

# Cutting Straight the Word of the Truth on Heresy, Idolatry & Fornication (1)

## What is the Real Meaning of Heresy according to the Bible?

In the New Testament, one of the items among the believers and members of the Body that is considered an intolerable sin warranting quarantine from the Body is heresy. Many Christians know that heresy refers to something negative. Even some among us in the recovery may think that heresy is simply something against the truth revealed in the holy Word. Others may know that it is a teaching that denies the person of Christ. Perhaps not many, however, are aware of the full meaning of heresy according to the Bible.

In Greek, the noun form of the word heresy is *hairesis*. It appeared nine times in the New Testament. The adjective form *hairetikos* appeared once in Titus 3:10. From the context of these verses, we find that heresy is very much related to division. In fact, heresy and division are the same word in Greek. The Greek word in its prominent sense has this notion in all its uses in the New Testament. Both brothers Nee and Lee pointed out that to set up a division that issues in a sect and to seduce people away from the Lord are both heresy.

From the excerpts in this article taken from the ministry of brothers Nee and Lee, along with the comments of other renowned Bible expositors, we shall see heresy in relation to division. By studying the teaching of these brothers, may we be constituted with the truth to see and be kept from anything heretical that damages and divides His Body, and from division-makers who are quarantined.

### The Twofold Meaning of Heresy in the New Testament According to Bible Expository Dictionaries

Authoritative Bible expository dictionaries agree with brothers Nee and Lee on the matter that the Greek word for heresy denotes more than just different teachings, but also teachings which stemmed from self-willed opinion that resulted in division. To site a few:

“Hairesis denotes (a) ‘a choosing, choice’ (from *haireomai*, ‘to choose’); then, ‘that which is chosen,’ and hence, ‘an opinion,’ especially a self-willed opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects, Gal 5:20 (marg., ‘parties’); such erroneous opinions are frequently the outcome of personal preference or the prospect of advantage; see 2 Pet. 2:1, where ‘destructive’ (RV) signifies leading to ruin; some assign even this to 1(b); in the papyri the prevalent meaning is ‘choice’ (Moulton and Milligan, Vocab.); (b) ‘a sect;’ this secondary meaning, resulting from 1(a), is the dominating significance in the NT, Acts 5:17; Acts 15:5; Acts 24:5,14; Acts 26:5; Acts 28:22; ‘heresies’ in 1 Cor. 11:19.” (*W. E. Vine, Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*)

“Heresy - from a Greek word signifying

1. a choice,
2. the opinion chosen, and
3. the sect holding the opinion. In the Acts of the Apostles (Rev. 5:17; Rev. 15:5; Rev. 24:5, 14; Rev. 26:5) it denotes a sect, without reference to its character. Elsewhere, however, in the New Testament it has a different meaning attached to it. Paul ranks ‘heresies’ with crimes and seditions (Gal. 5:20). This word also denotes divisions or schisms in the church (1 Cor. 11:19). In Titus 3:10 a ‘heretical person’ is one who follows his own self-willed ‘questions,’ and who is to be avoided. Heresies thus came to signify self-chosen doctrines not emanating from God (2 Pet. 2:1).” (*Matthew G. Eaton, Eaton’s Bible Dictionary*)

## The Twofold Meaning of Heresy in the New Testament According to Bible Expositors

Renowned Bible expositors likewise share the same notion that heresies are teachings from someone who obstinately persists in his own opinions that is independent of the teaching of the church, which disquiets the church and results in parties and division in the church. This person's faith is subverted and should be shunned, avoided, rejected, and left alone:

"An heretic (after a first and second admonition) reject — Avoid, leave to himself... here it evidently means, a man that obstinately persists in contending about 'foolish questions,' and thereby occasions strife and animosities, schisms and parties in the church. This, and this alone, is an heretic in the scripture sense; and his punishment likewise is here fixed. Shun, avoid him, leave him to himself." (John Wesley, John Wesley's Explanatory Notes)

"When a man tried to set up his own opinions, and by that means to form parties in the assembly, after having admonished him once and a second time, he was to be rejected; his faith was subverted. He sins, he is judged of himself." (John N. Darby, John Darby's Synopsis)

