

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**

69. The History of Heresy Part 39

WOSM Monday 02/11/08

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 in verse 4 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, the Total and Complete Depravity of all Humans, the Sovereignty of God and the Free Will of Man.

And on the last broadcast, we saw how that the Doctrine of Original Sin teaches that being Lost is more than just being sinful in our actions- and consequently we need more than to simply to modify our actions in order to be saved. Since being lost is not just what we do- but it is who we are- we need more than simply to improve what we do in order to be saved. Since our lost, rebellious, and sinful condition is in our very *nature*- if we are to be saved- we need a new nature. And since our "lostness" is not defined simply by what we do- but is defined by who we are- then in order to be saved- we need to change who we are- not just change what we do.

Now it is true that if we change who we are- then we *will* change

what we do. I agree with that- if we are truly saved, then our actions will change- but simply changing our actions doesn't necessarily mean that we are saved. Many who follow Mormon or Buddhist teachings live very moral lives- and yet they have not had their nature changed by the miracle of the New Birth and are thus- still lost. So the point I am making is that simply by applying will power to alter certain aspects of our behavior is not the same thing as being born from above.

All Lost people possess a depraved and sinful nature. That nature is corrupt and wicked and evil in God's sight and cannot be repaired; it cannot be fixed; and it cannot be healed or improved. The Bible says that it must be transformed.

You see, we don't need to be "fixed"- we need to be reborn. We don't simply need "improvement"- no, we need to be resurrected. Salvation does not *improve* our depraved nature- Salvation *transforms* our old Adamic nature into a divine nature. Salvation is the *replacement* of one nature that is fallen and depraved with a new Divine nature that is created in righteousness and true holiness.

As fallen people- we love self; we worship self; we adore self; we build up self; we promote self we follow self; we do what is right for self; we do what will be most beneficial to self. So, the god of lost people is not the God of the Bible. No, the god of all lost people on earth is self.

But saved people have received from God a new nature which transforms their desires and now we love and worship and follow and serve and obey and promote God to the detriment of self.

Now not all lost people sin all the time. Some lost people do noble and good things as far as we define human nobility and goodness. But the Bible teaches that all lost people have the proclivity to sin; they long to sin; they enjoy sin; they love to sin; they seek to sin; they plan to sin; they desire to live for sin and self. They may not always be successful in their sinning due to circumstances or a lack of money or a lack of opportunity- but the Bible teaches that in their heart- all lost people do only evil, and they do this evil continually.

Here is the analogy. Fish swim; birds fly; bears hibernate and people sin. You don't have to teach a bird to fly; you don't have to teach a fish to swim and you don't have to teach a bear to hibernate.

Why? It is in their nature to do so. They are not being individualistic or doing anything new to swim or fly or hibernate- no, they are simply obeying their own normal cravings and natural instincts.

So, it is true with Man. All men are born with a sinful nature and when Man chooses to do anything- he may *think* that he is following his own free will; and it may *appear* that he is individually choosing to sin- but in reality, he is doing nothing more than choosing actions which lie within the sinful bondage of his own fallen nature because he does not have the ability to do anything else.

Now over the years, we have minimized what it means to be saved. In our effort to “win more people” and to get more people saved- we have lowered the bar about what it actually means to be saved so as to make it easier to reach more numbers of people. That technique has proven to be a tragic mistake.

Today, we are willing to include anyone as being saved as long as they have “prayed the prayer” or “gone down front” or in some way expressed some mental agreement with God about some facts about life. And some of these persons may well be saved. But unless the nature of the beast has been changed- there has been no genuine Salvation- so when the freshness of their emotional experience has died down- most of these people wander back out into sin. And they do this because they were never truly born from above to begin with.

I once met a man who was a pig farmer. He raised pigs. He also could train pigs to do funny and cute things. This man had trained one pig to do amazing things. He dressed up the pig in a tuxedo and the pig would come into the house and sit down in a chair at the table and pretend to eat a meal. The pig almost looked human. In fact, he had better table manners than some people that I know.

But after awhile, the pig would revert back to being a pig and the farmer had to be sure that he took the tuxedo off the pig first- because if he didn't- the pig would get the clothes dirty as he would go outside and wallow in the mud and eat corn husks.

We all remember how a few years ago, that famous animal trainer, who had trained hundreds of lions and tigers for several decades- turned his back on a tiger just one time and the animal immediately forgot all that he had been taught for years and reverted back to being a wild beast and nearly took the animal trainer's head off. So we can teach an animal many tricks- but we cannot change the

nature of the beast.

Why would the pig want to go outside in the heat and wallow in the mud and eat corn husks- when he could stay in the house in the air conditioning and sit at a nice table and eat good food? Because it is the nature of the animal to do so.

