

Heresy Hunting Is A Biblical Requirement

By Rev. Anthony Wade



But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. - 2Peter 2: 1-3 (ESV)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. - 1John 4: 1 (ESV)

He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. - Titus 1: 9 (ESV)

Heresy hunter is a term **Paul Crouch** stole from the righteous, I'm stealing it back. The late false teacher Crouch once famously quipped on his heretical television show a warning against those he dubbed, "heresy hunters." To Crouch, anyone who questioned him using the Bible fit this category. If you believe in sound doctrine and insist that those who espouse Christ do the same, then you must be one of these heresy hunters. The damage done by this oft-repeated accusation remains until this day. It is still a phrase repeated by false teachers. Just this week I saw the term used in two different articles by two different heretics. Other false teachers have taken this to new levels. **Perry Noble**, who tried to rewrite the Ten Commandments this year, called those in the church that want to "go deeper" into the Word jackasses. In a sermon. **Bill Johnson** of the other-worldly heretical Bethel Church claims people more concerned with the Word than experience are the modern day legalists.

Beloved, we are sinful creatures. Our natural tendencies are towards sin, even if we are saved. Our flesh wants what our flesh wants. We can convince ourselves anything is of God. We can see signs in the heavens and make "confirmations" appear in our Alpha-Bits morning cereal. There is a reason why the Bible tells us that our heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick. Our heart will always lie to us. Do we get that today? It is desperately sick. God however did not leave us unequipped. He left us His final revealed will in the Holy Scriptures. We know that there is nothing wrong in the Bible. It is inerrant. We know that God can never contradict His Word. It is infallible. Yet there are many teachers and preachers today who would prefer that we rely upon our experiences and feelings over the surety of the Word.

I cannot tell you how often when discussing doctrinal matters the answers from people start with "I feel" or even worse, "I know." We cannot know anything except that we cannot trust what we feel. Do not tell me what you think you know, what you are feeling, or what your experiences says. Give me the chapter and verse. Then I know you are basing what you are saying upon an immutable truth, assuming you are not mangling the text. The best class I ever took was a class on Genesis and the first week the teacher asked a question and my hand shot straight up. I thought I provided a good answer

but his response was; chapter and verse? When I had to admit that I did not know off the top of my head what chapter and verse he kindly said that he did not want to hear what I had to say but rather what God had to say on the matter at hand. He was absolutely right. So it is not enough for me to simply say that heresy hunting is biblical, I need to provide chapter and verse and be led by the unfailing words of God; not my own.

I chose the three verse sets as the key verses to support what I am saying. To be honest there were countless others I could have chosen. The fact is that there is so much written in the Bible about false teaching. I chose these three because they are from three different authors. These three different authors are all espousing the same thing because the entire Bible was written by God and He has made it abundantly clear. Heresy hunting is a biblical requirement. The first verse set is from the Apostle Peter, There are several lessons from this one snippet. There is no doubt that false teachers will arise among the brethren. Paul warns the leaders at Ephesus the exact same thing.

I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. - Acts 20: 29-30 (ESV)

They will not care about the flock. This is the bedrock principle of the Purpose Driven Church model. It is called "blessed subtraction." Pastors are taught that it is OK to allow the sheep to wander out of the pen. Let them go! You can always find more goats.

They will rise up from among our own ranks. Wolves are not just infiltrators. They will arise from within the ranks of "churchianity." They will be well-respected. They will have top ten selling books. They will lead large congregations and be celebrity personalities.

They will speak twisted things. Perhaps trying to rewrite the Ten Commandments. Perhaps selling earthly prosperity. Perhaps trying to astonish the sheep with parlor tricks and clairvoyance. Perhaps calling you a jackass in the middle of a sermon for wanting to get deeper in His Word.

They will draw disciples after themselves. Is this not the case in modern Christendom? The seeker friendly model teaches that you build for the church you want, not the church you have. The pastor ceases being a shepherd and instead is a vision casting CEO who takes on the responsibility

for the horizontal growth of the church, even though that is unbiblical. Jesus Himself chastised the Pharisees for travelling the world to make one convert and thus make him twice the son of hell as they are. That is what we have today. Churches that become mills for false converts. In the second Peter verses, we see that Peter is warning of the same thing. False teachers arising from among us. Bringing in destructive heresies. Greasy grace, prosperity doctrine, word faith, false signs and lying wonders. Seeker friendly, emergent and purpose driven. All heresy. All need to be hunted.

