


- 1  **Studies from John MacArthur's "Truth War"**
Study #1

"An Unpopular Exhortation"

Jude 1-7

- 2  **Jude 3 & 4**

■ v. 3 - *"Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write to urge you to contend for the truth that was once for all entrusted to the saints."*

■ v. 4 - *For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord."*

- 3  **Jude's message is a "bitter pill" for today's Christian to swallow**

■ "We are living in a generation when many so-called Christians have no taste for conflict and contention."
- John MacArthur

- 4  **Wolves in Sheep's Clothing**

■ In verse 4 of his epistle, Jude specifically mentions certain false teachers who had "secretly slipped in" among true Christians in the church

- 5  **False teachers who have "slipped into" today's evangelical church**

■ Rob and Kristen Bell

- 6  **Christianity Today Article about the Emerging Church Movement**

■ Rob & Kristen Bell - "... found themselves increasingly uncomfortable with the church. 'Life in the church had become so small,' Kristen says. 'It had worked for me for a long time. Then it stopped working.' The Bells started questioning their assumptions about the Bible itself - 'discovering the Bible as a human product,' as Rob puts it, rather than the product of divine fiat. 'The Bible is still at the center for us,' Rob says, 'but it's a different kind of center. We want to embrace mystery, rather than conquer it.' 'I grew up thinking that we've figured out the Bible,' Kristen says, 'that we knew what it means. Now I have no idea what most of it means. And yet I feel like life is big again - like life used to be black and white, and now it's in color.'"

Article by Andy Crouch in Christianity Today,

Nov. 2004, pp. 37-38

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■ "One dominant theme pervades the whole article: in the Emerging Church movement, truth (to whatever degree such a concept is even recognized) is assumed to be inherently hazy, indistinct, and uncertain - perhaps even ultimately unknowable."
- John MacArthur

- 8  **"Postmodernism"**

■ "... a wholesale overhaul in the way people think about truth itself." - John MacArthur

■ The term "Postmodern" is meant to imply that what was previously considered to be the answer to man's quest for the truth [i.e. "Modernism"] has now been found unsatisfactory and that "Postmodernism" has moved on beyond it.

■ "Modernism" - glorified human reason, discounted the idea of the supernatural, looked to scientific and rationalistic explanations

■ Postmodernism represents "... a tendency to dismiss the possibility of any sure and settled knowledge of the truth."

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■ When the Bells express their uncertainty about the Bible and its meaning, this mindset of skepticism and doubt eventually extends to all of the foundational pillars of the historical Christian faith:

- the reliability of Scripture and its divine inspiration, authority, inerrancy, sufficiency, and perspicuity (or clarity)
- the deity of Christ
- the concept of justification by faith in the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ on the cross
- the plain teaching of Scripture concerning what is evil and sinful
- the very nature of God is “up for grabs” according to this way of thinking!

10  **Brian McLaren**

- “I don’t think we’ve got the gospel right yet : I don’t think the liberals have it right. But I don’t think we have it right either. None of us has arrived at orthodoxy.” [Quoted in the Christianity Today article]

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- “I don’t believe making disciples must equal making adherents to the Christian religion. ... It may be advisable in many (not all!) circumstances to help people become followers of Jesus and remain within their Buddhist, Hindu, or Jewish contexts.” [page 263 in his book, “A Generous Orthodoxy”]

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- “Although I don’t hope all Buddhists will become (cultural) Christians, I do hope all who feel so called will become Buddhist followers of Jesus; I believe they should be given that opportunity and invitation. I don’t hope all Jews or Hindus will become members of the Christian religion. But I do hope all who feel so called will become Jewish or Hindu followers of Jesus.” - [McLaren, *ibid*, p. 264]

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- ‘*Ultimately, I hope that Jesus will save Buddhism, Islam and every other religion, including the Christian religion, which often seems to need saving about as much as any other religion does. (In this context, I do wish all Christians would become followers of Jesus, but perhaps this is too much to ask. After all, I’m not doing such a hot job of it myself.)*’ - [*ibid*, p. 264]

14  **McLaren’s utter disregard for sound Gospel doctrine**

- “... ‘getting it right’ is beside the point: the point is ‘being and doing good’ as followers of Jesus in our unique time and place, fitting in with the ongoing story of God’s saving love for planet earth.”
- “Our message and methodology have changed, do change, and must change if we are faithful to the ongoing and unchanging mission of Jesus Christ.”

