

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** 67. The History of Heresy Part 37

WOSM Thursday 02/07/08

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 today we are continuing to examine the heresy of Pelagianism which attacked the Christian Church late in the fourth century over the Doctrines of Original Sin and the Total and Complete Depravity of Man and the Sovereignty of God and the Free Will of Man.

Now part of the reason that Pelagianism and its teaching about Human Free Will is still so popular today after 1700 years- is because we have lost our understanding of the Doctrine of the Total Depravity of Man. We who live in 21st Century America are far removed from a Biblical understanding of Human Depravity. We are bombarded constantly with advertisements that tell us that we deserve this or that we have earned that or that we are better than this or that we are worth that. So, our entire concept of ourselves has not been framed by what the Bible teaches- but by people who don't believe the Bible or by well meaning but misguided folk who don't know the Bible or by ravening wolves who purposely distort the Truth in order to

deceive.

But however we get our information about ourselves- we must agree that if that information is not Biblical- then it isn't true. And this problem is especially difficult during a time of war when American patriotism can be easily confused with Salvation. Being a patriot is a wonderful thing. I support our troops fully and I support the War in Iraq on a personal level. I support military service in general and I am not a conscientious objector. There is no Scriptural conflict in being a Christian and in fighting a war against an enemy where people will die and be killed and those who think that there is a conflict simply don't know their Bible very well.

But fighting and, God forbid, even dying in a war to protect and defend your nation, while noble and honorable, is not the same thing as being saved. Our brave soldiers who die in battle may well go to heaven when they die- but not unless they are saved. Simply dying in battle does not guarantee Heaven any more than any other moral act. We must constantly confess that there is only one way to be saved.

Every man woman and child in this country and every other country must be convinced of their sins by the Power of the Holy Spirit and must repent of being an enemy of God and they must trust Christ for Salvation or else they are lost and lost people do not go to heaven- even if they are nice people- and even if they are patriots. That is why it is very important that we preach the Gospel to every creature.

But until and unless we have a Biblical understanding of our own lost condition- we really cannot comprehend Grace and we really cannot comprehend Salvation and we really cannot comprehend God's Wrath.

So in order to comprehend and appreciate Grace and Salvation- we must first grasp the depth of our own Depravity- our own Lostness and we must have a good and true picture of that condition if we are to fully understand everything else.

Let me show you how important this is. People became very confused about Hurricane Katrina that devastated our Coast a few years ago. Some said it was God's Wrath against gambling; others said it was the devil trying to destroy a good and noble people; other said it was a lack of faith on the part of the Church; and still others said it was neither God nor the devil, but was simply an act of Nature.

And the reason that there was so much confusion about this disaster stems from a lack of understanding what the Bible declares is true about God and what the Bible declares is true about Man.

For the most part, almost everything that we hear today and are taught today about Man is based on a Humanistic or a Pelagian concept- and not Scripture. We have been bombarded with a “psychological gospel” and a “bubble gum gospel” for so long that we have abandoned what the Bible teaches about the depth of Man’s Lostness and have adopted a secular and a humanistic view of Man. This incorrect view of Man leads us to be greatly disappointed about things in life and it leads us to build an entire structure of theology and comprehension about God that is faulty at best and could well be heresy at worst.

To begin with- we must start with basic facts about God and the Bible. The Bible is the inerrant and infallible and inspired Word of the living God. This Book, along with God’s Creation are the only two ways that God has chosen to reveal Himself to Mankind. Everything that we know about God that is true is found in this Book and in that which God created. What God has revealed about Himself in Creation is called “General Revelation”. And what God has revealed to us about Himself in the Bible is called “Specific Revelation”.

For example- we can know that God is Omnipotent; that He is Supreme; and that He is bigger and more powerful than we are by looking at a mountain or by standing in awe of a waterfall or by gazing into space and beholding the stars or looking into a child’s eyes. So we get general information about God through God’s own Creation.

But if we are to be saved; if we are to follow Christ; if we are to obey God; if we are to understand concepts like Grace and salvation and right and wrong; and the difference between good and evil- we cannot get that information through God’s Creation alone. We must have more details; we need more information than we can glean from part of God’s marvelous Creation- so God has been gracious to give us a specific and detailed Revelation about Himself- and that “Special” or “Specific” Revelation about God is what we call the Holy Scriptures.

So we must understand that the Bible was not written for everyone. The Bible was not given to everyone. The Bible was written and the Bible was given to those whom God has chosen to be

His own people. The rest of the world looks at this Book with disdain and disgust. In the Old Testament- God did not give all the people on earth His Law. God visited and God gave His Law only to His Own specially chosen people- the Jews. Today, the reason the Bible is so mangled is because it is not understood. And in order to understand the Bible- it takes more than just reading it occasionally. The deep and rich and powerful and glorious and life changing mysteries that are contained in the Bible cannot possibly be grasped and they sure cannot be appreciated and they sure cannot be properly interpreted by a casual and haphazard reading of some selected portions of it. The Bible was written in a way so that if it is to be understood rightly- it must be studied. Therefore we who value this Book must reorder our lives so that we may spend uninterrupted and dedicated and consistent times of serious study of God's precious Word.

