

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**

44. The History of Heresy Part 14

WOSM Monday 01/07/08

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. We are now concentrating on a late first century heresy that attacked the Church called Gnosticism.

Now we studied last time how that there are three main branches of Gnosticism:

1. Dualism
2. Syncretism
3. Docetism

And on the last broadcast, we looked at Dualism and today I want to see what Syncretism is all about. Syncretism comes from the Greek word where we get our English word, "synchronize" from. According to *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Walter Elwell, Syncretism is a form of Gnosticism that merges various beliefs both pagan and otherwise into one system of religion.

Syncretism is the blending of all beliefs into a “hodge podge” patchwork of man-made religion- and it is much more common than you would think.

Syncretism was first used to describe how the normally divided people of the island of Crete came together to face a common enemy, but what it became known as is the method by which sin is blended into Christianity and made to be acceptable. This legend was familiar all around the Middle East at that time, which is why the Apostle Paul wrote in **Titus 1:10-14:**

10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain.

12 One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."

13 This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith,

14 not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.

Syncretism exists when something that the Bible teaches is wrong is “spiritualized” or “sanitized” or “sanctified” by incorporating it into the Church and thus- that which was wrong- suddenly becomes right; that which is sinful- is suddenly accepted as being not only okay- but is accepted as being holy- even though the Bible clearly cries out against it.

The prophet Isaiah cried out against syncretism when he said in **Isaiah 5:20:**

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

All throughout the Bible, God told His chosen people that they were to be holy; that is, they were to be “set apart” from all the other people of the earth; that they were to be an exclusive and dedicated and consecrated *to* God and *for* God. This “set apartness” doesn’t mean that we think that we are better than others, nor does it mean that

we are too good to associate with sinners or that we cannot rub shoulders with the sinner- we can and we should- but what it does mean is that the God that we serve *expects* and *deserves* our full loyalty and our full devotion and our full love and He will not share us with the world and so there must be *some* type of separation between the saved and the lost in behavior, desire and in how we live, or else why would the sinner ever want what we have? Hear the Word of God in **Ezekiel 22:25-26:**

25 "There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in the midst of her.

26 "Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

People have asked me why I am doing this study on Jude. They say, *"These heresies are all ancient and beside the historical value- why are you going over this now?"* My Christian brothers and sisters, it is true that these heresies are ancient. But although these heresies are ancient, they are sadly not extinct. These ancient heresies are alive and well and are still plaguing the Church today and based upon our current unwillingness to learn and comprehend Sound Doctrine- the Church today is a sitting duck for these very same lies to invade and destroy the Christian Faith.

Even though the form of Gnosticism called Syncretism began around the second century, the snare of Syncretism is today bringing us to a place of corruption and judgment like we have never seen. Syncretism has become so popular, that we now have invited the world into the Church and the Church today for the most part doesn't look or act or live any different than the lost unsaved world! We have mixed the holy with the profane- precisely what the Bible says not to do. As a result of Syncretism being in the Church today, we have the same social problems like divorce and financial irresponsibility and emotional distress that used to be reserved for those who didn't have the God of all Glory in their lives and the Peace that passes all understanding in their hearts.

During the early years of the Church, as the Gentiles were being

Saved- the Church allowed these former pagans to bring into the Church, many of their old pagan practices so that they would feel more comfortable. Some of these practices were innocent, but some of them were sinful. But because the Church was now allowing these new converts to keep their old ways and did not expect them to adopt the ways of God- these sinful practices suddenly became acceptable and in some cases, they even became holy almost overnight. This served to confuse many about right and wrong.

A very good example of how modern day syncretism is now operating in the Church in this area is the blending or synchronizing of a pagan celebration with a religious service in the season of Mardi Gras.

The celebration of Mardi Gras by the Church of Jesus Christ in general and Christians in particular is a modern day equivalent of the Gnostic heresy of Syncretism. You see, Mardi Gras is not like the Fourth of July or other celebrations. Mardi Gras is a *blending* or a *synchronizing* of pagan worship and the Church of Jesus Christ and that is Gnostic Syncretism.

According to Wikipedia, the Internet Encyclopedia, the forerunner to our modern celebration of Mardi Gras was the Roman Festival of Lupercalia, which celebrated the she wolf which had suckled Romulus and Remus- the legendary founders of Rome with several days of drink, dance, and sexual promiscuity in the streets of pagan Rome.

