

The Books of Titus, Philemon, and Jude, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 10: Warnings from History Against the Ungodly

Jude 5–11

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This lesson carries significant doctrinal weight, because Jude's historical examples directly confront the idea that a genuine believer can never finally be lost. The teacher should handle this with care and clarity. Jude's first and most striking example is a people whom the Lord truly "saved" out of Egypt and "afterward destroyed" because of unbelief (v. 5). The angels, too, once held an exalted position and fell. These examples are given precisely to warn the saved against presumption. The lesson should present plainly the scriptural teaching that a believer can fall away and be lost, against "once saved, always saved," while showing how this coexists with genuine assurance and God's keeping power.

The teacher must hold two truths together without collapsing either. On one hand, Scripture warns repeatedly and soberly that those who do not continue in faith can fall away (1 Corinthians 10:12; Hebrews 3:12; 6:4–6; Galatians 5:4). On the other hand, God genuinely keeps those who keep themselves in His love (a theme Jude will sound in verses 21 and 24). The warning is not meant to rob faithful believers of assurance but to guard them against the presumption that destroyed the wilderness generation. Assurance and responsibility are partners, not rivals.

The formational aim is to produce sober, reverent, persevering faith, not anxiety. Jude calls his readers to remember the past so they will heed it. Send students home taking the warnings seriously, recovering neglected disciplines, embracing their God-given place, turning from the ancient paths of envy, greed, and rebellion, and resolved to remain faithful to the end, resting all the while in the God who keeps those who continue with Him.

Question 1

Student Question:

Jude deliberately recalls the past, reminding his readers of what they already knew (v. 5). Why is remembering God's past acts, both His deliverances and His judgments, so important for living faithfully in the present, and how does forgetting the past lead God's people into danger?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin with Jude's method in verse 5: "I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it." Jude does not give new information; he stirs up memory. Scripture often works this way, calling God's people to remember, because the issue is rarely ignorance and usually forgetfulness. We drift not because we never knew but because we stopped remembering.

Draw out why remembering both God's deliverances and His judgments matters. Remembering His deliverances fuels gratitude and trust; remembering His judgments fuels reverence and caution. A people who forget the past lose both. Israel's repeated failures were tied to forgetting what God had done (Psalm 106:13, they soon forgot His works).

Apply it to the rhythms of Christian life. The disciplines of Scripture, worship, the Lord's Supper, and testimony all serve to keep us remembering. Help students see remembrance not as nostalgia but as a means of staying faithful, and set up the personal application in the next question about recovering neglected disciplines.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Remembrance as a means of faithfulness (Psalm 103:2; 106:13)
- Remembering both God's deliverances and His judgments
- Forgetfulness, not ignorance, as the root of much drift
- Spiritual disciplines as aids to remembering

Discussion Prompts

- Why is remembering the past so important for present faithfulness?
- How does forgetting God's works lead His people into danger?
- What helps you keep remembering what God has done?

Question 2

Student Question:

Jude stirs his readers to remember truth they had let grow cold (v. 5). What spiritual disciplines (Scripture, prayer, worship, fellowship) have you allowed to fade in your own life? Which one is the Lord prompting you to recover, and what is one concrete step toward it this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question takes Jude's call to remember and applies it to neglected disciplines. The phrase "you once fully knew it" describes truth that has grown cold, and the same thing happens with practices we once valued and have let slide.

Help students locate the specific discipline that has faded. For one it may be regular time in Scripture; for another, prayer, gathered worship, the Lord's Supper, or fellowship. The point is not to pile on guilt but to notice honestly what has quietly slipped and recognize the drift it produces.

Move toward one concrete recovery. Ask each student to name the single discipline the Lord seems to be prompting them to recover, and one realistic step toward it this week. Small, sustainable steps re-established are better than ambitious resolutions abandoned. The aim is one practice genuinely renewed.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Neglected disciplines as a cause of spiritual coldness
- Honest assessment of what has quietly slipped
- The role of Scripture, prayer, worship, and fellowship in faithfulness
- Small, sustainable steps of recovery

Discussion Prompts

- Which spiritual discipline have you allowed to fade?
- What drift has that neglect produced in you?
- What is one concrete step toward recovering it this week?

