

NT HERESIES AND ADVERSARIES

(in chronological order, mostly from Craig Blomberg's heresy article, *J. Evan. Theol. Soc.* 45, 59, 2002)

<i>John the Baptist</i>	<p>“Many of the Pharisees and Sadducees” for not producing “fruit in keeping with repentance”</p> <p>Classical legalists: e.g., those who these days require baptism or tongues for salvation</p> <p>Nomists: those who define Christian life by a list of dos and don'ts</p> <p>Ethnocentrists: Those who privilege their own ethnic or national identities</p>
<i>Jesus (synoptics)</i>	<p>Christology: Pharisees and scribes who refused to acknowledge Jesus' authority</p> <p>Elevating ceremonial law over moral: Jesus' appeal to Hos 6:6—“I desire mercy not sacrifice”</p> <p>The sin against the HS: “Being so out of touch with the true God of the universe as to attribute patently obviously divine manifestations to the power of God's arch-enemy”</p>
<i>Jesus (new in Gospel of John)</i>	<p>Secret Jewish believers as represented by Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-15)</p> <p>Believers who don't persevere during hard times (Jn 8)</p>
<i>Acts</i>	<p>Love of money: Simon Magus, Ananias and Sapphira</p> <p>Classical legalists who want Gentile converts to obey the law</p> <p>False teachers who will infiltrate the fold (as warned by Paul in Acts 19)</p>
<i>Galatians</i>	Judaizing Christians , who embrace a “different gospel—which is really no gospel at all” (1:6)
<i>1 and 2 Thess</i>	Preterists: A relatively mild correction to those who think the <i>parousia</i> 's already occurred
<i>1 Corinthians</i>	<p>Factions and suing one another</p> <p>Licentiousness: Ignoring sexual sin in their midst</p> <p>Asceticism: Promoting celibacy</p> <p>Compromise with the culture: Weaker and stronger believers contending over meat sacrificed to idols (see also Rev)</p> <p>Disbelief in the bodily resurrection</p> <p>An elevated view of spiritual gifts</p>
<i>2 Corinthians</i>	Judaizers calling themselves apostles, demanding pay, and boasting of their ethnic background
<i>Romans</i>	Only controversy: dietary laws ; Paul advocates forbearance of strong for weak
<i>Col, Phil, Eph</i>	<p>Judaizing and proto-Gnosticism (Col)</p> <p>Rival teachers (Phil 1:15-18) who teach the gospel from <u>bad motives</u>; Paul still <u>rejoices</u></p> <p>Judaizers (Phil 3:2-4:1) who may have been <u>sincere</u> but distort the Gospel: Paul is <u>harsh</u></p>
<i>1, 2 Tim, Titus</i>	1 Tim is similar to 1 Cor; 2 Tim is similar to Phil; Tit has a Cretan version of the false teaching of Eph and 1 Tim; including factiousness, which is an excommunicable offense (Tit 3:10)
<i>Hebrews</i>	Lifeless orthodoxy; probably reflects the temptation of Jews to lapse into plain Judaism to avoid persecution
<i>1 Peter</i>	The main adversaries here are oppositional family members
<i>1, 2, 3 John</i>	Gnosticism, docetism , reflected in the belief that they were already fully sanctified, antinomianism
<i>Revelation</i>	Nicolaitans, who hold the teachings of Balaam—likely condemned for eating food sacrificed to idols (Num 25:102; Acts 15:23-29), an unacceptable accommodation to the culture.
<i>2 Peter, Jude</i>	Denial of the <i>parousia</i> (2 Pet 3:3-4); itinerant teachers with corrupt understanding of the Law (Jude)

Gnosticism: A Hellenist/dualist reading of the Gospel, which saw the flesh as an evil prison for the spark of the spirit in the elect; Jesus as having brought the secret knowledge for gaining freedom from the flesh; and the OT as the work of an evil demiurge.

Docetism: The belief that Jesus only *seemed* human, but was really fully divine without being fully in the flesh.

Antinomianism: Denying the need to follow moral or ethical prescriptions.

Preterism: The belief that the second coming has occurred already.

**SOME PRACTICES AND BELIEFS CONSIDERED OBJECTIONABLE
BY A SUBSET OF THE AMERICAN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

Practices

- *Ordination of women* (e.g. schism in the Ep. Church a few decades ago). Has led to division in the CRC but not schism.
- *Marriage and ordination of homosexuals* (e.g. schism in the Ep. Church)
- *Worship styles*: This has led to countless church divisions.
- *The “Toronto Blessing”*: A weird supposed manifestation of the HS which had people in Toronto barking like dogs (literally); it was pronounced nutty and unbiblical by John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard Church.
- *Materialism*: In churches such as RCRC and Xenos, members are excluded from leadership for insufficient tithing.
- *Pentecostalism*: Requirement that believers speak in tongues

Beliefs

- *Christ wasn’t divine*: This has led to an influx at RCRC of Christians from a local United Methodist church.
- *Open theism*¹: Two Bethel professors censured by the Baptist Church for advocating this belief.
- *Denying the authority of Scripture*: e.g., Ep. bishop John Shelby Spong—*not* disciplined
- *Less-than-five-point-Calvinism*: Grounds for exclusion from leadership according to the traditional CRC Form of Subscription
- *Preterism*: At least one member of BCC was excluded from teaching Sunday school for this belief.
- *Darwinism*: A culture-war front for some churches
- *Postmodernism*: Includes relativism, plus a general suspicion of anyone else’s meta-narrative—addressed from the pulpit if at all. Arguably it has been accommodated by some seeker-friendly approaches

¹ The belief that the future doesn’t exist until we get to it, even for God. God, then, doesn’t know the future for sure, but is a very good guesser. This reduces some angst related to suffering in the world, but conflicts with Scripture.

