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BIBLICAL NAMES AS A SOURCE OF VOCABULARY

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Well known works of literature have often been a source of vocabulary in many languages, and in the Western world there is probably no work of literature better known than the Bible. The mass consciousness of Biblical characters and events, at least in the past, has inevitably led to figurative, metaphoric and extended meanings for Biblical names and the adoption of a large number of common expressions originating from the characters and events of the Bible. The very word bible (French bible, Spanish biblia, Italian bibbia, German Bibel) has come to mean "any book considered authoritative in its field." Bible is derived from the Greek plural biblia, "papyrus, scroll book," which in turn comes from the name of the Phoenician port Byblos, from which papyrus was exported to Greece.

The term Bible belt was coined by H. L. Mencken in 1925 and refers to sections of the United States, especially in the South and West, where religious fundamentalism prevails. Bible paper (French papier bible, Italian carta bibbia) is a thin, strong, opaque printing paper used for Bibles and reference books. In Italian fare la Bibbia, literally, "to make the Bible," means "to sermonize," and un bibbiaro is a vendor of the Protestant Bible.

In German, Bibelauslegung means "exegesis or interpretation of the Bible"; bibelfest "versed in the Scriptures"; and Bibelforscher "a Jehovah's Witness." Bibelkritik is Biblical criticism;
Bibekunde "Biblical research"; Bibellehre, scriptural doctrine; Bibelsprache, Biblical language; Bibelspruch "Biblical text"; Bibelstelle "a Biblical passage, text or lesson read in Church"; and Bibelstunde "Bible class or scripture lesson."

From Bible, there have been numerous derivatives: such as biblical (French: biblique; Spanish: bíblico; Italian: biblico; German: biblisch); and Biblicist, "an expert on the Bible" or "one who interprets the Bible literally."

The prefix biblio- meaning "book" appears in numerous forms, such as bibliography (French: bibliographie; Spanish: bibliografía; Italian: bibliografia; German: Bibliographie); bibliographer (French: bibliographe; Spanish: bibliógrafo; Italian: bibliografo; German: Bibliograph); bibliolatry, "excessive adherence to a literal interpretation of the Bible" or "extreme devotion to or concern with books"; bibliomancy "divination by a passage chosen at random in a book, especially the Bible; bibliomania, "an exaggerated liking for and acquiring books" (French: bibliomanie; Spanish: bibliomanía; Italian: bibliomania; German: Bibliomanie), bibliophile, "a lover or collector of books" (French: bibliophile; Spanish: bibliófilo; Italian: bibliofilo; German: Bibliophil); bibliopole, "one who deals in rare books; bibliotheca, "a book collection, library, or catalogue of books" (French: bibliothèque; Spanish and Italian: biblioteca; German: Bibliothek); and bibliotics, "examination of written documents to determine author-
ship or authenticity." In French, a librarian is un bibliothécaire, (Spanish and Italian: bibliotecario; German: Bibliothekar), and a book bus is un bibliobus. In French also, la bibliothéconomie is "the science of organizing and managing libraries " (Italian: biblioteconomia; German: Bibliothekslehre).

The names of some of the books of the Bible have assumed extended and more generalized meanings. Genesis (French genèse, Spanish genesis, Italian genesi, German Genese) can mean "the coming into being, origin or creation" of anything. Exodus (French exode, Spanish exodo, Italian esodo, German Exodus) now means "any departure, usually of a large number of people." The Apocalypse (French apocalypse, Spanish apocalipsis, Italian apocalisse, apocalissi, German Apokalypse) is the last book of the New Testament, attributed to the apostle John, which carries numerous prophetic visions, including that of the end of the world. In general usage, it is a prophetic revelation, especially as it relates to the end of the world. The Apocrypha are the fourteen books of the Septuagint (a 3rd century B.C. Greek translation of the Old Testament), included in the Vulgate, but considered uncanonical by Protestants because they were not part of the Hebrew Scriptures. The term was also applied to various early Christian writings proposed as additions to the New Testament, but rejected by the major canons. By extension, it means any writings of questionable authority or authenticity, and apocryphal (French
apocryphe, Spanish apócrifo, Italian apocrifo, German apokryphisch)
means "false, counterfeit."

