

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**

84. The History of Heresy Part 54

WOSM Monday 03/03/08

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 I am continuing today to go over the review of the seven major heresies that form the basis of all modern false teaching and apostasy.

And on the last broadcast, we saw how that Sound Doctrine was vital to the success of the Church. Today I want to review who these "certain persons" that Jude talks about here in verse four were and how they affected the Christian Church.

Now we have learned together that all heresy is a perversion of Divine Truth. So, in order for heresy to live and thrive- there must be ignorance on the part of the believer. Where there is Biblical Truth- heresy finds no foothold. Only by either not studying the Bible at all- or by studying it incorrectly can false teaching come in and gain acceptance.

But God is faithful, and He has provided everything that we need for life and godliness in His Word. But although God's Word has everything that we need; every answer to every question- that same Word is absolutely useless to us if we do not understand what God said as He authored it.

The more you get into God's Word- the more you see the need for

it. The more that you study and research the Scriptures- the more you understand the value of them. And as you do these things- you will also see how shallow and how open to deception most people and most Churches really are.

Every heresy that came to the Church over the last 2,000 years attacked one of three concepts:

1. They attacked and misrepresented the Grace of God and, by extension, the Gospel itself
2. They attacked and misrepresented the Character and Nature of Almighty God
3. They attacked and misrepresented the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ

And Jude puts it like this in verse 4, when he said that these heretics; these certain men who were ordained by God for condemnation:

... turned the grace of our God into licentiousness... - that is, they portrayed God's Amazing Grace as either being not powerful enough to save men all by itself; or they portrayed this unmerited favor as something that allowed and even condoned sin.

... denied our only Master and Lord...- that is, these heretics denied God's Sovereignty or some other Biblical part of God's own Nature and Character.

... Jesus Christ.- that is, they rejected either Christ's Divinity or Christ's humanity or Christ's position and purpose in the Trinity and in Salvation.

Now in the first century, while Paul and John were yet writing their letters and Gospel, three heretical groups rose up to attack the Church.

1. The Judaizers
2. The Antinomians
3. The Gnostics

And you may remember that we studied how that both the Judaizers and the Antinomians fought against the Gospel itself, while the Gnostics fought over the Person of Jesus Christ.

You and I studied that these three heresies, and the battle to defend the Christian Faith against them are actually recorded in God's Word for us to read. Paul did battle against both the Judaizers or the legalists and the Antinomians over what Grace is and what Grace is not, while John fought against the Gnostics and their false teachings about Jesus.

We saw how that the Judaizers, or the legalists, completely ignored Grace, while the Antinomians abused Grace. The Judaizers taught that Grace was not enough to save a man without that man contributing something himself to his own Salvation; while the Antinomians taught that Grace was a license to live anyway you wanted once you were saved.

We saw that neither one of these false teachings were right; neither one was more noble than the other; both are equally a perversion of God's Grace and the Gospel, and both are heresies that should be totally and completely rejected by the believer and the Church.

The modern Judaizer takes great pride in the fact that his life is more moral than the Antinomian while the Antinomian takes great pride that he is not under the bondage of the legalist. But both the Judaizer and the Antinomian have sinned in perverting the right way of the Lord.

The Judaizer is wrong because the Bible clearly teaches that we are saved by Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ alone without any human effort or action or contribution at all in any way. But the Antinomian is equally wrong because after we are saved- we are commanded by Jesus Christ Himself to bear fruit; to live a godly life and to keep God's commandments.

To read a good snapshot of the confrontation between Paul and the Judaizers, read about the Jerusalem Council in **The Acts 15** and **Galatians**. To read about Paul's rebuke to the Antinomians, read **Romans 6**.

And we also saw on those earlier broadcasts how that both Legalism and Antinomianism are alive and well in the 21st century Church. Many groups today preach a legalistic, works oriented Salvation that

requires human effort or human cooperation in order for God to save them.

Conversely, Antinomianism is also going strong today in those Churches where Christian duty and responsibility and obligation to walk holy; obey Scripture; and die to self is never taught; and never preached; and never practiced.

Now toward the end of the first century, after Paul and Peter had been martyred, another heresy rose up called Gnosticism. The responsibility to defend the Faith from this attack fell to the Apostle John, who wrote his Epistles and Gospel during that same time.

As we studied in those broadcasts, Gnosticism attacked the Person of Jesus Christ, by either denying that Christ was a real human being, or by denying that He was Deity. The Gnostics were prolific writers and wrote many spurious and blasphemous books during that time that renounced Christ's sinless life and made claims about Jesus that were scandalous and evil.

