

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**

43. The History of Heresy Part 13

WOSM Friday 01/04/08

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 we are continuing to study about who these "certain persons" that Jude talks about here in verse 4 really were by studying the seven major groups of heresy. We have already covered the Antinomians and the Judaizers and are now concentrating on a late first century heresy that attacked the Church called Gnosticism.

We need to remember that to a Gnostic, Salvation was not repenting and trusting in the finished Work of Jesus Christ. No, the Gnostics taught that Salvation was nothing more than receiving secret knowledge that had been hidden in codes and cryptically placed where only the so-called "enlightened ones" could find it.

The Gnostics waged war against the Scriptures and against the Deity of Jesus Christ- just like Jude said that they would. This is why the Mormons and the Christian Scientists all say that the real key to understanding Scripture is through their other books which hold the true way to see the light. Since both Mormonism and Christian Science are modern day manifestations of Gnosticism, they both change how people look at Jesus from what the Scriptures say about

Him. So they attack His Deity; His sinless life; His Virgin birth; His Resurrection and so on, just as Jude said that they would.

One of the classic ways in which the Gnostics attack the authenticity of the Bible is by saying that there was much confusion in the early Church about which books to include in the Canon of the NT. And that statement is simply flat out wrong. There was not much confusion about which New Testament writings to include. There was much confusion among the Gnostics about the New Testament writings because they didn't like any of them- especially anything that John had written.

But because the Gnostics have been successful in casting great doubt in many people about the Bible- you need to know that there was tremendous unity among the early believers about the New Testament writings and there was unanimous unity about those writings which dealt with the Christian Doctrines concerning Christ's Deity and about Justification by Faith alone. So their claim about great confusion in the early Church about the Bible is simply not true.

We must understand that all Gnostic teachings were written after the books of the Bible were written. No New Testament writing was written after the Gnostics wrote their books. And here is another interesting thing to remember when dealing with ancient writings. We must understand that just because something is old or ancient does not make it true or reliable or inspired by God. There were liars back then just like there are liars today. People wrote fiction books 5,000 years ago, just like they write them today. People slandered other people in writing just like they do today. People forged documents and plagiarized back then just like they do today. All the evil in men's hearts that is manifested today was manifested then.

The 66 Books of the English Holy Bible that we have today are a very reliable and trustworthy copy of the original autographs of the men who actually wrote down God breathed words down. So in spite of what the Gnostics teach- You can trust your Bible.

But we need to know that all English Bibles are translations- since the Bible was not written in English- it was written in Hebrew Aramaic and Greek. And since all English Bibles are translations- all English translations contain some translation difficulties. But these difficulties are nothing more than human challenges based upon one language not easily transferring over into another. But those

challenges do not involve any doctrine or teaching, and they are easily overcome- even to the casual reader by employing sound rules of Biblical interpretation. And since any proper study of the Bible consists of language and Word evaluations- practically all of the English translations of Scripture are trustworthy.

I prefer the New American Standard version or the English Standard Versions. My next choices would be the New King James and the King James and then the Holman Christian Standard Version. Since the publishing company Zondervan, has chosen to go down a liberal road in removing all male references of God out of their revised New International Version, I cannot in good faith recommend the NIV any longer. But which ever English version you choose- here is the bottom line- read it; study it; love what it says and live how it teaches.

The Gnostics and other heretics always try to capitalize on the fact that most people do not know or study or understand Church history, so most people really don't know how we got our English Bible and what process the early Church went through to arrive at 66 inspired Books. So Gnostics and others capitalize on that ignorance and they sow seeds of doubt in the hearts and minds of people about the Bible. Beloved, you need to know about the Bible, so I want to commend an excellent book on this subject that will answer any and all your questions. It is a book entitled, *The Canon of Scripture*, by F.F. Bruce. This and many other books will relieve your mind as to the claim by the Gnostics that we cannot trust the Bible.

Just like we have today- there were some in the early church that wanted to simply blend in with the Gnostics. These people view any struggle over doctrine to be wrong and they simply feel that it doesn't matter what someone thinks or believes as long as they are sincere and love Jesus. We have those people in the Church today, don't we? The problem with that kind of appeasement is that unless we know just Who Jesus is- we really can't love Him. The Gnostics didn't believe that Jesus was a real person- they taught that Jesus was only a spiritual "concept" that was hidden in secret codes in the writings of the Gnostic mystics. So you can see how this presented a real problem for those who wanted to have peace with everyone at the expense of Truth. Precisely how do we love Jesus if He didn't really exist?