The name of Jesus (French Jésus, Spanish jesús, Italian gesù) is used in
the Romance languages for an image of Jesus. In French un Jésus is also a
lovable child. Le Jésus in French and la carta gesù in Italian mean "long-royal or
super-royal paper," now 56 by 76 centimeters. An older meaning was a kind of paper that bore
the watermark I.H.S. (Jesus Hominum Salvator, Jesus Savior of Men).

In Spanish Jesus appears in various idiomatic expressions:
en un decir Jesús, "in an instant"; Jesús mil veces! "good God!";
no saber ni el Jesús, "not to know even the alphabet"; decir los
Jesuses, "to assist dying people"; morir sin decir Jesús, "to die
very suddenly."

In Italian fare Gesù, literally, "to play the part of Jesus," is "to join hands" (as of a child saying prayers or anyone expressing
thanks or emotion). Fare Gesù con cento mani, literally, "to play the part of Jesus with a hundred hands," is "to be overwhelmed
with gratitude." Essere tutto Gesù e madonne, literally, "to be all Jesus and madonnas," is "to be a pious hypocrite." Gesummio,
literally "my Jesus," is an exclamation equivalent to "gracious heavens." In Tuscany un Gesù pietoso is "a pawnbroker's shop."

From Jesus, Spanish derives Jesuita or Jesuita "Jesuit,"
(French jésuite, Italian gesuita, German Jesuit), a member of the
Company of Jesus founded by Ignacio Loyola in 1534. Pejoratively, it takes on the meaning of "hypocrite" or "a person using hypocritical ruses" -- because of the abuses of casuistry, the special cases of conscience for which the Jesuits used to find excuses.

Christ (in French le Christ, Spanish and Italian Cristo, German Christus) is not, strictly speaking, a name, but a title derived from Greek Khristos, "the anointed," translated from Hebrew măschıah, "Messiah." Nevertheless, the application of this title to Jesus alone and its coupling with Jesus as if they were one word (French Jésus-Christ [ζέzykr], Spanish Jesucristo, Italian Gesù Cristo) have in effect converted it into a name in the consciousness of speakers. From Christ or Cristo we have the familiar derivatives for Christian: French chrétien, Spanish and Italian cristiano, German the noun Christ and the adjective christlich, as well as Christianity, christianize, Christendom (French christianisme, christianiser, chretienté; Spanish cristianismo, cristianizar, cristianidad; Italian cristianesimo, cristianizzare, cristianità; German Christentum, christianisieren, Christenheit).

In Spanish cristiano is familiarly "a person," as in No se ve un cristiano por las calles a esta hora, "No one is seen on the streets at this time." Hable usted cristiano means "speak intelligibly" or "speak Spanish" (rather than some other language).
Cristo is also used in a number of popular expressions. A **mal cristó**, mucha **sangre** means "bad literary or artistic works can be commended only by bad or vulgar methods." The exclamation **voto a Cristo**! is equivalent to "zounds." **Haber la de Dios es Cristo** means "to have a quarrel." **Ni por un Cristo** is "not at all." **Donde Cristo dio las tres voces** is "far away." **Pegarle una cosa a otra como a un santo cristo un par de pistolas** is "to join two things inappropriately," literally, "a holy crucifix with two pistols." **Poner a uno como un cristo** is "to beat or maltreat," and **ni Cristo que lo fundó** is an emphatic denial of something. In **Chile estar sin cristo** means "to be without a room."

