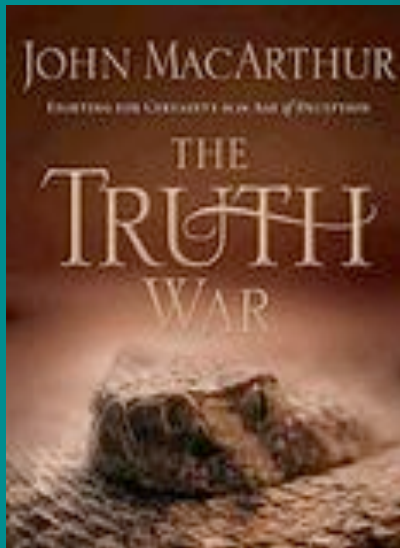


Studies on MacArthur's "Truth War"
Study #2

“The Great Apostasy”
Jude 3-4 & 17-25



“Why I’m Not Emerging”
James MacDonald



- “Let me begin with a word of personal appreciation for the current leaders of the emerging church movement. I am deeply grateful for your courage in standing against the many shortcomings of the modern western church. Thanks for insisting that authenticity in relationship is the foundation of genuine Christian community. Thanks for standing against the formulaic/instant Gospel which fills our churches with tares and insulates the human heart from a genuine transformational encounter with the living Christ. Thanks also for daring to believe that failure is not final and that Christ yet longs for His bride to function with the health and wholeness He created it to enjoy.”

- “History is replete with proof that those most articulate about our shortcomings are often least able to bring balanced, objective solutions. I resonate deeply with much of the criticism flowing from the emergent church against current western Christianity, but I am deeply grieved to see the emergent remedies accepted so uncritically by those who feel gratified by the accuracy of their critiques. **Knowing the soup is bad does not make one a chef.** If successful diagnosis was a license to treat the patient every lab technician would be a surgeon ... scary.”

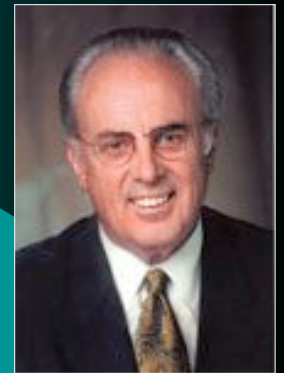


- “Cavalier questioning of the explicit statements of Scripture regarding the necessity of the new birth, the priority of biblical proclamation or the binding authority and sufficiency of Scripture cannot build a stronger, more Christ-honoring church no matter how sincere the messengers. Critiquing the church is good, disregarding or diminishing the revealed truth of our Founder is not good, no matter how ‘nice’ the people are who do it.”

How are people affected by apostasy?

[insights taken from MacArthur's book!]

- The most distinguishable characteristic of apostate people is the **lack of discernment!**
- **Discernment** has been defined as **the ability to differentiate between God's thoughts and God's ways and all others.**
- "... evangelicals (once known for a very prudent and biblical approach to doctrine) are fast becoming as doctrinally clueless as the unchurched people they are so keen to please. At least three decades of deliberately downplaying doctrine and discernment in order to attract the unchurched ..." [i.e. the **"seeker sensitive"** movement] "... has filled many once-sound churches with people who utterly lack any ability to differentiate the very worst doctrines from truth." - **John MacArthur**

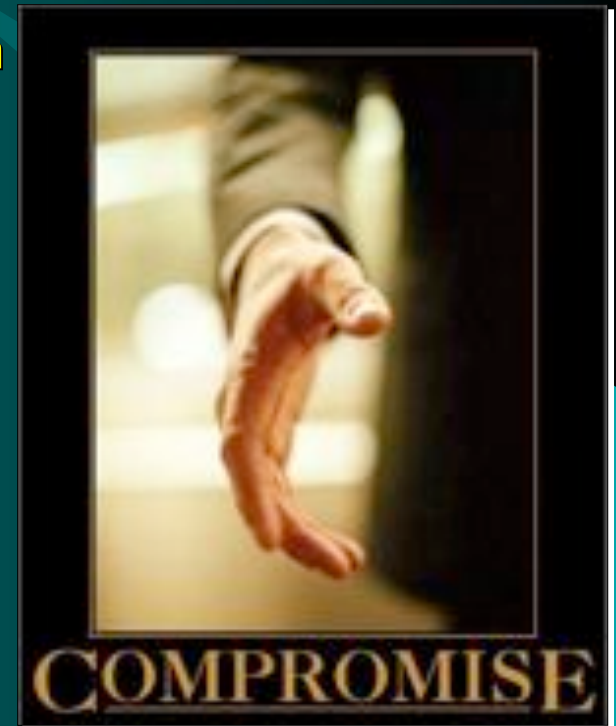


- An extreme and unbiblical form of tolerance has been promoted by the entertainment media for the last 30 years.
- This unbiblical attitude of extreme and excessive tolerance found its way into the evangelical movement in the form of postmodern relativism.
- I Cor. 13:6 says real love “*does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.*”



The absence of discernment leads to compromise!