Thank God that the Apostle John had the courage and the backbone to step up to the plate and reject the heresy of the Gnostics. Look at what God inspired John to write to the Church about the Gnostics in **2John 9-11**:

9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not give him a greeting;

11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

John was not like the appeasers of his day or ours and John clearly taught that if anyone does not stay pure and faithful to the Doctrine of the Apostles then that person does not know God at all. And John clearly warned the Church that since the teaching of the Gnostics was so evil and so perverse and so contrary to inspired Scripture that believers were not to entertain the Gnostics, nor invite them into their homes, nor give them a traveling blessing.

Now even though Gnosticism is a very complicated web of pagan teachings- there are basically three main branches of Gnosticism that I want to go over very briefly:

1. Dualism
2. Syncretism
3. Docetism

Dualism

Now Dualism is the religion of Star Wars. Dualism was a form of Gnosticism that teaches that there is an “evil force” that is equal to and the opposite of the “good force.” Dualism is a very serious error and a departure from Biblical Christianity. Christianity is not dualistic because first of all- evil did not always exist and secondly, evil will not always exist. Evil began with Lucifer’s rebellion in heaven and evil will end when Christ returns to this earth. And thirdly- Christianity is not dualistic because whatever power satan may have now- he is certainly no match at all for God. At best, satan

is a fallen angel. Granted, he may have more power than a common man in the sense that he is not subject to the laws of gravity and is a spirit being and is immortal, but God Almighty is the One Who is Omnipotent and Sovereign and therefore satan can't do anything without first obtaining God's permission.

It is a dualistic teaching that says that God Almighty is locked in a life and death struggle with satan. That is simply not the case. God is always Supreme; always victorious; and always on top. God never loses any battle; He never comes in second; never needs to regroup; and never needs to ask anyone for anything. God is never defeated; never nervous; He is never bewildered; and Almighty God is always sure; always right; and always faithful.

The Bible is clear about God- God is absolutely Sovereign. He is Sovereign in Creation; He is Sovereign in Salvation; and He is Sovereign over all the earth and everything that is made. God made Lucifer- and God knew that Lucifer was going to rebel before Lucifer did.

Many today hold a view about life that is not Biblical. They see gigantic forces of "good" arrayed against gigantic forces of "evil" with man standing in the middle with the ability to choose which force he will serve and follow and love. This is a dualistic view of life and is not Christian. Christianity is not dualistic. Christianity is monogistic. It is Christ that is high and lifted up and every other knee will bow before Him, and every other tongue shall proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Now while that dualistic view of life may be very popular today- it is simply not true. The Bible says that God is in charge of all things. The Bible says that God is Sovereign. The Bible says that Man is a pathetic lost soul- who is completely and utterly and totally depraved and unable to choose contrary to his fallen nature. The Bible says that unsaved man is completely dead in sins and trespasses without one plea- alienated from the life of God that is in Christ; strangers from the promises of God and without God and without any hope at all in the world. The Bible is very clear that there is not one righteous man on earth- not one. The Bible says that no one who is lost seeks after God; and that no one is good.

The Bible says that satan, while more powerful than humans, cannot do anything without first getting permission from God. That

unlike God, satan is not all powerful; he is not all knowing; and he is not all present. Satan is limited to being in one place at one time. Satan does get fearful; satan does get nervous; satan does get frustrated and satan is afraid of God and he is afraid of Jesus, and he is very afraid of the power of the shed Blood of the Lamb of God. One drop of that holy Blood makes him head for the hills. Satan cannot read your mind; and contrary to modern thinking, that while satan can tempt you and beguile you and trick you- but satan cannot make you do anything you don't already want to do. No, you must know that people sin because they want to- not because they are forced to.

I tell you that the Bible is clear- satan doesn't have the power- God does. Satan is not in charge- God is. Satan is not God's equal- there is no one like our God. I tell you that the power of evil is no match for God's Omnipotent Power- and satan is angry- yes, he is very angry because he knows that he has but a short time. I tell you that the day is coming when one angel is going to take the devil and put a seal upon him and bind him in chains and throw him into the bottomless pit where he will stay for 1,000 years. After that he will be loosed to go and deceive the nations again, but this time, the Lord Jesus Christ will come and cast him and all his followers into the lake of fires that burns with brimstone and the Bible says that the smoke of their burning will ascend forever.

I tell you that our God reigns. The Lord that made the heavens and the earth is greater than satan. Beloved, the Gnostics are wrong about God. They are wrong about satan. They are wrong with just about everything that they say and teach.

So do not be deceived by the heresy of the Gnostics but gird up the loins of your mind and set your face like flint and 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.

