indicates that Zephaniah had in mind a purification of heart and life (Zeph. 3:13). Throughout the OT, the word language is most often translated “lip.” When combined with “pure,” the reference to speech refers to an inward cleansing from sin (Is. 6:5) that is demonstrated in speech (Matt. 12:34). This kind of speech is purified by the removal of the names of false gods from their lips (Hos. 2:17). It is unlikely that Zephaniah had in mind a single world language.

<https://sites.google.com/a/indubiblia.org/inductive-bible-study/zephaniah-1>