- “In recent years, evangelicals have embraced compromise as a tool for church growth, a platform for unity, and even a test for spirituality.” - MacArthur [“Lack of discernment” and “compromise” are actually viewed as virtues!]
- Isa. 5:20 *“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.”*
- Jas. 4:4 *“You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”*



The pathway to discernment is spiritual maturity

- ***“To prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ [the church] may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of fullness of Christ.***
- ***“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ.”** - Eph. 4:12-15*



- ***“... though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God.”***

- Hebrews 5:12-6:1

Spiritual maturity and discernment go hand in hand according to the Bible!

- **“Teach me good discernment and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments”** - Psalm 119:66 (NASB).
- **“Make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; for if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver, and search for her as hidden treasures; then you will discern the fear of the LORD, and discover the knowledge of God”** - Proverbs 2:2-5 (NASB).”
- **“On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found”** - Proverbs 10:13 (NASB).



Three kinds [categories] of people who are adversely affected by apostasy [Jude 22-23]

- ***“Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear - hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.”***



The confused



- These are the “**doubters**”! - They have been exposed to false teaching, and it has shaken their confidence in the truth.
- At this point, these individuals may not yet be fully committed to the truth of the Gospel in saving faith. Or, they could be very young Christians, or Christians who are very weak in their faith.

- Jude's instructions for our response to such individuals is "Be merciful" to them!"
- "Churches today are filled with people like that. They drift from church to church. They are often more concerned about whether they like the music than they are about whether they are hearing the truth. They are usually absorbed in religion for self-centered reasons. They want a better life. They are "recovering" sinners looking for fellowship. They are therefore susceptible to anyone who promises to meet their 'felt needs.' They are the first-line victims of false religion." - [John MacArthur's comments about this category of people.]

The Convicted



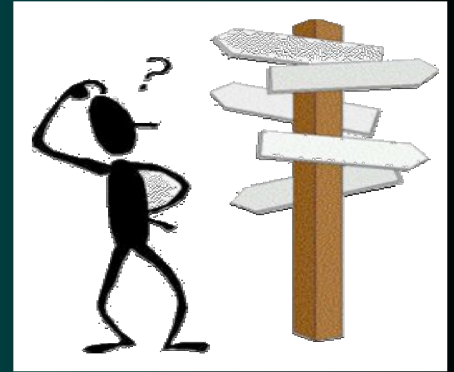
- Jude tells us that this category of people must be snatched from the fire! This means that they are already in the fire! They have already bought into the lie!
- The Word of God here “pictures apostasy as a burning, destructive, potentially lethal conflagration.”
- Something more than “being merciful” is needed here; **we are instructed to go after them in a very aggressive manner, as in a rescue operation, to try to snatch them out of the fire.**
- “Snatching them from the fire” means giving them the truth!

The Committed



- ***“... to others show mercy, mixed with fear - hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.”***
- **The essential message here is a warning that when you endeavor to show mercy to this category of people, you need to be very careful not to risk being defiled by their corruption.**
- **“The expression Jude employs is shocking. It is as course as any expression in Scripture. Jude uses a Greek word for ‘garment’ [NIV ‘clothing’] that signifies underwear and a word for ‘polluted’ that means ‘Stained in a filthy manner; spotted and stained by bodily functions.’ He is comparing the defilement of false teaching to soiled underwear.” ... “Therefore, Jude says, we should no more risk being defiled by apostasy that we would want to clasp someone’s filthy, stained underwear close to ourselves.”**

Conclusion



- **We are living in a society which is full of spiritual dangers!**
- **There are churches in the realm of evangelical Christianity which are beginning to show their willingness to abandon even the most essential doctrines of the Christian Gospel.**
- **Others, have adopted a philosophy of church growth which rejects the need for discernment and truth [even attacks Christians who hold clear doctrinal views and labels them as obstinate, contentious, and unloving] and applauds extreme tolerance!**
- **We are called to minister mercy to such people by speaking the truth to them.**
- **We are to protect ourselves by “building ourselves up” and becoming mature in the faith, able to discern error and expose it.**