

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**

66. The History of Heresy Part 36

WOSM Wednesday 02/06/08

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 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 and the Total and Complete Depravity of Man and the Sovereignty of God and the Free Will of Man.

As I told you last time, when I was a young Christian, I was taught wrongly about Man's Free Will and the role that it plays in Salvation- just as many of you were also taught.

When I trusted Christ for Salvation in the summer of 1971, I was taught that Man was a "free moral agent" and that God would never violate the Free will of Man. I was taught that God was a "gentleman" and that while God *wanted* me to be saved and He would *invite* me to be saved- God would never *impose* His Will on me.

And that statement sounded logical to me as a young sixteen year old boy and I accepted that statement on face value and buried it deep within my own heart. I believed it and as I grew in Christ- I also

taught it. The statement sounded so good that it was bound to be in the Bible somewhere. This concept sounded authoritative and it sounded logical- so it was bound to be true- right? Of course, I never found the concept of human free will in the Bible and to be honest with you- for years, I never even looked. When I did read the Bible, I read it through the lens that already accepted that statement as though it were a fact- so I interpreted every other verse in the Bible based upon that statement being true.

I went on like that for years. I believed that some men voluntarily *chose* to be saved, while others chose to *reject* Salvation. So to me, being saved, was all about people “choosing to accept Christ”. So my job as a preacher, as I saw it, was to try to convince other people to go ahead and choose to be saved. I was earnest and honest and sincere about this. And I really was saved. Jesus changed everything about me and I wanted everyone to be saved too. I didn’t want a dog to go to hell and I still don’t. So I preached and I worked with as many people as I could to try to get them to choose to be saved.

I knew people who *seemed* to be saved and who *seemed* to serve God- some of them for years- and then suddenly they *seemed* to lose interest and they fell away. These events would strengthen my belief about Human Free Will. Obviously, these people had at first to chosen to be saved and then- evidently- they had later on chosen not to be saved. Again, my job was not really to understand what had happened- but was simply to try to convince them to choose to be saved again.

During those years- I never even heard of Pelagius. And I didn’t know anything about his heresy. I had barely even heard of Augustine and knew nothing about what he taught. I didn’t know that what I was taught about the Free Will of Man wasn’t in the Bible. I didn’t know that what I was taught about Human Free Will was more closely in line with the heresy that Pelagius taught than it was with the Scriptural Truth that Augustine taught.

So I would get up like a robot and boldly proclaim, “*God will never violate the Free Will of Man.*” with great authority from the pulpit as though that was some verse of Scripture. But it isn’t Scripture. That concept that we all so easily accept today is not in the Bible- and never has been. And this matters, friends, because if God

didn't say this- why should we repeat it as though He did?

The Truth is that the concept of Human Free Will- as it is taught today- came from the heretic Pelagius and the Church of Jesus Christ formally and officially denounced the teaching of Human Free Will as a heresy 1600 years ago.

Now I didn't know that. So, I wasn't *trying* to be wrong. I wasn't *trying* to believe anything that was not Scriptural. And I sure wasn't trying to teach somebody else a Doctrine that was false. I loved the Lord and I was endeavoring to serve Him with all my heart- but the fact remains that I *was* wrong about the Free Will of Man and all my sincerity didn't keep me from being unscriptural about this very important issue.

You see my problem was I didn't know Bible Doctrine. I didn't understand Systematic Theology. I had never sat down and tried to write out my own beliefs on paper. I never even thought about how inconsistent and contradictory many of my own beliefs were. I really had never even stopped to think about whether my beliefs were even in the Bible. If something made sense to me- I believed it to be true. You see, I was just so glad that I was saved- I guess I never took the time to learn anything like this. I was so happy that I wasn't going to hell. I was just glad to be invited to the party and had been truly saved- I wanted everyone else to be saved too.

But along with the love and zeal for Jesus that God had put into my heart was a love for the Words of Jesus. God knew I was off base and God didn't want me to be off base- so He put in my heart a love for His Word. God was content to save me just like I was- but once He saved me- this same God was no longer content with me like I was. So over time- the Holy Spirit led me and guided me and He led me through valleys and He led me over mountain tops and He began to mold me and shape me and form me into His own Image and into His own Likeness and God changed me from glory to glory- even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

And with each Change- God's Word became more and more clear. My desire to study God's Word didn't diminish as the years went by- it grew. My desire to spend time with God didn't get lax- it grew. And as I spent time with God in prayer and time with God in His Word- Jesus became more real to me; God became more magnificent and more majestic and bigger and more important and

wiser and more beautiful and more valuable than I had ever known.

And my trials became more important to me. No longer were my trials simply some bad experience that I didn't enjoy and wanted to get out of- no my trials became a custom made training class that my heavenly Father had designed specifically for me in love whereby I was to learn all that I could in that trial and glean all that I could from it and stay in it as long as necessary and not miss any important aspect of it because I began to believe what the Bible teaches about trials and I saw that my trial was not simply an attack of the enemy- but according to the Bible, my trial was the glorious method that my loving Father had chosen to bring me forth as pure gold.

