



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

Under the Influence

Jude 1:5–16

Tim Badal | November 19, 2023



Last week we started a series titled “Clear Faith in a Blurry World,” looking at the second to the last book of the New Testament, the one page letter from Jesus’ half-brother Jude. Last week we learned that Jude wanted to talk about the great salvation that we

have in Jesus Christ, the salvation he had come to receive. At first he thought his brother was crazy. But then after he saw Jesus die, be buried and then rise from the grave alive and well, he placed his faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

This was what Jude had wanted to talk about, but circumstances kept him from doing that. He instead speaks to the subject of contending for the faith, fighting for the faith, putting all our energy and emphasis in life into that faith. The reason for his concern was that people had crept into the church unnoticed who were changing the gospel of Jesus Christ. They were changing the worldview that saw Jesus Christ as Lord, into a worldview that told people we are god and master. They taught that because people are god and master, and because Jesus’ words didn’t matter, believers could live with all manner of sensuality and selfishness, pursuing all manner of possessions and pleasures unabashed and unhindered. As a result, Jude wants his readers to contend to the faith, addressing these creepers who come in unnoticed, pushing back against them and evaluating whether his readers had fallen under their influence.

We learned last week that these false teachers don’t need pulpits. We learned about social influencers and how social media—and for that matter, media as a whole—has a way of influencing our lives. What we watch on TV, what we listen to on the radio, on our iPods, iPads and all the different devices we have, the magazines we read, the podcasts we listen to—all of these result in our being influenced by the world. Jude is telling us to be careful when encountering these voices of influence.

I want to say quickly, even before we get into our text, that not all voices in the world are bad. In fact, Jude will cite some in his text from sources that are outside the Bible. This is not me ranting that all things secular are bad, that all things that don’t come with the gospel attached to the end of it are demonic. That’s not the case at all. In fact, I will quote from a couple individuals who are secular but who still speak truth. What I want us to do is evaluate what we’re consuming and how it is influencing our lives.

To do this, let’s look at the book of Jude and learn from Jesus’ brother how we can contend for the faith. We’ll start in Jude 1:5, where we left off last week, and go all the way to verse 16. This will be an absolute mouthful. Listen to what he has to say.

⁵ Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶ And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— ⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

⁸ Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. ⁹ But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment,

but said, "The Lord rebuke you." ¹⁰ But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. ¹¹ Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. ¹² These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; ¹³ wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

¹⁴ It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, ¹⁵ to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him." ¹⁶ These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

Aren't you glad you came to church this morning? Holy cow. Jude is on fire. You're probably thinking, "How in the world are we going to get done on time?" The answer is: we won't, but you should be right on time for your Thanksgiving dinner. No, you know two groups have already been in and out, so we'll get you in and out as well. There's certainly a lot here.

I want you to realize, before you prejudge how I'm going to preach this, that Jude shares all these things as rapid-fire bullet points. He's saying all these serve as examples of a truth. You and I, by contending for the faith, need to evaluate the voices we're listening to. That's his point.

Today, just as was true in the first century, there are voices—demonic, deviant, disobedient voices—that are whispering in our ears and leading us away from Jesus Christ being our only Lord and Master. These teachers did this in person in the first century; we now do it swipe by swipe, reel by reel, post by post, tweet by tweet, movie magazine by movie magazine, music album by music album. There is a plethora of ways we receive these voices. Are we evaluating the voices using this fundamental question this morning, "Am I under their influence and not know it?"

When we talk about being "under the influence," right away our mind goes to alcohol. A person who drinks alcohol little by little comes under the influence of the alcohol. Sip by sip, gulp by gulp, more and more the alcohol begins to carry the day. With every ounce of alcohol the influence grows. If you've been around anyone who has taken in too much alcohol, you see firsthand their inhibitions drop. Words never said when they're sober are now being communicated in grand fashion. Their motor skills begin to fall apart. Their reaction time begins to fall away. Scientists tell us this is a phenomenon you can observe. You put alcohol into a system and these things happen. The more drinks they have, the more influence that alcohol has on them.