"Heresy is a transcript of haireisis, the primary meaning of which is choice; so that a heresy is, strictly, the choice of an opinion contrary to that usually received; thence transferred to the body of those who profess such opinions, and therefore a sect... Parties into which divisions crystallize." (Marvin Vincent, Vincent's New Testament Word Studies)

"An heretical man (one who founds or belongs to an haireisis—a self-chosen and divergent form of religious belief or practice). When St. Paul wrote 1 Cor., these forms had already begun to assume consistency and to threaten danger: see 1 Cor. 11:19. We meet with them also in Gal. 5:20, both times as haireomai, divisions gathering round forms of individual self-will." (Henry Alford, The New Testament for English Readers)

"heretic--Greek 'heresy,' originally meant a division resulting from individual self-will; the individual doing and teaching what he chose, independent of the teaching and practice of the Church." (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, Commentary on the Whole Bible)

"The ministers of the word must at once cast off heretics, that is, those who stubbornly and seditiously disquiet the Church, and will pay no attention to ecclesiastical admonitions." (The Geneva Study Bible)

"An heretic — A divider, or schismatic. Anyone who preaches doctrines which divide the household of faith is a heretic. So is any schismatic or factious man." (Barton W. Johnson, B.W. Johnson's Bible Commentary)

"A man that is an heretic,.... An heretic, according to the notation of the word, is either one that makes choice of an opinion upon his own judgment, contrary to the generally received sense of the churches of Christ, and prefers it to theirs, and obstinately persists in it; separates from them, forms a party, and sets himself at the head of them, whom he has drawn into the same way of thinking with himself..." (John Gill, John Gill's Exposition of the Bible)

"The verb of the same stem means 'the act of taking, of choosing.' Thus the noun means 'that which is chosen.' It can refer therefore to a chosen course of thought or action, hence one's chosen opinion, and according to the context, an opinion varying from the true exposition of the Word of God, in the latter sense, heresy. It also refers to a body of men separating themselves from others and following their own tenets. The word could have incidental reference to the Judaizers and their teachings." (K.S. Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament)

## The Twofold Meaning of Heresy in the New Testament According to Brothers Nee and Lee

According to the Scriptures, the Greek word for heresy is *haireisis*. Heresy firstly means the causing of divisions that form sects in the Body of Christ, and secondly it means the holding of a teaching that seduces people and leads them away from the Lord our Savior:

“The word *division* or *sect* is *haireisis* in Greek. It is used nine times in the Bible. It is used six times in Acts, and it is translated ‘sect,’ such as the sect of the Sadducees, the sect of the Pharisees, and the Nazarene sect. It is used three times in the Epistles.” (*W. Nee, Messages for Building Up New Believers, Vol. 3, Chapter 12, Section 7, LSM*)

“To know what heresy is, we must go to the New Testament and understand the meaning and usage of this word in the Greek language. We cannot derive the meaning of the word *heresy* simply by studying a lexicon. We must know both the meaning of the Greek word and its usage in the New Testament. The Greek word *haireisis* is used nine times in the New Testament (Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5, 14; 26:5; 28:22; 1 Cor. 11:19; Gal. 5:20; 2 Pet. 2:1). The adjective form, *hairetikos*, is found in Titus 3:10. In most of the occurrences of the word *haireisis* the meaning is ‘sect.’”

“Therefore, considering all the nine occurrences of this word in the New Testament, we may say that heresy firstly means the causing of divisions that form sects in the Body of Christ, and secondly it means the holding of a teaching that seduces people and leads them away from the Lord, the Savior. Therefore, to set up a division that issues in a sect and to seduce people away from the Lord are both heresy.” (*W. Lee, Young People's Training, Chapter 8, Section 4, LSM*)

### Heresy in Titus 3:10

Titus 3:10 tells us to refuse the factious (sectarian) man who causes divisions by forming parties in the church according to his own opinion. In order to maintain the one fellowship of the apostles in the church, a factious and divisive person should be rejected after a first and second admonition. This is done to stop any fellowship with a contagiously divisive person for the benefit of the church:

“Some say that in Titus 3:10 ‘a factious [sectarian] man’ should be translated ‘a man who teaches heresy’ and that this expression does not refer to a divisive person. But in Greek this expression denotes a person who holds an opinion or a different doctrine that tends toward division. Thus, the English versions translate this as (1) a factious man—American Standard Version, New American Standard Bible, Marshall's Interlinear Greek-English New Testament; (2) a man who is factious—Revised Standard Version, Amplified Bible; (3) a heretical sectarian and cause of divisions—Amplified Bible; (4) a heretical person causing divisions—Wuest; (5) a sectarian—W. J. Conybeare; (6) a man who causes divisions—R. F. Weymouth; (7) a factious person—James Moffatt; (8) a sectarian man—Concordant Literal New Testament, Berry's Interlinear Greek-English New Testament; (9) a factious person—Berkeley Version; (10) a heretical man, i.e., one given to ‘lift up’ opinions, sound or unsound, and an unstable, unsettled individual who wishes to form sects—Young's Translation; (11) causing division by a party spirit, factious—Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words; (12) a divisive person—New International Version. Most of the above translations are authorities.” (*W. Lee, The Ministry of the New Testament and the Teaching and Fellowship of the Apostles, Chapter 2, Section 6, LSM*)

### Heresy in Acts 5:17 and Acts 24:5

In the book of Acts, the word heresy is used to describe a separate group which was considered by others as a sect:

“Acts 5:17 speaks of ‘the sect (*haireisis*) of the Sadducees.’ In Acts 24:5 Paul was accused of being ‘a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.’ Here, a small number from the Jewish religion

followed Jesus to form another group which was considered by others as a sect.” (W. Lee, *Young People's Training, Chapter 8, Section 4, LSM*)

### Heresy in Galatians 5:20

The word heresy means “divisions due to different doctrines.” In Galatians we see that such division is heresy and it is one of the works of the flesh:

“Galatians 5:19-20 says, ‘The works of the flesh are manifest, which are such things as...outbursts of anger, factions, divisions, sects [hairesis].’ One item of the works of the flesh is sects. The Chinese Bible translates it ‘heresy.’ In Greek this word is the same word as ‘division’ or ‘sect.’ Here we see what division is. Division is a work of the flesh. Paul was telling not only the Galatians and the Corinthians, but also you and me, that division is not a spiritual thing but a work of the flesh. Paul gave an itemized description of all the works of the flesh. He spoke of fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, etc., and he also spoke of division.” (W. Nee, *Messages for Building Up New Believers, Vol. 3, Chapter 12, Section 7, LSM*)

“Galatians 5:19-21 speaks concerning the works of the flesh. One of the items is sects or heresies. The Greek word for ‘heresies’ in the Chinese Union Version means ‘divisions due to different doctrines.’ Therefore, any act of causing division because of different doctrines is the work of the flesh.” (W. Lee, *Lessons for New Believers, Chapter 15, Section 4, LSM*)

### Heresy in 1 Peter 2:1

According to the apostle Peter, heresies are destructive and damnable as they are different teachings by the false prophets who lead the believers away from the faith in the Lord and consequently away from the church:

“The word *hairesis* is also used in 2 Peter 2:1, which says, ‘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.’ According to this verse, heresy is a teaching that leads you away from the faith in the Lord.” (W. Lee, *Young People's Training, Chapter 8, Section 4, LSM*)

### Heresy in 2 John 7-11

The apostle John used the same Greek word for heresy to describe the heretical teachers who deny the incarnation of Christ. They are called antichrists – those who we should not have anything to do with. Any compromise in dealing with this kind of heresy should be abandoned:

“The Apostle John charged the believers not to receive the heretical antichrists into their houses and even not to say to the heretics, ‘Rejoice!’ (v. 10). To say ‘Rejoice’ to someone is to greet him. He who says to these heretics, ‘Rejoice,’ shares in their heretical, evil works (v. 11). This is a strong quarantine exercised over the heretics who do not confess the incarnation of Christ, who came in the flesh....” (W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 10: The Eldership and the God-Ordained Way (2), Chapter 5, Section 14, LSM*)

“We also need to quarantine the heretical ones, those who go beyond the teaching concerning Christ (2 John 7-11). According to 2 John 10, we should not receive such persons into our home, and even we should not greet them. This also is to quarantine them.” (W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 10: The Eldership and the God-Ordained Way (2), Chapter 6, Section 12, LSM*)

