

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**

71. The History of Heresy Part 41

WOSM Wednesday 02/13/08

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 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 were looking at the Doctrine of Original Sin which was at the heart of the Pelagian Controversy. Pelagius, the heretic taught that Man was fundamentally good and that the Fall of Adam had not damaged Man's inherent goodness. Augustine said that the Bible clearly taught that since the Fall of Man- all humans are born with a sin nature and that sin nature of fallen Man was so total and so radical in and of itself that it warranted eternal hell for every living human.

When Augustine taught that it was Man's Nature that was fallen, he was affirming what the Apostle Paul said in **1Corinthians 15:21&22**:

21 For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the

dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

And again, in **Romans 3:23:**

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God;

The Bible clearly lays the blame of our sin on the fact that Adam sinned, and his sin was passed onto every man born after him. This has the effect of making *all of us* sinful “by birth”; corrupt “by nature”; and depraved “by essence”. The Bible does *not* teach that we are sinful simply because we sin. No, the Bible teaches that we are *already* sinful in our hearts; and in our nature; and that is *why* we sin. So, the sinful things that we do are simply the normal and logical outflow of being fallen and depraved.

So that forces us to ask, “*Is Salvation simply modifying our sinful activity? Is Salvation simply reducing the amount of sin we commit, or is Salvation something more radical than that?*” These questions are important- here’s why.

If Salvation is simply a matter of someone becoming aware that certain actions of theirs are wrong and then going about to modify or reduce or alter or change some or part of those actions- and all of this was accomplished simply by exercising human discipline or human prerogatives or human effort or human ability- if *that* is what we call Salvation- then Salvation would be nothing more than an exercise of our own will power. And many people- especially the humanists believe just that. But if that is true- then why did Jesus die?

I mean if all that we have to do to be saved is to *reduce* the amount of sin that we commit- then why do we need Jesus at all? If Salvation is simply about me putting forth more effort- then I really don’t need Grace and I don’t need Salvation and I really don’t even need Jesus. All I need is to exercise my own will power and put forth more effort. And this is precisely what Pelagius taught.

Now those who promote the sovereignty of Man’s so-called “free will” may well be ignorant of what they are doing because I certainly was- and they may be well intentioned- but what they are doing is not noble at all and it sure isn’t Biblical. And they are really not lifting the dignity of Man either. No, those who teach the sovereignty of Man’s

“free will” are simply teaching false Doctrine; they are teaching doctrines of devils; and they are agreeing with Pelagius that Salvation is not a supernatural miracle of Grace and Love that originates from God- no, to these people, Salvation is nothing more than us modifying our behavior because we exercise our own human ingenuity and power and choice. And whether people realize this or not- this is the essence of Pelagianism or what we call today “Secular Humanism”.

To teach someone that in order to be saved, all we have to do is exercise our own Free Will and change some aspects of our behavior will not save anyone, beloved. No, to teach this lie is to doom them to hell. Because as long as anyone thinks or believes that they can save themselves through their own power or through their own ability or through exercising their own Free Will or by implementing some human discipline upon their own lives- they will never see their own Human Depravity and they will continue to be blinded to their own Original Sin and they will be deceived about the power of their own Free Will and they will be conned about what Salvation really is and they will be kept away from what the Bible teaches about sin and repentance and Salvation and they will be successfully isolated from God’s Plan of Salvation.

The Bible teaches something completely different than what Pelagius taught. The Bible teaches that Man was born in sin and shaped in iniquity. The Bible says that all men are completely ruined by the Fall. Almost all of the Old Testament and much of the New Testament proves to us over and over again that we *cannot* save ourselves. These inspired Books were written precisely to prove to us that we are sinners by nature and that we are incapable of delivering ourselves from our own nature. Look at what God spoke through his prophet in **Jeremiah 13:23**:

“Can the Ethiopian change his skin Or the leopard his spots? *Then you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil.*

The Holy Bible says here that human beings can no more stop sinning than a man can change the color of his skin or than a leopard can change his spots. This verse tells us that our “lostness” has much more to do than just our actions and behavior. No, our “lostness” is in our nature and we were born with that lost nature and therefore.

Salvation is much more than simply modifying our behavior.

Both the color of our skin and the spots on a leopard's given at birth. We had nothing to do with those things and we can do nothing about them after we are born. It is something that comes with birth. So, too, our sinful nature is inside us by birth. It isn't just in our mind; it isn't just in our actions- no, sin is in our DNA. We sin because our nature craves to sin. We like sin- we don't hate sin. No, the Bible says that we who are born of women love to sin. Sin feeds our carnal and depraved mind and nature. Lust feeds our nature to possess; pride feeds our own self- importance; arrogance feeds our own self- worth; vengeance feeds our own sense of self- respect; covetousness feeds our sinful nature to want to be important.

