

Heralds of Heresy

How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Psalm 119:103-105 NKJV

I am currently speaking on these things with our church body as a warning in regard to what is out there. What is popular. What is not in line with scripture. This is partly to promote awareness, but also so that we might examine ourselves and the scriptures to see if there be any “false way” that we are being drawn to, or even currently following. Many of these people and churches I will share about in this study are an example of the “extreme” in a doctrinal heresy, and I suspect that few people who will read this are all the way over in their camp. Still, it is valuable for us to “self-examine” and determine if we have bought into, or accepted, parts of it that are unscriptural.

The church in our time has become calloused to the seriousness of false doctrine. This, along with the lack of real Bible study in the lives of many professing believers has allowed a lot of bad teaching to spread unchecked. Often those who try to bring correction are seen by the masses as some sort of “killjoy,” and immediately people start pointing to experiences and testimonials that they think somehow validate the false teachings of these individuals. We should be looking to scripture, and not experiences.

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 2 Timothy 4:3-4
ESV

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
ESV

This is one of those writings that will probably keep evolving over time, as new information is discovered, or as some of the groups and individuals discussed change their positions (hopefully). It is my honest prayer for all of the people involved that they will repent of the false teachings and become grounded in the truth.

I want to be clear that when I use the term “heresy,” I do not take it lightly. This is not about disagreements among believers on the meaning of things that sincere students of the Bible often disagree about. There are many subjects relating to things like eschatology, the sovereignty of God and man’s will, church polity and structure, sacraments, etc., that good and sincere people have been discussing and disagreeing about for centuries. There are things in scripture that are always going to

have an element of mystery to them, as God's ways are much higher than our ways. Heresy is when someone is clearly teaching against what scripture states, particularly when it comes to the nature of God, the character of God, the truth of salvation by grace alone through Jesus Christ, the sinfulness of mankind, the deity of Christ, and any other clear and foundational truth of scripture. It is definite heresy when someone distorts teachings on the deity of Jesus Christ, the fullness of salvation through Him alone, or exalts man to a position scripture does not allow.

There are few subjects I would like to avoid more than this one, but it is critical in our time and also the responsibility of any leader to warn and to protect. Heresy is not new, but in our day and age, heresy is high-tech! It can spread at a rate unimagined before the age of technology. This, together with the rise of the megachurch, has put the means and the resources at the disposal of many who are either unqualified to be presenting themselves as authorities on scripture, or are outright deceivers with a dark agenda. I want to point out that simply because a church is large does not mean it is promoting false doctrine. The problem is that there are some large churches and movements who's message is well tailored to attract "itching ears," of which there are plenty in our day, and thus these groups grow quickly. Of course this leads to loads of cash and other resources, and many people think this means the hand of God is on them and they must have a real and scriptural message. Add to this internet access, talented musicians, skilled promoters, and publishing contracts, and it is a powerful combination.

Through the course of this writing I will be including links to a number of videos, articles, and other resources that I believe will be helpful in explaining things. One of the main reasons I am writing this up is because I simply can't include all of the valuable resources on Sunday mornings. We would be in this study for years. I will be providing links to videos and articles made by others, and I want to note that just because I link something does not mean I agree with *everything* that person says.

Heralds of Heresy Part 1

The Power of Wanting to Believe Something is True

The first message I shared in the “Heralds of Heresy” series was titled, “The Power of Wanting to Believe Something is True,” and it can be found at <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=182038377553>. The message deals with some foundational truths that are under attack by many of these false teachers and movements. Issues like the deity and pre-existence of Jesus Christ. The Godhead itself. The uniqueness of Jesus, and the fact that He was not “just like us.” Jesus was fully God, and did not empty Himself of His deity in order to come to earth (the Kenosis theory). Jesus did not have to be born again. He *was* and *is* the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Messiah, eternally existent. The “Christ Spirit” or “Christ Anointing” did not enter Him at His birth or at His baptism. *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily* Colossians 2:9 NKJV

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Hebrews 13:8 KJV

Rather than recap the entire sermon here, I would encourage you to click the link and hear it for yourself. This truth is absolutely foundational. It is also important to note that the attempt to lessen who Jesus was and is always seems to coincide with the attempt to exalt man. I do want to cover a few of the main points here in writing.

