

Good morning! Please pray with me.

The title of my message this morning is *No Longer Be Children - Part One*. Please stand with me and turn to the book of Jude for the reading of God's word. Jude is the very short single chapter book directly before Revelation. This sermon will be a continuation of the other messages I've preached from the book of Jude.

The verse I'll be preaching from is Jude 8, but I'm going to read from verse 5 to establish the context and perhaps bring to mind some of the points from my last sermon.

5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; 7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

8 Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries.

You may be seated.

In verses 5-7, Jude provides three sobering Old Testament examples of God's judgment upon apostates. There is no uncertainty about these references. They do not require any sort of nuanced interpretation. These are tragic examples of what happens to people, or even angels, that rebel and turn away from God. Once you study them, you will know how God feels and reacts to apostasy.

The Jews in the wilderness: They were God's people. He rescued them from Egypt with miracles and awesome displays of power, but on the border of the Promised Land, they rebelled against Him. They listened to the voice of the ten spies who said they could not take the land, despite God's promises. They even went so far as to blaspheme God by saying He only brought them out of Egypt to the edge of the Promised Land so that the Canaanites could kill their wives and children. What happened to them? God caused them to wander for forty years until that generation perished.

The angels who did not keep their proper domain: They were at one time God's servants. They stood in His very presence, but they too rebelled. They rejected God's authority over them and departed from their proper place to come down to the earth and procreate with human women.

What happened to them? Since they did not keep their place, God has kept them in **everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.**

Sodom and Gomorrah: They enjoyed ease of life, living in a well-watered green land. It would have appeared to any outsider that they were blessed by God. They might have even supposed that God must approve of the sexual perversion they were known for. We know the rest of the story, how God rescued Lot and his family and then destroyed these wicked cities with fire from the heavens due to their sexual immorality.

Now, with that context in mind, I want to draw your attention to the first part of verse 8 where it says “**Likewise also these dreamers....**” Your translation may be slightly different. It might say “**In the very same way,**” or, “**Yet in like manner.**” Jude is reaching into the past with one hand to take hold of these examples of God’s judgment for apostates and then he’s reaching out with his other hand to take hold of these false teachers who had “**crept in unnoticed,**” and he’s binding them together. These false teachers will suffer the same horrific fate as the apostates from the past. They are “**marked out for this condemnation**” as verse 4 says.

These men who pervert the gospel - who deny the Lord Jesus Christ - aren’t to be welcomed, accepted, or tolerated. Instead, they are to be regarded with horror. Jude is helping his readers understand how God sees them - and not only them, but all false teachers. He’s saying, you better think carefully whether you want to be associated with these men, because they are under the wrath of God.

When one of your children steps out of line - let’s say they were playing recklessly and broke something valuable - what do your other children do? They flee! They get out of there, or they run to tell mom and dad lest the wrath for the guilty child should fall upon them!

I’ll tell you what they don’t do. They don’t continue playing with the guilty child pretending that nothing happened and wait to be discovered together. This is apparently what Jude’s readers were doing because in verse 12 it says, “**These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves.**” That tells me that the congregation had already been won over by these deceivers. They were in their fellowship and had no fear of being unmasked.

Their tolerance looks like acceptance and approval. We need to remember that. If we tolerate false teaching it will look as if we’ve also departed from the truth. We will be guilty by association, not to mention putting our faith and the faith of others around us in jeopardy. So, we can’t tolerate them, but we also can’t flee from them (like the children in my example) because that just enables them to continue turning people away from the truth unimpeded.

So, what do we do? What is Jude's major instruction for us? To contend with them. Verse 3 says, **"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."**

Jude is not charging us to contend for faith in a general sense, he is telling us to contend for THE faith. The faith that was preached by the apostles. The one true faith. And notice, it is the faith **which was once for all delivered to the saints**. That means it's been established. It's not changing. It doesn't change because God does not change. So, when someone creeps into our church and begins to twist, distort, or subvert that faith, (or, simply put, to change it) we are to remain unshakeable. We are to be unyielding. Implacable. To use the word that scripture seems to favor, we must be steadfast.