And we must be willing to use tools that will help us to dig and discern and divide and take apart and put back together the precious Words of life that are in the Bible. And we have to realize that there are no shortcuts; there is no simpler way to do this- but that God receives great glory when those who say that they love Him are willing to take the time and spend the time and plow through the wonderful Words that are in the Bible.

You would think that God has made it hard on purpose- because studying the Bible is not easy- it is hard. Studying the Bible correctly will take your entire lifetime. Look at what we have to overcome in order to study the Bible.

Firstly, we have a language barrier. The Bible was not written in English. The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and a certain kind of Greek. Today we have many English translations of the Bible that are good and reliable. But we must be careful that we do not simply rely on the translators to do our job for us. Each translator was a human being just like we are and they ran into translation problems. So even if you use a King James or a New King James or a NASB or a Holman Christian Standard or an English Standard Version of the Bible- you still need to do word searches and you need to have a reliable Greek and Hebrew lexicon handy to make sure that what you are reading is what God said.

And please do not make the mistake of simply going to the English translation that is the easiest to read. We have dumbed down

this culture to the point that I don't know if we can go any lower. Getting the easiest translation is not necessarily getting the best. Beloved, don't be content to stay on the level that you are on. If you need help in developing your reading skills- then seek that help out. It is available. Rise up and push yourself to a higher level. God will bless you. If you need to take English classes at night in order to fully grasp the Truth of God's Word- do that. What better reason to miss a few episodes of Judge Judy than to go to school to learn how to read the Bible? Whatever you need to do; whatever amount of energy you need to expend; however much time it takes- Get into the Bible; study it; cherish it; love it; believe it; and obey what it says.

But whatever you do- do not cop out and say that the reason that you don't read the Bible is because you don't understand it. Put some time into it and God will reveal to you the Words of life. If you need help with a Bible study plan- call me and I will help you. If you need help understanding what the Bible means- let's get into it- but don't sit back and do nothing.

My Christian brothers and sisters, reading what God wrote is different than reading what Shakespeare wrote. It is different than reading a mystery or a romance novel. Reading God's Word puts God's Specific Revelation into your soul and when God does that- you will never be the same again.

But there is still more. Simply reading the Bible or simply using the tools is still not enough. Your heart has to be right with God in order for God to reveal His Word to you. We must remember that the Pharisees studied the Old Testament Scriptures 12 hours a day and they didn't know Jesus when He stood right in front of them. No, you and I cannot approach our Bible Study time with unforgiveness or bitterness in our hearts. You cannot expect God to show you Divine Truth when you have hate in your heart. You should not expect God to show you anything until and unless your heart is clean and pure.

We must remember that The Word of God is not understood simply because of translation. The Word of God is not understood simply because of interpretation. No, the precious and Holy Word of the living God is understood by the human mind and heart because of divine revelation that the Holy Spirit brings to the worthy seeker.

We have a language barrier; we have a custom barrier; we have a literary barrier- but the real barrier between us and God is a

spiritual barrier and while there are many tools to help us over all of the other barriers- the only commodity that is available to close the spiritual barrier that we have with God is Blood. We need to be freshly bathed in holy red Blood every time we approach God' Word. We need our sins covered; we need our feet washed; we need our minds girded up; we need our carnal and natural thoughts brought under subjection; we need our ways thrown down; we need to take our sins and confess them to our Intercessor and have the Blood of Jesus to wash them all away and we need to take all of our crowns- all the good and the right things that we have done and we need to cast those crowns down at His Feet. We need to humble ourselves at the foot of the Cross and in this confessed and forgiven and washed and humble state- then we can open God's Word and now the Holy Spirit will open our minds and He will open our eyes and He will open our ears and He will open our hearts and we then will be able to see and we then will be able to understand and we then will be able to grasp and comprehend with all the other saints what is the breadth and the length and the depth and the height of the glorious and magnificent and wondrous things of God. And then you and I will be able to actually know; we will be able to literally know the Love of Christ, which passes all understanding and then we will be filled with all the knowledge of God.

Oh I tell you that it is wonderful to know Jesus! It is wonderful to serve this risen Lord! It is marvelous that God chose us before the foundation of the world, and He drew us and He washed us and He saved us and now we have been adopted into His family and now we are a part of his Kingdom and now we are a part of His Body and we have been handed the Words of Life. We have been given the only Truth that the world has ever known. Beloved cherish this Truth; love this Truth; Study this Truth; Obey this Truth; Live this Truth and let us all regroup and let us all 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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