

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**

74. The History of Heresy Part 44

WOSM Monday 02/18/08

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 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.

Now last time we saw that all the religions in the world; all the false teachings of the world; all the heresies of the word have one thing in common: They all are built upon a high view of Man and teach that Man must work or earn or deserve Salvation. Only one religion- Christianity teaches that because Man is fallen and depraved- that he *cannot* earn Salvation; Man *cannot* work his way into Salvation; and Man does not *deserve* Salvation. Biblical Christianity teaches that Salvation is a free gift of Grace from a loving God to those whom He has chosen.

Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism are what are called a "works based" Salvation System that requires lost Man to do something in order to be saved. Biblical Christianity alone teaches that Man *cannot*

do anything to get his own Salvation because Salvation is solely and wholly a gracious act of a Sovereign God.

Now most every one would agree with that statement on the surface- even those who are engaged in a works based Salvation system. But where the rub comes in is when we get down to the details of what this all means. In order to fully comprehend the depth of this- we need to return to Scripture to see exactly what God is saying about Salvation. Let's go again to **Ephesians 2:8&9:**

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Now again, most everyone I know would agree with these verses on the surface. But let's look at the implication of what these verses are saying. Here is the \$64,000 question:

Is Salvation a Sovereign Work of God or is human cooperation necessary for Salvation?

Pelagius taught that the Fall of Adam was a myth and that those born after Adam had no negative affects because of anything that Adam did. So, because lost man retained all of the faculties that Adam had- nothing more than putting forth will power to obey was all that was needed to be saved. Thus, Grace and even the Crucifixion was not necessary in Pelagius' teaching.

This heresy, called Pelagianism was later refined by Erasmus in the 16th century and is the father of what is called today, Secular Humanism. Most everyone in every Church would agree that Humanism is wrong and is not correct.

Pelagianism has a high view of Man and a low view of God. Pelagianism teaches that men are born just fine and do not need Grace and do not need Christ in order to be saved. Pelagians teach that men can "save" themselves by and through their own efforts- if a man chooses to do good- he is saved and if a man chooses to do wrong- he is bad. Pelagianism puts all the power of Salvation on the Omnipotent Sovereignty of Man's Free Will.

Now that is easy for many people to see. Almost everyone from

Mormons to Catholics to Protestants to Jehovah's Witnesses to Hare Krishna's all would agree that pure Pelagianism is wrong and that Secular Humanism is of the devil. In fact, the Roman Catholic Church is on record as officially denouncing pure Pelagianism as a heresy.

All of these groups would be happy to sign a document that denounces Pelagianism and the view that man is just fine at birth.

But let's get down to a finer detail. Let's go to the second view of Man. The second view of Man is what is called, "the sick view" or semi-Pelagian view. This view teaches that the Fall of Adam was real and that Man was negatively affected by the Fall. But semi-Pelagians do not accept that Lost man was totally depraved by the fall- that lost unsaved Man still retains some of the faculties that Adam had before he fell- namely his free will and the power to choose.

Now this second view correctly rejects pure Pelagianism which holds that men are just fine- no, they reject that- but they teach that lost men are not dead to God- they are simply spiritually "sick" and need a spiritual "doctor" and some spiritual "medicine" in order to be saved. So, what's so bad about that?

Those who hold to the semi-Pelagian or "spiritually sick" view of lost Man teach that in order to be saved- lost, fallen man needs to cooperate with God in his Salvation. In other words- in their view- the spiritually sick "patient" needs to cooperate with the spiritual "doctor" by taking his spiritual "medicine" and by doing some spiritual "exercise" in order to be saved.

The semi-Pelagians teach that men cannot be saved unless they cooperate with God in their own Salvation. How do they teach that men cooperate with God in their Salvation? Well, that varies from group to group, but here is a rundown.

Some semi-Pelagians teach that in order to be saved- you have to be baptized. Others teach that you have to attend the mass, or keep the sacraments or go to confession in order to be saved. Still others teach that men have to speak in tongues in order to be saved; while still others teach that we have to do nothing except believe and trust and accept Christ in order to be saved. The problem with this second view, dear friends, is that when you add any human requirements to Salvation- you negate what **Ephesians 2:8&9** clearly teaches- that Salvation is of no human works at all- none, zero.

Ephesians 2:8-9 is clear. The Bible is emphatically clear about this issue. The Bible rejects both Pelagius' teaching that men are just fine and do not need God or Grace or Christ for Salvation. But the Bible is equally as brutal in rejecting the semi-Pelagian teaching that lost man is "spiritually sick" and needs to cooperate with God for their own salvation. The Bible declares:

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Now what did God the Holy Spirit mean when he inspired the Apostle Paul to write down these two verses? Did the Holy Ghost mean that Salvation is *all* of works as Pelagius taught? Or did the Holy Ghost mean that Salvation is of *some* works as the semi-Pelagians teach?; or did God the Holy Spirit mean that Salvation is not of *any* works at all in no way shape or form? When the Bible says clearly that Salvation is not of works- it means exactly that- Salvation is a gift from God and is not brought about by any human works whatsoever.