## Division is Heretical and Sectarian

The word heresy refers to “division” and “sect.” A sect is a party, and a party is a division. A divisive or factious person is a heretical sectarian person who causes divisions by forming parties in the church according to his own opinions:

“Division is versus oneness. In order for us to practice the oneness of the Body of Christ, we need to realize that division is heretical, sectarian (Gal. 5:20b-21a). We need to see the real meaning of the word heresy in the Scriptures. Some of us may feel that heresy is anything against the truth revealed in the holy Word.... But the word heresy is used to refer to only two things. First, any teaching that denies the person of Christ in His divinity as God or in His humanity as man is heretical. Christ is the complete God and the perfect man. Second, the word *heresy* also refers to division. Galatians 5:19-21a says, ‘And the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, angers, faction, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, carousings...’ In Galatians 5:20 the Greek word for ‘parties,’ *hairesis*, is literally *heresies*, which means schools of opinions (Darby’s New Translation), sects. A sect is a party, and a party is a division. Divisions and parties, sects, are works of the flesh, and ‘those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God’ (v. 21b). Second Peter 2:1 uses the word *hairesis* in referring to false teachers who bring in destructive heresies, denying the Master who bought them. Titus 3:10 uses the same Greek word for heresy in its adjectival form, *hairetikon*, in referring to a factious man. This is a heretical, sectarian man who causes divisions by forming parties in the church according to his own opinions.” (W. Lee, *Messages to the Trainees in Fall 1990, Chapter 18, Section 8, LSM*)

### Two Items Considered as Heretical in the New Testament

Denying the person of Christ and division are the only two items that can be considered as heretical. Heresy and division insult the headship and the Body of Christ. If we do not quarantine the heretical person but instead receive him into our home or greet him, we are in effect taking part in his evil works:

“Denying the person of Christ and division are the only two items that can be considered as heretical because they are damaging to the uttermost. Denying the person of Christ insults Christ as the Head and denies Him as the Head. Division dismembers the Body of Christ. One heresy damages the Head, and the other heresy damages the Body. These heresies are intolerable in the eyes of God and should be utterly rejected by us. Second John says that if anyone denies the Lord’s person in His divinity or humanity, we should not receive him into our home or even greet him (vv. 7, 9-11). If we either receive him into our home or greet him, we share in his evil works. Regarding the divisive ones, Paul strongly charges us to ‘turn away from them’ (Rom. 16:17).

“We saw in the previous message that only two things are considered as heresy—the denial of Christ’s person and the making of divisions. Besides these two things, we have to learn to tolerate, to embrace, all the things with which we may not agree. There is no excuse for anyone to make a division. We must learn to keep the oneness and learn to live Christ.” (W. Lee, *Messages to the Trainees in Fall 1990, Chapter 18, Section 8, LSM*)

### The Three Constituents of Destructive Heresies Brought in by the False Teachers

Opinion, divisions, and sects are the three constituents of heresy. These heresies of destruction were brought in by the false teachers, who aim to destroy the church rather than to build it:

“‘Heresy’ is an anglicized Greek word, *hairesis*, which means choices of opinion of doctrine different from that usually accepted, ‘self-chosen doctrines alien from the truth’ (Alford), thus causing division and producing sects. This word is also used in Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5, 14; 26:5; 28:22; 1 Corinthians 11:19; Galatians 5:20; and Titus 3:10 in the adjective form, *hairetikon*, heretical. Here it denotes the false and heretical doctrines brought in by the false teachers, the heretics....”

“Heresy involves three matters: opinion, the causing of divisions, and the producing of sects. Therefore, opinion, divisions, and sects are the three constituents of heresy. Heresy, of course, is not constructive. Instead of building up the church, heresy destroys the church. For this reason, Peter speaks of destructive heresies, or heresies of destruction.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of 2 Peter, Chapter 9, Section 1, LSM*)

### Beware of the Masks of the Divisive Ones

The ones who make divisions are very aggressive in contacting the saints. They may come to the saints with kindness and spirituality to mask their divisive intent. We need to beware of the masks of the divisive ones:

“These two matters—division and apostasy [or heresy]—go together... We ourselves may not have anything to do with either division or apostasy, but this does not mean there will not be any problem among the saints regarding these matters. There may be a problem, especially with division. The ones who make divisions are very aggressive in contacting the saints. Furthermore, they may put on a ‘mask’ and try to entice you by appearing to be nice, humble, and loving. Certain divisive ones have been practicing this among us. Suppose someone comes to you in a ‘humble’ manner, saying, ‘I would like to have some fellowship with you. I have not seen you for a long time, and I miss you very much. How have you been doing?’ If someone approaches you in this way, you need to be careful. The apparent kindness, love, and humility of such a person may actually be a mask to hide his divisive intent. We need to beware of the masks of the divisive ones.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of Deuteronomy, Chapter 13, Section 2, LSM*)

### Avoiding Contacts with the Heretical, Divisive Ones

The heretical and divisive ones always carry with them germs of division or heresy. We must hate and avoid having any contact with them so that we will not be infected with the disease even unconsciously and become cold toward the recovery and toward the church life:

“In Deuteronomy 12 and 13 we see that we must hate and avoid both division and apostasy. In order to do this, we need to be discerning in our contact with people, as indicated in chapter fourteen. Certain ones may be carrying the germs of division or heresy. If we contact such ones without discernment, we will be infected, perhaps unconsciously, for these germs are very contagious. Once a saint has been infected in this way, he will become cold toward the recovery and toward the church life. Therefore, in order to avoid division and apostasy, we should be careful in contacting people.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of Deuteronomy, Chapter 14, Section 1, LSM*)

“Furthermore, if they become companions of heretics, that companionship will corrupt good morals. This principle applies to us in the church life today.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of 1 Corinthians, Chapter 67, Section 2, LSM*)

### Not Receiving the Heretics and Their Contagious Heresy

We must not confuse brotherly love with indiscreet receiving of the heretics. We should have nothing to do with such persons and their contagious heresy:

“Do not think that because we are told to love others we should receive a heretic. Concerning this, love does not avail. John says clearly that we should not receive an antichrist, a false prophet, into our house, and we should not even say to him, ‘Rejoice!’ The point here is that we should have nothing to do with such persons and their contagious heresy.” (W. Lee, *The Conclusion of the New Testament (Msgs. 221-239), Chapter 4, Section 5, LSM*)

## Rejecting the Heretical, Divisive Ones and Their Mixed Truths

Most heretical teachings are mixed with truths and packaged in a subtle way so as to deceive some into believing and accepting them to be truth, thereby creating factions among the saints. We should learn to not touch these heresies, flee from them, reject them, and turn away from them altogether.

“No heresy is one hundred percent heresy; every one is a mixture of heresy and truth. Satan would not be so foolish as to come up with something that is pure heresy. Most of the time heretical beliefs are mixed in with the best truths. When a man receives the truths, he takes in heresies at the same time. It is not easy for young believers to discern these heresies. We should learn to not touch heresies. We should flee from them and reject them. Only those who are sober will save themselves from danger; those who are curious will always suffer the poisonous sting.

“No young Christian can deal with heresies. The best thing for a young Christian to do is to turn away from them altogether.” (W. Nee, Messages for Building Up New Believers, Vol. 3, Chapter 20, Section 1, LSM)

## Not Speaking Beyond the Boundary of God’s Established, Spoken Word

Clearly, anyone who preaches a different teaching other than the apostles’ teaching which is based on the Scriptures goes beyond the boundary of God’s established, spoken Word is heretical:

“If anyone goes beyond this limit, he is a heretic.... Brothers and sisters, do not allow anyone to lightly claim that he is an apostle or a prophet. If a man goes beyond the boundary of God’s established, spoken Word in his speaking, his speaking is heretical and devilish.” (W. Lee, The Ministry of God’s Word, Chapter 5, Section 4, LSM)

## Heresy of Division on the Ground of Doctrine

Heresy does not necessarily convey the thought of erroneous teaching but rather of division on the ground of doctrine:

“In the Greek the word rendered ‘heresies’ in Galatians 5:20 [KJV] does not necessarily convey the thought of error, but rather of division on the ground of doctrine. The Interlinear New Testament translates it as ‘sects,’ while Darby in his New Translation renders it ‘schools of opinion.’ The whole thought here is not of the difference between truth and error, but of division based upon doctrine. My teaching may be right or it may be wrong, but if I make it a cause of division, then I am guilty of the ‘heresy’ spoken of here.” (W. Nee, The Normal Christian Church Life, Chapter 5, Section 9, LSM)

“Paul uses the word *hairesis* strongly in Galatians 5:20, ranking heresy with works of the flesh, such as adultery, fornication, and witchcraft. Immediately before speaking of heresies, Paul mentions ‘hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions.’ Hence, wrath, strife, seditions, and heresies are related to each other. First we have wrath, then strife, and after strife we have seditions. Following these are heresies. This means that if we strive and fight with others, the result will be divisions that issue in sects. Thus, in this verse, Darby translates *hairesis* as ‘schools of opinion.’ To have a school of opinion means to hold an opinion that causes you to be separated and divided from others and to form into a sect.” (W. Lee, Young People’s Training, Chapter 8, Section 4, LSM)

## The Need to Quarantine the Heretical, Divisive Ones

According to the apostles’ teaching, heresies, along with divisions and fornications, are intolerable and seriously requires a quarantine by the church:

“Among all the tests of the oneness of the Body and of the one accord of the church listed above, only three—divisions, heresies, and fornication—are intolerable and need a quarantine by the churches and the saints according to the apostles' teaching.” (W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 10, Chapter 5, Section 20, LSM*)

“We should refuse such a one after a first and second admonition, knowing that such a one has been perverted and sins, being self-condemned. To refuse such a one is to exercise to quarantine him. When a believer is divisive, factious, sectarian, he becomes contagious; therefore, we need to refuse him, that is, to quarantine him.” (W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 10: The Eldership and the God-Ordained Way (2), Chapter 5, Section 12, LSM*)

“This turning away is to exercise to quarantine the divisive, sectarian ones in order to protect the saints from being contaminated. The divisive ones are very contagious. Anyone who contacts them will be ‘infected.’ This would not be good for them or for others. Thus, today we should carry out what is termed in medicine a quarantine.” (W. Lee, *The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy, Chapter 3, Section 2, LSM*)

“I do feel that all the churches must do something to help the saints to know the real situation in the recovery. The saints must be helped to realize that a ‘contagious disease’ is now among us, and, as in the field of medicine, we must quarantine the diseased ones. To quarantine does not mean that we do not love those who are ‘ill,’ nor does it mean that we cut them off. It means that we do something to preserve both the contagious ones and the rest of the Body.” (W. Lee, *The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy, Chapter 4, Section 8, LSM*)

## Summary and Conclusion

In our previous article [“What is the Scriptural Principle of Quarantine Applied to a Divisive Person?”](#) based on Romans 16:17 and Titus 3:10, we have seen the need for the church to exercise quarantine on the divisive ones, and how we should not contact such persons to fellowship with them. Romans 16:17 charges us to turn away from those who make divisions. To turn away from them is to exercise to quarantine them. Titus 3:10 says that we should refuse a factious (sectarian, divisive) person after a first and second admonition. To refuse such a one also is to exercise to quarantine him because of the heresy of division. (As a collateral reading, please see *The Heresy of Division* published by The Defense and Confirmation Project at: <http://afaithfulword.org/articles/DivisionAsHeresy.html>)

Just as in Brother Lee's time, some may say that the apostle's charge to deal with the divisive ones in Romans 16:17 should not be applied to the division-makers in the Lord's recovery today. They may say that Romans 16:17 refers to men who do not serve our Lord, but their own stomach, as mentioned in the next verse, and that the division-makers in the Lord's recovery today are not this kind of person. In addressing the same question, Brother Lee in his book *The Ministry of the New Testament and the Teaching and Fellowship of the Apostles* stressed that “we need to realize that in Romans 16:17 the apostle condemns the action of making divisions, regardless of what kind of person makes the divisions. A brother may be very right in every regard as a Christian, but if he makes divisions in the church or among the churches, he should be condemned and quarantined as the apostle charged.”

