



## BIBLICAL HERITAGE REPORT & DISCOVERING THE BIBLE

Creating a better, happier and safer world through research & the distribution of factual information about our religious & spiritual histories!

<http://www.biblicalheritage.org>

## Party, Sect or Heresy #2

By Jim Myers

### CONTINUED FROM ISSUE #49

Let's review the suggested English translations for this Greek word:

- (1) *sect*
- (2) *party*
- (3) *school*

αἵρεσις

The translations we are reviewing are as follows:

- (1) **King James Version** 1769
- (2) **Douay-Rheims Version** 1899
- (3) **New American Standard Version** 1977
- (4) **New International Version** 1984
- (5) **New Living Translation** 1989

The next verse we will study is **Acts 15:5**.

**KJV** - But there rose up certain of the **sect** of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

**D-RV** - But there arose of the **sect** of the Pharisees some that believed, saying: They must be circumcised and be commanded to observe the law of Moses.

**NASV** - But certain ones of the **sect** of the Pharisees who had believed, stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

**NIV** - Then some of the believers who belonged to the **party** of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses."

**NLT** - But then some of the men who had been Pharisees **before their conversion** stood up and declared that all Gentile converts must be circumcised and be required to follow the law of Moses.

Most of the translators were consistent and stayed with "sect." I think it is very interesting that the **D-RV** translators decided to translate the word as "**sect**" in this verse, instead of transliterating it as "**heresy**" as they did in Acts 5:17. I wonder why they would **call the Sadducees a heresy and the Pharisees a sect**? The **NLT** translators used their *literary license* once again, but this time instead of ignoring the Greek word they became creative and translated it as "**before their conversion**." Wow!

Now let's move on to **Acts 24:5**.

**KJV** - For we have found this man *a pestilent fellow*, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the **sect** of the Nazarenes

**D-RV** - We have found this to be a pestilent man and raising seditions among all the Jews throughout the world: and author of the sedition of the **sect** of the Nazarenes.

**NASV** - "For we have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the **sect** of the Nazarenes.

**NIV** - "We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all

over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect.

NLT - For we have found him to be a troublemaker, a man who is constantly inciting the Jews throughout the world to riots and rebellions against the Roman government. He is a ringleader of the sect known as the Nazarenes.

For the first time we find complete agreement among the translators. However, there is a very interesting item in this verse, a “Christian” group – the Nazarenes – also classified as a sect, just like the Sadducees and Pharisees. It would probably be correct to conclude that the author viewed all three as Jewish sects. Now, let’s move on to the next verse -- Acts 24:14.

KJV - But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.

D-RV - But this I confess to thee that according to the way which they call a heresy, so do I serve the Father and my God, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets.

NASV - But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law, and that is written in the Prophets.

NIV - However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets.

NLT - But I admit that I follow the Way, which they call a sect. I worship the God of our ancestors, and I firmly believe the Jewish law and everything written in the books of prophecy.

This verse contains two very interesting translation issues. First, notice how the translators handled the Greek word they translated as either “way” or “Way.” The NASV, NIV and NLT translators chose to

capitalize the word, while the KJV and D-RV translators did not. At least they made the correct decision to translate instead of transliterate the Greek word. *It is interesting that the “Way” was the name of Paul’s sect.* Once again they treat it as just another Jewish sect -- just like the others. Now let’s move on to Acts 26:5.

KJV - Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

D-RV - Having known me from the beginning (if they will give testimony) that according to the most sure sect of our religion I lived, a Pharisee.

NASV - Since they have known about me for a long time previously, if they are willing to testify, that I lived *as* a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.

NIV - They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee.

NLT - If they would admit it, they know that I have been a member of the Pharisees, the strictest sect of our religion.

This time all of the translators chose the same English word for their translation. *I think this exercise demonstrates that in certain cases the Belief Systems of the translators determined how they would or wouldn’t translate the Greek word.*

This brief study also demonstrates that if the translators used one of the lexical options consistently readers would have understood that there were a number of different sects being discussed by the author of the Book of Acts – Sadducees, Pharisees, Nazarenes and the Way. The Nazarenes and Way members reflect two different paths that members of the Jesus Movement were already taking within a few decades after the destruction of the Temple. It is very possible that descendants of these groups will become members of the two other groups which we will discuss in the next issue. **BHR**

## Your Help is Requested

You are invited to become part of the Biblical Heritage journey. BHC works to gather quality information from many sources and distribute it to as many people as possible. *Discovering our spiritual heritage is an exciting journey.* Many people know nothing about the history of the organizations and beliefs that have played a very important role in the lives of generations of “believers.”

This spiritual journey begins with one book for many of us – our Bible. It has a history too. Who wrote its words? Who decided what our “word of God” would be? In what language was it written? How can we most accurately understand its words and messages? How accurate are our English translations? Is there a way that I can learn to work with the original languages -- without going back to college -- so I will be able to check the work of the translators?

Information that will help answer the above questions, as well as many others, has already been gathered and deposited on the BHC website and written about in our newsletters. It is available without charge to the public. Obviously, it cost money to do our work. The money comes from the tax-deductible contributions of those who understand the importance of, and urgent need for, quality information. Only by having access to factual information are we able to test the accuracy of what we believe to be either true or false.

You are encouraged to make copies of the attached article and distribute or e-mail it to as many people as possible. You are also invited to help BHC by sending a tax-deductible gift today. *You investment in BHC’s work makes you an important member of the BHC team!*

(Cut Here)

---

Please make check or money orders to – **Biblical Heritage Center.**

\_\_\_ I will keep BHC in my daily prayers.

\_\_\_ Enclosed is my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_ I will help BHC by sending a regular monthly contribution.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Print this form and mail it to: BHC – P. O. Box 79 – Cleburne, TX 76033-0079.**  
**If you prefer to make an online donation -- go to <http://www.biblicalheritage.org> .**