This is why so much attention is paid by John to the Deity of Jesus Christ alone with His humanity. John taught that Christ was the One and only of God- that He was the most unique Person in all of human history. John boldly taught that Jesus was God Almighty wrapped in human flesh. John taught that Jesus was not almost a god; He was not a demi-god; he was not an angel; He was not a supercharged or super educated or super advanced Man- no, John boldly proclaimed that Jesus was God, and that Jesus was also a Man. John said that Jesus was the Son of God, the Son of David and the Son of Man. John taught that Jesus was in the beginning with God and that Jesus as God. But John also taught that Jesus Christ was a man Who had come in the flesh and Who had dwelt among them, and they had touched him and listened as He spoke and they had seen Him with their natural eyes.

John taught that Jesus was 100% God and 100% Man at the same time in the same body without conflict or contradiction.

We also saw how that the so-called "Lost Books of the Bible" are all Gnostic writings as are the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Judas. The very popular "DaVinci Code" book and movie are based upon an ancient Gnostic writing that talked about Jesus and Mary Magdalene wrongly and sinfully.

God proved Himself to be faithful because as one heresy replaced another, God would raise up one man after another who would stand

against the heresy until it was thoroughly analyzed; discussed, understood, rejected, denounced, and both the heresy and the heretic were excommunicated out of the Church.

Now this was not done in a fit of rage or by a knee jerk reaction to something that the Fathers of the Church didn't like or understand. The Elders and Deacons and Pastors of the early Church were not a bunch of self absorbed men who ruled with an iron fist and who tolerated no disagreements or alternate opinions.

No, we saw that the fathers of the early Church were godly and humble and faithful men who held the mystery of God's Truth with fear and trembling and who made sure that the Gospel was preserved correctly and handed down for us to know and believe and love. These holy men begged with tears that the heretics would repent and return to their first love.

The first several Church Councils that were convened to look at the various heresies were not harsh or cruel or merciless exercises in human stubbornness and bigotry and fear and superstition. Actually, these Councils were very loving attempts at sincerely and thoroughly analyzing the heresy and trying the false teaching against the Scriptures to see if they could stand.

We went from the heresy of the Gnostics to the heresy of Arius, which was called Arianism. We saw that Arianism also attacked the Deity of Jesus Christ in the fourth century.

We saw how that Arius rejected the Deity of Christ and nearly destroyed the Christian Church with his heresy due in no small part to the apathy on the part of the Church leaders to defend the Truth against apostasy. But once again, God was faithful to raise up Athanasius, who almost single handedly exposed Arianism as a lie and convinced the Church to reject his heresy and to produce a formal document that affirmed the Deity of Jesus Christ.

Next, we spent a long time studying the next major heresy called Pelagianism that rose up in the fourth and fifth centuries to attack the Gospel of Grace and the Nature and Character of God. Pelagius rejected Original Sin, Total Human Depravity, Justification by Grace and the Sovereignty of God. Once again, an attack against the Church was met with a faithful warrior for Truth who stood against the lie. God raised up Augustine to do battle against Pelagius and correctly label Pelagianism as a lie from hell.

Then much later, in the 16th and 17th centuries, God raised up a group of holy and devote men, called the Puritans, to faithfully reject the rationalism of the Socinians.

We also saw that although these heresies are ancient- they are not extinct. Each of these false teachings are alive and well and living somewhere near you. But although heresies are alive and well, we also studied that the best way- the only way to confront and expose and defeat each of these heresies and in fact all false teaching is by you and I humbly submitting to a systematic; line upon line; precept upon precept formal plan of serious, in depth Bible Study.

And we saw that God's Light will dispel all of the devil's lies; that God's Truth will destroy all false teachings and Biblical Sound Doctrine will replace ignorance and misconceptions and improper and misguided man made doctrines.

So that is our review of the History of Heresy. If you would like a copy of this study on the seven major groups of heresy- please call or write and let me know. Last year- God enabled us to send out over 1300 CD's free of charge as we have never made merchandise of the Word of God- and we would be happy to send you these fifty-four messages if you would let us know. And Lord willing, on the next broadcast, I will begin to look at the next verse of the **Epistle of Jude** as we look at what the Holy Spirit inspired Jude to write about the defining characteristics of the heretics.

So, I pray that I have done what the Puritans talked about and that is treated the Scripture fairly. I pray that verse 4 of Jude has been seared into your heart and mind and I pray that the Holy Spirit of God will illuminate this verse in your own personal walk with God so that you and I may both be faithful to earnestly contend for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints. 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.