

# 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**

### 58. The History of Heresy Part 28

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WOSM Friday 01/25/08

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. And we have gone over five of the seven major groups of false teachings in our study so far and today I want to begin to discuss the sixth major group. This heresy is called "Pelagianism" and rose up late in the fourth century after the Arian Controversy was put down.

Pelagianism attacks the Grace of God head on by warping three very fundamental Doctrines of Christianity: The Doctrine of Original Sin, The Doctrine of Total Human Depravity, and The Doctrine of the Sovereignty of God. So, in order to fully comprehend what the Pelagian Error was all about- we will have to investigate what each of these Doctrines teach.

Pelagianism is probably the most vicious and the most serious attack against the teachings of the Bible that has ever existed. Pelagianism is very wide in its scope and is very much alive and well today. In fact, Pelagianism is more popular today than it was when Pelagius first introduced it over 1700 years ago. The Pelagian Error

feeds on fallen Man's need to be in charge of his own Salvation. It feeds the pride of man like no other heresy, which is why it is so popular and why it is so wrong and why it is so dangerous. It is the enemy of the Cross of Jesus Christ; it is the enemy of Grace; it is the Enemy of God's Sovereignty and has the insidious ability to defraud the simplicity of Salvation like no other heresy.

And I want to make bold statement about Pelagianism here. And I want you to know that I don't just throw these kinds of statements around easily. But Pelagianism is so evil a heresy; so wicked a lie; such a complete distortion of what the Bible teaches about Grace and Salvation and God and Man that I can make this statement without fear of contradiction. It is impossible for anyone who espouses the heresy of pure Pelagianism to be saved.

Pelagianism was named after the man who first began to teach it- Pelagius, who was born in Britain and who early on was a very well respected man in the Church. And we cannot talk about Pelagius and the heresy that bears his name without bringing in another man that had tremendous impact on the Christian Church during his life and who was the antagonist of Pelagius. This man's name was Augustine.

Augustine was one of the greatest thinkers and theologians that the world has ever known and the Christian Church has ever produced. Augustine was a man of immense talent and anointing and brilliance and wrote some of the greatest volumes of Christian thought that the world has ever known. Every serious student of Christianity needs to read what this man wrote.

Many statements that we use everyday in our evangelistic efforts and our sermons and our teachings came from this man. Statements like, "*Lost man has a hole in his heart*"; "*Jesus will be Lord of all or not Lord at all*" and "*Love the sinner, but hate the sin*" all came from Augustine.

Many of you remember several years ago- when this nation entered into war with Iraq, the President of the United States, George Bush quoted Augustine when he talked about a term that has been used by every President since George Washington to justify war. The term is "The Doctrine of Just War" and it was developed by Augustine to reconcile how Christians who have been commanded in the Bible to not kill may fight for their country and destroy the enemy and still be

in good graces with a righteous God. God anointed Augustine to develop the Doctrine of Just War.

Because the Reformers quoted extensively from Augustine in the sixteenth century, we have all of his works preserved for us today.

Augustine was born on November 13, 354 in what is now present day Tunisia. His mother, Monica was a Christian, but his father was a pagan. As a young man, Augustine was a horrible sinner and a womanizer who lived a corrupt and decadent life during much of his younger years. Because his academic brilliance was obvious to all- his father set him to Carthage to study where Augustine took in a live in woman and had an illegitimate son.

In Carthage, Augustine was astonished to find that poor, uneducated, and uncultured people could know the Son of God personally and have the strong assurance of Salvation and the Joy and Peace that came from Jesus Christ, while it seemed that the most important, educated, wealthy, and influential people of his day struggled with self doubt, confusion, and great and terrible sins.

According to his own words in his book, *Confessions*, there came a day by God's Grace that Augustine had reached the top of his profession and the depths of his own personal despair. He literally collapsed under the weight of his own sinfulness and flung himself under a fig tree and began to cry out to God. Suddenly he heard a young child say, "*Take up and read*". Augustine grabbed a Bible that was nearby and read this passage from **Romans 13:13-14**:

**13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.**

**14 But <sup>a</sup>put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.**

It was at that moment that Augustine repented and fully trusted Christ for Salvation and he rose from that place, immediately resigned his position, walked away from his live in lover and went to learn Christ in a nearby town. He was baptized by Ambrose in Milan on Easter Sunday in AD 387. In AD 396, this one time whoremonger was ordained as the bishop of Hippo in North Africa.

Like George Washington and many others, Augustine wrote down his prayers and they have been preserved for us. One prayer that he wrote began to be circulated around the world. It was this:

*“Lord, give what Thou commandest and command what Thou wilt.”*

By this time, Pelagius had become a monk in Britain and when Pelagius read this simple prayer by Augustine- he violently rejected it with all his might. To Pelagius, a prayer that would ask God to give to us what God had already commanded us to do was ridiculous. Pelagius said that we should not ask God for any help in doing what God had already commanded us to do- that the very fact that God had commanded it showed that God had already given what was necessary to do it.

