

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**

54. The History of Heresy Part 24

WOSM Monday 01/21/08

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 men" that Jude talks about here in verse 4 really were by studying the seven major groups of heresy. And we have already covered the Antinomians, the Judaizers, the Gnostics, and the Modalists. And now we are continuing in our study of one of the most important times of the Christian Church- a time when the Church nearly lost its understanding of the Deity of Jesus Christ and when heresy nearly destroyed the Gospel. This is what the heresy of Arianism was all about.

Now the fourth century Church was being torn apart over the issue of the Deity of Christ. On the one hand, you had the wicked presbyter of the Church at Alexandria Egypt, a man named Arius, who was teaching that God the Son was of a *similar* but different Essence or substance from that of God the Father.

On the other hand, you had the bishop of Alexandria, a man named Alexander who was teaching that Christ was of the very same essence or substance with the Father. Alexander's view was Biblical and Arius' view was a slight change from the Biblical account- yet had

the net effect of teaching that Christ was not God- but a lesser created Being.

The controversy centered around one letter of one word. Arius had added one letter to one Greek word that changed the meaning of the word to suit his own theology. Alexander excommunicated Arius for not repented of blaspheming the Son of God.

The mood of the Church in the fourth century was similar to the mood of our modern Church. As we found out, the prevailing sentiment of the Church then was that the teaching of Arius, while quaint and odd was not serious enough to warrant the harsh action that Alexander had taken. The leaders of the Church, almost to a man tried to get Alexander to soften his attack against Arius and allow both views of Christ's Divinity to be taught in the Church simultaneously.

See if this sounds familiar. The prevailing mind set of the leaders of the Church in the fourth century was, "Let's just try to get along. Arius is a fine man; well articulated; very eloquent and is very passionate about certain views. Alexander is well respected and old and has a view that differs from Arius. But Arius and Alexander agree on most all other points of Doctrine. Let's not split the Church over an iota. Let's don't ruin the unity of the Church over one letter of one word. Who cares whether Jesus was God or not? It's enough to just simply love Him and believe on Him and trust Him for salvation."

That is pretty much the same mind set that we see today in the Church. It makes sense to talk like that. It appears to be loving and gracious. It has all the earmarks of being tolerant- which is the new virtue that trumps all other virtues today. After all isn't Christian unity more important than some little different in a Doctrine that very few people even understand anyway?

No, it is not. It is true that the Arian Controversy of the fourth century was sparked over one letter of one Greek word. But the implication of what Arius taught was far more important than that. Here is why. If Arius was right, if it is true that Christ is not God, but is a created being, who is more than a man, but is nonetheless less than God- then we are wrong to worship Christ. If Christ is a created Being, then for us to worship a created being would be idolatry.

Second and more important than any other argument is the unquestioned fact that the Bible clearly states that Jesus was God.

When Jesus was confronted with the Pharisees, Jesus made this startling statement in **John 8:58**:

Jesus said unto them, Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.

And what Jesus did here was use the very same term to describe Himself as did God when God spoke to Moses from the burning bush. Jesus was telling the Pharisees very clearly that He is God.

Now many today say that Jesus never actually said that He was God. I have heard many, many people say that. And they say it with such certainty that you would almost think it was true. But what these people say with such certainty is just flat out not true. Jesus was *clearly* telling these self righteous Pharisees that He was God manifested in the flesh in this passage and one of the best ways to know that is to look at how the Pharisees reacted to what Jesus said. Let's look at the next verse in **John 8:59**:

Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Now the reason that these Jews were going to try to stone Jesus here was precisely because Jesus had made Himself to be equal with God and they thought that Jesus had blasphemed God for doing that- so they were going to kill Him. Let's look at **John 5:18**:

For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

Now we may not know this today, but the Jews of that day were very much aware that when Jesus said that God was His Father- Jesus was in effect saying that He and God were the same thing. The Jews understood exactly what Jesus was saying about Himself and that is precisely why they wanted to kill Him. The Romans wanted to kill Jesus because He was creating a problem about authority in Palestine because of all the people who followed Him. But the Jews were clear about why they wanted Jesus dead- they never wavered from this one thing- Jesus had made Himself equal with God and therefore he had to

die. The Apostle Paul spoke about this very same thing in **Philippians 2:6-11** that says:

6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.

