

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**

42. The History of Heresy Part 12

WOSM Thursday 01/03/08

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 on our last broadcast, we saw how that after the Church had successfully dealt with the danger of the Antinomians and the Judaizers, the heresy of Gnosticism crept into the Church in the first century to destroy it. The Gnostics were a group who combined pagan beliefs with Christianity and Jude says that they crept or snuck into the Church to pervert the Gospel and to sow seeds of doubt and confusion about the Person of Jesus Christ.

We studied last time that Gnosticism is a lot like the modern so-called "New Age Movement" in that there isn't just one New Age religion, but an entire collection of offshoots of that paganism. We also saw that the pseudo Christian cults of Mormonism and Christian Science are modern day equivalents of many of the tenets of ancient Gnosticism.

Now there is much about Gnosticism that is complicated and hard to grasp, but if you can get this main point- you can get the gist of what Gnosticism is and why the Church fought so hard against it in the first century. The Gnostics didn't believe that men are saved by Grace through Faith in Christ alone. The Gnostics believed that

saving Faith was the result of “receiving” or of “being enlightened” to hidden or secret knowledge that was buried in codes among the ancient writings of the Gnostic mystics. The Gnostics didn’t believe in the inspired Words of Scripture- so they fought against the inspired writings of the Apostles and the Old Testament prophets and attacked the authenticity of the Bible. They still do this today. This is why the Christian Scientists and the Mormons, and all the other Gnostic cults that are alive today have “other revelations” about Jesus which are outside the orthodox and inspired writings that came from the Heart and the Mind of God.

The Gnostics believed that all “spirit” was good and that all “flesh” was bad. So, this is why they taught that Christ was not a real live human being- because that would have made Him evil and sinful. They taught that Christ was a spiritual *concept*- not a literal human being.

Now we also learned last time that it was primarily the Apostle John who fought against the heresy of Gnosticism. This is why John taught so hard about Jesus’ dual status as both God and Man. Let’s look at what the Holy Ghost inspired John to write about this in **John 1:1-5**:

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Now John is doing several things here by writing about Jesus the way that he did. First of all, John uses the very same phrase to start his Gospel account that Moses used to start the Book of Genesis: “**in the beginning**”. By doing this, John is tying both the Old and the New Testaments together and is showing the Gnostic heretics that this is the way things have *always* been. This was a direct response to the Gnostic teaching that the Apostles had corrupted the Gospel shortly after Jesus’ Resurrection. John was saying that Jesus was a

Man- but He was much more than just a Man- that Jesus was also with God from the very beginning.

You see, the Apostle John knew that God's Plan for Man was the same in the Old Testament as it is in the New. There has never been more than one Plan of Salvation for Man. Moses and David and Abraham and all of the Old Testament Fathers were saved the same way that we are saved today- by Faith- and not by works of Righteousness.

So John allowed a shot to go over the bow of the ship of the Gnostics by saying that what the Apostles taught about Jesus was the very same as it was from the beginning. There was never a time that Jesus was not *with* God.

But what John said next absolutely destroyed the Gnostic teachings. Let's look at the rest of verse 1:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

So, John was not only saying that Jesus was *with* God in the very beginning- but now John is clearly saying that Jesus *is* God- that Jesus is, in fact, Almighty God wrapped in human flesh and come down to live his life on earth just like we live our lives- except He lived without sin.

Then just to make sure that the Gnostic heretics heard him, John repeated how long Jesus and God had been together in verses 2&3:

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

John says that Jesus was *with* God from the very beginning. Before God created anything- Jesus was with God. So, Jesus was not a created being as the Jehovah's Witnesses teach- He was not an "elevated" or an "enlightened" Man- as the Mormons teach- He was not simply a good man or a prophet or a teacher or a wise man- but John says that Jesus was Deity; John says that Jesus was Divine; John says that Jesus was from God and was with God and that in fact Jesus was God.

And John also said that the reason that the Gnostics or anybody else couldn't see that and couldn't know that is because Jesus was Light, and no darkness could ever comprehend the Light.