I want you to ask this question this morning, not in the realm of drinking, but in the realm of your consumption of media and the voices that media brings. "Am I under their influence?" I want you to notice a few correlations between what I'm talking about from Jude and drinking alcohol.

Number one, the influence is determined by three factors: the amount consumed, the time it takes to do it and the dulling of the senses progressively taking place. So it is with our media. The more deviant, the more demonic, the more disobedient, the more spiritually rebellious media we take in—whether on our phones, TVs or radios—the greater is the possibility we'll come under its influence. The more time we give to it, the more that influence will grow. And the more that influence grows, the more the spiritual senses God has given believers will be dulled.

The book of Jude says that many of us don't even know this. We don't realize what is happening. We're the drunk who is unaware of his condition. We're unaware of what's coming out of our mouths. We're unaware of the doctrines we now espouse, if only in private, because we've allowed these voices to carry the day. Instead of writing about the salvation we all have, Jude is saying, "I have to ask you to do some examination." He then gives us five things we need to be looking for.

Looking for signs

Jude begins by saying in verse five, "I want to remind you of some things." I'm not going to be able to go through every one of the eight or nine examples he gives. I realize there are a lot of newer Christians here, so I want you to know where to look in your Bible for these stories. Then I want to challenge those of you who have been believers for a long time: you need to know these stories, not just in a Bible trivia sort of way. The Bible tells us these stories because they are intended to serve as

examples for us. Jude is reminding us of things we ought to already have fully known. If we don't, that may mean we need to turn the TV and our phones off, then get into this Book more. But for those who are new, I want to give you grace. We're glad you're here. I'm going to tell you where these stories are coming from; some come from the Bible, some come from outside the Bible.

First of all, Jude brings up the book of Exodus, along with Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy—the second through the fifth books of the Bible. As we see in verse five, it's the storyline of the people of God—the Israelites—being brought into captivity in Egypt. For 400 years, they were slaves, enduring great hostility from the Egyptians. They cried out for God to rescue them, yet for 400 years He saw fit to leave them there.

Eventually however God sent Moses, a leader of leaders, to go to Pharaoh demanding that he let God's people go. That's exactly what happened because of the many plagues God sent upon the Egyptians. After seeing God work in these powerful ways, the Israelites went out into the wilderness, where they soon rebelled against God.

Then in Jude 6, there's a story about angels *"who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling,"* after which they are put in chains. This comes from Genesis 6, right before the flood. Something heinous took place which caused God to grieve that He even created man. Remember, angels were with God before the foundation of the world, where they were worshiping Him in heaven. Somewhere between when God created the angels and when He created the world and humanity, Lucifer, the chief angel rebelled against God. We don't know why or how, but he did. He was such a powerful created angel that a third of the angels agreed that he could take on God, so they followed him in his rebellion. In an instant, God threw them out of heaven and down to earth, where demons now—as they did in Jesus' day—wander around the world. We can't see them, but they're there. In the New Testament, we read about when Jesus was ministering that some people were possessed by demons. We read about demons going into pigs, then being thrown into the sea.

There is an episode in Genesis 6 where a group of demons, we don't know how many, saw that human women were beautiful, so they decided to sleep with them. How could they do that? Everywhere we see angels, they look like men to us, therefore they have human characteristics, even though they're not actually human. Still, they can eat and sleep and talk, so when they left their position in heaven, they took on some level of flesh and slept with women, creating a mongrel species of human beings. This was when God said He was grieved that He had made humanity, therefore He was about to destroy them all. Genesis 6 tells us the human race was absolutely corrupted, immorality was everywhere and giants were walking around the land. They were called Nephilim. God said, "Okay, I'm going to kill them all." But one man named Noah found favor in God's eyes, so God allowed him and his family to be saved from the destruction. That means we are all now descendants of Noah.