From this simple one line prayer that Augustine prayed and Pelagius’ reaction to it brought forth one of the greatest battles over the souls of men that the world has ever seen. This battle is what is now called the Pelagian Controversy. This battle involved serious discussions about serious issues that had to be resolved. Issues like:

- ✓ How Did the Fall of Adam Affect the Human Race?
- ✓ The Doctrine of Original Sin
- ✓ Human Depravity
- ✓ God’s Sovereignty
- ✓ Precisely How is Man Justified before God?
- ✓ Do We Need Grace to be Saved?

Pelagianism is the foundational teaching that formulates what is called today, Secular Humanism. Secular Humanism elevates the glory of Man; magnifies Man’s importance and deifies who Man is. Humanism makes Man to be his own god and makes the God of the Bible to be completely irrelevant. Secular Humanism came forth from that which Pelagius taught in the fourth and fifth centuries and it has successfully infiltrated our public school system; our colleges; the business world; our newspapers; magazines; radio and television news organizations; our own government; and sadly many theological seminaries that used to teach the Bible.

Pelagianism in the form of Secular Humanism has become so dominant today that the very same tenets that Pelagius taught 1700 years ago are point by point; and line by line the very things that are being taught and enforced and laid out as being true.

Most of those who espouse godless evolution quote from Pelagius as often as we quote from the Bible. The Hollywood types who, for some reason, are thought to know what they are talking about, quote from Pelagius all the time. Time, Newsweek, US News and World Report, ABC, NBC, CBS, and CNN news organizations; the History and Discovery Channels and National Geographic are filled from top to bottom with Humanists who value Pelagius as their hero. Harvard, Yale and Princeton Divinity Schools, who many years ago turned out some of the greatest Christian preachers the world has ever known, have completely capitulated to the Pelagian Error and today promote Humanism more than they promote Biblical Truth. These once proud and venerable universities at one time held to a strict Biblical Confession of Faith and were bastions of clear, Sound Doctrine- but today these same universities are dens of iniquity and the habitation of every abominable and creeping thing.

So when you hear me talk about a heresy that occurred some 1700 years ago- don't think for a minute that what I am saying has no relevance to you today. We who love and serve the Lord and who value the Bible and believe that the Bible is the infallible and inerrant and God breathed Written Revelation of God to Man are an island surrounded by the godless sea of the results of Pelagianism's lies and falsehoods.

We need to understand that how you view God and how you view Man and how you view Salvation will shape your entire view of everything else. And if your view is not Biblical- then by default- it will be humanistic. So let's examine how prevalent ancient Pelagian doctrine is in modern American culture.

Pelagianism has taken over the hearts and minds of American business and the medical profession. We advertise and sell goods and services and we exalt and promote business practices in this country based entirely on a pagan humanistic Pelagian system that promotes greed; materialism; and self gratification above honesty; godly love and humility.

The unbiblical view of Man that speaks about concepts like “self esteem” and “self worth” and “self fulfillment” and “self help” that has swept our nation and our culture and that is promoted and taught and propagated by the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association are in fact unbiblical and pagan concepts which exalt the good of man while minimizing or outright eliminating even the need for God. This Freudian approach to human nature was articulated by Pelagius 1700 years ago and actually hinders people from coming to Faith in Christ and is the enemy of the Gospel.

The entire discipline of education called Sociology is a godless and Humanistic perversion of what the Bible teaches about Man and is also based upon the Pelagian heresy that teaches that man is his own “god”. So we can see that although Pelagius put forth his heresy 1700 years ago, Pelagian heresy is all around us today.

And all of this would be bad enough, but this very same heresy that started with Pelagius and was so hard fought against by the heroes of the Church many hundreds of years ago has now been welcomed back into the modern Church with open arms because it was repackaged as being “New and Improved” and we bought it.

My Christian brothers and sisters we must not fail to cry out against the dismal lack of spiritual discernment that is in the Church today which is a direct result of years and years of promoting individualism as it pertains to Truth and minimizing Sound Doctrine or putting it on the back burner.

We who lead in the Church have a responsibility to rise up and be awake to what is going on around us. We have got to raise the bar about Truth back to where the Bible put it and we have got to establish a higher standard as to what we accept as being from God other than it sounds cool or it makes the hair on the back of our necks stand up.

Oh I tell you that we need to repent and we need to do what the Bible tells us to do and analyze what is spoken and what is written and what is proclaimed today as being God’s so-called “new wave” and the Holy Spirit’s so-called “new revelation” and hold these teachings accountable to the Word of God and hold these people accountable for teaching false doctrine and you and I must earnestly contend for the very same 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.