

Counterfeit Faith

The world today is filled with the many false teachers Jesus, Jude and the Apostles warned us about. They predicted that these end times would be the age of deceit. Those deceivers would concoct carefully designed false religion along with twisted and counterfeit precepts and doctrines claiming the authority of the Holy Bible. As is now very evident, they even fashion counterfeit gospels and many a counterfeit Jesus, as well as other seemingly attractive gods.

They fill receptive trusting, but biblically ignorant hearts with wheel barrels full of legitimate looking but worthless counterfeit nuggets of fool's gold which they are told will set them right with God. Those who actual chose and want to have the Christian faith are no less deceived by these agents of spiritual death. Unless those who choose Jesus and seek to know who He really is through His Autobiography, they are very susceptible to these peddlers of counterfeit Jesuses, and this can only lead to a counterfeit faith.

Satan has had thousands of years of experience observing man and perfecting ways to deceive even the more discerning. Right after the success of his very first deception, that of Eve, he trained his hordes of demons, with their impressive but limited supernatural powers, to become counterfeit gods, to carry out his evil mission of leading people away from the true God by giving them gods whose messages were more to their liking. Thus the world was given idols, many varieties, through which the demons minister. These remain effective today in their evolved forms fashioned to better satisfy "modern man." To the aspiring Christian, there has been given a great variety of counterfeit Jesuses by means of which the false teachers tragically mislead gullible souls. A Jesus who was not of a virgin birth; a Jesus who didn't actually rise from the dead; a Jesus who isn't God; a Jesus who paid only a portion of the price for our sins; a Jesus who is but one of a number of deities; a Jesus who provides one of several ways to heaven; and a Jesus who is actually the brother of Satan, thus providing the Ying to counterbalance the Yang as

the two opposing forces who maintain equilibrium in this world of the flesh. Have I omitted any? There are more counterfeit Jesuses available to believe in than old Howard Johnson had as kinds of ice cream with his 28 flavors. There is a Jesus who has just the right flavor for every pleasant, fashionable but perverted belief system Satan could devise, and to which fallen man might be attracted too. Take your pick; one is as good as the other. Follow any of them; they will each take you to the same place, Hell. Some of these more modern Jesuses are wonderfully packaged and promoted in the best style Madison Avenue can provide. See their promoters on T.V.; hear them on the radio, and from many pulpits.

Perhaps the most insidious of all hell assuring Jesuses is the half-Jesus. This is the Jesus represented most effectively from within what is euphemistically called the evangelical Christian church, regardless of its denomination. Here we find the real Jesus, but rarely is more than half of Him presented. Only the part we learn about of Him, is, He who was the Good Shepherd, the One who turned the other cheek, who loved children, and who gave wonderful advice to live by. This half- Jesus healed the sick, and did many wonderful acts of charity. He explained what forgiveness should be and how love was the greatest of virtues. He even demonstrated how a thief, a professional sinner could be saved moments before death by a simple confession of faith. How wonderful, wise, and loving this Son of God is depicted, and all of it is true. But what about the other half of Him the half that most pastors and evangelicals avoid mentioning because, while it might convict them, and lead them to a saving faith, the resulting call to serious accountability would offend and send people away, emptying the pews. What about the Jesus who demands repentance, obedience and compliance with his Word? The whole of Scripture was provided for our learning and guidance not just the pleasant parts. What about the Jesus who will sit in stern judgment and send all non-believers into the eternal lake of fire. What about the Jesus who will, in the last days descend from heaven, and is spoken of by Isaiah in chapter 63 verses 1-4, as having wages war at Bozrah killing millions? He left the battle with His vesture badly stained with their blood (Revelation 19:11-13). He isn't all Mr. Nice Guy from the human perspective. And who ever hears about Him as

Judge and Executioner of those who refuse the divine and just offer He made on the cross?

The true Jesus is both Lord and Savior. He cannot be one and not also be the other. He must be both to every saved soul. A half-Jesus is no Jesus, if you claim to worship Jesus but only know of His Savior part, you may be dealing with a counterfeits, and your profession of faith may not include the possession of a saving faith. Really know whom you believe in, who you worship. Study His word carefully so you can discern with absolute assurance, the real from the counterfeit. Learn of and accept the Lord portion of Jesus in your life.

After World War I the German currency, the Reich mark was so inflated as to be nearly worthless. It has been said that it took a wheel barrel full of this paper currency just to buy a loaf of bread, providing there was a baker who had bread and was willing to exchange it for that nearly worthless paper. One might say, for the sake of comparison, the worth of one mark was equal in value to that of a single mustard seed. It's not likely that anyone would bother to counterfeit such useless money, but suppose someone did and that that wheel barrel was full of authentic looking, but nevertheless counterfeit money. Would it have still been acceptable to the baker? Probably, because he would not know the difference nor suspect that it was not the real thing. How many of us can tell the difference between carefully crafted counterfeit, twenty-dollar bill and a real one? Many such counterfeits have circulated for quite a while escaping detection, even passing through bank screening only to be detected at a central bank or at the treasury.