Then we have Sodom and Gomorrah. The story of Lot, who lived in Sodom, starts with the calling of Abraham in Genesis 15. As you move through Abraham's story, Lot, who was his nephew, was part of it. He traveled with Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees—northern Iraq today—to Canaan. As their clans got larger, Lot and Abraham split, then Lot picked an area around the city of Sodom. Little by little he worked his way into the city of Sodom. It was a bad place. It was a dark and debased place. Because of that, God told Abraham He was going to judge them. Abraham of course wanted to save his nephew, so he began to go back and forth with God: "For this many people, will You save the city?" God said, "Yes." Abraham lowered the number until he got down to ten. But that was not enough, so God in His grace sent two angels to warn Lot. Lot met them at the city gate and realized these were not ordinary men. As I said earlier, even angels can do things humans do, including eating and sleeping. The angels first told Lot they wanted to spend the night in the town square, but Lot insisted that they come to his house. He knew Sodom was not a safe place for them.

While they were finishing dinner, the men of the town, young and old, surrounded the house, banging on the door, because they wanted to "know" the visitors. That word is a euphemism for sexual union. For example, Adam "knew" his wife and she conceived a son. These men had come to have sex with Lot's male visitors. Lot freaked out, so he told the city men, "I'll give you my two virgin daughters. Do what you will with them." But the townsmen refused that offer; they wanted the men. Then within 12 hours, God totally destroyed the city of Sodom.

Then in Jude 8 we continue to read how the people defiled the flesh and rejected authority. Verse nine next brings a story about how the archangel Michael and the devil are having an argument. This story is not recorded in the Old Testament, but

it comes from a book called *The Assumption of Moses*. You can find it today on the internet. It describes when Moses died and the devil wanted his body. There's a lot of debate about why he would want it, but apparently Michael contended with the devil for the body. While the original story isn't in our Bible, because Jude references it as a fact scholars generally accept it to be true.

Then we run into some other stories, including the story of Cain, which is found in Genesis 4, where he killed his brother Abel out of jealousy. There's also the story of Balaam, who took God's truth and monetized it for selfish gain. That story is found in Numbers 22-24. Next is the story of Korah and his band of brothers who rebelled against Moses, which is found in Numbers 16. At the end of our passage in Jude there is a quote from Enoch, the seventh generation after Adam (verse 14). This story comes from a book called Enoch. Again, this book isn't in the Bible, but it contains the truth that Jesus Christ is coming again.

All of these stories focus on the different characteristics of these men, which is what we're interested in today. What do we need to evaluate about the voices we hear and take in today?

Beware of influencers who are pagans.

Characteristic number one: these influencers are pagan. Notice that Jude says in verse five that these are people *"who did not believe."* In verse eight he describes them as people who *"defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme."* In verse 11 Jude says, *"Woe to them!"* He calls them *"hidden reefs"* that will shipwreck you (verse 12). They're shepherds who devour the sheep. Then in verse 15 he uses forms of the word *"ungodly"* four times to describe these people. These are not Bible people. These are not church leaders. These are not Christians.

So it begs the question regarding the people we're listening to and being entertained by, "How many of them are pagans? How many are not followers of Jesus Christ?" Ask yourself, "Am I hearing more from Christians than I'm hearing from non-Christians? What percentage of what you listen to is truth about God and His work, compared to the corrupt worldviews of the sinners around us?" Does that mean we should never listen to anything from an unbeliever? No. Does that mean we can't watch a movie with unbelievers in it? No. But we have to be discerning. We have to contend for the faith. So let's evaluate the podcasts we are subscribing to, the movies we're watching, the music we're listening to. The people who entertain us are often pagans.

Ask yourself this: "If I was to have a sit-down conversation with them and told them what I believe, what would their response be? Would they speak well of Jesus? Would they speak negatively about Him? Would they mock and scoff at my faith and what I believe based on Scripture?" We need to be careful about whom we're listening to.