And we can train people to raise their hands and we can teach them to dance and shout and sing in the choir and pray and in some other way modify their behavior to a point- but sooner or later- those unsaved and lost people who are trying to “act” like Christians will revert back to being exactly what they really are- lost sinners- and as lost souls- sooner or later they will return to the wallow of their sin and they will return to the husks of their depraved life. Why? Because we have dealt with their behavior- but we have not touched their nature. And only God can change our nature- only God can save a soul.

Now why would any thinking person ever desire to live in sin? As destructive as sin is- why would *anyone* seek to serve sin? It doesn't make sense. Sin always wins and the people always lose. Nobody wins with sin- they lose 100% of the time and yet in spite of 6,000 years of human history to prove to us that sin is destructive- people sin today more than ever. Why is that? This goes way beyond human reasoning and human intelligence. It goes down into the DNA of fallen mankind. We sin because it is in our nature to love sin.

And unless God changes our nature and unless God resurrects our dead souls; and unless God rebirths our depraved natures- we can do tricks and we can change our actions to a point- but we are not saved and we are not born again and we are still lost and we are still fallen.

The Bible boldly declares that Mankind is so lost that he *cannot* save Himself. Our depravity is so entire- so complete- so all-encompassing- that we do not possess the ability to redeem ourselves. Our fallen nature is so corrupt and so sinful that we do not have the power to be any different than what we are- truly we are exactly what the Bible declares us to be. Look at **Ephesians 2:11-12:**

11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands —

12 *remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Now in these verses, the Bible describes the condition of lost Man. Look at the terminology that is used here. “Gentiles in the flesh”, “Uncircumcised”; “aliens”; “strangers”; “having no hope”; “without God”. How could Pelagius read this verse of Scripture and then say that Man was okay in God’s Eyes? How can anyone today read this and hundreds of other verses and think that lost and fallen Man is okay? This verse does not describe someone who is okay with God. This verse describes someone who is in a terrible state with God; someone who is completely lost; someone who is totally separated from God. And the Bible says that everyone born of woman is in this condition and he is in this condition by birth.

Also please notice that the Bible doesn’t say that we are basically good people who only need to improve a few areas of our lives. The Bible doesn’t say that we are fundamentally a wonderful and good creation of God who only needs to build up our self esteem. No, the Bible says that we are “Gentiles in the flesh”, which means that we are unbelievers. The Bible says that we are, “uncircumcised”, which means that we are not a part of the God’s Covenant. The Bible says that we are, “without Christ”, which means that we are on our own- without a Savior. The Bible says that we are, “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel”, which means that we are not a legal resident of the Promised Land. The Bible says that we are, “strangers from the covenants of Promise”, which means that we are not in line to receive anything that God has promised. The Bible says that we are, “without hope”, which means exactly that- we are without any hope at all. The Bible says that we are, “without God”, which means that we are totally separated from the Almighty.

How could we get any more lost than this? What other terminology could God have used to drill into us our lost condition? How could anything be more clear? Man is lost and he is lost by birth and he is lost by nature and he is so lost that he deserves hell and he is so lost that he cannot do anything at all about it.

Pelagius couldn’t have been more wrong than he was. Pelagius couldn’t have been in more opposition to what the Bible teaches about Lost man than he was. Pelagius couldn’t have been a bigger enemy of

Jesus Christ than he was. So, if all of this is clearly in the Bible- which it is- then where in the world did Pelagius get his teaching from? He got it from the devil. He got it from hell. He got it from demons. And that is why the Church was correct to label this man as a heretic and to label his teaching as blasphemy and label his studies as apostasy and the Church was correct to cast this evil man out of the Church.

Now that would be bad enough, but what is even worse is that today- Pelagianism is the dominant belief system in the world. And so many undiscerning Church members today pick up elements of Pelagianism all the time from famous teachers and run off with it and adopt it into their lives precisely because it is so appealing to our fallen nature and precisely because it makes our sinful and carnal flesh feel so good.

But we must remember that anything that promotes sinful flesh is always an attack against Jesus Christ. And we also must understand that anything that promotes Jesus Christ is always an attack against sinful flesh.

Any teaching that builds up sinful flesh is not of God- but is a hindrance to allowing lost man to see and to fully understand his Lostness- and that is contrary to God's Will. You see, unlike us- God is perfectly willing to offend anyone as long as they are made aware of their sinful condition. Only by fully understanding how lost he is will any man ever seek to be found. So trying to shield lost people from the impact of the full realization of their own Lostness in all of its horrible detail is not helping anyone- it is dooming them to hell.

Any teaching that exalts the power of man to be able to do for himself what the Bible clearly says only God can do is not lifting up Man- it is condemning him to an eternity without Christ. This is precisely what Pelagius did.

I tell you that we all need to exercise spiritual discernment and look and see if we are being taught what the Bible says about Fallen man and we all need 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.

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from *The New American Standard Bible* © 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of teachings taken from a verse- by- verse Journey through the **Epistle of Jude**. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete copyright statement be at the end of all copies.

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.