Jesus has always been fully God. This seems like a pretty basic theological statement. The attempt to take away from the deity of Jesus Christ has been at the heart of many heresies through the years. It makes sense in human logic. If you want to exalt man you have to devalue Jesus. The earliest of these heresies that really gained attention was through a man by the name of Arius back around 300 AD. He taught that Jesus was not pre-existent. The concept was that Jesus was “divine but not deity.” The council of Nicaea was formed largely to refute this heresy. The scripture is very clear on the fact that Jesus is, and always has been, fully God.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. John 1:1-5 NKJV

If anyone wonders how we know this is talking about Jesus, we have verse 14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 NKJV

The idea that Jesus was not pre-existent, or that He was not fully God, might seem crazy to you. It is, but these heresies are catching fire in several major circles within what could be termed western "Christianity" these days. Primarily in the "New Apostolic Reformation" (NAR)/Dominion Theology circles. Let me dispel one myth right out of the gate. *Jesus neither was or is, "just like us."* He was fully God in the form of man. He took on human flesh. ***His birth was the addition of manhood, not the subtraction of Godhood.*** *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.* Colossians 2:9 NKJV

Jesus is the Son of God, not simply a son of God. Many within the NAR/Dominion theology movement, some of the heretical movements of our time, teach that He was not the ONLY begotten Son of God. He was the first-fruit. The first of many. People like Paula White. In the next message of this series you will see a video where she proclaims this terrible lie.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. Colossians 1:15-17 NKJV

Is that just like us? Can you say that about yourself? Jesus was not just like us. Jesus was fully God, we are not, and never will be, fully God. Jesus was not born in sin. We are born in sin. If Jesus had been born in Adam's sin He could not have been the perfect sacrifice. He would have been tainted. He was tempted as we are, but did not sin, nor did He inherit the sin of Adam.

So actually the scriptures we have looked at should already raise the question, how could anyone believe anything else? I like to look at the motive behind a false doctrinal teaching. In this case it is usually because of what is known as "little gods" theology. It is a core teaching in Mormonism but also from the likes of Kenneth Copeland and it goes way back to E.W. Kenyon and a chain of others. The concept is to lower our teaching of Jesus to where He was not one with the Father, He was not pre-existent, and/or He was not Jesus the Christ at His birth, but rather the "Christ Spirit", or "Christ Anointing" entered Him later on.

For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11 NKJV (emphasis mine)

But the main reason to bring Jesus down in status is to raise up man. To say He was just like us so we can be just like Him. The next step is that the scripture becomes less important. After all, we have men seeing visions and giving prophecies. Problem is, a lot of these statements, prophecies, and teachings don't line up with the Word of God. So they come up with some pretty strange work-arounds like, "the Bible has absolute truths and then superior truths." We will hear that in one of the videos later in this study.

What fuels this is good talkers, light shows, internet access, TV shows, good music, confident sounding people, and something I want to share with you that is very powerful. It is *the power of wanting to believe something is true.*

This is why many people fall into NAR/Dominion theology. It's why people buy into prosperity doctrine. It's why people buy into all of the "feel good" stuff. It's why people buy into "easy believism." It's why people fall into works-based salvation. If it makes sense to people, or it meets what they believe are their needs, and they want to believe these things are true, it's a powerful motivator.

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. 2 Peter 2:1-3 NKJV

There are those who would say we shouldn't call out people who teach false doctrine. We should. If they have set themselves up as teachers, and they propagate false doctrine, they should be called out. I don't mean a disagreement about eschatology and the time of Christ's return. I'm not talking about debates over whether or not you should use real wine at communion. I'm not talking about discussion in regard to the tension that exists in understanding the relationship between God's sovereignty and man's will. Those are tough issues where reasonable arguments can be made scripturally on all sides and sincere people often disagree. I am talking about doctrine that undermines the biblical truth about who Jesus is. About the nature of salvation, about what the sacrifice of Jesus Christ accomplished. Doctrines that demean the nature of Christ. In these cases the people are not just in error, they are preaching anti-Christian theology.

Many of these groups use all kinds of testimonials and confident sounding speakers, powerful music, and any other weapon at their disposal, to pervert the truth. They will talk about signs and wonders as if they are conclusive proof of God's anointing. The Lord has warned us about this for a reason.

For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Matthew 24:24-25 NKJV

The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 NKJV

Luke 16:31 says that if they won't listen to the written Word, Abraham and the prophets, then they won't listen even if someone rises from the dead!