Now how adamant you get about this is determined by how much you really believe the Bible to be the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of the living God. The phrase, "**not as a result of works**" either means that Salvation is not of any human activity at all or the Bible isn't true.

Examine verse 8 carefully with me. Paul says here:

For by grace you have been saved ... Now we all say that Grace is unmerited favor- but what does that actually mean? Grace is unearned; Grace is undeserved; Grace cannot be earned. If it is earned- then it is not Grace- it is a wage. So we are saved by unearned love; undeserved special treatment and unmerited favor. But what else did Paul say:

... through faith ...

Through faith. So, we must believe in order to be saved. But wait a minute. If we have to believe isn't that a work? No and here's why. If lost fallen man in his unsaved condition already possessed the faith to be saved inherent in him- then yes, believing would be a work and verse 9 would be a lie. But the faith that it takes to be saved is *not* inherent

in the lost soul- God has to provide even that for fallen man to be saved. Look at the rest of verse 8:

... and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

When you study the Greek here - you can clearly see that the subject that the word “that” is attached to is not the word, “saved” but the word, “faith.” And the phrase “it is the gift of God” is not talking about Salvation being a gift from God- it is referring to the faith that it takes to believe. So when you put it all back together verse 8 reads like this:

For we are saved by grace through faith and the faith that it takes to believe is not of yourselves- it is the gift of God therefore Salvation is not of any human works at all- lest any man would boast.

So because it is written this way- faith is not a work of human choice- it is a gracious gift of God to undeserving sinners.

Now this explanation of **Ephesians 2:8&9** may not please you. It may be different from what you have ever heard before. And that is precisely my point. What I just told you is the correct exposition and exegesis of that verse. You can go to any Greek Lexicon and any Bible software program you want to and look this up for yourself. That is what the Apostle Paul taught. And the fact that many of you have never heard this before is proving the point that I am making that we need to return to what the Bible actually says and not what people have told us that it says.

The Reformers of the 16th century called the Church back to the authority of Scripture and taught that all Doctrine must come from the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone. Their teaching of Sola Scriptura is the only safeguard that we have today against wayward men who will teach something that sounds good; or that sounds logical; or that appeases the sensibilities of fallen man- yet is not what the Holy Ghost put into the Bible.

For months, some of you have wondered why I was taking so long and going so slow through the Book of Jude. You have asked me why I was going over ancient heresies. What has any of this got to do with

what we are facing today? Who cares what somebody did or said 1600 years ago- what has that got to do with me today? Well, here is why.

Here is the issue. Do we have the right to make up our own way to Heaven? Does any group; does any church; any organization any ministry; any pastor; any bishop; any church council; any pope any prophet have the authority or the power or the right to determine Doctrine outside of Scripture? Who gave them this power? Who authorized them to do this? Who told them to do this? God didn't. Jesus didn't. The Bible didn't. From where do they get their authority to ignore what the Bible says and invent another way of Salvation?

1600 years ago, Pelagius was labeled a heretic because he deviated from what the Bible taught about Man and the Fall of Man and Original Sin and Salvation. Pelagius was rightly criticized and when he refused to repent- he was rightly excommunicated from the Church. Besides the modern godless Secular Humanists- I don't know anyone who would defend Pelagius today.

But what about those who teach some of Pelagius' Doctrine today? What about those who have added human requirements to Salvation that the Bible did not add?

Only one of the three views of the Fall of Man is Scriptural. Only one view of Salvation is Scriptural. The Bible says that Man was radically ruined in the Fall. The Bible says that Man's fallen nature is corrupt and depraved and wicked. The Bible says that Man lost his immortality in the Fall. The Bible says that Man lost his emotional perfection in the Fall. And the Bible says that Man's Free Will is now in bondage to his fallen nature.

Only one view of God is Scriptural. Only one view of Man is Scriptural. Only one view of Salvation is Scriptural. This is why we need to drop all of our man made theologies and return to the authority of Scripture. It really doesn't matter what you or I think. It really doesn't matter what our opinions are. All that really matters is what God says and God said that we are lost and undone and without God and without hope. God says that there is none righteous, no, not one. The Bible says that we are lost and we cannot save ourselves and we need a perfect, sinless, spotless Savior Who can rescue us from the abyss of our own depravity- and he whom the Son sets free is free indeed.

Oh, I tell you that Salvation is a glorious, supernatural, sovereign miracle of Divine Grace and Love. God alone predestinates some to

receive this wondrous gift; God alone draws them to His side. God alone regenerates them so their dead, blind, deaf souls can hear the Gospel. God alone gives them the gift of Faith so they can believe. God alone washes them in the Blood of Jesus. God alone declares them to be righteous. God alone imputes the very righteousness of Christ to them. God alone sanctifies them and God alone will keep them to the end. It is all of God and it is all through God and it is all for God's Glory.

I tell you that we serve an awesome God and we all need to love Him with all our hearts and all our souls and all our minds and all our strength and we 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.

© 2007- 2023 by Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America
Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. PO Box 147 Saucier, Mississippi 39574 www.covenantofpeace.net

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.