We see this exhortation often in scripture.

1 Corinthians 15:58 - **58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord....**

2 Peter 3:17 - **17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked....**

There's one more verse that I want you to pay particular attention to because the ideas behind it will be part of the lessons this morning. The verses that come before it say that Jesus has given us apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to edify the body of Christ to bring us to maturity and then Ephesians 4:14 says, **"that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting...."**

Why does he say **"no longer be children"**? Children are overly trusting. They are naive. They are pliable and immature. Those may sound like good qualities for a couple of reasons. For one, they are innocent. They don't really expect anyone to deceive them. For another, as their parents we want them to trust us and be pliable, but in other contexts, it's very dangerous. The real trouble with children is that they are undiscerning. They trust their parents, and they will also trust a stranger who might mean them harm.

That leads me to lesson one on your bulletins.

[Lesson One: To resist false teachers, strive for spiritual maturity.](#)

I want to be clear, in Ephesians 4:14, Paul is not referring to physical age. He's referring to spiritual maturity. It is possible to be a spiritually mature teenager, and it is possible to be a spiritually immature senior citizen.

In the same way that a child is undiscerning, someone who is spiritually immature is undiscerning about the teaching they sit under. They will trust a faithful expositor of the word, and they will trust a wolf in sheep's clothing alike. In that way they are "**children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine.**"

There are a couple reasons people are spiritually immature. First, new believers are going to be immature in the faith for the simple fact that they don't yet know much. That's just reality. It takes time, even for the most zealous new believer to learn and grow into a mature Christian. That's normal, but there is another reason some are spiritually immature, and it's rather tragic.

Some people are spiritual children because they choose to be. They refuse to apply themselves to the study of God's word, and because of that, they are ignorant regarding sound teaching. They are gullible. They are easily deceived by even the most obvious false teachers, because they simply cannot discern between truth and error.

If you want to protect yourself from error.... If you do not want to be a spiritual child, you must prioritize the study of God's word. Wake up early, or stay up late. Set aside time to be in the word and ask God to illuminate scripture to you. Pray for insight. Ask for wisdom. Sacrifice less important things.

Everything is less important. How important is it for you to hear from your heavenly Father? Is anything a higher priority? Yet, many Christians forgo time in the word because they are "busy" with the most trivial matters of life. Really it's a matter of priorities. One of my favorite sayings is: *you will make time for what is truly important to you.*

Proverbs 23:23 says, "**Buy the truth, and do not sell it, Also wisdom and instruction and understanding.**" We all need to be spending our time to buy the truth found in the pages of scripture.

False teachers are going to find it very difficult to gain traction in a church filled with mature students of the word. That's what we want. That's how a church defends itself from deceivers. The spiritually mature are like warriors ready to jump in and contend when false teaching appears. They understand what the truth is, and they understand the stakes are high.

Now consider the opposite of that: a church filled with spiritual children - undiscerning, naive, and easily fooled. They cannot even recognize an enemy when they see one. They see a wolf and

think he's a sheep. They hear preaching that appeals to their flesh and instead of being repulsed by it, they are enticed by it.

Even if they do know scripture to some degree.... Even if they do perceive some error, they are unskilled to contend. It's like a little child trying to wield a sword against a trained soldier. The false teacher has a number of ways to defeat them.

That leads me to lesson two on your bulletins.

False teachers overcome spiritual children by:

Lesson Two: captivating them with dreams and visions.

Verse 8 begins with the words, "**Likewise also these dreamers....**" There are differing opinions on what is being referred to by the word "dreamers." One line of thinking is that describing them as "dreamers" is to say that they are delusional. They are living in a dream world. They are self-deceived, believing that God is not offended and filled with wrath on account of their behavior.

Although those things may be true, I'm not convinced that is why Jude referred to them as "dreamers". The Greek word used here is one that stretches my ability to pronounce: It is enypniázomenoi. The only other place in scripture that same word appears is Acts 2:17 where it is used to describe prophetic dreams sent by God. For that reason, I believe Jude's meaning is that these men claimed to hear directly from God in their dreams.