Now to tell Gnostics, who hung their hat on comprehending knowledge, that they couldn't comprehend Light because they were darkness was a great insult to them. But John was not finished. Look at what he wrote about Jesus in **John 1:14**:

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

So here was the \$64,000 statement. John says that Jesus- the Word- was made flesh. That He was born of a woman; that He was both God and Man; that He was both Omnipotent as God and limited by human frailty; that He was both a human being as well as being Deity.

John was utterly shattering the Gnostic heresy that Christ was not a real person and was nothing more than a spiritual concept. The Holy Spirit inspired John to write that Jesus was human- that the Word that was in the beginning with God; the Word that was God- was also made flesh and not only did Jesus live a human life here on earth- but John said, *"You Gnostics are wrong about Jesus"*.

John says that he and the other Apostles actually saw Jesus; John says, **"we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."**

John says, we beheld him; we touched him; we looked upon Him with our natural eyes; we heard Him speak; we saw His Mouth move when He spoke; We saw Him walk on water; we saw Him raise the dead; we saw Him heal the paralytic; we saw Him multiply the fish and the loaves; we heard Him teach about the Kingdom of God; and John says that we saw Him suffer and we saw Him die. And John said they also saw Him rise from the dead in the very same Body in which He had died- it had the same nail prints in His hands and then John said that they communed with Jesus for 40 days after His Resurrection and John said that about 500 people saw Jesus bodily and physically ascend up into Heaven.

John wrote many things about Jesus that confounded the Gnostic teachings. John taught that Jesus was not 50% God and 50% man. No, John, as well as the other Apostles taught, that Jesus was

100% God and 100% man in the same Body at the same time without conflict or contradiction. Just thinking about that will blow your mind. And it did. The Gnostics hated John for what he said about Jesus, and we can thank God today, because if John had not been so vocal and so consistent against each and every tenet of the Gnostic apostasy- Gnosticism would have taken over the Church 1900 years ago.

Even today, even after all that John wrote about this evil- Gnosticism is making a great comeback. From *The Gospel of Judas*, which makes Judas- the son of perdition look like a hero- to *The Gospel of Thomas*- which would make any New Ager proud to the so-called “lost books of the Bible”- which pop up in every generation- Gnostic writings are prevalent today and are deceiving the masses of unsaved and the simple minded.

Dan Brown’s latest book, *The DaVinci Code* and Martin Scorsese’s film, *The Last Temptation of Christ*- are both Gnostic writings that blaspheme the sinlessness of Jesus and attack His Divinity.

Right after John completed his Gospel account of Jesus- he wrote three Epistles to the Church. In those Epistles, John continues his relentless assault against the heresy of the Gnostics. Listen to what John wrote in **1John 1:1**:

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life —

John again reiterates how that he and the other Apostles not only have trusted in Christ for Salvation, but they actually and literally and physically touched Jesus and they heard Him speak with His mouth- once again- showing that Christ was both Human and Divine.

Let’s read on in John’s Epistle about what he said about Jesus in **1John 1:2**:

and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us —

John is telling us here that Saving faith; the life of God in Christ; was physically and tangibly manifested in Jesus and John says that they literally saw it and John says that he and the other Apostles faithfully bear witness or record that saving faith or that righteous life in the pages of the Bible. John is telling his readers here that Saving faith is not locked up in secret codes or hidden writings as the Gnostics teach, but saving faith and the life of God in Christ is clearly revealed in the pages of inspired Scripture and in the Scriptures alone. Let's read on in **1John 1:3**:

what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

John is here telling the Church that the Gnostics are wrong about how to receive wisdom. John says that he and the other Apostles have *not* hidden any secrets anywhere; they didn't write anything in codes; they didn't have other books that were not part of the canon of Scripture; they didn't leave out important facts; and they didn't leave behind cryptic messages that only a few so-called enlightened ones could find. No, John says that he and the other Apostles of the Lord carefully and rightly and correctly and fully and completely disclosed all that Jesus gave to them in what they wrote so that all men might read and know and have fellowship with Jesus and be in right standing with God and be saved.

I tell you that we need to thank God for men like John and we need to return to what John and the other Apostles of the Lord taught and we need to return to Biblical Christianity and we need to make sure that what we believe is in the Bible and not invented by man and we need to once again 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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