So how do you know? How can you know what is true? I mean, say you are somewhere and miracles are taking place, people are worshipping and it feels like all of heaven is coming down. Then they start teaching something about Jesus that is not true. My friends, the devil comes as an angel of light. Pharaoh's magicians really were turning sticks into snakes.

So how do we know? How do we tell the truth from the lies? Almost all lies are based on truth at some level, and the devil is wise enough to plant pieces of truth all over within his lies. What did Jesus do when the devil tempted Him? He said, "it is written." You can't know something is false unless you know what is true. How can we say, "it is written," if we don't know what is written? We need to be immersed and grounded in God's Word.

We should be asking, are they teaching biblical truth? Are they explaining away some scriptures and emphasizing others? Are they using the whole counsel of God, the fullness of His Word? Does what is taught fit with Jesus' admonition of self-sacrifice, humility, killing of pride and selfish desires? Does it fit with the mission Jesus gave us in scripture? Is the teaching emphasizing God or is it emphasizing man? You can't know if it's true unless you know your Bible.

I am aware that one of the primary responsibilities the Lord has given me as a shepherd is to guard the sheep. Guard them from the wolves.

I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 2 Timothy 4:1-5 NKJV

So many fables. Look at the churches in Revelation. The Lord was very harsh toward those who spread false doctrine. He was also harsh toward the church for tolerating them.

I Pray that the Lord will give us all clarity as we continue through this study.

Heralds of Heresy Part 2

Kingdom Confusion

The second message in the series is titled, "Kingdom Confusion," and you can find it at <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=112202156367511>. This installment deals primarily with the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) and Dominion Theology. Not everyone involved in the NAR is a full Dominionist, nor are all those who teach Dominion Theology members of the NAR. In fact, many of those who clearly teach Dominion Theology or hold to NAR teachings do not use those terms to describe themselves. I am not so much interested in the titles themselves, but rather the teachings that flow from the concepts. There is a lot of overlap between the NAR and Dominion influences, but each group and individual will have their own distinctives. My main goal is to point out the falsehoods so that you are better able to recognize them, regardless of who is putting them forth.

In general, the New Apostolic Reformation is not new. It is a rehashing of the "New Order Of The Latter Rain" propagated by William Branham in the 40's and 50's (mainly), and his teaching was really just a rebranding of false doctrines before him. Much of it has been carried forth by the likes of Kenneth Copeland in more modern times, who largely took it from E.W Kenyon and others. In the early 2000's C. Peter Wagner brought the concepts of Dominion Theology and the NAR a bit more definition, particularly with the "Seven Mountain Mandate", which teaches that the church needs to take over seven "spheres" of society. This is supposed to usher in the return of Christ, and the teaching is that since the church has so far failed to "subdue" these "spheres," or "mountains," we are holding things up.

One of these NAR/Dominion people is Paula White. As I write this (January of 2020), the president of the United States is Donald Trump, and the White House Spiritual Advisor is Paula White. Paula is well known to be a teacher of the false prosperity doctrine but that is far from the only falsehood she speaks. She is a proponent, as are a number of those I am referring to in this study, of what is known as "little gods" doctrine where Jesus was not almighty God, and we can be gods ourselves. Please check out this video:

<https://youtu.be/GozQ2o3QPNM>

This video hits on what I see as a problem much bigger than Paula White herself. That is *the willingness of those who seem to be biblically reasoned pastors and leaders endorsing her, and not calling out the clear heresy of her teachings*. Even people like Franklin Graham. That is so discouraging to me. This is a woman who famously said on the TBN network in 2007, *"anyone who tells you to deny yourself is from Satan."* Who said that? It was Jesus! *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."* Matthew 16:24 NKJV. Now some might think Paula White misspoke, but it's been 13 years and many have criticized her for this. I can't find any record of her denying it anywhere. I have tried. It would please me very much to find something like that.

How can people who profess to be believers not cry out "*blasphemy!*" when they hear something like this?" How can they not rebuke the person who says it? Instead, many endorse and celebrate her as she writes books and prays for the president. Applauding as she makes spiritual declarations about her having the authority to declare the White House holy ground. My friends this is demonic heresy. This woman has absolutely no fruit that would indicate she is a Christian, and much fruit to show she is not. When we call someone a Christian who promotes heresy and evil, we do damage to the message of the Gospel itself. We join in blaspheming the Name of Jesus Christ. Our witness is greatly compromised and the world has a right to call us hypocrites.