So what is the point of this? It is simply an attempt to demonstrate by analogy how a professor of a redeeming faith, unknowingly to him or herself or even to others might not be a possessor of that faith. Let us say that person has a "wheel barrel" full of faith, instead of Reich marks, and he or she comes to our divine Heavenly Father, the Great Baker who dispense the bread of life, that precious grace of salvation. He examines that wheelbarrow full of faith, and sees that every "banknote" is a counterfeit. Will the seeker receive the bread of eternal life? Certainly not! Now suppose another comes to Him with a convicted and repented heart and has a wheel barrel completely empty, except for one tiny bit of genuine faith, but only as big as a "mustard seed". What happens?

Why the divine Baker will, with great pleasure, give him what he seeks, that divine bread of life! What a wonderful God we have! At the point of God's acknowledgement of the reality of one's faith, it is not the size but rather the genuineness that matters initially, because with the aid of the Holy Spirit, that faith will surely grow and become all God wants it to be. The great danger is that that speck of faith might also be counterfeit, which means of course no bread! But will the seeker know this? Probably not! Because he or she has presented a counterfeit faith to our Creator believing that it's genuine. They most likely don't even know about the existence of counterfeit faiths and even if they do, are they sufficiently versed in God's truth about the matter to recognize the more "perfect" counterfeits? They have most likely been fed by those who themselves cannot recognize the counterfeit nature of their beliefs. This has led many down the sterile trail of false belief, to a counterfeit faith, so genuinely looking that only God can discern the difference. Being absent true Scriptural knowledge they have no reason to question what they were led to believe. So they are stuck with it right down to the tragic end. The longer they continue to hear "Christian lite" sermons or half-gospels which seem to validate and never challenge their belief, the more deep-rooted such a false belief becomes. After a while, only anger and indignation will be the greeting to anyone who seeks to set them straight. For them, to study the Bible and see what Christian "heavy," that is Christian truth, might be all about, is an absurd waste of time, because they believe already they know all they need to know. Haven't those who "converted" them, told them. So? Haven't their "handlers" kept them fed with what they claim to be the bread of life? The truth is that instead of the genuine bread of life it is the leaven-loaded loaf of apostasy, which will puff up the soul unto death.

Does anyone wonder about the genuineness of one's faith? Probably many do, and those who do, will be the least likely to have a counterfeit faith. For they probably have searched the Scripture, prayed for evidence, and sought with eagerness, the precious relationship with our Lord and Savior. I believe that it is many of those who are absolutely sure they have it, never questioning it, and who go about their lives without ever even thinking about it, may be in the greatest danger. They are those who claim that Scripture commands us to know we are saved and therefore we are wrong to ever even

question it. To be certain of our salvation is indeed a command. But it should come about as a result deep introspective prayer, and genuine knowledge of His Word. Certainly some may rightly know, and know immediately when it occurs. How blessed they are! But perhaps a word of caution is appropriate here. As has been expounded on ad nauseum, here and in several of my other essays, Satan's diabolical cleverness as a deceiver can produce counterfeits so near perfect that even the most astute can be fooled. Combine his abilities with the human heart which is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9) and you have all the ingredients needed for an incredibly convincing yet false conclusion regarding the most urgent and important of all possible matters. I don't believe that it's any violation of God's command to occasionally feel that we need to stop and re-examine the sincerity and legitimacy of our faith. Even the highly blessed and exceedingly fruitful of Christ's disciples, Charles Hadden Spurgeon admitted that he even found it necessary to occasionally question and reassure himself as to the genuineness of his faith.

As the theme of many of these essays indicate, my heart aches for those who don't know Jesus, for those who are unsaved but believed they are saved. However, my more specific focus of concern is for the many who profess the Christian faith, but do not possess the grace of salvation, because they don't even know what they don't know regarding that which would allow them to recognize the clear evidence of a saving faith. Because of this, for many reasons described above, they spend their lives in "blissful" ignorance presuming they do belong to Jesus. How do I know? Who am I to judge another's faith? Of course, I cannot judge another's faith, only God can. But evidence abounds to even the half-discerning eye, that such is the case with a large majority of professing Christians. This particular comment is sparked by a recent Barna poll of people calling themselves born-again Christians. The poll indicates that of those who responded, only 17% believe that salvation is by grace without works; only 25% pray, attend church, and read the Bible; only 37% are convinced that Jesus did not sin, and only 24% are certain that Satan is a real spiritual being. David Kinnaman who directed the most recent poll said, "*Americans hold few convictions about their faith. For instance, even among those who disagree about orthodox views, many do so while hedging their*

bets. Most Americans have one foot in the biblical camp and one foot outside. They say they are committed, but to what? They are spiritually active, but to what end? The spiritual profile of American Christianity is not unlike a lukewarm church that the Bible warns about.” (Barna Annual Tracking Study .org (May 21, 2007).

What does the result of the poll reek with? A wide spread abject ignorance or rejection of Biblical truth. Would your response to the poll have been included in these percentages? I pray not! Can there be a mustard sized seed amount of genuine faith in the hearts of very many of these professing Christians? I pray so, but I fear many will be shocked and terrified on judgment day.

Once again, I pray that if the reader considers himself or herself to be a redeemed Christian, each will take heed to what I have tried to communicate and will also choose to examine their individual beliefs in the context of the poll. How tragic it would be to complete one's life believing one is saved, where one's faith is a cleverly disguised worthless counterfeit, which cannot affect redemption.