

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**

37. The History of Heresy Part 7

WOSM Wednesday 12/26/07

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 have looked at length at the first heresy- Antinomianism and now it is time to move on to the second great heresy- the heresy of the Judaizers. As we read in Jude 4- the Holy Ghost inspired Jude to tell us that ungodly men would creep into the Church like the snakes that they are and would pervert the Doctrines of God alone two lines- notice that Jude says that they would “**turn the grace of our God into licentiousness**” and these ungodly men would “**deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.**”

So, we see that all heresy attacks in two places- 1) Heresy attacks God's Grace and turns God's glorious and marvelous Grace into sensual sin and 2) Heresy attacks the very Person and Character and Nature of God and Jesus Christ. And we have seen that although these heresies are ancient- they are not extinct- they are alive and well and are still deceiving people today. We have also seen that although the Church denounced each of these heresies and wrote extensively about them- that, that alone did not destroy them. And so we need to be aware that the best remedy against heresy is studying and knowing and believing and loving and living the Truth.

Now I have told you that heresy is divided into seven major groups: The Judaizers, The Antinomians; The Gnostics; The Modalists; The Arians; The Pelagians; and The Socinians and that all of the many hundreds of false teachings that exist today are nothing new- but are simply offshoots of one or more of these seven major groups.

Now we have discussed at length about the Antinomians and how they attacked God's Grace by abusing Grace and turned the Grace of God into a license to sin. These people *presume* upon the Grace of God and are really just lost people pretending to be saved.

You will know an Antinomian by his fruit. Anyone who for any reason attacks biblical holiness may well be an Antinomian. These people mock righteous living; and look at any attempt at controlling the carnal lusts of the flesh as being legalistic.

But now we turn our attention to the real legalists- the Judaizers- who appeared on the scene at the same time as did the Antinomians. These people were basically the opposite of the Antinomians- but were equally as off base as the Antinomians. While the Antinomians *abused* the Grace of God by looking at God's Grace as a license to sin- the Judaizers completely *ignored* God's Grace and taught that Grace alone was not enough for Salvation.

Judaizers rose up in the days of the Apostles and taught that human effort; human works; human good deeds such as keeping the Sabbath; keeping the dietary and ceremonial laws of Moses and being circumcised was necessary in order for the Gentile believers to be saved. In other words, the Judaizers said that the Gentile converts must become Jewish before they can become Christian. But we must look at the setting in order to understand how this heresy came into being.

You see, as the Christian Faith began to spread outside of Israel and as it began to be preached to the Gentiles- these ungodly, barbaric pagans began to trust in Christ and believe and be added to the Church. And this caused quite a controversy among the people due to the fact that the majority of believers at that time were Jewish.

The Jews had been taught their whole lives to look at a Gentile as being unholy and unclean. So even after the Jews were saved- much of their social tradition carried over into the Church. Many Jews in the Church looked down their noses at the Gentile converts

and counted them as second class citizens. Which is why we have much in the Holy Scriptures that command believers not to treat saved people any differently. Paul and Peter and John and the recorded Words of Jesus all tell us to make no distinction between rich and poor; between educated and uneducated; between male and female; between Jew and Greek; or between slave and master. The logic of Scripture is that if Christ thought enough about them to die for them to save them- then we are to love them and we are to make no distinction between them as it pertains to Salvation.

Now one of the Apostles had a real hard time with this. As good as he was in other areas- Peter had a hard time reconciling this Truth with what he had learned his whole life. So God went to great lengths to show Peter how he was to think and act toward the Gentiles who were coming to Christ and being saved.

For example- in the **Book of the Acts 10**, we read where God gives Peter an encounter with an honorable Gentile man, named Cornelius. This man was noble but was unsaved and because God had chosen Cornelius for Salvation- He brought this Gentile to the house where Peter could minister to him the ways of Salvation.

But there was another reason that God brought Cornelius to Peter. God wanted to show Peter that there was going to be many Gentile converts and that Peter was going to be called to minister to them.

