

THE BEREAN

"...EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY..." (Acts 17:11)

THE LANGUAGE OF ASHDOD

BY B. G. ECHOLS

Nehemiah was a great leader in helping Israel restore the true religion of God as delivered by Moses. Yet he had to overcome many obstacles. Here is one he related. "In those days also I saw the Jews that had married women of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people" (Neh. 13:23,24). The modern religious scene is similar. When speaking of religious matters we hear words that are foreign to the Bible; or Bible words that are given a different meaning from the Bible meaning. The list seems almost endless, so we will consider only a few.

We hear people refer to "Christmas," "Lent," "Good Friday," and "Easter." These are foreign to Bible language. They are not in the New Testament because God never authorized anyone to observe them. When one begins to practice unbiblical things, he must create unbiblical names for them. I know that "Easter" is found in the King James Version in Acts 12:4. This mistranslation is corrected in the New King James. W. E. Vine makes this comment in his Expository Dictionary. "The term Easter is not of Christian origin. It is another form of Astarte, one of the titles of the Chaldean goddess, the Queen of heaven." Easter and the other things mentioned earlier grew out of an attempt to adapt pagan festivals to Christianity. The language of Ashdod indeed!

Another group of words foreign to the Bible are associated with denominations. Since denominations did not exist in the New Testament, there are no denominational names in it. Again, when one starts something that is not in the Bible, it has to be called by unbiblical terms. There was only one church in the New Testament. It had no peculiar names. Most often it is referred to simply as "the church." The unity for which Christ prayed (John 17) can never be until divisive and humanly devised names cease to exist.

"Clergy" is another word not found in the New Testament because there was no such distinction made. Jesus told His disciples, "But be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your Father on earth; for one is your Father, even he who is in heaven" (Matthew 23:8,9). Many clergy take the title "Reverend" which is a presumptuous use of the word. "Reverend" is found only one time in the King James Version (Psalm 111:9). The basic idea of the word is to fear, to revere, or be made afraid. We should fear no man, but only God (Matthew 10:28). The New King James Version translates the sentence, "Holy and awesome is His name".

We need to seek a restoration of the faith and practice of the apostles of Jesus as revealed in the New Testament. Let us do Bible things in Bible ways, and call Bible things by Bible names.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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