Now while it is true that we love to sin- we sure do not love the *penalty* of sin. We don't enjoy the hangovers and the heartaches and the emptiness and the fines and the jail time and the separation and the pain and the misery and the sorrow and the death- but those things are the *results* of sin- they are the *payment* for sin on this earth; they are the *fruit* of sin. They are not the sin itself. So many people don't really mind the adultery- they just don't like all the bad stuff that happens when they get caught. They don't mind the drunkenness and the blasphemy and the lust and the covetousness- they just don't like the horrible payment for those sins that comes with it.

That is why people who are put in jail suddenly "get jail house salvation". The facts are that most people who repent in jail are back in jail very soon after they get released because they really weren't saved at all; they just were trying to escape the *penalty* or the results of their sin.

And the same thing is true with people who *don't* get caught and who *don't* go to jail. They are perfectly willing to go to church for a while and stop this and start that as long as it will get them out of trouble. But when the trouble ends, they revert back to who they really are, and they never darken the door of the Church again. The FBI couldn't find these people. And that's because they didn't really repent, and they really didn't get saved.

So, since sin is a much greater problem than just our behavior- by necessity, Salvation then must also be greater than simply modifying our behavior. And since the *source* of sin is our fallen nature- by necessity, Salvation then must be the transformation of that nature

from fallen to divine. And that is a miracle and that is something that no man has the power to do through his own human effort. We require God and His Grace to be saved. Here is how God put it in **Genesis 6:5**:

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

You see, the “god” that lost people worship by nature is *not* the God of the Bible. No, the “god” that people automatically worship is the god of “self”. So, the enemy of God is not only the devil- the enemy of God is also us. And as long as we possess the sinful and depraved nature- we will worship self. Worshipping self; promoting self; adoring self; exalting self; pampering self; encouraging self are not actions and concepts and truths that are taught in Scripture- no, they are idolatry. Jesus didn’t teach self esteem- Pelagius taught it. The Prophets and Apostles didn’t teach self worth and self value and self love- no heretics taught it- and the exaltation of self- even at the expense of the exaltation of God is the very essence of Humanism- not Christianity.

It makes you wonder why many of the popular teachers today teach what Pelagius taught doesn’t it? Why don’t they teach what the Bible teaches? Why teach what a heretic taught? I tell you that we really need to exercise spiritual discernment and prove what we are being taught by holding what these people say accountable to the Scriptures. And it also should scare you to death that we have been fed a bill of goods about our own self importance over the last 60 years and we have called it holy, and we have called it Christianity. But it is neither holy nor is it Christianity. The promotion of self is nothing more than a 1600 year old heresy being repackaged as a new revelation, and it is just as evil today as it was when Augustine confronted it and it is just as destructive and it is just as much a lie today as it was then. Listen to what 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.

Any attempt at trying to get you into Heaven other than by God’s one single Way- is an insult to the Cross of Calvary and doesn’t make you a sincere person- Jesus said it makes you a thief and a robber.

You can call it the religion of Joy or the power of positive thinking or speaking a creative word or exercising faith; or the purpose driven life or the prayer of Jabez or your best life now or whatever you want to call it. But no matter how you repackage it; no matter how you market it; no matter what spin you put on it- it is the very same false doctrine; the very same heretical teaching; the very same unbiblical pronouncements that builds up self; that promotes self; that exalts self at the expense of Biblical Truth.

When you and I promote self, we are fighting against God. When we promote self, we are telling people that they are worthy; that they are good; and that they deserve something. But the Bible teaches that we are unworthy; the Bible teaches that we are not good; the Bible teaches that the only thing that we deserve is hell.

Pelagius taught that the reason that men go to heaven is because they wanted to; Because they chose it; they earned it; they worked for it; and therefore, they deserve heaven because they chose to do what they were supposed to do to get it.

Augustine taught that the Bible says that men go to Heaven for no other reason other than God loved them; and God chose them and God drew them and God awakened their dead souls and God convicted their hearts and God washed them in pure Blood and God sealed them with the Holy Spirit of Promise and God empowered them and Augustine taught that we are not saved by what we do- we are saved by what God does for us and that we are incapable of doing for ourselves.

Pelagius taught the Sovereignty of Man. Augustine taught the Sovereignty of God. Pelagius taught that Man's Will was free and that it was powerful and that it was the deciding factor of who would be saved and who would not be saved.

Augustine taught that Man was totally and completely dependant on the Grace of God to do anything for God or with God or through God and that unless God came to us- we couldn't get to Him.

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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