The same is true with Titus 3:10. Some may err in attempting to limit the meaning of the word “factious man” (Gk, *hairetikos*) in this verse only to “one who preaches heresy,” adding further that a heresy is merely “to deny the person of Christ.” Although this narrow and limited concept developed during the dark ages and the degradation of the church, in the Bible the word relates primarily to sect-making, not particularly to Christological errors, as we have seen in the ten times the word occurred in the New Testament and the excerpts from the ministry that expound on the subject. The larger context where this word appeared shows how ill-fitted such limited notion of *hairetikos* is. We do not see the *hairetikos* man in Titus 3:10 as one who put forth teachings that deny the person of Christ but one who taught far less serious matters like “foolish questionings and genealogies and strifes and contentions about the law,” yet, by so doing, causes division in the church. It is because of this one's sect-making that the apostle Paul urged Titus to refuse him, for that is the serious concern here. Far more than merely

addressing the nature of error and the gravity of the dissonant teachings by the heretics, apparently the apostle Paul's main concern is on the resultant division they have produced due to their obstinate propounding of the self-opinionated teachings.

Evidently, the Scriptures reveal that the apostle Paul's criteria in determining a heretical person is not primarily on what kind of a person he is or what kind of a teaching he has but the division he is creating. By and far, the Greek word for heresy that Paul used denotes not just the teaching that depreciates the person and headship of Christ, but the sect-making and division that damages and divides His Body, for hairetikos does not necessarily convey the thought of error, but rather of division on the ground of doctrine or teaching.

Moreover, Brother Lee warned us that no heresy is one hundred percent heresy; every one is a mixture of heresy and truth. In fact, most of the time, heretical beliefs and teachings are mixed with the best truths. It started with a self-willed opinionated interpretation of the Bible, then it was developed into a teaching and elevated as a revelation directly from God. This is so in order to attract some unsuspecting true seekers of God's desire into believing and accepting the teaching and practice, to follow the heretics and form a faction, thus dividing the Body of Christ. This reminds us of the actuation and words of a dissenting sister whose supposedly "biblical teachings and practices" clearly resulted not in the building up but rather the dividing of the Body. A catalog of many of her different teachings that caused division was listed and analyzed in various articles in this website under the category of "*Concerning Different Teachings and Mishandling the Word.*" One of the items concerns the practice "house-to-house Lord's table meeting" which the opposing sister had twisted and elevated to an absolute and prescriptive truth she was forcing upon the churches.

In Acts 2:42-47 we find the fifteen practices which the believers in Jerusalem attended to in the early days of church history after the outpouring of the economical Spirit upon them on the day of Pentecost. One of those practices is their daily breaking of bread from house to house preceded by a supper (2:42). However, that was the practice particularly of the saints in Jerusalem and specifically during the earliest church life after three thousand and five thousand new believers were baptized within a short period of time.

The descriptive practice of breaking bread from house to house in Acts 2:46 does not necessarily convey any special emphasis on the "believers' homes" being the venue where the Lord's table meeting was held, for in those days they practiced everything in their church life at home, which happened to be the *only* meeting place that belongs the believers; the other being the public portico in the temple, which was conducive for gospel preaching but not for the Lord's supper. In short, the partaking of the food and the venue in which the Lord's supper was held are not the focus of Acts 2:46; rather, it is the one accord which the early believers practiced in connection to their corporate living and service that is most significant. The venue is not and should not be an issue or point of emphasis. In fact, after Acts chapter two, the daily breaking of bread from house to house was *not* mentioned again anywhere in the Bible. Instead, we see that in later times the believers came together in one place for the bread-breaking meeting weekly on the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20). That the Bible is silent regarding the practice of daily breaking of bread from house to house after the earliest believers practiced it in Acts 2:46 indicates that the "house" factor is not of particular significance or importance, for if it were, it would surely have been reemphasized elsewhere in the Scriptures by the apostles. In their writings, the attendant details of the bread-breaking meeting are conspicuously missing; only the breaking of bread itself was mentioned, not the details pertaining to its venue. It goes to show that what happened in Acts 2 was the work of the Holy Spirit, even as Brother Lee pointed out that the way the believers met in the *early days* was invented and ordained by the Spirit. It was indeed the best under the circumstances.

