

The New Testament Church  
*The Book of Jude #2 – Jude 1:3-4 - Contending for the Faith*  
January 12, 2025 - Pastor Paul Jehle

I Introduction and review of *Faith and the Family* in the book of Jude

A. The Book of Jude

1. It is a summary of key truths to prepare the early Church for the “test” of evil rising
2. The theme is that believers are **called to contend** as well as **continue** in the faith
3. Be **calm** and **confident** as God allows the **collapse** of evil to **manifest** His **Kingdom**

B. Faith and the Family

1. Family is first in Kingdom manifestation – Jesus is our example with his own family
2. To avoid the blindness of not seeing faults or ignoring blessings, *we must maintain Church and Kingdom priorities* in the midst of our families – the Kingdom goes beyond

II Contending for the Faith

A. v. 3 – *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*

1. Our common salvation – important to know that you are truly born again in Christ
2. Contend earnestly – in Greek – *agon* – *compete* – “to struggle to contend or defend”
  - a. 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:15 – *apologeoa* – to give a reasoned argument for truth (with borders)
  - b. *Conflict (due to sin) has always clarified our beliefs and where we are with Christ*
3. The faith first delivered... – **what were the key truths of the original gospel?**
  - a. Hebrew 5:12-14 (the Word) – a fundamental premise – *application* of the Bible
  - b. Heb. 6:1-2 – repentance, faith, baptisms, service, resurrection, eternal judgment

B. v. 4 – *For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1. God is our **Creator**, man fell into **sin**, and **Christ** is our Redeemer (God and man)
2. We are **regenerated** by **faith** in Christ and His finished work – death and resurrection
3. We cannot **reason** to revelation; we must reason *from* the **Bible** by **grace** (His ability)

C. The “faith once delivered to the saints” – to counter Genesis 3:6 and 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:16

1. Lust of Flesh – Pelagius – **man is born good (he is not a sinner)**
  - a. Satan’s temptation was that Eve and Adam were being deceived by God – no rules
  - b. *If man is born good, then any judgment against his ideas/actions makes him a victim*
  - c. This battle of ideas culminated in the heresy of Pelagius vs. Augustine – q. Almy
2. Lust of Eyes – Gnostic – **we are born with the “spark of divinity” (no conversion)**
  - a. Satan’s temptation was that Eve and Adam could “be like god”
  - b. *If we are already like god there is no need for conversion, only self-revelation*
  - c. Led to dualism (spirit good, material bad) and asceticism (self-discipline) – q. Almy
3. Pride of Life - Plato (Greek) – **we reason our way to salvation (no Word of truth)**
  - a. Satan’s temptation was that Eve and Adam could determine right and wrong
  - b. *We either reason to our own “truth” or from the revelation of God’s truth (the Word)*
  - c. Happiness removes restraints, making culture look like Plato’s Republic (400 BC)

D. **These three areas have, throughout history, demonstrated the “faith once delivered to the saints” of the early church – departure from these has been the source of cultural change**

### **Lust of the Flesh – Man is born good – leads to being a *victim* (it's not your fault)**

The Council of Charthage, presided over by St. Augustine in 412 AD, charged Coelestius, a disciple of Pelagius, with violating the clear teaching of Scripture, as quoted in Gary Almy's (*How Christian is Christian Counseling?* – Crossway Books, 2000, page 145 and 148), Celestius asserted:

1. *Adam was created mortal, and would have died, even if he had not sinned.*
2. *Adam's fall injured himself alone; not the human race.*
3. *Children come into the world in the same condition as Adam was before the Fall.*
4. *Humanity neither dies in consequence of Adam's fall nor rises again in consequence of Christ's resurrection.*
5. *Unbaptized children, as well as others, have eternal life.*
6. *The Law, as well as the Gospel, leads to the kingdom of heaven.*
7. *Even before Christ, there were sinless people.*

Augustine's rebuttal - *If human nature is uncorrupted, an the natural will competent to do good, we need no Redeemer to create in us a new will, but merely an iprover and ennobler; and salvation is essentially the work of man. The Pelagian system has really no place fore the ideas of redemption, atonement, regeneration, and a new creation. It substitutes for them our own moral effort to perfect our natural powers, and the mere addition of grace as a valuable aid and support.*

### **Lust of the Eyes – Humans are “god” – leads to Gnosticism (self-revelation)**

Gnosticism, focusing on self, in addition to man becoming “god” as articulated below, produced *dualism* (spirit good, material bad); *asceticism* (superstition) – becoming holy by discipline

As Almy writes on page 163; *This knowledge was provided through some kind of mysterious revelation. It was not merely gathered or learned in any conventional sense, but was made available through heavenly mediation to those who are elect and capable of receiving it.... The difference between the redeeming gnosis of ancient Gnosticism and the redeeming faith of Christianity is dramatic and total. 'Union' with God through knowledge is as different from reconciliation with God through the Messiah as black is different from white. No wonder these teachings occasioned such zealous opposition from the apostles and early Church Fathers.*

### **Pride of Life – Platonism (man can understand everything) – leads to reason over revelation**

Socrates (470-399), Plato (427-347) and Aristotle (384-322) were Greek philosophers who focused on knowing self, the State and happiness. We might say the terms “self-image” and “self-esteem” are inherently Platonic. Almy's summary of Augustine on Plato (p. 185);

*The chief assertion that Augustine challenged was Plato's confidence that human reason could save. Prior to his encounter with Plato's philosophy, August, while a student at Carthage, had been infatuated with gnosticism as a means of pursuing truth. When he left Carthage and moved to Milan in 386, he was loosed from this influence and discovered the truth of Scripture.... Much of what Augustine wrote about the nature of God, the soul, and learning was improved by its conversation, comparison, and contrast with Plato's views...*