In Italian, as in Spanish, **cristiano** may mean a human being. **Ogni fedel cristiano** means "anyone whatsoever"; **maniere da cristiani**, "civilized behavior"; **cristaneggiare**, "to talk or behave like a Christian or to show Christian tendencies," **un cristianelle**, "a poor sort of Christian," **cibo da cristiani**, "decent food"; **un cristianaccio**, "a decent fellow, a kind-hearted man"; **ora da cristiani**, "the reasonable hour"; **cristianificare**, "to convert to Christianity": **cristianamente**, "in a Christian way" or colloquially, "decently, respectably, tolerably, pretty well."

As for Christ himself, we have the following expressions: **segnato da Cristo**, "afflicted with a visible deformity"; **un Cristo in croce**, "a crucifix, a haggard or worn-out person"; non c'è
Cristo che tenga, "there's no help for it, there's no way out"; and povero cristo, "poor wretch."

Christ or Christmas form one element of the names of a number of plants: the Christmas berry, an evergreen shrub also called the "toyon"; the Christmas cactus or crab cactus; the Christmas fern, or dagger fern; the Christmas rose or hellebore, whose flowers bloom in later fall or winter; and Christ's thorn, any of several near Eastern plants with spiny thorns popularly believed to have been used for Christ's crown of thorns. The English verb christen, originally to baptize, has come to mean in ordinary usage "to give a name and dedicate ceremonially," or "to use for the first time." The verb crisscross is derived from Christ cross.

In German, the stem Christ- enters into a number of compound forms, such as Christmond, December; Christabend, Christmas eve; Christwoche, Christmas week; Christdorn, Christ's thorn; Christ-geschenck, Christmas present; and christfeindlich, anti-Christian. The verb christeln is "to affect a Christian bearing" and the noun die Christelei means "affecting a Christian bearing" or "bigotry."

The French nouns crétin and crétinisme (English: cretin, cretinism; Spanish and Italian: cretino, cretinismo; German: Kretin or Kretine, Kretinismus) are derived from the French dialect of the Swiss canton of Valais, where chrétien (Christian) was pronounced crétin and was used in the sense of "innocent." The
term crétin was first used in commiseration -- the deformed person being nevertheless a human being, but the meaning then became pejorative. In contemporary French, crétin in familiar speech refers to a hopeless fool or dunce. In Italian una cretineria is "an act of stupidity or an idiotic remark."

Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, is the origin of the Spanish noun belén, meaning "a crib or group of figures representing the Nativity shown at Christmas." In some popular presentations of the Nativity, however, the atmosphere was one of confusion or disorder, so that belén may also mean "confusion, disorder, noise," or colloquially, "gossip or mischief." Estar en Belén or estar bailando en Belén means to be absent-minded, meterse en Belén to get into difficulties, and ¡Qué Belén! what a racket. The English noun bedlam, "a place or situation of noisy confusion, a lunatic asylum" is derived from the name of the Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem in southeastern London, which was incorporated as a hospital for the insane in 1547.

French calvaire (Spanish and Italian calvario) meaning an ordeal, comes from Late Latin calvarius, skull, a translation of Hebrew Golgotha, the hill where Jesus was crucified.

In English, a calvary is a sculptured depiction of the Crucifixion. French capharaum and Italian cafarnao mean "a place of confusion or a lumber room." They come from the name
of a town in Galilee where Jesus often lived and where his return
one day attracted a vast throng before his house.

Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Jesus, has provided a
synonym for the word "traitor": English Judas, French judas,
Spanish judas, Italian giuda, German Judas. A judas in English
(Judas in French) is also a peep-hole in a door, floor or wall,
i.e. a hidden opening. A Judas kiss (French: baiser de Judas;
Spanish: beso de Judas; Italian: bacio di Giuda; German: Judasküss)
is a traitor's kiss. Judas-colored means red, especially applied
to red hair, from the tradition that Judas had red hair. In French
poil de Judas means carrot-colored hair, and bran de Judas or
marques de Judas means "freckles." In Spanish un judas may mean
a silkworm that does not spin, or an effigy of Judas burned in the
streets during Holy week. The Judas tree or redbud (Spanish: árbol
de Judas; Italian: albero di Giuda; German: Judasbaum) was so named
because Judas was supposed to have hanged himself on such a tree.
(But in French it is l'arbre d'amour or l'arbre de Judée, tree of
love or of Judea).

