

Contend Earnestly For the Faith Which Was Once For All Handed Down to the Saints

An Expository Study of the **Epistle of Jude**

Chapter 14- A Further Description of the Heretics **Jude 16**

163 A Further Description of the Heretics Part 9

WOSM Friday 06/20/08

Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the **Epistle of Jude** and today I want to continue to look at what Jude taught about "A Final Description of the Heretics". So, let's open our Bibles and read **Jude 16** again together:

These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their *own* lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of *gaining an advantage*.

Now in this verse- Jude says that the false teachers who creep into the Church to deceive the simple are:

1. Grumblers
2. Those who find fault
3. Those who follow their own lusts
4. Those who speak arrogantly
5. Those who flatter people for the sake of gaining an advantage

Now over the last eight broadcasts, we have gone over four of the five descriptions of the heretics that Jude brought forth under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost here in verse 16. And today, I want to go over the fifth and final description that Jude gave to us in this verse. Jude said that those who creep into the Church to bring in false teaching would be:

5. Those Who Flatter people for the Sake of Gaining an Advantage

Now 2,600 years ago, the prophet Jeremiah cried out against the false prophets who altered the Word of God to fit their audience, when he said this in **Jeremiah 5:31a**:

**The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule on their *own* authority;
And My people love it so!...**

And it is a sad commentary of human nature that most people are willing to hear a lie as long as it makes them feel better. As long as we can receive some personal benefit- even if that benefit is temporary; and even if that benefit is at the expense of our eternal soul- more and more people today are willing to accept and follow and be faithful to that- rather than the Truth. I suppose that is why Jesus called us sheep.

And as sheep- we are an extremely naïve and gullible creation. We are a trusting people who are very eager to believe in someone and to follow someone whom we perceive can help us.

This is why as God's children; we are told over and over in Scripture to exercise spiritual discernment and to examine what someone teaches and to examine what we believe and to hold what someone says accountable to Scripture so that we may know that it is from God. And that action is called spiritual discernment. Now spiritual discernment is not a gift that only a chosen few operate in- that is not true. Spiritual discernment is the act of holding what someone says and teaches to the authority of Scripture and every single believer is supposed to engage in this action. So true, genuine spiritual discernment is based upon a clear and thorough knowledge of the Holy Bible and what it teaches.

Whenever anyone is consciously altering the holy inspired, inerrant, and infallible Message of God so that it becomes compromised or changed- he is doing what Jude warns us about here. Flattering people in order to gain an advantage occurs when the preacher or teacher or evangelist consciously dulls the edge of the sword of the Word of God so that it does not pierce so deeply; so that it does not divide between the soul and spirit; so that it does not discern between the thoughts and intent of the heart; because he knows that if he does not change the message; if he does not dull the edge of the sword that person will become offended; leave the Church and take their money

and influence with them. So, they change the Word of God so that they will benefit from it

You see, in order to keep lukewarm, backslid, and unsaved people from leaving the Church; in order to stop them from becoming offended- the preacher or teacher or evangelist consciously changes the holy Message to make it less offensive; he alters the Word to make it more acceptable; he holds back on the Gospel so that the Word of God appears to say something that it really doesn't say or that it doesn't say something that it indeed does say. And the preacher does this because he senses that by doing this- those people can help him either financially or personally.

Now even though this type of thing is expressly forbidden in Scripture- it is very common in Church today.

One of the reasons that this evil sin has become so prevalent in our day is that our culture has changed from being a logical culture based upon well thought out and articulated principles to an emotional culture based upon unreliable and ever changing personal feelings.

We now value human relationships more than we value Divinely inspired Truth- so if we have to choose between speaking the Truth or offending someone- we are more and more willing to alter the Truth so as not to offend the person- and that is harmful to both the Truth and the person.

This is what Paul meant when he told Timothy that he was not ashamed of the Gospel. Being ashamed of the Gospel means that you are not proud of what it says, you are embarrassed by what the Gospel stands for; and it also means that when the rubber meets the road- you are not willing to hold faithfully to the Gospel if it causes some to be offended- especially if those particular people financially support you. Being ashamed means that you are perfectly willing to change what the Gospel says and even change what it means so that the Gospel becomes more appealing to the people you are speaking to.

Let me give you a very clear example of what I am talking about. Right after 9/11 on the Larry King Live program on CNN, there was a panel of five religious leaders. All of these men are well known and famous. To his credit, Larry King asked each one of them the very same question, *“Do you believe, and do you teach that the only people who are going to heaven are those who are born again through the Blood of Jesus Christ?”*

Now what a wonderful opportunity on national television for each of these men to boldly and proudly proclaim the clear revelation of Scripture about how that no man can come to the Father except through Jesus Christ. But instead of the Gospel being presented in all of its glory- four of the five men began to do exactly what Jude said don't do. Four of those five well known and famous religious leaders "craw fished" all over the place. They fell all over themselves trying to make Christianity appear to be something that it is not. One of them, Joel Osteen- the young pastor of a huge 42,000 member Church in Houston Texas unbelievably said that he really didn't know if Jesus was the only way to Heaven or not. In fact, this young man boldly said that it really didn't matter. This author and television preacher, who has recently written a New York Times best selling book, boldly proclaimed that he thought that Hindus in India could be just as saved as Christians because, "they love God too".

