

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**

34. The History of Heresy Part 4

WOSM Thursday 12/20/07

Welcome again my brothers and sisters in Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse Journey through the Epistle of **Jude** and today I want to continue our examination of “The History of Heresy” by looking again 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 on the last broadcast- I was teaching you that although many of the heresies that have plagued the Church are *ancient*- they are by no means *extinct*- and sadly- they are alive and well and still deceiving people today just like they did hundreds and hundreds of years ago.

Now there are many false teachings today- but when you boil all heresy down- false doctrine basically only attacks the three areas that Jude tells us about here in verse 4- so let’s read that again:

... who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

So heresy tries to distort or to add to or take away from what the Bible teaches about these three things:

1. The Character and Nature of God the Father
2. The Person of Jesus Christ in both His full Deity and His full Humanity
3. The Grace of God

Now as we have discovered- over the 2,000 year history of the Christian Church- there have been seven *major* heresies that attacked the Christian Church and which are the foundation for all of the many thousands of false teaching that exists today. Those seven major root heresies are:

1. The heresy of the Judaizers
2. The heresy of the Antinomians
3. The Gnostic heresy
4. The Modalist heresy
5. The Arian heresy
6. The Pelagian Controversy
7. The Socinian heresy

And as I told you on the last broadcast- the heresy of the Judaizers, the Antinomians, and the Gnostics were in the first century while the New Testament was still being inspired and which Paul, Peter, John, and the other Apostles dealt with *personally*. So to begin our study- I want to look at the first two major heresies that attacked the Christian Church right from the beginning- the false teachings of the Judaizers and the Antinomians.

The Judaizers and the Antinomians were the twin evils that hit the Church almost simultaneously during the same time that the Canon of the New Testament was being received from God the Holy Spirit through the Apostles. Both of these groups waged war against the Grace of God and just how God saves lost people.

In a nutshell, the Judaizers *ignored* Grace while the Antinomians *abused* Grace. The Judaizers taught that Grace wasn't enough to save a lost person and that other human effort was necessary for Salvation and the Antinomians taught just the opposite- that the Grace of God gave saved people the license to live and act as they pleased once they were saved.

Both of these groups go by other names today. The false teaching of the Judaizers is called "Legalism" today and the false doctrine of the Antinomians is sometimes called the "Easy Gospel". But whatever you call these false teachings- they are both still alive and well and believed by many in the modern Church. Now what we need to understand, dear friends is that both of these teachings are wrong; both are evil; both are perversions of what the Bible teaches about Grace. Neither one is more noble than the other; neither one is closer to the Truth than the other.

You are just as wrong to be a Judaizer as you are to be an Antinomian. For anyone to preach and believe either one of these heresies means that they have added to or taken away from what the Bible teaches about Grace and those who hold to these heresies today are operating outside of Biblical Authority.

Now before you get the notion that this is my idea to label these people as heretics- you need to know that these are not my words dear friends- they are the Words of inspired Scripture. When Jude said in verse 4 that “**certain persons have crept in unnoticed**”, he was using a Greek phrase- *pareisduo* (par-aa-ees-duo), which appears no where else in the New Testament except right here. And this phrase has the connotation of someone slipping in secretly with a wicked intention. In other Greek literature of the 1st Century- this same phrase was used to describe the cunning craftiness of an evil lawyer- who, through slick arguments- that had nothing to do with a genuine search for the Truth- was able to get into the minds of courtroom officials and corrupt their verdicts.

So as we study these heresies, you need to know that Jude and Paul and Peter and John and the other Apostles and writers of the New Testament didn't look at these people as being sincere people who were just a little off in their doctrine. No, the men whom God used to raise up His Church looked at any attempt by anyone- even seemingly innocent and sincere attempts- that nevertheless corrupted one letter or one nuance or one iota or one meaning of the Doctrine of God that Jesus Himself had given to them- these men looked at any attempt like that as an attack by satan himself against the Church of Jesus Christ and an attack against the purity of the Gospel and qualified them to be labeled as the enemy of the Cross of Jesus Christ.

To be sure, the Church had many people on the outside- atheists and barbarians and unfriendly pagan governments, who attacked the Church- even as there are today. But the attacks from the outside didn't really hurt the Church- in fact- the attacks from outside served to unite the Church and embolden them to preach all the more in that great Name of Jesus. The Bible says repeatedly that even though the Church of Jesus was under an ongoing threat of complete annihilation from forces outside the Church- that the Word of God prevailed.

But attacks from *within* the Church were different. These attacks came primarily through false doctrines that evil men brought in as they crept into the House of God. These inside attacks served to confuse the people and to disillusion them. These inside attacks over Truth divided

the Church and brought forth weakness and more false teaching and the result was weak and confused people.