Mary Magdalen, in Latin, Magdalena, a woman from Magdala, now
now El Mejdel, near Tiberias, was healed of evil spirits,
ministered to Christ, witnessed the Crucifixion, and discovered
the Resurrection. She has often been confused with an unnamed
prostitute who anointed Christ's feet in Simon's house and with
Mary of Bethany, sister of Lazarus and Martha.

From Magdalena French derives the common given name Madeleine. Une madeleine is a "tea cake" or a repentant prostitute or refers to various fruits -- peach, plum, apple, pear -- that ripen at the time of the feast of St. Magdalen, July 22. The name of the tea cake is believed to come from that of Madeleine Paulmier, the cook of Mme Perrotin de Barmon, who created the recipe. In Spanish it is magdalena. In popular French, pleurer comme une madeleine means "to shed bitter tears." In Italian, fare da Marta e Maddalena is "to do all the work." Fare la Maddalena is "to show oneself very good and pious." Ti dia la Maddalena means "may you be hanged."

From the name of Virgin Mary French derives une marotte, originally a holy figure or doll, but later a fool's bauble, cap and bells, a hairdresser's dummy head, or else a fancy, folly, whim or hobby. Chacun a sa marotte means "Everyone has his hobby." From Marie, the diminutive Marion is produced, and from Marion, marionnette, originally a statue of the virgin. Marionette (French: marionnette, Spanish marioneta, Italian marionetta, German Marionette) is a puppet, literally or figuratively, or a weak-minded person. In German, eine Marionetteregierung is a "puppet government."
The Pharisees were a Jewish sect at the time of Jesus whom
the Gospel reproaches for an affected attachment to the practices
of religion. After Jesus denounced their pride and hypocrisy,
they incited the masses against him and eventually brought about
his Crucifixion. English pharisee (French pharisien, Spanish and
Italian fariseo, German Pharisäer) has come to mean "a hypo-
critically self-religious person."

The good Samaritan (French le bon Samaritain, Spanish el buen
samaritano, Italian il buon samaritano, German der barmherzige
Samariter) was, according to the Book of Luke, the only passer-by
to help a man who had been beaten and robbed. The term is used
generally with the meaning of a compassionate person who helps
others. In German, ein Samariter is a volunteer sick-nurse, and
Samariterdienst leisten means "to give unselfish assistance to a
needy person or accident victim."

Simon Magus, a Samaritan who offered money to the apostles
Peter and John for the power of conferring the Holy Ghost on anyone
he pleased by the imposition of hands, has left his name to the
noun simony (French simonie, Spanish simonía, Italian simonia,
German Simonie), "the buying or selling of ecclesiastical pardons,
offices or emoluments." In Italian simoneggiare or simonizzare is
"to practice simony."

The name of the veronica plant is derived, for some obscure
reason, from Veronica, a name referring to the holy shroud and to
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a saint whose existence is not entirely confirmed. According to legend, the image of the face of Jesus was impressed on the handkerchief offered to him by St. Veronica on the road to Calvary.

By analogy with the gesture that she made to wipe the face of Jesus, Spanish verónica (French véronique, Italian veronica) has also come to mean "the flourish of a bullfighter waiting for the bull, holding out his cape with his two hands."

Lazarus, the poor diseased man at the door of the wicked rich man in the Book of Luke, has left his name to French ladre, formerly a leper, now "an insensitive person or miser," and to Italian lazzaro, "a beggar," and lazzarone, "a Neapolitan beggar, scoundrel or loafer." Fesse-mathieu in French, "a miser or skinflint," means literally "one who would spank St. Matthew, the patron of money changers, in order to extort money from him."