In A.D. 494, Pope Gelasius I, *synchronized* or *blended* this pagan celebration with Christianity and made it acceptable to the Church by changing the focus of celebration from the she- wolf to the Virgin Mary. At this time a group of priests called the Luperci would sacrifice two male goats and a dog and then would drape the skins of the slain beasts around their bodies as costumes. These skins were called, “februa”. These priests would then run through the city, striking the people who lined both sides of the streets with the remains of the dead animals.

The promise was made that if a woman or young girl was struck with the contents of this pagan parade- she would be fertile and would bear many children. This so- called promise had the effect of encouraging adultery and fornication both during and after the parade. Normally, Christians would be outraged at such a display of

sin, but because the leaders of the Church had *synchronized* the holiday and had “spiritualized” and “sanctified” it by blending it with a Christian observance, the “edge of the sword” had been dulled and outrage was turned into participation.

This time of “carnival” was so widely known that when William Shakespeare wrote his play, *Julius Caesar*” he began his play during the festival of Lupercalia.

In France, during the Middle Ages, it became common for people to wait until Easter to be baptized. Many people fasted and went into solemn seclusion for upwards of forty days to prepare their hearts and minds for baptism. This period of cleansing became known as “Lent” and became a time when people fasted or gave up something meaningful to prepare themselves for baptism.

The first day of Lent was always on a Wednesday and is today marked by millions by having a cross marked on their foreheads from ashes which is supposed to denote sacrifice and humility.

So, the last day before Lent was Tuesday- and it was the last day in which people could be light and happy and merry before they had to go into forty days of fasting and repentance. So, because the French Church was overrun with Gnostic teachings, the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday became known, especially in Paris during the Middle Ages, as a time when sin could abound one last time before they had to be serious and pious. So, they called it “Fat Tuesday.”

This Tuesday celebration grew larger and larger until parades and drunkenness and sin was displayed in an ungodly demonstration of human depravity at first for that one day only, but it soon grew to extend over a period of over two weeks. You need to know that it is a recorded fact that this time of filth and sin was guided and operated under the eye of the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church in Paris during the 1700’s and had its full blessing.

In 1699, when the French explorer, Iberville settled the Gulf Coast, he brought with him many of the practices of his native France. On March 3, 1699, Iberville had set up camp on the West Bank of the Mississippi River about 60 miles south of where the city of New Orleans is today. Iberville knew that this was the very day that Mardi Gras was being celebrated in his native France. Iberville, then proudly named the site of his camp, “Point du Mardi Gras” in honor of this corrupt celebration.

All during the time when the French controlled New Orleans, pre Lenten celebrations were common. When the Spanish took over the city, however, they banned the corrupt party because they thought it made a mockery of Christian purity. This ban continued until 1823, when the Creole population of New Orleans convinced the Governor of Louisiana to reinstate only the “masked” balls. In 1827, the street parties began again with a vengeance and in 1837, the parades began again with the sin and violence and drunkenness along with them that we know today.

Today, Mardi Gras type celebrations are held in several states and countries around the world. In every case, Fat Tuesday is known as the last day in which men can kick up their heels and sin with abandon before they have to fast for forty days.

I tell you that the Mardi Gras celebration is a mockery of all that is holy and all that is righteous. Mardi Gras is the greatest religious hoax that ever was. And make no mistake about it- Mardi Gras was and is a religious holiday perpetrated upon the world by a pagan and backslid “church” that has tried to synchronize pagan things with the things of God, and those who love the Lord should cry out against the hypocrisy and the evil of this wickedness.

Now I realize that many today have no idea about the origins of Mardi Gras. And I realize that today many use this time as just an excuse to get off work or to get out of school or to catch some beads, which by the way are symbolic of the rosary that this backslid “church” tells us to use. Mardi Gras is a wicked example of Gnostic Syncretism and just because many today are not informed about what this wicked celebration is all about is no reason why we who do know should not cry out against it.

This is why we need to understand that the ancient Gnostic heresy of Syncretism is alive and well today and we need to wake up and smell the coffee and we need to repent and to return to Biblical Holiness and we need to earnestly contend for the Faith that was once 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.