8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

So how do we reconcile all of these verses with the verses which talk about how Christ humbled Himself and how Christ grew in wisdom and how Christ exhibited human attributes and even at one time said that His Father was greater than He was?

These seemingly contradictory verses which on the one hand speak to Christ's Divinity and which at other times speak to Christ's humanity are both easily reconciled through the Doctrine of the Trinity and the Doctrine of the dual Nature of Christ.

The Doctrine of the Trinity teaches that God is one in essence, but is eternally manifested in three distinct Persons of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. So Christ is different from God in Person, and function, but is the very same as God in essence and substance.

And the Doctrine of the Dual Nature of Christ teaches that Christ was the most unique Person in all of human history because he is 100% God and 100% in the same Body at the same time without conflict or contradiction.

But Brother Blair, look I am not an academic or a theologian. I don't see why we need to learn all of this stuff. Isn't it enough to just love Jesus and trust in Him. Yes it is enough to love Jesus and trust in Him for Salvation if all that you wish to do.

Listen to me. We as Americans should all be able to just go to work and love our families and mind our own business- right? But we were attacked on 9/11. 3,000 men, women and children were murdered. We are under the very real threat of some demon possessed maniac getting a nuclear bomb and blowing up half of Detroit at any minute. I hate that this is true- I resent the fact that this is true- but it *is* true and to try to ignore it or to try to live as we did before 9/11 and just forget about terrorism is both foolish and naïve.

Those who desire to destroy us are not sincere but misguided people. These people are vicious madmen who do not mind dying in order to kill as many ten year old girls as they can. They are not heroes; they are not modern day George Washingtons- they are the scum of the earth. They are the product of a demonic religion that teaches hate and war as a primary means of winning converts.

Beloved, none of us wants war- we all want to just live in peace- but what do we do with those who want to destroy us- have them over for tea and crumpets? Because we are at risk- because we are in danger- because we are in real jeopardy to be attacked at any minute- we must guard, and we must protect ourselves and we must fight.

This is the way it is with the Church of Jesus Christ. It would be wonderful to be able to simply love Jesus and to waltz around in sheer bliss and happiness about our own personal Salvation- and the day is coming when we will be able to do just that in Heaven. But we live in a time when there are real spiritual terrorists- Jude called them ungodly men, who are not noble people; they are not sincere but misguided souls. These people are described in the holy Bible as clouds without water; wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. These people do greater harm than the natural terrorists. These spiritual renegades creep into the Church in their sleeper cells- disguising themselves as angels of light and they bring in their dirty bombs of damnable heresies that are designed to deceive and confuse people about Grace and about Jesus and about God.

These people are trying to destroy the Church and for us to just sit back and let these people have their way would be a sin as great as if we laid down our weapons and let the natural terrorists win.

The Church of Jesus Christ is under attack today. Sound Doctrine is being fought on every side. The integrity of the Bible; the Deity of Christ; the Sovereignty of God are all under assault today.

The reason that millions of people today are falling for the lies that the Da Vinci Code and the Gospel of Judas and the Gospel of Thomas and the so-called lost books of the Bible put forth is because the spiritual terrorists called Gnostics are operating out of their sleeper cells from within the Church. The answer is not to kill them- the answer is to shine the light of Truth on their lies.

The reason that millions of people are becoming enamored with a works based salvation system today is because the spiritual terrorist called Judaizers are using their dirty bombs of false teaching to sow seeds of doubt and confusion about the Grace of Jesus Christ.

All around us, the sleeper cells of modern day heretics are springing up. These spiritual terrorists sense a weakness in the resolve of the Church to be willing to confront them with Sound Doctrine. They are betting that people will just get apathetic and laid back and neglect their obligation to maintain Truth in the Church.

I tell you that we need to wake up and repent and return to our first love. We need to realize that as long as we desire entertainment instead of edification in the Church; as long as we seek teachers to scratch our ears instead of calling us back to Biblical Christianity; as long as we are captivated by materialism and covetousness disguised as God's blessings; and as long as we uphold relationships at the expense of inspired Truth; we will be ripe for ancient heresies to come back and infiltrate the Church all over again.

I tell you that those who have an ear to hear what the Spirit is speaking unto the Church know that it is time to rise up in our most holy faith and it is time to grab the horns of the altar and it is time to weep between the porch and the altar and it is time for us to 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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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.