Question 3

Student Question:

Jude's first example is a people whom the Lord "saved" out of Egypt and "afterward destroyed" for unbelief (v. 5). What does this example teach about the relationship between God's gracious salvation and the ongoing necessity of faith, and why is it significant that those who fell were people who had genuinely been redeemed?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is a key doctrinal block; handle verse 5 with care. The Lord "saved a people out of the land of Egypt" and "afterward destroyed those who did not believe." Emphasize that these were genuinely redeemed people, brought out of slavery by God's mighty acts, who nonetheless perished because of unbelief and disobedience. Their salvation out of Egypt was real, and so was their later destruction.

Draw the relationship between grace and continuing faith. God's gracious deliverance did not make their faith optional; the deliverance was meant to lead to a life of trust and obedience that would bring them into the promised land. When they hardened in unbelief, they fell. As Hebrews 3:19 sums it up, "they were unable to enter because of unbelief." Grace received must be met by faith continued.

Apply the principle to believers now. Paul makes exactly this application in 1 Corinthians 10:1–12: these things happened as examples and were written to warn us, "therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall." The teacher should let the warning land while reserving the fuller treatment of "once saved, always saved" for the heavier block at question nine. Here the focus is the necessity of continuing faith.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The wilderness generation as genuinely redeemed yet later destroyed (v. 5)
- Grace received requiring faith continued (Hebrews 3:19)

- Israel's fall written as a warning to believers (1 Corinthians 10:1-12)
- Salvation begun not guaranteeing salvation completed apart from faith

Discussion Prompts

- Why is it significant that those who fell had been genuinely saved?
- How does this connect God's grace with the necessity of ongoing faith?
- How does Paul apply Israel's example to believers today?

Question 4

Student Question:

The wilderness generation was saved out of Egypt but never entered the promised land because of unbelief (v. 5). Is there any area where you have settled for being delivered from your old life without pressing on toward all God has for you? Where might unbelief be keeping you from going forward with Him?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question uses the wilderness pattern, saved out of Egypt but never entering Canaan, to probe spiritual stagnation. Some believers are content to have escaped their old life without pressing on toward maturity and all God has for them. They camp in the wilderness rather than moving toward the promised land.

Help students see unbelief as the culprit. Israel did not enter because they did not trust God to bring them in; fear and unbelief kept them circling. Likewise, we stall when we stop believing God for the next step of growth, obedience, or calling, settling for less than He offers out of fear or complacency.

Move toward forward motion. Ask each student to identify one area where they have stalled, treating deliverance as the destination rather than the doorway, and to name one step of trusting obedience that would move them forward with God. The aim is to exchange stagnation for renewed pursuit.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Spiritual stagnation: deliverance treated as the destination
- Unbelief as the cause of failing to press on (Hebrews 3:19)
- Pressing on toward maturity and God's fuller purposes (Philippians 3:12-14)
- Trusting obedience as the path forward

Discussion Prompts

- Where have you settled for deliverance without pressing on?
- How might unbelief be keeping you from going forward?

- What step of trusting obedience would move you forward?

Question 5

Student Question:

Jude points to angels who “did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling” and are now kept for judgment (v. 6). What does this example teach about the seriousness of rebelling against God’s order and abandoning the place He has given us, and what does it reveal about God’s justice?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Examine the second example in verse 6: angels “who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling.” These were exalted beings in God’s presence, yet they abandoned the place He assigned them and are now kept in chains for judgment. Even angelic glory did not secure them when they rebelled against God’s order.

Draw out the seriousness of abandoning one’s God-given place. The angels’ sin was a refusal to remain content within the bounds and role God had given. This is a profound warning: rebellion against God’s ordering of things, the grasping for a place not ours, leads to ruin, even for the highest creatures.

Reveal what this says about God’s justice. If God did not spare rebellious angels, His justice is impartial and certain (2 Peter 2:4). No status, privilege, or proximity to God exempts a creature from accountability. This both sobers the proud and assures the oppressed that God’s justice is real. Set up the personal application about contentment with our place in the next question.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Even exalted angels falling when they abandoned God’s order (v. 6)
- The seriousness of rebelling against God’s assigned place
- God’s impartial and certain justice (2 Peter 2:4)
- No status or privilege exempting a creature from accountability

Discussion Prompts

- What does the angels’ fall teach about rebelling against God’s order?
- Why is it significant that even angels were not spared?
- What does this reveal about the certainty of God’s justice?