The people in Jude's day were influencing their Christianity by the pagan voices of the world, men who perverted the grace of God, indulged in sensuality and denied our Master and Lord Jesus Christ. I could name a lot of names this morning, but I don't want to demonize them. But I want you to discern whether their voices are what you should give your time and attention to. By the way, it goes beyond voices from the world of entertainment. There are also pagan voices from political pundits and social commentaries. Does what they say fit into the categories that Jude is telling us are ungodly?

Beware of influencers who are possessive.

Second, these people he's describing were possessive. Jude speaks of the Israelites who were rescued by God from slavery in Egypt through miracle upon miracle. They walked through the Red Sea. They received manna from heaven. They were led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. They got water from a rock. Quail fell from the sky to feed them. Their shoes never wore out for 40 years. Three million people had everything they needed as they wandered over an area about the size of the state of Illinois without reaching the Promised Land. But the entire time they were complaining and rebellious.

Why would a people who had experienced more miracles than any other people rebel against God? Because they thought they knew better. They thought they already had everything they needed for their lives.

So let me ask you this. Of the people you're following, are they listening to God? Or are they rebelling against God? Do they really believe they're living under the oversight of God? Maybe they're not believers. Let's ask this: do they see themselves as created beings, created by someone greater than them, who will hold them accountable? Do they have that kind of worldview? If they don't, then they believe themselves to be an evolved animal who should get what he wants when he wants

it, how he wants it—and whoever gets in his or her way had better look out. The people in these stories grabbed hold of that, and many of them in our media are grabbing hold of the idea that they are a law unto themselves. They can do what they want in the ways they want. They're possessive of that kind of life.

Beware of influencers who are perverted.

Number three, they are perverted. In verses six and seven, Jude speaks of two events that have perversion written all over them. First in verse six, we have angels sleeping with women, creating a mongrel race of human/demons who roam around the world. That results in God's judgment.

Then in Genesis, there is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah where men were trading their natural relations with women to pursue other men. Given the prospect of two virgin daughters, grown men and young men said, "No, we want someone like us." Perversion. These people were trading the grace they were given for sensuality. They defiled the flesh, as Jude puts it. They rejected authority.

What it says in verse six is they left *"their own position of authority."* They left their lane. If there was a statement Jude could make about the 21st century view of sexuality, he could say that we have left our lane. God has given us our lane. Sexual relations are something He created for our good, for our enjoyment. God loves sex. He's the mastermind behind it. It is pure and holy; it is to be pleasurable. But what God creates Satan counterfeits and perverts.

We can focus on the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah and say, "That's the chief one." Listen to me. There are all kinds of perversions in our world. Some of us are being led into these. Some of us are engaged in them. Some of us are dreaming about them. Some of us are longing to pursue them. That didn't come from God. Don't put that on God. God said, "I created this and I've clearly spoken to you about it in My Word." But the devil says, "Did God really say...?" We're in the days when truth is defined by what feels good and what makes us feel better. No. What does God's Word say about it? God's Word has spoken.

Folks, we live in what may seem to be one of the most perverted times ever, but the Bible reveals that it's not just our time. So why does this generation feel so perverted? It's the pervasiveness of it. It's everywhere. It's impacting young and old alike, so much so that even the secular voices in our world are concerned about it. Consider this quote from The Conversation, "a network of not-for-profit media outlets publishing news stories and research reports online, with accompanying expert opinion and analysis":

A group of individuals analyzed 172 top female influencers on social media over a period of four months. They ranged from women who willingly promote brands with no remuneration to those who market themselves as a personal brand. Our sample of influencers was drawn internationally and sourced from shout-out pages which act as a virtual currency to build popularity and thus gain attention. We analyzed images, interactions and comments of the influencers' studies.

