

Contend Earnestly For the Faith Which Was Once For All Handed Down to the Saints An Expository Study of the **Epistle of Jude** Chapter 6- The History of Heresy **Jude 4** 38. The History of Heresy Part 8

WOSM Thursday 12/27/07

Welcome again my brothers and sisters in Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse study of the Epistle of **Jude** and today I want to continue our examination of The History of Heresy by looking at the fourth verse of Jude- so let's read verse 4 together:

For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now we are studying a group just such as Jude describes here in verse 4. The Judaizers crept into the Church in the first century and along with the Antinomians- they attacked the Grace of God. As we discussed on our last broadcast, the heresy of these legalists who ignored the Grace of God became so great that the Church convened the very first Church Council to examine and analyze it to see if the Doctrine of the Judaizers was what Christ taught.

In order to comprehend what the fuss was all about- we need to read **The Acts 15:1**:

Some men came down from Judea and *began* teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

The issue here was enormous. Paul and the other Apostles had been teaching ever since the Resurrection that Man is saved by Grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Here the Judaizers began to teach that unless a man is circumcised- he cannot be saved. What

was at stake was nothing short of the answer to the question, “*How is a man saved?*”

The Judaizers are those heretics who add human works to Grace in order for Man to be saved. Here they were adding circumcision. Some today add baptism; others add keeping the Sacraments of the Church; some add keeping certain dietary laws or the Sabbath or hair and dress styles. Still others teach that unless you speak in tongues- you cannot be saved. But it really doesn't matter what they add- it is the fact that anyone who adds any human work at all to Salvation diminishes or ignores Grace and they are doing the very same thing that the Judaizers did in the first century.

You see, brothers and sisters, what makes the heresy of the Judaizers or the legalists so bad is that it attacks the sufficiency of Grace to save the soul and teaches that Justification is a cooperative effort between God's Grace and Man's works- and that is blasphemy.

Now I want to make sure that you understand what I am saying here. If you have listened to the earlier broadcasts, you would know that the Bible is very clear that once a person is saved- he is *required* by God to change. Going to Church and obeying God's Word and doing or not doing certain things in accordance with Scripture are all part of the Christian life. And those who do not change are really not saved. Those who teach that you don't have to change after you are saved belong to another heresy group, called Antinomianism and they too are deceived.

But while it is true that God demands that the saved soul change- it is also true that Salvation itself is wholly and solely a Sovereign act of God and the Justification of the human soul is accomplished by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished work of Christ alone and any attempt to add any human work in whatever form or fashion to what it takes to be saved is a horrible sin and is in fact an attack against the sufficiency of Grace. This is what the Judaizers were doing here.

The Judaizers were ignoring Grace and adding other human requirements to what it took for God to save their soul. The Judaizers attacked the Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone head on and began to add other requirements to Salvation. They had laid the gauntlet down and boldly proclaimed that Faith alone was not

enough to save a man- but that human works needed to be added to God's Grace and Man's Faith in order to save him.

Now in our modern laid back cavalier culture, we don't view heresy the way that the Church did in the first century. It is frightening to see the lack of spiritual discernment on the part of so many in the Church today. I hear some of the most famous and widely read authors and pastors today teaching that Doctrine doesn't matter anymore; that Doctrine is dry and dusty and boring and that it doesn't matter what we believe as long as we love Jesus; that Truth quenches the Spirit and that knowing right from wrong is somehow bad for us today. Some teach today that everybody has some good in them and since being saved today has been incorrectly reduced to simply "being good", their teaching says that most everybody is therefore saved.

On June 20, 2005, one very popular minister appeared on Larry King Live and said that he really didn't know if a Hindu wasn't just as saved as a Christian.¹ He said that he really didn't know how a man is saved and he really didn't know if God will condemn anyone for anything, but he did know that God has not called him to ever condemn anything. This man has 42,000 people in his Church.

Our modern fallen culture calls this man a hero. Our culture calls ambivalence like this noble. Our modern carnal thinking praises statements like that as being humble and loving. But the Bible says that people like this are not humble- they are simply confused and wrong. The Bible is not ambivalent- it is sure and certain and condemns such statements. Listen to me, being unclear about God breathed Truth is not noble- it is foolish and dangerous.

Christian brothers and sisters, this man is leading this many people, yet he said on national television that he is confused about Salvation; that maybe Hindus are as equally saved as are Christians. Well, if that is true then why did Jesus die? Why did God give us the Bible and why did God demand that we read it and proclaim what is written in it? And why do missionaries sell everything that they have and risk their lives to preach the Gospel in Hindu lands if Hindus are just as saved as Christians? If what this man said is true, then all these missionaries need to come home now so we can all hold hands with our Hindu brothers and chant Hare Krishna chants as we all sail off into nirvana together. People like this would never convene a

Church Council to determine whether or not we have to be circumcised in order to be saved- but Paul did.