The Old Testament has also furnished a sizable vocabulary. Adam, the progenitor of mankind, becomes in colloquial Spanish un adén, a "slovenly man." In popular French, dans l'habit du père Adam (Italian: in costume adamitico; German: in Adamskostüm), literally, "in old Adam's clothes," means "nude"; and se mettre dans le costume d'Adam is "to strip to the buff." Nous sommes tous sortis de la côte d'Adam, literally, "we all came out of Adam's rib," means "we are all descended from Adam." Il se croit sorti de la côte d'Adam means "he thinks he is somebody." Je ne le connais
ni d'Eve ni d'Adam means "I don't know him from Adam."

The projection of the largest laryngeal cartilage at the front of the throat, especially in men, is called the Adam's apple (French: la pomme d'Adam; Italian: il pomo d'Adamo; German: der Adamsapfel). It is a translation from the Hebrew tappuah haadam. In French, manger quelque chose avec la fourchette d'Adam (to eat something with Adam's fork) means "to eat with one's fingers."

The old Adam in English, der alte Adam in German and quel d'Adamo in Italian mean "human frailty."

In German, den alten Adam ausziehen, literally, to remove the old Adam, means "to become a new person," and eine Geschichte bei Adam und Eva zu erzählen anfangen, literally, "begin telling a story with Adam and Eve," is "to speak in a rambling way," or go back to the very start. Eine Eva, an Eve, literally, is "a vain coquettish girl."

The Garden of Eden (French: éden, Spanish edén, Italian eden, German Eden) is, figuratively, "any delightful place or dwelling" or "a state of bliss or happiness." Similarly, paradise (French paradis, Spanish paraíso, Italian paradiso, German Paradies) has the same figurative meaning.

The French and Spanish forms may mean "the upper gallery of a theater." In French vous ne l'emporterez pas en, au paradis, in familiar usage, means "You won't get away with it, you'll have to
pay for it." Les paradis artificiels are "the pleasures of narcotics." L'oiseau de paradis or le paradisier in French (Spanish: ave del paraís; Italian: uccello del paradiso or paradisca; German: Paradiesvogel) is "the bird of paradise." Le paradisier in French and der Paradiesfisch in German mean "the paradise fish." In Spanish, paraíso de bobos means "fool's paradise."

In Italian, voler andare in paradiso in carrozza, literally, "to wish to go to paradise in a carriage," means "to expect to have the best of both worlds." Volere entrare in paradiso a dispetto dei santi, literally, "to wish to enter paradise in defiance of the saints," means "to go where one is unwelcome, to gate-crash." Il paradisiaco is the banana or plantain.

English hell and German Hölle, and their Romance equivalents, French enfer, Spanish infierno and Italian inferno, which are derived from Latin infernum, "the place below," may mean figuratively "the place or occasion for great suffering." In French enfer may refer figuratively to the place in a library where books not made available to the public are kept. In Spanish, en el quinto infierno or en los quintos infiernos, literally, "in the fifth hell," means "very far away." In Cuba, infierno is the name of a card game. In Italian un tizzone d'inferno is "a scoundrel." Mandare uno all' infierno is "to tell someone to go to hell, to get rid of someone,
or, euphemistically, to 'bump off' someone." In industry, l'inferno is "the reservoir or depository."

From Satan, the Biblical spirit of evil, English derives satanic (French satanique; Spanish satánico, Italian satanico; German satanisch). In French satané means, colloquially, "devilish, confounded, roguish." In Italian un satanasso is "a person inclined to violence or one who is too dynamic." In German ein Satan or ein Satanas is an evil, diabolic person; ein Satansbraten is "a crafty fellow or scoundrel"; ein Satanskerl "an evil person;" ein Satanspilz "a poisonous spider"; Satanstücke "ill nature, viciousness," and ein Satansweib "an evil or else very energetic woman." The worship of Satan is satanism (French satanisme; Spanish and Italian satanismo; German Satanismus).