Where did these researchers go? They went to 172 social media pages. They went to Instagram. Instagram's highest demographic are girls aged 11 to 19. What did they find out? This is the secular world talking. This isn't Bible-Banger Bob, okay? Here's what the secular world says:

We found a continuum of pornified self-representations by these social media influencers on Instagram. This ranged from softer references, where influencers posed to highlight sexualized body parts and employed porn-chic images that are hard to differentiate from mainstream commercial pornography. Here, pornified representations grab viewers' attention with the goal of being monetized to sell products such as protein powder, gummy vitamins and detox tea.

Friends, sex sells and this memo is going out to our world, impacting the youngest among us. In fact, the exposure of pornography to the youngest among us is clear from these statistics: 93% of teenage boys and 62% of girls have seen pornography. I can assure you they're not looking it up on websites anymore. It's there on Snapchat. It's there on Facebook. It's there on TikTok. It's all over the place.

So imagine what an 11-year-old boy or girl is going to come up with for their view of sexuality when they've seen the darkest, deviant images of sex that anyone could ever dream up. We're in trouble. The world is telling us we're in trouble. Lawmakers are saying, "We've got to get a handle on this." Great Britain said this about the issue of pornography and sexual perversion: "It is the pandemic of all pandemics."

You say, “Well, my kids aren’t watching that.” Listen, did you hear what they said? It starts out really small. So let me ask you—how perverted are the things you’re watching? Let’s talk about movies. Let’s talk about music. Let’s talk about what we scan through on our social media feeds. What’s coming up? What’s the commentary about your sexual self-care? It’s all over the place. Yet you don’t think this is impacting your family? You don’t think this is unnoticed? Brothers and sisters, we’re in the pot and it’s on fire. We’re bringing it into the church, into our marriages, into our homes and families. Our children are feasting on these things with no mental, spiritual, emotional or biblical way to defend against it. How much are we willing to lose before we will contend for the faith?

Beware of influencers who are proud.

They’re pagan. They’re possessive. They’re perverted. And they’re proud. In verses eight through 11, we see how they “*blaspheme the glorious ones.*” In verse 16 they’re called “*grumblers, malcontents...loud-mouthed boasters.*” It sounds like Jude has been on Facebook, right? How many grumblers have we seen? How many malcontents? How many people who are never happy? How many of them are people who are following their own sinful ways? How many are loud-mouth boasters?

Can I ask something? When did being a loud-mouth, arrogant cuss become popular? We see it in our political punditry and our podcast commentators. The louder you are, the more bombastic you are, the wiser you must be.

I’ll really rile you up. We see this in our politics. Have you seen some of these debates that are going on? They’re like kindergartners. Get loud. Get obnoxious. Say you’re the best one for the job and that will win the day. Here’s the thing—it will. But let it not be so for the Christians.

The Bible says blessed are the peacemakers. The Bible says blessed are the humble. Blessed are those who are meek in spirit. But we love the proud and the proud do what they want when they want. That’s what Cain did when Abel got in his way. That’s what Korah did when Moses got in his way. That’s what Balaam did when the donkey got in his way. You can read that story. And no, I’m not talking about Shrek.

When you’re proud and arrogant, you will knock anybody down who gets in your way—with words, with fists, with whatever. It’s not just people who do it; nations also do it. We love that about our country. We go around and bully people in our country, because it feels good, because we’re proud as a nation. What does Jude say? Woe to you. “Woe” is not a good word. Jesus reserved the ‘woes’ for the most defiled individuals, the most destructive doctrines. These people were proud.

Beware of influencers who are pointless.

Finally, these people are pointless. In verses 12-13, we get a whole litany of images. They’re a “*hidden reef at your love feasts.*” So you go to have a good time, but you’re shipwrecked as a result. That’s doesn’t sound like a good love feast. You’re a sheep, but your shepherd eats you. That’s not good for a shepherd. If he eats the sheep, he won’t have anybody to tend to. Jude goes on to say they’re like “*waterless clouds.*” What good is a cloud without rain? What about “*fruitless trees*”? Fruit trees that bear no fruit? What good are they? They’re pointless. What about “*wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam*”? Have you ever been on the beach trying to capture that foam? There’s nothing there. It’s pointless and useless. Jude is telling us that these people live pointless lives.