Jude says that these ungodly men “**crept in unnoticed**”- they infiltrated the fabric of the Church- holding themselves out to be something that they were not; wolves in sheep’s clothing; orchestrating as much damage as possible. And the result of heresy infiltrating a Church is that genuine fellowship, true Spirit and Truth worship, Biblical ministry, and effective evangelism all fade away as the Church succumbs to devastating errors in both Doctrine and practice.

In today’s Church, such apostasy takes many forms. False teachers write books, and they edit publications, speak on radio and television, teach in colleges and seminaries, preach from pulpits and have Web sites.

And if anyone dares to denounce something that a popular preacher has taught or written- even if it is blatantly false and unscriptural- the wrath of Man comes down upon his head- so as a result, very few will risk what it takes to cry out against the modern heretics of our day. It is simply easier to stay quiet.

But thanks be to God that men like Jude and Paul were not silent. Paul cried out against both the Judaizers who were attacking Grace from one side while he also denounced the Antinomians who were attacking Grace from the other side.

Like Jude- Paul began to be moved upon by the Holy Ghost to write the Epistle to the Church at Rome around the year A.D. 55, some ten years *prior* to Jude writing this Book. And in this glorious Epistle that we studied in my Church for over 9-1/2 years- Paul laid out very clearly the glorious Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone. Paul wrote Chapters 5-8 of **Romans** as a great exposition of how God converts the human soul. But right in the middle of this exposition on Justification, Paul stopped and wrote Chapters 6 & 7 as a response to both the Judaizers’ and the Antinomians’ heretical attack against genuine Grace.

Paul begins his argument here in **Romans 5:20&21** by saying:

20 The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

21 so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now this passage infuriated the Judaizers. And so, they began to attack Paul and to slander him. These heretics said that Paul was saying

that sin didn't matter to God and that the Law of God was an offensive thing. These people felt that Paul was teaching that the Law of God was evil. Interestingly enough, this same verse also gave rise to the Antinomians. They also said that Paul was teaching that sin was just fine with God- in fact the Antinomians taught that in some cases it was God's Will that people sinned so that Grace could be manifested all the more. They said that Paul was teaching that if you want Grace- you need to sin. Of course Paul was not teaching anything at all like that.

What Paul was actually saying is that the Good News of God's Grace is greater than our sin. That as the knowledge of sin *increases* through an understanding of the Law- God's Grace will increase even more to the saving of the soul.

Now the false teaching of both the Judaizers and the Antinomians became so wide spread- that Paul was forced to answer them. But was Paul actually teaching that sin was good? Was Paul condemning the Law of God? No. And this Apostle wrote two chapters in his letter to the Church at Rome to refute the lies of both the Judaizers and the Antinomians. For example- Chapter 6 of Romans deal with Paul's argument against the teachings of the Antinomians and Chapter 7 is Paul's response to the Judaizers.

So, the Antinomians wrongly believed that Paul was teaching that since Grace was greater than our sin- that after a person is saved- he can then sin with impunity. These people twisted what Paul taught to believe that once we are saved- we have the right to live as we want and to do as we please. So, in effect, Antinomianism teaches that Salvation is really nothing more than a free pass that allows people to indulge themselves in as much sin as they desire because God's Grace will always be greater than our sin. But was Paul teaching that when he said that God's Grace was greater than our sin? Let's look at his response in **Romans 6:1&2:**

**1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?
2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?**

Paul response to the heresy of Antinomianism cut right to the heart of the matter. The argument had been clearly defined:

Because God saves lost sinners by Grace through Faith alone without the aid or assistance of any human effort- once these souls are saved- do they in fact now have the right and the power to continue to live in sin?

And Paul answered that question that the Antinomian heretics raised with a powerful response- “**God forbid**” or “**May it never be!**” And this was one of the strongest rebukes that existed at that time in all of Greek literature. So by using this term- Paul could not have been denouncing this lie any stronger than he was here. But Paul went even further than the Antinomians ever dreamed. Not only did Paul rebuke them for their heresy- Paul now turned the tables on these heretics and redefined the entire discussion about just how a person should live after he as saved.

Paul says here in verse two that not only should a saved person not continue on in his sin- but he equated a saved person with someone who hadn't just *reduced* the amount of sinning he was doing, but Paul equated saved people with those who had literally died to sin and were *incapable* of continuing on in sin.

Paul said that even as dead people had lost their ability to continue on in life- so too, saved people had lost their ability to live continuously in sin. Dead people couldn't live because they had lost the *power* to live. And saved people couldn't live continuously in sin anymore- because they had been transformed by the miracle of the new birth and they had received within themselves a new, divine nature and that new nature was different from the old nature.

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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