Now all four of those men are ashamed of the Gospel in the classic sense of that phrase and they each one value people liking them and each one of these false teachers are more interested in people thinking that they are "broad minded" and "tolerant" than they are in boldly proclaiming what God has actually said. So, these men all hold men's person in admiration because of advantage.

Only one of the five men loved the Gospel enough and was faithful to Jesus enough to say, *"That is exactly what the Bible teaches!"*

The reason, of course, that the other four were reluctant to say what they knew to be true is that they wanted to be liked and they each wanted to keep their following rather than stand up for Truth- regardless of how it made them look.

Now I have been very puzzled at why so many people are willing to compromise Truth for many years and I have done quite a bit of research as to why this is true. I have come to the conclusion that more and more people today are willing to sacrifice Truth on the altar of relationship because of three things:

1. An incorrect view of God
2. An incorrect view of Man
3. An incorrect view of Salvation

There is only one reliable source for information about God- and that one single source is the Holy Bible. God has divinely inspired several men over a 1500 year time frame to pen down inerrant and infallible Words which give us a clear construction and revelation of the very Nature and Character of God.

Any idea about Who God is or what God will or will not do; or what God's Will is or what God loves or hates that is formed through human logic or personal experience or Church traditions or papal edicts or Church councils or angelic visitations or other writings or personal prophecies are not to be trusted if they contradict what the sixty- six Books of the Holy Bible reveal.

So, the only way for us to know God in truth is by and through the Scriptures. So, by systematically studying what God has revealed about Himself in Scripture- we will- over time- get a very clear and precise comprehension of just Who God really is; and what God does; and what God loves; and what God hates and what God's Will is.

When someone says, for example, "*I don't think that God would do that*" and the Bible clearly says that God will do that- then that person's belief in and understanding of God is faulty and unreliable.

For example- the Scriptures reveal that God is, among other things- holy and righteous. His is all holy and He is all righteous and He is all holy and all righteous all the time. There is never a time when God is not holy or righteous- even when He is exercising divine judgment upon a nation; even when he is exercising eternal condemnation on an individual.

And because God is all holy and all righteous- He cannot bear anything that is sinful. That means that no one can approach this holy and righteous God unless and until they too are just as holy and just as righteous as He is. God said in **Leviticus 20:7**:

You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the LORD your God.

Our Lord Jesus said in **Matthew 5:48**:

Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

The Apostle Peter echoed these words, when he wrote in **1Peter 1:15&16**:

15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior;

16 because it is written, "*YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.*"

Now the Bible also reveals that God is Love. God is pure undefiled; unfiltered; uncompromising; unconditional and perfect Love. But in addition to Love; God is also holy and righteous. He is holy in that He is separated and unlike anything else and everyone else. He is righteous in that everything that He thinks or says or does is always perfectly right. There is no standard of thought or life or behavior that could be set that is higher than God. And God Himself set that standard based upon His own Personal Nature and Characteristics. And we find those Characteristic in the pages of Scripture.

For example- God's eternal moral absolutes are represented in nine of the ten commandments found in **Exodus 20**. And these moral absolutes are eternal because they reflect Who God is and therefore they are always binding upon all people for all generations and all men will be judged based upon their adherence to or their rebellion to these eternal moral standards- precisely because they reflect to us Who God is and they never change because God never changes.

But the dietary and ceremonial and sacrificial laws of God as revealed in the OT to the Jews were all temporary and all men were not held to them even back then nor were they to always be in force because they do *not* reflect the Character and Nature of God- but were used to teach certain people certain things or to prepare those people for better things.

So, we need to have a correct view of God- and that view is always a high view. Any attempt to make God lower than He is so that He *seems* to be more accessible to us is wrong because it fundamentally changes Who God really is. So, to lower our view of God- to make Him less holy; to make Him less Righteous is a sin because it rejects what God reveals about Himself to us.

The Bible says that God hates sin. As I have told you on several broadcasts, sin is not bad because it negatively affects us- although that is true. Sin does indeed negatively affect everyone who engages in it- to be sure- but that is not what makes it wrong. Sin is wrong; sin is bad because sin offends God. Period. *Anything* that offends God is unrighteous by definition; it is unholy; it is ungodly and is therefore sin.

So, if we are to have a correct view of God- we must include in that view, God's holiness and His Righteousness and His utter and complete hatred of all sin- no matter how insignificant that sin may appear to us.

And this is why we all need to earnestly contend for the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints. Well, I've got to stop right here. 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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