Friends, how many more Hollywood stories do we need to see that end with suicide and drug overdoses before we realize that what we’re pursuing is pointless? At a recent Chiefs football game, Taylor Swift—one of the most influential people in our world today—was wearing her boyfriend Travis Kelce’s uniform. She was seen for about 22 seconds in a sky box, watching the game, wearing his jersey, then overnight his jersey became the number seller. Do you think we follow them?

We are influenced in ways we don’t know. They sell us everything from burgers to cars. One of my favorite Bears’ podcasts says, “Drive what Justin Fields drives.” Really? I’m not sure I want to be associated with that guy right now. But because Justin Fields drives it, I want to drive it? Because Taylor Swift wears it, I want to wear it?

Brothers and sisters, we’ve got to stop following Hollywood and start following Jesus. I love what a Hollywood person himself said. Jim Carey put it this way, after he had something of an epiphany in his life: “I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they’ve dreamed of, so they can see it’s not the answer.” Well, hello Ecclesiastes. Have we met? Yet we follow it. We want it.

This type of teaching, this type of living, has made its way into Village Bible Church. It has wormed its way in, albeit subtly, and this pointless way of life is worthless. It's going to end in destruction. So do some evaluating in the days to come. Maybe after the end of your evaluating, you can say, "This stuff is okay. It's in check." I'll leave that to you. I'll let the Holy Spirit do His work. I'm not going to put laws on you. I'm not going to put my convictions on you. I want you to ask, "Lord, am I hearing You in this person? Am I seeing You in this person? Is Your Word being reinforced by this person, by what they're doing, by what they're saying, by what they're promoting? Or are they pagan, possessive, perverted, proud and pointless voices that I'm wasting my time with?"

Longing for the Savior

It's not just good enough to look for the signs; we need to long for the Savior. Jude finishes up with this incredible prophecy from the book of Enoch that states that Jesus is coming. So instead of allowing the voices of the world to creep in unnoticed, what should we be doing? Consider three things. We should listen, we should look and we should learn.

Listen – He is on the way.

Jude says in verse 14, "*Behold...*" That's a word that arrests the listener, that stops us in our tracks. Stop listening to the voices of the world. Jesus is coming back, amen?

Look – He's not alone.

Jesus is coming and He's not alone. Look, He's bringing thousands upon thousands of His holy ones. Here's the problem. Many of us don't even care; we're so distracted by the world. I'll be honest with you, some in this place don't want Jesus to come back because we want to enjoy ourselves a little longer. When the lifeguard comes, he's going to pull us out of the pool. We don't want that. Christian, our greatest desire should not be to follow this world, but to see Jesus Christ come back in all His glory. He's on His way with tens of thousands of His holy ones.

Learn – He means business.

And notice what we need to learn: Jesus means business. He is going to execute judgment. Are you ready? What will it say of the people of God if we are in bed with the world? James, Jesus' other brother, said, "You are an adulterous people." Jesus is our spouse. He's the One Who has saved us, the One we're in relationship with, yet we are committing adultery with the world. How does this happen? You don't just end up in bed with the other. It starts with flirting, with notes, with warm and fuzzy statements, with a hug, a kiss, a holding of hands. Then it moves deeper and darker into the sin of adultery. Could it be said of many of us here today that we are inching our way into an adulterous relationship with the world that God says He's coming to destroy? What voice are you going to listen to? Who is going to be your influence? You have a decision to make. I have a decision to make. We have to examine our hearts. Will it be the world or will it be Jesus? Who is going to be the anthem of our hearts, the anthem of our souls?