Some may object and say that they do not deny the Master! Beloved, saying the name of Jesus is not affirming Him. They deny the Master every time they are disobedient to His Word. Every time they lie to the sheep. Every time they make merchandise of the Gospel. The sensuality referred to here is in relation to immoral lives. Not just the pastors we see falling every day from sexual sins but the immoralities of this world and this life. If you write a book saying this is your best life now then by definition you are going to hell. What comes next in this key verse set is so important. It is because of them that the way of truth shall be blasphemed. Beloved, just because these snake oil salesmen fool far too many Christians do not think for a second that their falseness is lost on the world. They see them for who and what they are. It leads to people wanting to have nothing to do with Christianity.

The unsaved know they do not need to get up early on a Sunday to hear a feel good, motivational, pop-psychology message. They know when someone is trying to manipulate them out of their money while they fly around the world on Gulfstream Learjets. The way of Christ is blasphemed because of them. It is their greed that drives them. Whether it be greed for material things or greed for power. In that greed they will exploit the sheep of the Lord. They do so with false words. They do so with their own words and not the words of the Lord. Once again reinforcing why it is critical that we follow only what the Bible says. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle and their destruction is not asleep. That means they will get what is coming to them beloved but between now and when we all stand before Christ to give account we must not only be aware they are there but we must discern.

Which leads us to our next key verse. As sheep we are to know the Lord's voice. It seems that many in Christianity today are content to listen to any voice that appeals to their flesh and says the name Jesus enough to sound pious. We often hear the first portion of this verse from 1John - test every

spirit to see if they are from God but the conclusion reveals the "why." Because many false prophets have gone out into the world. There is no shortage of people claiming to speak for God. One of the growing trends among false teachers today is the claim of direct revelation. Joseph Prince claims every message he preaches he received directly from God. Many others claim "spiritual downloads" and audible words from God to try and lend a sense of authority to their otherwise heretical messages. So it is not just an individual word we must test beloved but any word that is claiming to come from the Lord. We are called to do the more noble work of the Bereans.

The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. - Acts 17: 10-11 (ESV)

We cannot just accept what we hear beloved. There are too many false teachers who have gone out into the world. We must be examining the Scriptures to see if what they said was so. We must be in the business of discerning whether what we have heard is from the Spirit of the Lord or some other deceiving spirit. We need to realize that the hunting is inevitable. If we are not hunting for heresy then heresy is hunting for us. How is it that hundreds of thousands of people fall prey to such blatant false teachings every day? Because they do not know the truths contained in the Word of God. They are accepting what is being fed to them even though it is poison. Consider these verses well:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name? 'And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' - Matthew 7: 21-23 (ESV)

How do so many come to the last day having believed they have served Christ only to discover they never knew Him? Because they were deceived by false teaching. Because they did not do the work of a Berean. Because instead of hunting heresy the heresy hunted them. The Bible clearly teaches that we can believe in vain. That we can place our faith in a false gospel; a

false Christ. Beloved, do not simply believe every spirit. Test them to see that they truly are from God by lining them up to the inerrant, infallible Word of God.

That brings us to the final key verse for today. The role of those who labor in preaching and teaching. I know many men who faithfully preach the Word but do not wish to point out anything false. By doing so they only do half of what has been commanded of them. The verse from Paul to Titus cannot be clearer. There are two parts to the calling. One is to give instruction in sound doctrine and the other is to rebuke those who contradict it. I know this grates against the Kumbaya Christianity movement in America but this is the Word of God. There is a sad verse in the Book of Ezekiel when the Lord is looking for a man willing to stand in the breach for Israel so that God might not destroy it but He found no one.

And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none. - Ezekiel 22:30 (ESV)

It is equally sad today that precious few who are called are willing to stand in the gap for the church and intercede on its behalf by chasing away the wolves that continue to ravage the flock. It is almost as if we are more concerned about the feelings of the wolf than we are of the sheep he is destroying. Forget your chorus of don't judge! That is for novices to Scripture!

The Bible makes it clear that we are to judge righteously. It makes it clear that we are to judge within our own house. It is the world we are not judge because they still face the judgment of God. The Bible is crystal clear that we are to watch for false teachers, discern false teachers, and rebuke false teachers. We cannot stand idly by as the called of the Lord while other sheep are being slaughtered. It is not just enough that we preach correctly but we must protect all of the sheep by making sure that those who preach falsely are exposed. We are meant to be on the hunt.

So heresy hunter? Yes I am and I wear it as a badge of honor. If you are lying to the sheep of the Lord and making merchandise of them then you should be hunted. If you are trying to make yourself rich by bleeding the sheep of the Lord then you should be hunted. If you are seeking to draw a following after you, crossing the world to make a single convert but by

doing so make them twice the son of hell that you are, then you should be hunted. You should be hunted and your teachings dealt with as mercilessly as you deal with the sheep. We are not in the business of playing with wolves. We do not coddle them. We do not try and find common ground with them. We do not make excuses for them. We just don't.

We hunt them and it is open season.