And that makes a lot of sense, right? These are false teachers. Verse 4 says they were "**ungodly men.**" We shouldn't suppose they would have any reservations when it comes to lying about receiving revelation from God. Not only that, but since they preached lies, they needed a way to justify the deviation from apostolic doctrine.

They used this lie to disarm any potential opponents and overcome their objections. What better way than to claim direct revelation from God? I don't intend this to be a sermon on the activity of the gifts today, but this was a much more believable lie in the early church than it is today. Or, let me say it like this: as the New Testament books were being written, we know that God was still communicating to His people through direct revelation.

In 1 Corinthians 14:29-33, for instance, Paul gives instructions for how prophets were to operate in the church: **29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. 30 But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of**

the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

So, my point is: people in the early church were accustomed to the idea of direct revelation, but even then, were people supposed to blindly believe the words of anyone who claimed to be a prophet? Listen to a verse that occurs shortly after the last one I quoted. 1 Corinthians 14:37 - **37 If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.**

OK, we know Paul received revelation, and these prophets claimed to receive revelation from God, so were their words to be considered equal in authority to Paul's? Absolutely not! First of all, they were to be judged by other prophets, and second, they were to be tested against Paul's writings which are equated with **the commandments of the Lord.**

In other words, if anyone should suppose that they are hearing from God, one thing is certain: whatever they say is going to agree with what Paul wrote. Our faith - what we believe, what we teach, what we contend for - is the doctrine the apostles taught, and all prophetic revelation must be scrutinized by that standard.

The warnings about false prophets are pervasive in scripture.

- Matthew 7:15 - **“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.**
- 1 John 4:1 - **Beloved, DO NOT believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.**

It was similar in the Old Testament as well. God raised up leaders and revealed His word to them with accompanying signs, and all others who claimed to receive revelation were to be measured against that standard. God's people have always been required to exercise discernment when it comes to believing prophets. Why? Because God knew that men would rise up to deceive people.

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 - **1 “If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’ 3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.**

The clear teaching of scripture is that we should approach prophets with what? Skepticism. Suspicion. Scrutiny. Moses held the Israelites responsible for discerning false prophets in their midst. Paul set a standard in the early church that they should be scrutinized against his writings. Think about how the Bereans were commended when they didn't simply take Paul at his word, but what did they do? They were commended because they **searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.** (Acts 17:11)

Scripture seems to shout at us repeatedly to be very careful when it comes to believing people who say they hear from God, but spiritual children jump in with both feet.

That undiscerning belief is just gullibility by another name. I think sometimes we are tempted to applaud or at least appreciate all expressions of faith, but we can't do that where it leads someone away from sound teaching. That sort of naive faith is not commendable. It makes them very susceptible to being misled by a false teacher.

Does this happen today? You bet it does. It's very common for false teachers to claim direct revelation as a way to protect themselves from biblical correction.

- It can be as subtle as a preacher saying, "God told me." What do you mean, "God told you?" Are you saying God spoke to you? Or, are you saying you felt led by the Spirit?
- It can be as popular as the *Jesus Calling* books whose publisher describes the book this way: "*After many years of writing her own words in her prayer journal, missionary Sarah Young decided to be more attentive to the Savior's voice and begin listening for what He was saying. So with pen in hand, she embarked on a journey that forever changed her—and many others around the world. In these powerful pages are the words and Scriptures Jesus lovingly laid on her heart.*"
- It can be as brash as someone like Jesse Duplantis who claimed that God once asked his opinion on how to handle an individual's salvation. Here is how Jesse Duplantis described this conversation with God. He said:

"Friends have frank and open conversations with each other. I've done that with the Lord.... I've had God come tell me, 'This is what I'm going to do.' I've had the Lord say, 'What do you think about this?' God has asked me for my opinion. I said, 'Well Lord, since you asked...I don't think you ought to do that.' He said, 'Why don't you think I ought to do that?' I said, 'Well you know - I know you know people more than I do - but you know Lord, if you just let me do a little more work on this individual. I think we can get him to you.' And He says, 'Ok, go ahead. Do what you have to do.'"