Paula has been the President's personal pastor and spiritual advisor for some time and recently joined the White House executive staff as the leader of the Faith and Opportunity Initiative. The Name of Christ is being profaned over and over in events and press releases, and too many of God's people are endorsing it by either their silence, or actual affirmation. Let me be clear; *the president's personal pastor, the chairman of the presidents spiritual advisory council, and the White House Executive leader of the Faith and Opportunity Initiative, is clearly not teaching anything close to Christianity, and the fruit of her life and teaching show that she is not a believer in biblical Christianity. It is an entirely different religion altogether.* Frankly, it would be better to have a representative who admits they are from another religion, than one who presents something that is absolutely not Christianity as if it is. I want to repeat myself to be clear. The main problem is not Paula White. There are many prosperity/NAR/Dominion heretics out there, and many of the people you see laying hands on the president and praying are of that brood. The problem is that she can be endorsed, accepted, and even celebrated by so many professing believers who really should know better.

Lance Wallnau is a leading voice these days for the seven mountain mandate. He seems pretty crazy to most people, but it is important to understand that he has a HUGE following, and is quite prominent in American politics. This fellow does a pretty good job of explaining it:

<https://youtu.be/n95TKkJL5RQ>

If you want, you can watch the whole conference that is being referenced in that video at the next link, but it is certainly not necessary. It contains a lot of false teaching and craziness. You will notice though, that any time Lance needs to make a "leap" to connect things together or to apply something to scripture that clearly is not there, it is always because "God told him something." I believe the Lord speaks to us, but not in the way that NAR/Dominion folks often use that as a way to add extrabiblical material to the Word of God.

Entire conference— <https://youtu.be/QyYwYaINQdE>

One of the greatest theological errors here is the idea that Old Testament prophecies were directed at America. This would be a laughable issue if it were not for the fact that many people believe that at varying levels. Here is an article with some good information on the Seven Mountain Mandate:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/seven-mountain-mandate.html>

To really understand Dominionism, it is important to know about the post-millennial view of eschatology (end times theory). Post-Millennialism teaches that the world will get better and better as the Gospel spreads until it is at a good enough state for Jesus to return. Dominionism is kind of a *militant version* of post-millennialism. It is all about invading these “spheres” or “mountains” to take control and basically bring about the return of Christ. This is an end times theory we can outright reject biblically. Scripture is clear that things will get worse as we approach the return of Jesus Christ. This is only one example: *And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.* Matthew 24:4-14 NKJV

Besides the fact that we can clearly see the world is not going to improve until Christ returns, it is important to note that this was *never supposed to be our primary mission anyway*. If you watched the Lance Wallnau videos, you may have noticed that he mentioned one of the key pillars of the NAR and Dominionism. ***It is this idea that when Jesus said to “go and make disciples of all nations” in the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20), He meant the nations in the sense of governments and civic organizations, and NOT the actual people in those nations.*** Never mind that Jesus never focused on that. Nor did the apostles that followed Him. Seriously, in any context of scripture, that view is ridiculous, and since it actually perverts the command of Jesus to His Church, it is heresy, pure and simple.

So someone will ask, “aren't we as Christians supposed to be influencing culture?” Yes, of course. *We influence culture first and foremost by spreading the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, and also by speaking up and standing for the morality and truth that He taught us in ALL of scripture.* Encapsulated in the two greatest commandments:

Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Matthew 22:36-40 KJV

The great commission does not mean, "go into all the world and take over the governments so I can return."

Now, I am sure a number of you are thinking, "of course that is ridiculous." Though we may not believe entirely what these "prophets" are saying, we need to look within ourselves and ask if we have bought into some of it.

What the scripture *does* say, is this: *"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:13-16 ESV*

The very fact that the "city on a hill" phrase has been used so many times in politics and in nation building tells us that this concept has been somewhat ingrained in our society. The "city on a hill" in this scripture is us, not a nation. It is the church of the living God, and not an earthly "realm" or government. In fact, what inevitably happens when the church pours itself into the government is not the church influencing that government, but rather the government influencing the church. It has played out all through Christian history, and is playing out right before our eyes now. *The church gives up its saltiness because it thinks it will put it in a position to be saltier later.* It does not work that way. That is worldly pragmatics, which is something I plan to speak on at a later date. The idea that the ends justifies the means. Jesus did not teach us to live that way.