The term angel (French: ange; Spanish: ángel; Italian: angelo; German: Engel) becomes, figuratively, "a kind, lovable person." In American English it may also be the financial backer of an enterprise, especially a drama. In French mon ange is used as a term of affection; ange may mean a perfect person. Le bon ou le mauvais ange de quelqu'un is the person who exercises a good or bad influence on someone. Être aux anges means "to be delighted." Parler aux anges is "to talk to oneself"; rire aux anges is "to wear a beatific smile or smile in one's sleep." Familiarly, une faiseuse d'anges, literally, "an angel maker," is an abortionist.
In Spanish tener ángel means "to have the gift of pleasing"; un mal ángel is "a person with the capacity to displease"; un ángel patudo (literally, with big feet) is "a wolf in sheep's clothing." In Italian un angelo may be "a person of great goodness or beauty," or "a military policeman." Engel in German may be "a model of cleanliness, unselfishness or beauty." Ein guter or rettender Engel is "a guardian angel." Ein Engel flog durch das Zimmer (literally, "an angel flew through the room") means "there was a sudden hush." Ein Engelhehe is "an unconsummated marriage," ein Engelmacher, "a baby farmer," die Engelsgeduld, endless patience. An angelfish (French: un ange de mer; Spanish: un angelote; Italian: un pesce angelo; German: ein Engelfisch) is a brightly colored tropical fish. In Spanish serafín (literally, "seraph") is in familiar usage "an extremely handsome or beautiful person." A cherub in English is, figuratively, "any person, especially a child, with an innocent or chubby face"; French chérubin can similarly mean "a charming child."

Babel (Babel in Spanish, babele in Italian), derived from the Biblical Tower of Babel, means "confusion, pandemonium." According to the Biblical account, the effort of the builders of the tower to have it reach the sky was thwarted when God created a confusion of languages among them; Babel is believed to refer to Babylon. In French, c'est une vraie tour de Babel, literally, "it's a real tower of Babel," means "it's a perfect Babel, it's a pandemonium."
The adjective derivative *babélique* in French, *babélico* in Spanish and *babelico* in Italian means "gigantic," referring to construction, or "confused, discordant, unintelligible," referring to voices or speech.

From the name of Moses, who was exposed on the Nile in a small cradle because of the Pharaoh's order to kill all male Israelite children, French derives *un moïse* and Spanish *un moises*, "a small wicker cradle."

*Benjamin* in French, means "favorite son," an older meaning, and "youngest son," the current meaning. It is derived from Benjamin, the youngest son of Jacob and Rachel in Genesis, and Jacob's favorite son. There is a feminine -- *benjamine*. Spanish has *benjamin*, Italian *beniamino*. In Italian *essere il beniamino* means "to be a mother's darling." *Beniamina* is "favorite daughter."

According to Genesis, God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of their supposed depravity. *Sodomy* (French *sodomie*, Spanish *sodomía*, Italian *sodomia*, German *Sodomie*) means anal copulation of two males.

Samson, the Hebrew judge of extraordinary physical strength who was betrayed by Delilah and pulled down the walls of the temple, has left his name to the English noun *Samson*, a strong man, and Spanish *sansón*. Delilah in English is figuratively a
temptress. The name of King Solomon (Spanish: salomón) has become a synonym for a wise man.

The Philistines were an ancient tribe who gave their name to Palestine and fought the ancient Hebrews. A philistine (French: philistin; Spanish and Italian: filisteo; German: Philister) is "a person of vulgar taste whose mind is closed to the arts and letters." The present meaning of the word is derived from the slang of German theology students, who humorously applied it to the bourgeois who had not gone to a university and who were considered the enemies of those devoting themselves to intellectual pursuits, just as the Philistines were the enemies of the Hebrew people.

The foregoing survey of the adaptation of religious terms to non-religious uses -- in ordinary conversation, as well as specialized and even technical usage -- is probably far from complete. It nevertheless points to the enormous lexical influence of Biblical imagery and metaphors in the major western languages of today.

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