And as I grew- my Theology began to change. I no longer viewed Christianity like I did when I was first saved. Christianity is not about Man- Christianity is about Christ. Salvation is not even about Man. Salvation is about God giving Man the high honor of being able to glorify God in the manner in which God deserves to be glorified. Christianity was not about empowering me to fulfill my *own* destiny. No, Christianity is all about me dying to myself and crucifying my flesh and mortifying the deeds of my body and so that I may have the privilege of being a part of God's Destiny.

So Salvation doesn't build me up- Salvation casts me down. Salvation doesn't build up my own self- worth and self- esteem- no Salvation causes me to decrease so that Christ may increase.

Jesus didn't bid me to come to the Cross so that I could be the master of my own Destiny- no, Jesus bids me come to the Cross and die and be His bonds slave.

I began to realize that I wasn't in charge of Salvation and that God was. I began to understand that I didn't choose God- but God chose me. And I began to realize that God chose me before I was born; that He chose me before the foundation of the world. I began to realize that He chose me regardless of what I had done or hadn't done- that He chose me for no other reason that it was His good Pleasure to do so.

By Studying the Bible, slowly and relentlessly, God began to show me that I had no more to do with my own Salvation than Lazarus had to do with his own resurrection. That Jesus never asked Lazarus if he *wanted* to be resurrected- and that Jesus *violated* the

stew out of Lazarus' Will in order to resurrect him- just like Jesus had to violate my Will in order to save me.

My Free Will didn't have any more to do with my own Salvation than did a baby's free will has anything to do with his own conception. Parents don't ask a baby if the baby *wants* to be born. Parents don't even ask a baby what he wants to be named. No, the parents *impose* their own will upon the baby regardless of what the baby's will may be.

And God chose to place His Name upon me before He made the worlds and He Sovereignly decided to rebirth me and to regenerate me and to place His Spirit inside my heart- even before I knew Him- even before I wanted to know Him.

Now the reason that I have used these illustrations is because these are the very same terms that Jesus used to describe being saved. Jesus never labeled Salvation as a human choice- no, Jesus used terms that completely and totally eliminate all choice- terms like "resurrection" and "being born again".

The Bible clearly tells us to choose to serve God after we are saved- but the Bible never tells us to choose to be saved in the first place. And that is because Salvation is a Sovereign Act of a loving God and *cannot* involve human choice or human free will. However, once we are saved and the Spirit of God now resides within us- free will has been restored to us and we must then choose to obey and serve the Lord.

I tell you that Pelagius was wrong about Free Will and I was wrong about Free Will and those of you who hold on to the omnipotence of Human Free Will are just as wrong too. Salvation is a greater and higher Act that will not and does not and can not involve human effort. We have read this verse a million times, but let's look at it again and see if you see what I see. Let's look at **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 the Bible clearly tells us that Salvation is not accomplished; it is not manifested; it is not brought forth; and it is not obtained by any human work at all.

Well, what does that mean? Does the Bible teach that Salvation is all of human works as Pelagius taught or does it teach that it is of a little bit of human works and a little bit of Grace that many teach today or does the Bible clearly teach that Salvation is a Sovereign act of God without any human effort at all? Which one is it?

Well clearly, we can see that even though many of us have been confused about this issue- Thank God, Paul was not confused about this. If Salvation is 99% of God and even 1% of man's works- then **Ephesians 2:9** is a lie and we are saved by works and we absolutely do have somewhat to boast about. Those who think that they exercise their own free will and who of their own choice choose to be saved could then rightly boast that they chose to do the right thing while others chose not to be saved. And this would have the effect of giving part of the glory to God and part of the glory to man.

But if Salvation is wholly and solely an Act of God and is accomplished without any human work at all- and is done in spite of Man's Will- then no man can boast about it- and all men are deemed to be indebted to God and therefore God rightly receives all the glory for Salvation. Halleluia!

Beloved, we don't need some new slant on Truth. What we need is the very same Truth that God breathed into this Book. We don't need new revelation and new interpretation and new understanding and new anything. What we need is the right revelation and the true interpretation and the correct understanding of what God has already spoken to man in His Word.

I tell you that we need what the Bible says about Salvation and we need what the Bible says about Free Will and we need what the Bible says about Human Choice and we need what the Bible says about election and we sure don't need to hold onto any belief or any doctrine that is not Biblical and especially one that has been so thoroughly examined and so thoroughly rejected by the Church as the Free Will of man.

I tell you that we need to repent and return to our first love. We need to bring the Church back to being under the authority of Scripture. We need to learn the Doctrines of the Bible and we need to preach and teach those Doctrines rightly fully and fearlessly and we need to preach the Gospel to every creature and you and I need to once again 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.

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