Dear Christians, it might be well that we do not follow someone who is so confused about something so important as salvation and eternity. And we must view changes of Bible Doctrine to be a big deal. Far too many today feel sort of sophisticated in their approach to life in general and this fearless, self- centered, and laid back attitude has permeated into the Church. We feel today that as long as we are sincere; or as long as other people approve of what we are doing; or as long as we feel good about what we are doing in our own hearts, that what we are doing is right, regardless of what the Bible says.

But the men whom God used to write the Bible didn't believe that- they didn't teach that- and neither should we. The Apostles viewed any attempt by anyone- even an angel from heaven at changing one word, or one nuance, or one iota of any point of Doctrine as an attack by satan himself against the Gospel of God.

The Apostles believed and taught that no one could be saved apart from hearing the Gospel. And so, the integrity of the Gospel became paramount. These men taught that the Gospel couldn't be minimized, marginalized, summarized, or altered in any way, but that the Gospel had to be preached rightly and fully and completely. They were serious about this- because lost souls hung in the balance.

The Apostles of the Lord didn't believe that they were important people, but they did believe that what Christ had placed into their hands- the glorious Gospel was vital to the saving of souls. So, these men literally guarded it with their lives.

Again it is hard for us to comprehend, in our age of microwave meals and pushbutton DVD recorders, the unbelievable effort that these men expended and the great length that these men went to, to make sure that what they taught and what they believed was what Christ had said and done. Most of these men were killed precisely over Doctrine- most of the Apostles were martyred over what they believed and what they taught and because of what they denounced.

As I have said to you before, you could slap one of the Apostles across the face and he would turn the other cheek, but if you came into the Church and began to teach some other Doctrine; if you tried to stand up and give a "new revelation" that was not Scriptural; if you tried to lead the sheep of God down a path that God had not

authorized in Scripture- these same meek, mild, gentile men turned into pit bulls.

I am criticized routinely for saying the things that I say, but it is a fact that the men that God chose to set up the Church were absolutely brutal against any form of heresy and their response to any and all attempts by anyone to alter or change Doctrine has been written down for us to read and to be amazed at. So read your Bibles and see if what I am saying is true or not.

The Judaizers had crept into the Church. They had made the first move. They had begun to teach that God's Plan for saving souls was insufficient. Now the Church had to respond to this heresy before the Truth about Justification was lost forever. Let us look at how the Church responded to the heresy of the legalists in **The Acts 15:2:**

And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

The Bible says that Paul and Barnabas had “**great dissension and debate**” with the Judaizers. That is to say that Paul and Barnabas jerked a knot in the head of these heretics. They confronted them to their face. They rebuked them in the strongest terms, but they didn't stop there. Paul wasn't satisfied with simply *denouncing* the heresy of the legalists so he called for a Council. The Church said that simply one faction in the Church disagreeing with another faction in the Church was not enough. So they sent all the people from both sides of the argument to Jerusalem to the first Church Council so that the Apostles and Elders of the Christian Church could decide once and for all just how a man is saved.

When you read about how seriously the Church took the threat of heresy in the first century and then we look at how unserious we are about the very same threat today- I am reminded what my late father used to teach me concerning the events that led up to the Second World War. In the late 1930's, the Government of Germany was arming themselves in direct rebellion against the treaty that had ended the First World War, but Europe was not in the mood to stop them. In 1938, while Germany was arming themselves, but was still weak, the nation of Czechoslovakia had the largest and mightiest standing army in all of Europe. But because the Czech Government

valued Peace at any price more than they valued the enforcement of what was right- Czechoslovakia would not force the German Government to stop their rebellion. And within six months, the once proud nation of Czechoslovakia was overrun by Germany and annexed into impotency without firing a single shot. The result of this cowardice in the face of a clear threat was that over the next seven years nearly 100 million people died in the bloodiest war the world has ever seen- all because people who had the power to stop it valued unity and peace at the expense of Truth.

This is how Paul viewed the Judaizers and so he called for a Council so that this issue could be put to rest. Either we are saved by Grace through Faith in Christ alone without any human effort whatsoever and the Bible is true, or else the Bible is false and we are saved by Grace through Faith plus human effort and whatever else the dog drags in through the front door.

I tell you that we need to thank God that men like Paul made a big deal over heresy and fought against it. We need to value the effort of the few who have preserved the integrity of the Gospel for the many. And I tell you that it is time for us to repent and to return to our first love and to return to a high view of Scripture and a high view of God and a low view of Man and we need to return to the place when Doctrine meant something and Truth was important and that which God said was honored and feared and obeyed. And we need to return to the place where we can earnestly contend for the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints. Well, I'm out of time for today- but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our Journey through the Epistle of **Jude**. May God help us all.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

¹ Joel Osteen, Larry King Live, Transcript of June 20, 2005,
www.transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0506/20/lkl.01.html