

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**

40. The History of Heresy Part 10

WOSM Monday 12/31/07

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 discussing just who these certain men are by examining the seven major heresies that have plagued the Church over the last 2,000 years. And on today's broadcast, we are continuing to look at the Judaizers who rose up in the first century to attack the Grace of God. Today we call these people legalists. These are people who minimize Grace and maximize human effort in Salvation. These are people who teach that God's Grace is not sufficient for Salvation and that Man has to aid or assist God in the saving of the human soul.

In Paul's day, the Judaizers taught that circumcision was required in order to be saved and are described in the Bible as early as **Luke 18:9** as those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others.

The Judaizers of Paul's day were bold about trying to destroy the Gospel. They viewed Salvation by Grace through Faith without human effort to be an attack against the Ten Commandments and an attack against common sense. Like the modern Muslims of today, the Judaizers could not conceive of why God would desire to justify heathen Gentiles by Grace through Faith in Christ alone. Surely God

must require more than Faith to save these wicked people. This battle between those who held to a Biblical view of Salvation and the Judaizers raged long and hard and is recorded in many places in the Bible for us to read today.

Now no one who reads what the Holy Ghost inspired Paul to write could ever say that Paul was soft on sin- but it is true that Paul viewed the heresy of legalism to be such a serious threat against Biblical Christianity, that he wrote more against legalism than he did against adultery, most notably is the entire Epistle of Galatians, which is a blow by blow condemnation of the legalism of the Judaizers.

Today legalism takes on many forms. The heresy of legalism is being revived in Bible Colleges through a man by the name of NT Wright and his teachings on the "New Perspectives of Paul". And the Doctrine of the Judaizers, or the legalists is the foundational doctrine of the modern Roman and Seventh Day Adventist religious systems- but it is also found in many of the small, Full Gospel, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.

Some modern legalists might teach, for example, that you must be baptized in order to be saved; others would say that you need to speak in tongues in order to be saved; still others might say that you must keep the Sabbath, or the dietary and ceremonial laws of the Old Testament in order to be saved. Still others require systematic obedience to Church Sacraments in order to be justified. Whatever form it may take- legalism or the heresy of the Judaizers- is inherently evil; it is blasphemy; it is the enemy of the Cross of Jesus Christ. It is a heresy which teaches that you can go to Heaven by some other way other than the way that Christ taught. Jesus said in **John 10:1:**

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.

The Judaizers or the legalists are the thieves and robbers that Jesus spoke about here. Now it must be said here that saying that Judaizers are heretics is far more than me simply calling someone that I don't agree with a name. Declaring someone a heretic must never be done simply because there is disagreement with them about some unimportant issue. When the Church declares something to be heresy or someone to be a heretic- it is a very serious matter.

The issue in the first century was not a personal squabble between Paul and some Jews. Paul wasn't engaged in some silly argument over personalities and personal preferences. It was far more important than that. And I want you to know that I am not simply bashing people that I don't agree with- no, the issue here is very serious- it is not personal. The real issue here is just how a man is saved. Are we saved by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished work of Christ alone or are we saved because of some cooperative effort between God and Man? The answer to this makes all the difference in the world. Are human works a *requirement* for Salvation or are human works simply the *result* of being saved? Do we work *to* be saved or do we work *because* we are saved? The righteousness that God requires that we have in order to gain Heaven- is that righteousness my own personal righteousness that I have developed by doing good works or is it Christ's Righteousness that has been imputed to me by Faith alone?

And if it is my own personal righteousness- then I have no choice- I must work real hard to earn it. But if that righteousness is Christ's, then it is a free gift and is supernaturally imputed to every believer regardless of what they do or don't do. One of these methods requires men to earn their own Salvation and thus glorifies Man- while the other causes all men to helplessly plea for God to give them Mercy and Grace that they do not deserve.

Legalists say that we must help God to save us and legalists say that God cannot save anyone without their permission and without their cooperation. That belief in effect makes Man to be the one who is Sovereign and God to be the One Who is helpless.

Legalists would teach things like humans must partake of religious obligations and duties and partake in rituals and ceremonies in order to please God enough to save them. But we must know, beloved, that doing these works doesn't save anyone- but it does do exactly what the Bible says that it will do and that is it makes men boast. **Ephesians 2:8&9** says:

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.

If it is true that I am saved because of my family genealogy or my physical attributes or my own desire to be saved or because I keep the Sabbath or because I love God or because of anything that I do- then I would have somewhat to boast about and at least part of the credit and part of the glory and part of the honor of Salvation should rightfully go to me.

But if God saves me for no other reason than He wanted to regardless of what I have done or not done- then all praise and all glory and all honor and all credit and all thanks go to God and to God alone.

The Bible teaches that Salvation is a Sovereign work of a loving God, Who saves those whom He chooses. The Bible says that Salvation is obtained by Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ alone and is totally without any human effort at all. The Bible says that you cannot ever earn Salvation; and to try to do so is to fight against God's Plan which is to save sinners by Grace through Faith. The Bible says that the righteousness that allows me to enter into Heaven is not mine because my righteousness cannot ever rise the level that God accepts. The Bible says that the righteousness that allows me to go to Heaven is the righteousness of Christ which He earned because He literally and actually never sinned.

The Bible says that the Righteousness of Christ is not given to me because I *deserve* it- but because God imputes or credits that perfect Righteousness to me and that while I am in fact yet a sinner- God washes me and forgives me of all sin and then He declares me to be righteous based upon that which Christ has done.

The key to all of this is the word, "alone". This one word was the catalyst of the Protestant Reformation and cannot be emphasized enough. Legalists say that Salvation is by Grace through Faith plus human effort, so they reject the word, "alone".

So, this was the issue in the first century- how is a man saved? So let us look at how the Council of Jerusalem ruled. Let's look at **The Acts 15:12-31**:

12 All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.

13 After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, "Brethren,

listen to me.

14 "Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name.

15 "With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written,

16 '*AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT,*

17 *SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,*'

18 *SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO.*

19 "Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles,

20 but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.

21 "For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas — Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren,

23 and they sent this letter by them, "The apostles and the brethren who are elders, to the brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings.

24 "Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with *their* words, unsettling your souls,

25 it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 "Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word *of mouth*.

28 "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials:

29 that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell."

30 So when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter.

31 When they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.

So, the very first Church Council had made their ruling and had determined based upon the Scriptures that human effort was not to be added to Salvation, but that Salvation was wholly and solely a Sovereign act of God. Paul's teaching on Justification was confirmed and the heresy of the Judaizers was denounced and rejected- and this was done using the Scriptures.

But this episode teaches us something else about heresy. Although the Church called a Council and had thoroughly analyzed the teaching; and although the Church's rejection of legalism was clear; and in spite of the fact that the Judaizers were labeled as heretics and were literally and physically thrown out of the Church- this false teaching of legalism is alive and well and thrives in some Churches today.

Only by learning the Gospel can we fight off attacks against it and then we can be certain that neither legalism nor Antinomianism will attract us and beguile us- because we have earnestly contended 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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