

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 prographhentes eis touto to krima, oi 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*

μεταπιθέντες 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, tōn mōnōn dēsopótēn kai kúrion h̄mōn Iēsouñ Xrīstōn 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
ordained	into	this	who	condemnation	ungodly men
G4270	G1519	G5124	G3588	G2917	G765
τὸν	Θεὸν	ἡμῶν	χάριν	μετατιθέντες	εἰς
who	God	of our	the grace	turning	into
G3588	G2316	G2257	G5485	G3346	G1519
τὸν	μόνον	δεσπότην	Θεὸν	καὶ	Κύριον
who	the only	Lord	God	and	Lord
G3588	G3441	G1203	G2316	G2532	G2962
τὸν	ἡμῶν	Ἰησοῦν			
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.