So God gave Peter a vision and He gave it to him three times. And the gist of the Vision is that even though something may look or seem to be unclean- if God has cleansed it- it is not common and it is not unclean. And finally- the message became clear to Peter: God was going to save many of the unclean Gentiles and they were going to be saved the very same way that the Jews had been saved- the same way that Peter himself had been saved: By Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished work of Christ alone. And this message was so clear to Peter at that time that we have his recorded words about this in **The Acts 10:28** that say:

And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean.

And read with me what Peter said in **The Acts 10:34&35**:

34 Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand *now* that God is not one to show partiality,
35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.

And Peter finished his proclamation in verses 42&43:

42 "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.

43 "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

The Lord had shown Peter that even the dirty, unclean, pagan Gentiles could be saved through the very same means that he and Paul and Abraham and everyone else had been saved- by believing. And to cap off this marvelous event- God sent His seal of approval on the Gentile believers to prove to Peter and all the others that God was no respect of persons as it pertains to Salvation as we read in **The Acts 10:44-48**:

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered,

47 "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?"

48 And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

It is interesting to note here that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentile believers was of such visible and tangible and measurable substance- that they all could see it and know it and understand clearly that God the Holy Spirit had come upon the

Gentiles. And since the Holy Spirit doesn't come upon unsaved people- Peter knew that this was the proof that the Gentiles had been saved.

So after this glorious event- if anyone in the Church should have known better than to fall for the heresy of the Judaizers- it should have been Peter- right? Yet the lie of legalism is so subtle that even after God had clearly showed Peter that the Gentiles were going to be saved the very same way that everyone else had been saved- Peter was temporarily confused and began to join with the other Jewish leaders of the Church in telling the Gentiles that in order for them to be *really* saved- that Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ alone was not enough- but they had to keep the ceremonial and dietary laws of Moses- and that the human work of circumcision is what would save their souls.

Things got so bad that by the 15th chapter of **The Acts** we can read this in verse 1:

Some men came down from Judea and *began* teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

Just like Jude warned- these Judaizers had crept into the Church and they- along with the Antinomians- were attacking the Grace of God. The Antinomians attacked Grace from one side, while the legalists attacked it from the other side- but both of these heresies pervert the Truth about Grace.

So as the Judaizers rose up in the Church and began to add other requirements to Salvation that God has not added- they were in effect teaching that God's Grace was not sufficient to save the human soul- but that God needs our help and our cooperation in the saving of human souls by adding human works to His Plan of Salvation. And by teaching that God's Grace was not sufficient- these legalists were also saying that God Himself was not Sovereign- because He was not able to save Man without the aid and assistance of human works. So we can see that although we may not think that this was a big deal today- the Church thought that what the Judaizers taught was a major problem.

The heresy of legalism was so great that the Apostles convened the very first Church Council to deal with it- called The Jerusalem

Council. Now a Church Council is when an issue is of such major importance that all the leaders of the church are convened to thoroughly analyze it and discuss it and make a ruling on it based upon what God said about the issue in Scripture.

And it needs to be said here that there have been many Church Councils convened over the last two thousand years. But not all Church Councils were ordained by God. Beloved, I beg you to listen to me right now, this is very important. Only those Councils in which the decisions were rendered from Scripture and from Scripture alone are legitimate Church Councils. In every case where any Church convenes a Council and any decision is made about Doctrine, Correction, Godly Reproof; or Instruction in Righteousness where that decision came from human reasoning, Church tradition, or history and not from Scripture and Scripture alone, is to be ignored by the faithful Christian. That Council is illegitimate and the rulings of that Council are to be quickly discarded as nothing more than hot air.

As I have said several times before- no church; no council; no pastor; no board of elders; no deacon board; no pope; no group of Church leaders; no organization has any authority to formulate any Doctrine except that they base that Doctrine from Scripture and from Scripture alone. We do not have the right to make up Doctrine based upon social changes or emotional whims or human ingenuity- but we must make sure that what we believe is what God has said and that we all make sure that we are sincerely and earnestly contending 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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