Question 6

Student Question:

The angels fell because they were not content with the place God gave them (v. 6). Where are you tempted toward discontent with the role, season, or limits God has assigned you? How might learning to embrace your God-given place protect you from the kind of restlessness that leads to ruin?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question takes the angels' discontent with their God-given place (v. 6) and applies it to our own restlessness. The angels were not content to remain where God set them. We, too, are tempted to chafe against the role, season, or limits God has assigned, coveting a different place than the one we have been given.

Help students name the form their discontent takes: envy of others' positions, resentment of their season of life, frustration with their limits, or ambition that refuses God's timing. Discontent is not always loud; often it is a low, persistent restlessness that erodes trust and gratitude.

Point toward contentment as protection. Learning to embrace our God-given place, as Paul learned contentment in every circumstance (Philippians 4:11–13), guards us from the restlessness that leads to ruin. This is not passivity but trust that God's assignment for us is good. Ask each student to name one area of discontent and one step toward embracing their place.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Discontent with our God-given role, season, or limits
- Restlessness as a low erosion of trust and gratitude
- Contentment learned in every circumstance (Philippians 4:11–13)
- Embracing our place as trust in God's good assignment

Discussion Prompts

- Where are you tempted toward discontent with your God-given place?
- How does restlessness erode trust and gratitude?
- What would embracing your place look like this season?

Question 7

Student Question:

Jude cites Sodom and Gomorrah, which “indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire,” as “an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire” (v. 7). What does this teach about God's view of sexual sin and about the reality of judgment, and how do we speak this truth with both honesty and compassion?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Address the third example in verse 7, Sodom and Gomorrah, with both honesty and compassion. Jude says they “indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire” and serve “as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.” Their notorious sin and judgment stand as a public warning. The teacher should not flinch from what the text plainly says: God takes sexual sin seriously, and judgment is real.

Set this in the larger biblical teaching on sexuality. Scripture honors God’s design for sexual expression within the marriage of one man and one woman and treats departures from it as sin, not as cultural preference. At the same time, sexual sin is not singled out as unforgivable; it stands alongside the other sins Jude names. The teacher should avoid both a dismissive softness that empties the warning and a harshness that singles out particular sinners for contempt.

Model speaking truth with compassion. Many in any congregation carry wounds, struggles, or shame in this area. The goal is to uphold God’s standard clearly while extending the same hope of grace and cleansing offered to every sinner (1 Corinthians 6:9–11, “and such were some of you ... but you were washed”). Help students hold conviction and compassion together, refusing to choose between truth and love.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God’s serious view of sexual sin and the reality of judgment (v. 7)
- God’s design for sexuality within the marriage of one man and one woman
- Sexual sin among, not above, other sins (1 Corinthians 6:9–11)
- Speaking truth with compassion, holding conviction and grace together

Discussion Prompts

- What does this example teach about God’s view of sexual sin?
- How do we uphold God’s standard without singling people out for contempt?
- How does the hope of cleansing in Christ shape how we speak of this?

Question 8

Student Question:

Jude describes the false teachers as following “the way of Cain,” “Balaam’s error,” and “Korah’s rebellion” (v. 11), patterns of envy, greed, and rebellion against God’s authority. Which of these well-worn paths, envy, the love of gain, or resistance to God-given authority, most tempts you, and how is Christ calling you to turn from it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question takes the three ancient figures of verse 11, Cain, Balaam, and Korah, and turns them inward. Each represents a well-worn path of sin: Cain, envy and

resentment that leads to violence; Balaam, the love of gain that corrupts; Korah, rebellion against God-given authority. These paths are still well traveled.

Help students identify their own besetting tendency. Most of us lean toward one of these: the envy that resents others' blessing, the greed that bends our integrity for gain, or the rebellion that resists legitimate authority in the home, the church, or society. Naming the specific path is the first step to leaving it.

Move toward repentance and a better way. Each ancient sin has a gospel opposite: contentment and love instead of envy, generosity and integrity instead of greed, humble submission instead of rebellion. Ask each student to name which path tempts them most and one concrete way Christ is calling them to turn from it this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The way of Cain (envy and resentment), Balaam (greed), and Korah (rebellion) (v. 11)
- Identifying one's own besetting tendency
- The gospel opposites: contentment, integrity, humble submission
- Repentance as turning from well-worn paths of sin

Discussion Prompts

- Which path, envy, greed, or rebellion, most tempts you?
- What does that tendency look like in your daily life?
- How is Christ calling you to turn from it this week?

