

Jude 1:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Analysis

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Jude now reveals why contending for the faith is necessary: false teachers have infiltrated the church. "Crept in unawares" (Greek *pareisedysan*, παρεισέδυσαν) means to slip in stealthily, infiltrate secretly—these men didn't announce themselves as false teachers but posed as legitimate believers. This echoes Paul's warning about false brothers "secretly brought in" (Galatians 2:4).

The phrase "before of old ordained to this condemnation" (Greek *hoi palai prographphentes eis touto to krima*, οἱ πάλαι προγεγραμμένοι εἰς τοῦτο τὸ κρίμα) has generated debate. Some see predestination to damnation, but more likely it refers to prophetic warnings in Scripture about such people—they fit the pattern of ungodly men long ago written about as facing judgment. Their condemnation was "written beforehand" in Old Testament warnings and apostolic prophecies.

Jude charges them with two heresies:

1. "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness" (Greek *tēn tou theou hēmōn charin metatithentes eis aselgeian*, τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν χάριν

μετατιθέντες εἰς ἀσέλγειαν)—perverting grace into a license for sensual indulgence, antinomianism

2. "denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Greek *ton monon despotēn kai kyrion hēmōn Iēsoun Christon arnoumenoi*, τὸν μόνον δεσπότην καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἀρνούμενοι)—rejecting Christ's absolute authority and deity.

The word "deny" means to disown, refuse to acknowledge—whether explicitly in doctrine or implicitly through lawless living.

Historical Context

The early church faced immediate threats from antinomianism—the belief that grace eliminates all moral obligation. Some misinterpreted Paul's teaching on justification by faith alone to mean Christian behavior doesn't matter. Paul himself anticipated this misunderstanding (Romans 6:1-2, 15). Gnostic teachers claimed special spiritual knowledge elevated them above moral law, leading to either asceticism or licentiousness.

Jude's description of these infiltrators matches first-century patterns. False teachers often gained entrance through friendship, family connections, or claims of prophetic inspiration. Once inside, they subtly undermined foundational doctrines while maintaining Christian vocabulary. Their behavior contradicted their profession—claiming to honor Christ while living in ways that denied His lordship.

The reference to judgment "written beforehand" reflects Jewish understanding that Scripture contains patterns and prophecies applicable to later generations. The Old Testament repeatedly describes ungodly people facing God's judgment (Deuteronomy 13:5, Isaiah 29:15-16). Apostolic warnings about false teachers (Acts 20:29-30, 2 Peter 2:1-3) served as further prophetic writings identifying and condemning such infiltrators.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What contemporary forms of 'turning grace into lasciviousness' threaten the church today?
2. How can churches develop better discernment to recognize false teachers who 'creep in unawares'?
3. In what subtle ways might we deny Christ's lordship while still professing Christian faith?

Interlinear Text

παρεισέδυσαν γάρ τινες ἄνθρωποι τὸν πάλαι
crept in unawares **For** **there are certain** **men** **who** **of old**
G3921 G1063 G5100 G444 G3588 G3819

προγεγραμμένοι εἰς τοῦτο τὸν κρίμα, ἀσεβεῖς τὸν
ordained **into** **this** **who** **condemnation** **ungodly men** **who**
G4270 G1519 G5124 G3588 G2917 G765 G3588

τὸν Θεὸν ἡμῶν χάριν μετατιθέντες εἰς ἀσέλγειαν καὶ
who **God** **of our** **the grace** **turning** **into** **lasciviousness** **and**
G3588 G2316 G2257 G5485 G3346 G1519 G766 G2532

τὸν μόνον δεσπότην Θεὸν καὶ Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν
who **the only** **Lord** **God** **and** **Lord** **of our** **Jesus**
G3588 G3441 G1203 G2316 G2532 G2962 G2257 G2424

Χριστὸν ἀρνούμενοι
Christ **denying**
G5547 G720

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 2:4 (References Jesus): And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

2 Peter 2:10 (Parallel theme): But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

1 John 2:22 (References Jesus): Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

1 Peter 2:16 (References God): As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

1 Peter 2:8 (Parallel theme): And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

2 Timothy 3:6 (Parallel theme): For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

Galatians 5:13 (Parallel theme): For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

2 Peter 3:7 (References God): But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Psalms 62:2 (Parallel theme): He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

Psalms 1:1 (References God): Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.