Excuse me? God asked for your opinion? Romans 11:34 - **34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?"**

Is scripture sufficient or isn't it? Do we have God's completed word or not? The canon is closed. Where supposed revelation disagrees with scripture, it is false. Where it agrees with scripture, it is unnecessary. Mature, well-equipped Christians understand scripture is our ultimate authority. That is why our statement of faith begins with how we view the Holy Scriptures. It says this:

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The original autographs are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed, and therefore are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and divine revelation of God to man.

Claiming new revelation is just one of the strategies these false teachers employed to overcome the people Jude wrote to, but they didn't stop there. They also appealed to the desires of the flesh.

That brings me to lesson three part one on your bulletins.

[False teachers overcome spiritual children by:](#)

[Lesson Three \(Part One\): eliminating repentance from salvation.](#)

Verse 8 says, "**Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh....**" As I mentioned earlier, the word "**likewise**" points backwards to the three Old Testament accounts of God's judgment in verses 5-7. Which of the three involves defiling the flesh? The obvious answer is Sodom and Gomorrah, but Jude may also be including the angels who left their proper domain, came down to earth, and procreated with human women.

Jude's point is obvious. These men were doing the very thing that God previously judged in spectacular fashion. If you choose to ignore that warning and embrace them and their teaching, you're also embracing their coming judgment.

Now, I want to make it clear that not only did these men defile their own flesh with sexual immorality, but they taught others to do the same. Verse 4 says they, "**turn the grace of our God into lewdness.**" They were turning the gospel. They were twisting it - distorting it to say something other than it really says. Rather than preaching repentance and belief in Christ that leads to glorious freedom from the bondage of sin, they taught faith in Christ whose grace gives freedom to go on sinning.

Paul anticipated that people would hear his preaching about God's grace and accuse him of preaching a license for sin. Thankfully, he refuted that error clearly. In Romans chapter 5, Paul taught that Adam's sin brought all people under a death sentence, but Jesus' free gift was much

greater, because it nullified that death sentence for many and promised eternal life. In Romans 5:20 he makes this stunning statement: **where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.**

What are you saying, Paul? That's a dangerous doctrine! (I'm speaking as an objector.) Are you telling people they can go on sinning because God's grace is greater than their sin? Should we then magnify our sin so that we might magnify God's grace?

Isn't that the immediate wicked hope of fallen man? To have all the sin you want with none of the consequences? We know that's not what Paul was preaching because of the next verses.

Romans 6:1. **6 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not!** [The KJV says, "God forbid!"] **How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?**

While Paul answers, "Certainly not," these false teachers might have answered, "Certainly!"

False teachers that preach a permissive false gospel magnify God's grace for sinners to the exclusion of His other attributes. They minimize attributes like His holiness, His righteousness, His justice, and His wrath for sin. God cannot be dissected like that. When one, or some, of God's attributes are magnified and others are minimized, you are no longer speaking about the God of the bible, but some other god of man's imagination - an idol.

Why do they do this? It might help to think of false teachers like salesmen. The biblical gospel is going to appeal to few - only those whom the Lord is drawing to Himself, but this worldly false gospel is going to appeal to many, because it is attractive to their fallen natures. If you were an ice cream salesman, would you set up your cart on a narrow path with few potential customers, or on a broad path with many?

In my last sermon, I made the point that the goal of false teachers is often to build a large congregation to maximize the amount of money they receive through giving. They aren't going to preach a message that may offend anyone. They aren't going to call anyone out of a lifestyle of sin. They are going to affirm everyone who comes into their building and assure them they are right with God.

In a very real way, the product these false teachers were selling was the freedom to sin with an assurance of heaven. Since it is in fallen man's nature to worship idols and to love sin, this is an extremely easy sale to close. A spiritual child doesn't stand a chance.

One thing to keep in mind is that false teachers come in many forms. This morning we are discussing Antinomianism, because that is the error of the false teachers Jude wrote against. This

is the error that says since we are no longer under the law, but under grace, God does not require Christians to obey any moral laws.

The error on the other side of the spectrum of God's grace is Legalism. Legalists are like the objectors Paul anticipated in the book of Romans, when they hear sound teaching about God's grace - the genuine gospel - they think, "No! People must not hear this teaching because they will just go on sinning and never come to repentance."

