

CONCLUSION

Truth unites, heresies divide. We must discard every heresy (opinions contrary to Scripture) and humbly seek the truth with study, prayer, and fasting. This is the only way to have a pure church. According to one writer, "As a Christian, you are a churchman. Never join a sect or faction. Never lift the mere banner of a party. Belong to the church of God which was born of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost." Amen.

"It is a remarkable fact that all the heresies which have arisen in the Christian church have had a decided tendency to dishonor God and to flatter man."

- Charles Spurgeon

"Our Lord sent His disciples out as sheep among wolves; now the wolves are being invited into the sheepfold."

- Vance Havner

*"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in **damnable heresies**, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." II Peter 2:1*

The RICHIES

OF GRACE

"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

Robert Reed
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Heresy

"For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

1 Corinthians 11:19

+ An Opinion Contrary to Scripture +

The word heresy is mentioned in the New Testament in reference to doctrine and practice. Heresy is different from apostasy. Apostasy has to do with a departure from the faith, and heresy is denial or doubt concerning any doctrine or practice while holding to the main doctrines of the Christian faith. While heresy is not necessarily a total departure, it is still very serious in the eyes of a Holy and Righteous God.

May the Lord give wisdom in this important matter.

"Brethren, we shall not adjust our Bible to the age, but the age to our Bible."

-Spurgeon



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**"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."
Acts 16:31**

In this article, our focus will be upon three different thoughts concerning heresy: The meaning of heresy, that heresy is a work of the flesh, and our response to heresy.

THE MEANING OF HERESY

The words “*heresies and divisions*” in **verses 18 and 19** are very closely associated with one another as we shall see in this article. In the church at Corinth, there were heresies among the Brethren that disrupted their fellowship and unity. There is no reference to doctrinal error, but error in conduct, for the conduct of some were sinful in their abuse of one another during the observance of the Lord’s supper.

Heresy means an opinion that is contrary to Scripture. Vines expository dictionary calls it “A choosing, choice, that which is chosen, and hence, an opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to divisions and formation of sects. . . .” Our English word heresy is derived from the Greek word haireisis, and this Greek word is used nine times in the New Testament. In the Authorized Version, it is translated heresy four times and sects five times. In **Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5; 14; 26:5**, it refers to the Sadducees and Pharisees. In **Acts 24:5, 14, 28:22**, the Jews referred to Christians as the sect of the Nazarenes, that is, they referred to believers as a sect because they were a threat to their beliefs.

The word heresy is any teaching or practice that is contrary to Christian orthodoxy, the faith once delivered to the saints. It is any man-made opinion that creates disunity among God’s people. Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones said, “A heresy is a denial or a doubt concerning any defined, established Christian doctrine. There is a difference between heresy and apostasy. Apostasy means a departure from the Christian truth. . .but heresy is more limited in its scope. To be guilty of heresy, and to be a heretic, means that, in the main, you hold to the doctrines of the Christian faith, but that you tend to go wrong on some particular doctrine or aspect of the faith. The New Testament itself shows us clearly that this tendency to heresy had already begun even in the days of the early church.”

In **Titus 3:10** a heretic (one who believes or teaches heresy) is to be rejected after the first and second admonition. Because of his corrupt opinions and practices that are contrary to Scripture, he is to be excluded from the church if there is no repentance. There are also damnable heresies according to **II Peter 2:1**. These heresies have eternal results damning the soul to eternal judgment.

HERESY IS A WORK OF THE FLESH

In **Galatians 5:20**, heresies are listed with other sins that are called the works of the flesh: “*Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies.*” That is, heresies are a result of the old corrupt nature that we received from Adam. This is in contrast to the fruit of the Spirit in **verses 22-23**. Heresies are not of God, but are from the wiles of the Devil. Anytime there are heresies in the church, rest assured, they are birthed in hell.

OUR RESPONSE TO HERESIES

The believer is to take it seriously, constantly be on guard, and stand against it. The church at Corinth had tolerated heresies and the Apostle Paul rebuked them for it. In **I Corinthians 11:18-19**, the words “*divisions and heresies*” are mentioned together. The thought behind the word divisions is schisms, separation, or to tear. Heresies are usually the cause of divisions, and divisions are usually the consequences of heresies. These heresies and divisions are the results of contrary opinions within the church. As one author so clearly put it, “Heresies are like magnets that attract unsettled and unfaithful minds.” Keep in mind, these heresies were among God’s people (not unbelievers) and refers to conduct more so than doctrine.

According to **verse 18**, the divisions had brought harm to the church. The assembly is to be one, but there were factions and clicks; loyalties formed that separated the believers and abuse developed at the Lord’s table. In **verse 19**, the apostle shows how heresies reveal the sincere Christian, “*For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*” Heresies are not God’s design or desire, but they are to be expected, for such is the corrupt human nature. They will arise, but are not to be tolerated. These heresies actually reveal the true followers of God. These are the saints who were tested and found genuine. They refused to get caught up in the divisions. They submitted to God’s Word and allegiance to Christ. They contended for the faith once delivered to the saints and the unity of the church. They are the dear ones who love God and His Word.

Also, these heresies unmask the hypocrites. It shows who the dissatisfied and restless are. The rise of the winds of heresies separate the wheat and tares. The divisive ones will be exposed. God allows heresies to test us as in **Deuteronomy 13:1-5**. False teachers always seduce hearts that are not right with God.