Nevertheless, the practices of the seminal church life in Acts were not meant for us to follow legalistically without consideration. Rather, with help from the ministry, the divine record opens our eyes to see the principles behind such a prevailing church life full of revival and blessings. While the church in Jerusalem reaped enormous benefits from a daily church life in Acts 2, this did not become a blueprint for other churches at other times to follow altogether, as we do not see the same narrative of a similar church life and meeting practices after this record in Acts 2:46. To strictly copy the "house-to-house" aspect of the Lord's table meeting in Acts 2:46 and forsake the other two aspects of practicing it every day

and the partaking of food preceding it makes it evidently partial, selective, and subjective. If one is to insist on repeating the practices of the early believers at the beginning of the church life as shown to us in Acts 2:42-47 to the letter, should he not also practice the other items such as wonders and signs, bread-breaking meeting every day that was preceded by a dinner, having all things in common, and selling possessions and properties to share among all?

However, the divisive sister insisted in her self-willed opinion as she selected and overemphasized one extrinsic and non-essential item such as venue among the fifteen practices in the early church life of the saints in Jerusalem, named it “house-to-house LTM” and called it “the optimum means of hastening the Lord’s return.” The sister has elevated the descriptive practice of the believers’ breaking of bread from house to house seen briefly in Acts 2:46 to a prescriptive and absolute teaching, promoting it as a major part of the God-ordained way, and insisting that others should follow her way or be disparaged. By openly casting aspersion on the leading brothers who do not subscribe to her teaching and practice, she sowed and fermented discord and faction among the believers and even incited rebellion against the elders which eventually resulted to division, much like what a *haireisis* person does. Brother Lee’s succinct statement speaks it all regarding *heresy* being applied to division-makers: “My teaching may be right or it may be wrong, but if I make it a cause of division, then I am guilty of the ‘heresy’ spoken of here [in Galatians 5:20].”

Furthermore, it is significant to note that the teaching of the dissenting sister is very different from what we have received and learned from brothers Nee and Lee. The blueprint of the God-ordained way they showed us is in the four steps of gospel (for begetting), homes (for nourishing), groupings (for teaching), and districts (for building), not to mention that Brother Lee specifically stated that the best place for the Lord’s table meeting is in the *district, which may be in the meeting halls, homes or other venues depending on the decision of the elders of the church according to the need and the situation*. The result of all the teachings in the church must be for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ. It is ironic that the dissenting sister, in her thoughtless persistence to propound her self-willed and opinionated teaching and practice of “house-to-house LTM,” has in fact caused division and destroyed the very oneness that the bread and the cup on the Lord’s table symbolizes.

Today, the quarantine of the dissenting sister stays as she remains intransigent in her teaching that is party-forming, sect-making, and division-causing, in wanton disregard of the oneness of the Body. Those who join themselves to division-makers and their work also become part of the division, and as such, also need to be quarantined. Thus, the saints and churches, particularly the elders, must continue to be vigilant against such divisive ones who have been quarantined, without regard for any natural affection, but only with full regard for the protection of the Body and all its members.

According to the apostles’ teaching in Romans 16:17 and Titus 3:10, we must refuse and turn away from such factious ones. The apostle Paul did not exhort us to refuse factious ones without good reason. As we have seen in all the excerpts from brothers Nee and Lee, sect-making and division-causing in the church is a serious matter because it destroys the oneness of the Body. Besides, the apostle Paul exhorted us to refuse certain ones not merely to protect the Body and its members but also to impress those who create problems with the seriousness of their actions and to cause them to repent. If we do not refuse the factious ones, we are in effect harboring their sect-making and in essence condoning it, being incognizant of the seriousness of the turmoil they are creating. With our refusing, they would be adjured to stop their sect-making, even for their own good.

Many of us have come out of the denominations in Christianity or stay away from them not because these denominations are teaching “heresy” in the sense of erroneous doctrines but because their standing is not that of the church but of a denomination, a sect in division. Being in the proper ground of oneness now, we do not want to see heresy of division of any kind and in any degree to creep into the church; instead, we want to steer clear of any teaching or anyone who is a factor or even an instigator of division in the church. It is most prudent for us to remain in the sphere of the apostles’ teaching and fellowship in order to preserve the oneness and one accord for the building up of the Body for Christ.

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