I want to make it clear that if you're in either one of those ditches, you cannot be saved. You're either lacking repentance, or you are still trusting in your works to make you acceptable to God.

Interestingly, the people that embrace either of those errors (Legalism or Antinomianism) though they seem worlds apart, actually have the same fundamental misunderstanding (or ignorance may be a more accurate word) about salvation. I'm not saying that if they understood this one doctrine rightly, they would be saved. I'm saying, if they understood this one doctrine correctly, they would neither fear nor embrace the idea that God's grace allows people to go on sinning.

Why is it a problem for a bible teacher to live in defiling sin? For that matter, why is it a problem for any Christian to live in flesh defiling sin? Do you have a biblical answer for that? If you don't, the next lesson is going to equip you to answer that question. I pray also, that it will help you no longer be **tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men.**

Before I introduce the next lesson, I want to get you to think about brand new believers in Christ. When a person professes to believe the gospel, why is it that...

- some continue in their addiction to pornography and others radically turn away from it?
- some continue to take pride in self-destructive sins and others mourn them?
- some continue fornicating with their boyfriends or girlfriends, and others cut those relationships off?
- some continue to be habitual liars and others can't stand the thought of ever lying again?
- some continue to love worldly things, and others begin to love the things of God?

You get the idea. Is it just that some have greater willpower? Do the ones who repent simply come to their senses? How do we explain it? Does that power for change come from within man himself?

While you're thinking about that, I also want to establish clearly in your minds two inescapable truths presented in scripture that appear to be contradictory. The first inescapable truth is that

man is completely bound up in sin. By his very nature he is unwilling, incapable, and powerless to “do good” as scripture puts it.

To begin, scripture teaches that man is born in sin - inheriting fallen human nature from Adam.

Psalm 51:5 - Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

Psalm 58:3 - The wicked are estranged from the womb; They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.

So, sin is something we are born with, but surely man is good deep down, right?

Ecclesiastes 9:3 - Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

Mark 7:21-23 - 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”

Wait, but doesn't man at least love and desire what is good?

John 3:19 - 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Ephesians 2:3 - 3 we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

But, isn't man free to choose to do good?

John 8:34 - 34 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. (ESV)

Romans 8:7 - 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

OK, but if man hears spiritual truth, then he can understand his need to change, right?

1 Corinthians 2:14 - **14 the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 - **3 if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe....**

Well, has any man ever done what is good?

Romans 3:10-12 - **10 “There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.”**

Is it even remotely possible for a man to do good?

Jeremiah 13:23 - **Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.**

In other words, you have about as much ability to change your sinful nature as you do to change your physical appearance. Which is to say: you can't. But friends, though we are powerless to change, scripture says, “Change you must!”

The second inescapable truth of scripture that seems to contradict everything I just shared is that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. All of the Antinomian false teachers in the world who proclaim otherwise, can never change the next verses I'm going to read.

Hebrews 12:14 - **14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord**

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 - **9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. (Listen! False teachers are going to try to deceive you about this!) Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.**

Ephesians 5:5-7 - **5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, (Are you noticing a pattern? God wants you to discern between the truth of scripture and the error of deceitful men.) **for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them.****

So, we are powerless to change ourselves, but nevertheless a change must come, or salvation has not come. So, again I ask: why do some new believers evidence their faith with a changed life, and others continue in the sin they have always been mired in?

First of all, it is resolved with a scriptural understanding that not all who profess belief are actually believers. I dealt with that in my previous sermon, so I won't cover that again today.

Second, and what I want to focus our attention on now, it is resolved with a biblical understanding of regeneration.

That brings me to lesson three part two on your bulletins.

[False teachers overcome spiritual children by:](#)

[eliminating repentance from salvation \(Part Two\) which denies God's work of regeneration.](#)

When a man is saved, it is not merely an act of his will to come to faith. It includes that, but that is not all that it is. It is not merely a mental assent, for “**even the demons believe**” and remain unchanged. It is a supernatural, regenerative work of the Holy Spirit whereby a man is spiritually made new.