15  **Regarding The Substitutionary Atonement of Christ**

- “(It) just sounds like one more injustice in the cosmic equation. It sounds like divine child abuse. You know?”
- [Here, McLaren is following Steve Chalke, who, in his book, “The Lost Message of Jesus,” p. 182, refers to the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ as “twisted,” “morally dubious,” and “a form of cosmic child abuse.”]

16  **Tony Campolo**

- “My purpose in writing the book was to communicate loud and clear that I felt evangelical

Christianity had been hijacked. When did it become anti-feminist? When did evangelical Christianity become anti-gay? When did it become supportive of capital punishment? Pro-war? When did it become negative toward other religious groups?"

17 ☐ ***On the subject of homosexuality***

- MacArthur quotes Brian McLaren - the Emerging Church leader, as saying that he is not sure "what we should think about homosexuality." MacArthur says, "He called for a five-year moratorium on making any pronouncements about whether homosexuality is sin or not. 'In five years, if we have clarity, we'll speak,' he said. 'If not, we'll set another five years for ongoing reflection.'"

18 ☐ ***False teachers in the Anglican Church***

- "An Anglican committee commissioned to study the morality of extramarital sex suggested that the church should stop its opposition to cohabitation between unwed adults and regard the practice as 'a new path from the single state to the married one.'" [An article in the Times of London, by Ruth Gledhill [March 31, 2003], titled "Church Told to Rethink Bar on Sex Before Marriage.]"

19 ☐ ***Chris Seay***

- In his book ["Faith of My Fathers"], he says he believes traditional churches have made too much of the sin of homosexuality and have thereby wrongly excluded homosexuals from their fellowship. He says he wants practicing homosexuals [i.e. those living in deliberate sin] to feel right at home in his congregation (pp. 133-138).

20 ☐ ***Secular writers prefer Emerging Church Theology***

- "What makes a postmodern ministry so easy to embrace is that it doesn't demonize youth culture - Marilyn Manson, 'South park,' or gangsta rap, for example - like traditional fundamentalists. Postmodern congregants aren't challenged to reject the outside world." [Lori Leibovich, Mother Jones, July-August 1998].

21 ☐ ***Why it is necessary to contend for the truth***

■ **What is truth?**

- Ultimately, the definition of truth itself flows from God!!! In other words, truth, in the absolute sense is theological!!!
- The O.T. refers to the Almighty God of Creation as the "God of truth" [Deut. 32:4; Psa. 31:5; Isa. 65:16]
- Jesus said: "I am ... the truth" [Jn. 14:6] - thus making the claim that He Himself is the embodiment (the incarnation) of truth, thereby making the profound claim of His deity!
- John 17:17 says: "Sanctify them by Your truth, Your word is truth."

22 ☐ ***Note the implications of these claims:***

- All truth must ultimately be defined in terms of God; He is the source of all that exists, and therefore, the meaning of life and existence.
- As MacArthur puts it: "God has revealed Himself to humanity through Scripture and through His Son. Both perfectly embody the essence of what is true."
- "... historically and collectively, Christians have always been in full agreement that whatever is true - whatever is objectively and ontologically true - is true whether any given individual understands it, likes it, or receives it as truth. In other words, because reality is created and truth is defined by God, what is really true is true for everyone, regardless of anyone's personal perspective or individual preferences."
John MacArthur

23 ☐ ***It is, therefore, necessary to contend for the truth because:***

- Because truth is the only thing that can liberate people from the bondage of sin and give them eternal life [John 8:32 & 14:6; Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:13-14; I Cor. 1:21].
- Because false teaching [i.e. apostate religion] actually "intensifies sin's bondage," "multiplies sin's pollutions." and "magnifies sin's consequences," i.e. it makes the calamity of sin worse than ever." [Jude 4; Jn. 3:17-19; II Pet. 3:3 & 2:18-19]
- Because Scripture reveals the reality of an unavoidable cosmic conflict between truth and

error, between Good and evil, and that no one is exempt from this battle! [Jude 6, 14, 11, 14-15, 7, 11; Eph. 6:12; II Cor. 10:3-5 & 11:13-15].

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Acts 20:28-31 (NIV) Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.