Question 9

Student Question:

Jude's examples make a sobering doctrinal point: those who were once among God's people, even the redeemed nation and the exalted angels, fell and faced judgment. Drawing on the whole of Scripture, why do we teach that a genuine believer can fall away and be lost, contrary to "once saved, always saved," and how does this truth coexist with real assurance and the keeping power of God?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal block of the lesson, and it should give a clear, scriptural account of why we teach that a genuine believer can fall away and be lost, against "once saved, always saved," while showing how this coexists with real assurance. Begin from Jude's own examples and build outward.

Lay out the biblical evidence. Jude's first example is decisive: a people genuinely "saved" by God were "afterward destroyed" for unbelief (v. 5). Paul applies Israel's fall directly to Christians: "let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). Hebrews warns

believers against “an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12) and describes the tragic possibility of those who, having shared in the truth, fall away (Hebrews 6:4–6; 10:26–31). Peter speaks of those who, having escaped the corruption of the world through knowing Christ, are again entangled and end worse than before (2 Peter 2:20–22). Paul tells the Galatians that those seeking justification by law have “fallen away from grace” (Galatians 5:4). The warnings are real and are addressed to believers.

Show why “once saved, always saved” fails to account for this. That doctrine must treat every warning as either hypothetical or as proof the person was never truly saved, emptying the warnings of their force. But Scripture addresses these warnings to real believers and treats apostasy as a genuine danger, not an impossibility. The wilderness generation was really redeemed; the angels really held their position. To deny that the saved can fall is to contradict the very examples Jude gives.

Now guard against the opposite error, anxious insecurity, and show how warning and assurance coexist. Falling away in Scripture is not an accidental slip or a single sin, but a settled turning from Christ in unbelief and unrepentance. The faithful believer who continues in trust and obedience need not live in dread, for God genuinely keeps those who keep themselves in His love (Jude 21, 24; John 10:27–29 describes Christ’s secure keeping of those who follow Him). Assurance rests not on a one-time decision that cannot be undone, but on a living relationship with Christ that is real and ongoing. The warnings are the loving guardrails that keep us walking with Him; they function not to terrify the faithful but to prevent the presumption that destroyed Israel. Help students land in reverent, persevering confidence: secure in Christ as they continue with Him, and sobered against drifting away.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The redeemed who fell as proof that genuine believers can be lost (Jude 5)
- Direct warnings to believers against falling away (1 Corinthians 10:12; Hebrews 3:12; 6:4–6; 2 Peter 2:20–22; Galatians 5:4)
- Why “once saved, always saved” fails to account for these warnings
- Apostasy as a settled turning from Christ, not an accidental slip
- Assurance and perseverance together: God keeps those who keep themselves in His love (Jude 21, 24; John 10:27–29)

Discussion Prompts

- Why do we teach that a genuine believer can fall away?
- How does “once saved, always saved” struggle to handle Jude’s examples?
- How do real warning and real assurance fit together for the faithful?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across these verses. Jude has called you to remember, warned you through three solemn examples, and exposed the ancient paths of rebellion. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through this passage. What is the single truth from Jude 5–11 that you most need to carry into this coming week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone gathers the sobering lesson into one personal takeaway. Because the passage is weighty, help students respond not with fear but with reverent resolve, landing on a truth that strengthens their faithfulness.

Trace the movement of the verses. Jude called his readers to remember, then set three witnesses before them, a redeemed nation, exalted angels, and notorious cities, and then exposed the ancient paths of rebellion in the false teachers. The cumulative message is clear: take God seriously, do not presume, and remain faithful.

Close by uniting sobriety and hope. The warnings are meant to keep us walking closely with the God who keeps us, not to steal our peace. Ask each student to name the one truth from this passage they most need to carry, and one way they will let it deepen their reverence and resolve this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Reverent resolve rather than fear as the right response to warning
- Taking God seriously and refusing presumption
- Warnings as guardrails that keep us close to God
- Carrying one specific, applied truth into the week

Discussion Prompts

- What one truth from this passage do you most need this week?
- How can these warnings deepen your reverence without stealing your peace?
- How is Christ forming you through these verses?