

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** 59. The History of Heresy Part 29

WOSM Monday 01/28/08

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 and last time, we began to examine the sixth major heresy called "Pelagianism". Late in the fourth century and early in the fifth- Pelagius promoted a heresy which elevated Man at the expense of God and altered everything from Justification to Original Sin to Grace. Pelagius also fought against another man in the Church named Augustine.

Last time we saw that Pelagius objected to Augustine's simple prayer which said,

"Lord, give what Thou commandest and command what Thou wilt."

Pelagius countered that prayer with a statement that read,

"If I ought, then I can."

So at the heart of the Pelagian Controversy was this issue:

Precisely how did the Fall of Adam affect the human race?

The Bible teaches that the fall of Adam in the Garden profoundly affected all of those born after him and that because we are fallen creatures- we need to be saved and we need to be saved by God's Grace. Pelagius taught that the Fall affected no one except Adam and that we need neither Salvation nor Grace to be in right standing with God.

340 years earlier- the Apostle Paul had prophesied in **The Book of the Acts 20:30** that savage wolves would come into the Church and would not spare the flock. Pelagius was just such a wolf that Paul was talking about. Pelagius taught that it was evil to assume that man needed to ask God for the power and the ability to do something that God had told us to do.

Pelagius used his own human reasoning and not the Words of Scripture to formulate his Doctrine that the fact that God told us to do something proved that God had already given to us that power and that ability to do what He had commanded. So for Augustine to pray and ask God to give to us that which we needed in order to do God's Will was, to Pelagius, blasphemy.

Now I need to mention here that us asking God for the strength and ability to do those things that God has required of us is not just something that is nice or sweet or humble. I once was told that asking God for ability and power and strength wasn't really necessary, but it was okay to do so because it sounded good and surely wouldn't hurt. But the reason that we are to ask God for anything is two-fold. First, we are admitting that we are unable to do it in and by our own power and secondly- we are also admitting that God is able.

But Pelagius followed a pattern that all heretics follow. The first step that heretics take in order to bring in false teachings into the Church is that they challenge already accepted and established Doctrines. Heretics begin to mock and make light of orthodox, historical and Biblical teachings that the Church has held for years. They use a technique that has been used for thousands of years in getting people to laugh at sin.

You see, anytime you are laughing- your guard is down. When we laugh- the human mind opens up. You are expecting to laugh at something that is light and happy and frivolous and about something

that isn't serious or important. But when these people want you to accept what they say with little or no resistance- they use comedy and jokes and light and happy words so that you will drop your guard and let down your sword and welcome the humor into your heart and mind. Although this is an ancient technique of warfare- it is a fact of the psychology of the human mind- and it works.

This is precisely why the major networks all began to introduce openly homosexual characters into their programs in the early 1990's through comedy rather than through drama or documentaries. As America began to laugh about homosexuality- the natural disgust at what these people do to each other became less offensive until, from what I understand, every major network today has a prominent homosexual character on every single one of their prime time programs. Their stated goal is to make homosexuality acceptable to middle America by 2010. So, we are gradually dropping our Biblical objection to this perversion by simply laughing at it. But beloved- we must be careful that we are not laughing at sin- because sin isn't funny. Sin isn't cute nor is it humorous. Sin is black and horrible and ugly and wicked and evil. Sin angers God. Sin is an offense to God. Sin takes people to hell where they will burn in a lake of fire throughout all eternity. That's just not funny. Please don't laugh at sin. Please don't become so determined to have a good time that you do so at the expense of your soul.

You can argue about this with me till the cows come home, but if we are going to walk with God in paths of righteousness and if we are going to please the Lord with our money and our lives- we simply cannot engage ourselves in every venue of entertainment that is presented to us by the pagan world.

How do you feel when you pay money that God blessed you with to look or listen to someone who blasphemes your God? How do you feel to sit there and invite sin and lust and covetousness and greed and wickedness in your home through your programs and movies? How do you feel when the very things that you hold dear are mocked and laughed at and spit on and the people who do this are becoming millionaires with the money that God blessed us with?

And we need to remind ourselves that righteousness isn't something to make fun of. We should uphold convictions. We should value spiritual effort. We should humble our hearts at what God has

said and we need to bow our knees to every command of God and make sure that we are doing what Christ has said to do.

This very same technique is used today by the modern snake oil salesmen to get you to drop your guard about what the Bible says and teaches about very important issues. These ravaging wolves use slogans like *“Were moving out of the box”* or *“We are leaving the old and tired ways of the past”*. These slogans are all catch phrases designed to make you discontented with what the Bible teaches and to get you to leave Sound Biblical truth and follow them into heresy.

Nearly every night on the Hay, Wood, and Stubble television Network we can listen to some clown make fun and mock some precious and time tested Christian Truth that was formulated in the fires of persecution and intense Bible Study and trying to get his viewers to break out of the so-called prison and bondages of the past.