Though this change cannot be discerned by outward physical appearance, it is nevertheless such a drastic change as to be equated with being made a new creation, being raised to life, and being born again.

John 1:12-13 - 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

To teach about this birth, John tells us three things that it isn't:

- It's **not of blood** - That is to say this birth is not a mixture of bloodlines. You do not inherit this new birth from your ancestors.
- It's not **of the will of the flesh** - This is not a birth that comes as a result of human desire, unlike your first birth.
- It's not **of the will of man** - Meaning this is not a birth as a result of man's determination.

If it's not those things, what is it then? It is a birth “**of God.**” The implication is that it is a birth entirely the result of God's will. James comes right out and says what John implied.

James 1:18 - 18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

So, God is the author of the new birth, but what does it accomplish? The single greatest verse in scripture that describes what is produced in the new birth is perhaps not where you'd expect to find it. You might expect it to be found in the New Testament, but it is actually found in the book of Ezekiel. Please turn with me to Ezekiel 36. We won't be coming back to Jude.

The verses we are going to read describe a time in the future when God will restore Israel to their own land, but more importantly they describe how God will restore them spiritually.

Look with me at Ezekiel 36:16. **16 Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 17 "Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. 18 Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it. 19 So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds.**

They had defiled the land with their wickedness, so God purged them out and scattered them among the nations. He exiled them. That is their condition.

Now, skip down to verse 22. **22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. 23 And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord," says the Lord God, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.**

They did not repent of their wickedness on account of God's judgment, but sinned further by profaning His name to all the nations they were scattered. Paraphrasing, God told Ezekiel, "I'm going to do something about this. Not for the sake of Israel! Not because they deserve it! I am going to do it to show the nations that I am the Lord. The nations are going to know I am the Lord when Israel no longer profanes my name, but hallows it instead."

We read the previous verses to provide the context for these next verses. In my opinion, these verses give the greatest description of the new birth, or regeneration in the New Covenant, in all of scripture. Look at verses 25-27. **25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your**

flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Most likely, this is the verse Jesus pointed to (and expected Nicodemus to understand since he was “the teacher of Israel”) when He told him in John 3:5, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”**

Friends, do you see the certainty of the statements in Ezekiel 36:25-27? God says **“I will”** five times! Not “I might”. Not “I’ll try”. **“I will”!** Not only that, but the outcome is certain. In the new birth God promises to sprinkle clean water on you and **“you shall be clean”**. It is certain. He says he will give you his Spirit and **“cause you to walk”** in His statutes.

Remember those two inescapable truths in scripture? The first was: it is impossible for man to do good. The second was: the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. If salvation is evidenced by repentance from sin, and it is impossible for man to do good, then how can anyone be saved? If man must cleanse himself, we are doomed! Thanks be to God, the cleansing is not our work, it is His.

This doctrine deals a death blow to Legalism, because properly understood, good works are a product of God’s grace alone. The new birth is the starting point for sanctification, which progresses throughout our lives until we enter eternity.

This doctrine kills Antinomianism as well, because anyone who is truly His WILL be cleansed. They will be given a new heart and a new spirit. One that loves God and the things of God. He will put His Holy Spirit within them and CAUSE them to walk in His ways.

The man who professes Christ and is yet unchanged - still mired in unrepentant sin as a practice of life - that man is either a liar or deceived. That’s bad enough on its own, but what’s worse is that his testimony makes God a liar.

No Christian should sit under the teaching of a man who is in defiling sin. In fact, let me set the bar way lower than that. No Christian should keep company or do so much as eat a meal with a brother who is living in unrepentant sin.

1 Corinthians 5:11 - 11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

In my previous sermon, I planned to preach verses 5-11, but only got through verse 7. As I began this sermon, I planned to preach verses 8-11, but here we are only halfway through verse 8.

Pastor Scott's thoroughness must be rubbing off on me. One thing I'm sure of though (even if I only preach half a verse at a time): I'm definitely preaching through an entire book of the bible before he does. 😊

I'll be up front after service. I'd love the opportunity to talk with you and answer any questions you may have.

Let's pray.