

## Crept in Unawares

“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 4)

Jude’s sound of the trumpet was not merely hypothetical; the false teachers were real and present. We are told by teachers of the Greek language, that the phrase “crept in unawares” appears only here in the New Testament. The phrase means that these false teachers had slipped in unnoticed, or secretly. The text shows that they had slipped in secretly with an evil intention.

In extrabiblical Greek the scene “described the cunning craftiness of a lawyer who, through clever argumentation, infiltrated the minds of courtroom officials and corrupted their thinking.” To be sure, there are many false teachers outside the church who teach lies, and promote the lies they teach.

They are deceptive, and they openly proclaim their opposition to Christianity. However, Jude’s concern centered on false teachers who had crept into the church unnoticed – they had infiltrated the fabric of the church. And the results would be devastating.

Jude refers to these false teachers as “certain men.” He names no one – there are no historical records that indicate to whom Jude was referring. However, his point is clear, namely, any and all spiritual pretenders pose a clear and present danger to the church, no matter who they are.

Apostates and apostasy take many forms. Paul warned the Corinthians when defending his apostleship about the many faces of apostasy. “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

Jude may have not revealed the names of the false teachers to us, but his readers knew who the apostates were and what they taught. Jude warned his readers to be on their guard against these false teachers. In the same way, today’s church must also be aware that similar heretics still threaten the church today.

Paul said to the church at Rome, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).

Jerry W. Arnold  
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