What prison are these people talking about? Are they talking about the so-called “prison” that God wants one man to marry one woman for one lifetime? Is that the prison that they are referring to? Or what about the so-called “prison” of children obeying their parents or of wives graciously and willingly submitting themselves to the authority of their own husbands or of husbands loving their wives like Christ loved the Church; or of people actually being virgins when they are joined together in holy matrimony. Are these the so-called “prisons” that these people want us to move away from? Beloved, we need more of these kinds of prisons- not less.

I recently heard one popular evangelist tell his followers that if they would only exercise their faith, then they could fly around in a jet like he did. Really? I wonder how this man sleeps at night knowing that he flies around like a prima donna because he fooled enough undiscerning people into giving him the money to buy his plane for him?

The first thing that satan did to Eve was to get her to be discontent with what God has said and with what God was doing. God had told Adam that he could eat of every single tree in the Garden except one. They had access to everything that God had made except one tree and satan used words to make Eve feel like she was being deprived. This is the very same tactic that many modern preachers use today to manipulate people into feeling like they are being

deprived by God and that they are owed more and that God is really mean for not giving them something else.

The entire foundation of the Modern Health and Wealth and Prosperity Gospel is based upon getting people to become discontent with what God has said and with what God has already provided and is a perversion of true Biblical prosperity at its very core and is a reproach to the Cross of Jesus Christ that bids men to come and die.

Pelagius began to mock the Doctrine of Original Sin and made jokes about how believing what the Bible taught about the Fall of Man was naïve and was simply a tool invented by the Church to keep people oppressed and held back from their God-given destiny.

The second technique that is used by all heretics is to begin to circulate their heresy through the means of books, tracts, letters, and verbal proclamation. Today that would include radio, television, and the internet.

The goal of course is to overwhelm human resistance to spiritual error by the sheer weight of the volume of information.

The human mind may well refuse a single page tract about a new take on the Trinity, but we would find it harder to turn down that same false teaching if the man has written forty books and has a huge mega church and a nationwide television audience and six regional conferences a year. The goal of these heretics is to make popularity becomes their credibility rather than his faithfulness to God's Word.

This begs then for me to ask this question. What is the criteria that you use to receive what someone teaches? The fact that he is popular? The fact that he stands in a huge church with a nice suite on? The fact that he is cute or handsome or funny or whimsical? Or do you actually take the time to examine what he teaches; and you analyze his teachings by the Holy Scriptures and you have examined his life closely enough to know that he personally is living a godly and self-sacrificing life?

Now I want to say here that I personally have flown to different parts of the country and have set down and talked to pastors who have huge, multiple thousand members in their congregations and who have written many, many books and have found them to be wonderful men of God who are preaching the Truth and who are actually live it. And I personally know pastors who have small churches who are wolves in sheep clothing. And vice versa. So the

size of the Church is not the criteria- it is the level of their faithfulness to Scripture and their level of obedience to the Lord.

Once the heresy has spread around and has taken on enough followers and has become a real controversy, the Christian Church must respond to it. A Council of senior leaders- usually elders, deacons, pastors or bishops are convened to examine the issue at hand and search the Scriptures for a Biblical settlement.

We already saw earlier how that the Church in the fifteen chapter of the Book of the Acts convene such a Council to determine just how much Hebrew Law a Gentile believer had to obey.

Finally the Church then develops a written statement that gives their findings and the Scriptural proof that allowed them to make such a finding.

This is how the Creeds and the Confessions of the Church were formulated. They were essentially a formal response to some attack against the Gospel and they were a human attempt at upholding Biblical Truth.

Now the question always arises, *“Brother Blair, why do we need to issue a formal document or why do we need to write a Creed or a Confession of Faith? Isn’t the Bible enough?”* Yes, the Bible is enough. But as I have said before, the sad truth is that the Bible is not studied by most people; the Bible is not understood by most people; and the Bible is not written in subject order and therefore mistakes in translation; mistakes in interpretation; and mistakes in blending difficult and seemingly contradictory passages together occur and these errors give rise to heresy and give the heretics an open door to deceive.

To be sure- and hear me clearly about this- Creeds and Confessions are not inspired as is the Bible. They may and do contain errors as do all things that come from the mind and heart of human beings- and they should never be used to take the place of Scripture. Only the Bible is inerrant and infallible. And I also need to say that all Creeds and all Confessions are not Scriptural and although they were formally developed- they are false, and they do not deserve to be learned or believed or followed.

But having said that, there are some Creeds and there are some Confessions that are totally Biblical and they are nothing more than expositional studies of exactly what the Bible says about a certain

issue. And these Creeds are useful and these Confessions are wonderful tools that should never take the place of Scripture by any means, but can act as a guide that can help us to better understand the holy and inspired Word of the living God.

Many of the Church Councils and many of the Creeds and Confessions that came out of those Councils are good and are valuable to us today and they are historical examples of people just like us- 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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