On that note, there are many teachings that have to do with trying to set the USA up as the example of Christianity. Now, please understand that I would love to see the nation being governed by godly principles and godly people. That is nowhere near happening now and I honestly do not believe it will, but if you want to have optimism that it could happen I won't argue with that. The great problem in the sense of the church and the false teachings of the NAR/Dominion guys, is that they teach we are going to infiltrate through compromise and somehow take over these "spheres." A big one being government. Once again, you simply do not see this teaching in scripture, and you do not see it in the life and mission of Jesus or His apostles.

Rick Joyner is a leading false prophet and advisor to a number of politicians who take the “evangelical” label. Rick is another one with whom a small dose of discernment should raise many red flags. This brings me back to “the power of wanting to believe something is true.” There are quite a few professing believers who subscribe to his “prophecies” in spite of the fact that he has made so many that have not come to pass. These modern “prophets” seem to think it is just about getting a percentage correct, and yet they speak each one as if it is completely authoritative. Rick has prophesied that the national debt will be erased in some sort of American “day of jubilee.” Well, most of us would like that to be true. However, there is no reason to believe it coming from a man who prophecies fantasies all the time. As long as he prophesies things people would like to believe he can keep momentum. Rick’s primary “prophetic revelation” in recent years has to do with a second civil/revolutionary war. He is a popular figure in the NAR/Dominion world and this fits pretty well with the whole “takeover” concept espoused there. This is a video of him explaining it on Sid Roth’s “It’s Supernatural” show. Frankly, if someone is on Sid Roth’s show that should be a potential red flag in itself. You can watch the entire video if you want but it is not necessary. The point is, he says this war includes cities burning and much violence. He also says it is right and it needs to happen. God wants it. The grand question is, “who are the two sides in this war?” Are we, as Christians going to be out there leading it? Who exactly are we fighting against? Is that what God calls us to do as believers?

https://youtu.be/Hs0IF3w_5eM

Rick Joyner has many crazy “prophecies” and as I said before, it only takes an ounce of scriptural discernment to see through him. That said, many people who *should have an ounce of scriptural discernment do not see through him*. I truly believe that comes from the “power of wanting to believe something is true.” Many people have so much momentum and so much belief invested in all this dominion stuff that they are willing to believe anything that they feel is based on it. Even if they have never heard the words “Dominion Theology” they are living it out in their beliefs. We see this in the support of politicians all the time. All they have to do is claim they are Christian and people get excited. Jesus said we would know them by their fruit.

I mainly included this information on Rick Joyner because I believe he is one to watch out for. As Dominionism and the NAR get more and more popular, I think he will only become more prominent. It is also important to understand that a whole lot of people trust these guys. I can hear it in the speeches given by numerous politicians who profess to be believers. It is ingrained, in various levels, in western culture.

Heralds of Heresy Part 3

New Age Churches

The audio for the third part of the series, "New Age Churches," can be found at <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=11820223527950>

It would be easy to dismiss Paula White, Lance Wallnau and Rick Joyner if they are not household names in your circles. They are far more popular than most outside of their circles would imagine and their teachings have influenced modern "Christianity" and politics to a significant degree. Along with that, there are huge movements propagating NAR and Dominion theology who don't necessarily trumpet their NAR credentials. As I said earlier in this writing, the actual doctrine and teaching that is put forth is more important than the labels. It is interesting to me though, that so many groups, some who are not directly connected with the others, are bringing forth the same false doctrines. Twisting the same scriptures in the same way. This leads me to believe there is indeed spiritual power behind these movements, but it is not true to scripture. We should consider that it might not be the Spirit we are thinking of.

Now, again I want to be clear. I am not saying everyone involved in these movements is some kind of satanic high priest masquerading as a Christian. Nor am I saying that all of the members of these groups and churches are unsaved cultists. Many of them are probably just sincerely deceived. Many of them might be born-again believers in Christ Jesus. In a way, that causes me to be even more concerned because believers are being seduced and deceived. I believe that many of the leaders themselves think they are doing the right thing. I was once led off myself (to a mild degree) for a time when there was a surge in this stuff in the early 90's during the time of the "Toronto Blessing." I know what it is like to want to believe something is true so much that you unknowingly turn off your discernment meter, or simply turn down the sensitivity. I understand the passion to see a true move of the Holy Spirit in the church. I have that passion, and it is good, but it can also make us susceptible to something that is false if we do not exercise biblical discernment.

Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. 2 Timothy 2:14-18 NKJV

So there is Paul naming names and warning people, and about what? Some guy was running around saying that the resurrection had taken place already. What resurrection? It was a concept from Gnosticism where our resurrection was purely spiritual and had already happened. Due to this teaching some had strayed from the faith. So he is stating the importance of rightly dividing the Word of Truth. Today there are too many who don't even read the Word of Truth on a regular basis. They do not "study to show themselves approved." There are those who read it and don't take it seriously. There are those who read and know what it says, and yet an experience can trump the scripture. A good speaker can trump the scripture. Or "the desire to believe something is true" can trump the scripture.

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boast-ers, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godli-ness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 2 Timothy 3:1-5 NKJV

I think many read that scripture and see "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God", and they think of very dark definitions of pleasure. I actually think it is just about feeling good, worldly pleasure and comfort. Good feelings. Things that sound good and feel good. A Jesus who is all about you!

Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flat-tering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. Romans 16:17-20 NKJV

At the heart of all heresy, is a lack of knowledge of, or a lack of true value for, scripture. There also needs to be a respect for Christian doctrinal orthodoxy. This is not an issue of ritual. It is the fact that generations of brilliant and godly people have studied the Bible and worked to teach it in truth. Although there are obviously disagreements on some issues, there is also a broad consensus on the foundations of scriptural truth. This is often scoffed at these days. Biblical scholarship seems dry to people. If we understand the power of deep study in God's Word we will not think that way. If we truly desire to follow God's Word we will value it. Nowadays, someone can just say things that sound good and people accept it as gospel. Especially if there is good music playing in the background.

I want to also point out that this is not some anti-charismatic rant. I am charismatic. The word simply means you believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit and that they are for today, as opposed to a cessationist, who would hold that the gifts of the Spirit ended with the Apostles of the Lamb. These Dominion/NAR churches are generally seen as charismatic, or hyper-charismatic, but that is not the problem. The problem is that false doctrine is being preached. It is also not an issue of style. It is not about whether people jump up and down, dance around, or any of that.

At the time of this writing, Bethel Church (based in Redding, California) is the most prominent of these NAR/Dominion churches. I know that many people love Bethel, love Bill Johnson, and love the music. I get that. It can sound inspiring and many of us long for a true move of the Holy Spirit in our churches. So much so, that we can be fooled by that which is not authentic. Please watch this next video by Mike Winger. Mike is a very thoughtful and sound teacher. I would say that my one concern with this video is that he is too gracious when it comes to false doctrine and false teachers. Certainly more gracious than the scripture allows when speaking of those things. He does call it out though, and hits on a number of the core issues with the movement. I also want to say that these things do not only apply to Bethel Church, but to a number of up and coming post-modernist/NAR/Dominionist churches who either dabble heavily in, or outright push, new-age philosophies rather than teaching grounded in the Word of God. Including but not limited to, Elevation Church and Hillsong.

Once again, my primary goal is not to simply say, "here are five people you shouldn't listen to," but rather to alert you to false doctrines that are surging in popularity so that you can easily recognize them. Also, so that we as Bible believers do not promote the same false doctrines or teachers.

Here is Mike's video: <https://youtu.be/r3tEv260MTU>

As I said, Mike does a good job of covering many of the issues. There should have been some "wow!" moments as you watched it. Again, I want to stress that these doctrines are not limited to Bill Johnson and Bethel Church. If that was the case, I would be less likely to directly address it. This has grown into a global movement effecting millions of people.

As I have stressed throughout this study series, one of the most troublesome issues of these teachings is the lowering of Jesus through things like the Kenosis theory, which means that Jesus Christ was emptied of some or all of His deity in coming to earth as a man. The concept and motivation for this false teaching is to undergird the philosophies that many of these people put forth saying that Jesus was little more than a model for us to follow, and we can be just like Him. This flies in the face of scripture showing that Jesus was and is, fully God. Rather than list those again here I will refer you to the first part of this study and the first message in the series, which can be found at <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=182038377553>. It may be beneficial to listen to it again, as it covers some of the foundational issues of who Jesus is.

Here are some more resources that should provide further insight:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Bethel-Church-Redding.html>

<https://www.9marks.org/review/book-review-when-heaven-invades-earth-by-bill-johnson/>

I have more resources I can share, but that should be enough to at least make you think. I want to get to a huge concern, that has gone unnoticed by many people, and that is the Passion "Translation" of the Bible. I use the word "translation" very loosely here, and it would be fitting to use it sarcastically. This is a "bible" written by Brian Simmons, one of the Bethel Church "prophets." It is very much a sectarian writing that clearly supports the teachings and emphasis' of not only Bethel Church, but the NAR/Dominion movement as a whole. It is roughly 50% longer than other versions and that is due to a mountain of added material. That "discernment meter" I have talked about should be sounding an alarm in your head right now. Brian Simmons claims that all the additional stuff, as well as a plethora of changes to the text, were directly "downloaded" to him from God. Is your discernment meter going off yet? Yes, it's horrible. In this video Mike Winger, in his sometimes overly gracious way, does a good job of giving an overview:

<https://youtu.be/CvllDpjVyCs>

This is a terrible and somewhat terrifying thing folks. One of the saddest realizations of this for me is that I believe even 20 years ago the average professing Christian would have instantly seen this as a massive heresy. Now people are like, "oh cool, Bethel Church Bible." It is quickly becoming the unofficial NAR Bible, and is written to validate their own false doctrines. What better way for the enemy to pervert the church than to pervert the Word of God? This is an example of a church group teaching things that don't line up with scripture, so they just write new "scripture."

That brings me to something that hangs over this whole new-age/NAR/Dominion theology. It prepares people to be ripe for an antichrist. The "feel good, anything goes" philosophy that plays very fast and loose with scripture is dangerous, to say the least. It sets people up to believe more and more false doctrine, because the foundation and supremacy of scripture is simply not there.

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12 NKJV

Some things to note in that section of scripture. The coming of the lawless one will be with *all power, signs, and wonders*. These are the things many people are chasing after today and are the hallmarks of NAR/Dominion groups. Could this be the "strong delusion" that God said He would send? It is certainly a strong delusion, if not the strong delusion. The scripture says it is because people "*did not receive the love of the truth.*" **Every heretical teaching I have written about here exists because people are not valuing scriptural truth over feelings and philosophies.** They are fueled by the "power of wanting to believe something is true," rather than by the foundation of the absolute Word of God.

If I were to walk up to you today and simply ask, in regard to the subject matter presented in this writing, "are you deceived?" what would you say? You might answer, "no, I am not," to which I might ask, "How do you know?" Hopefully you would say it is because you have dug into the Word of God and found the things you believe to be absolutely grounded in scripture. Not because someone presented those concepts in a very compelling way, or because you *want* something to be true.

I hope this has been, at the very least, food for thought. My deep prayer is that our eyes will be opened. I knew there were issues with all of these things before I really dove into the studies on it several months ago, but I had no idea how strong the delusion was. This study in no way covers all of the false doctrines and concerns with these groups. The rabbit hole just keeps going and going. ***My eyes have been opened to something that should not be met with fear by those who have and live by the truth of God's Word, but rather met with a sober wisdom and stalwart commitment to remain true to scripture.*** We must call out heresy when it rears its ugly head, and examine ourselves to see if we have fallen victim on any level to vain babblings and new-age philosophies. These things are not limited to NAR/Dominion groups. We need to be grounded in God's Word so we can see the lies coming from any angle. There is no substitute for the knowledge of what the Bible actually *says*, rather than just what others *say about it*.

I truly love you all and I just want to say this has been a tough one for me. Partly because of the depth of the deception out there. It is shocking and sobering to see how God's Word is being twisted and misapplied. How Jesus is being depicted so far below His true majesty. It has also been difficult because it is my nature to deal with things that are positive, and no doubt there are some of you who even after reading this, listening to the messages, and going over the various resources, will not take it as seriously as you should, possibly because you want to "stay positive." Jesus would call these things out with stern rebuke. It is as simple as that.

This is a drastic oversimplification, but if I was in a room with a bunch of people and they were saying things about any of you that were degrading and/or untrue, I would defend you. I would hope that in the same situation you would defend me. You are my friends. *How much more* should we defend the King of kings, our Messiah, our dear Savior, when He is maligned and misrepresented? *How much more* should it tear at our very soul to see our blessed Savior demeaned, devalued, and His sacrifice cheapened through vain philosophy?

In closing, I will leave you with this.....

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Titus 2:11-14 NKJV

Be blessed my friends.

Because He lives!

Benje Graves