

Counterfeit Faiths

By Ron Boatwright

A counterfeit is made to resemble the genuine in many ways, but the resemblance does not make it genuine. Counterfeits are illegal, useless and worthless. Making and using counterfeit money will land one into a Federal prison. Even more serious are the many counterfeit faiths in the world today that are deceiving so many people. Counterfeit faiths will cause many good people to lose their souls in the eternal fires of Hell, even though they may be sincere in what they are doing. We are to, "Let no man deceive you by any means" (2 Thessalonians 2:3), because our souls are at stake. Jesus warns us to, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing" (Matthew 7:15). Those who promote counterfeit faiths appear as though they are presenting the truth. People do this by "walking in craftiness" and "handling the word of God deceitfully" (2 Corinthians 4:2).

We are exhorted, "That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting" (Ephesians 4:14). Many people are following false teachers. "For such are false prophets, deceitful workers...For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness" (2 Corinthians 11:13). Satan does not appear in a red suit with a pitchfork in his hand, but as a well-dressed smooth talking denominational preacher promoting his counterfeit faith. They have, "changed the truth of God into a lie" (Romans 1:25). But the sad thing is he is even standing in some of the pulpits of the churches of Christ today. These false teachers are trying to deceive the Lord's church and are being successful. We are told, "Also from among yourselves men will rise up speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:30).

Satan tempts people to take short cuts around God's will and to subvert it. Many times a partial truth is more dangerous than a total lie. Trickery, deceit, and deceptions of all kinds are used to make others believe their self-made counterfeit faith is divine truth. This is done by perverting the word of God. This was even happening in the first century AD. Paul says, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-8). There are many

false prophets who pretend to be God's spokesman in promoting their counterfeit faiths by exploiting people with their counterfeit arguments such as "faith only salvation" and "once saved, always saved". All counterfeit faiths have their origin with Satan.

God's word says, "There is **one body** and one spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, **one faith**, one baptism; **one God** and Father of all" (Ephesians 4:4-6). This scripture says there is only one true God, even though there are many counterfeit gods in our world. This scripture says there is only one true faith even though there are many counterfeit faiths in the world today. This scripture also says there is only one body, which is the one true church of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23, Romans 16:16), even though there are many counterfeit churches today. Even by their names they wear they don't even claim to be the Lord's one true faith and church. Today we regularly hear, "Attend the church of your choice". Why not attend the church of God's choice, the only church He established? The reason many people today do not believe in Jesus is because of the many confusing counterfeit faiths. Jesus in His prayer to God prays for those who believe in Him, "that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:21). For the world to believe they must see one united true church which is following one true faith.

We are warned to, "beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked" (2 Peter 3:17). How do we protect ourselves from these counterfeit faiths? "Beloved do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). We are to try what one is teaching by the written word of God. And "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him: for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds" (2 John 10-11). We also become guilty of sin, if we encourage or help any one in any way who is promoting a counterfeit faith. But we are to, "Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). The one true faith has been once delivered and it will not change. Counterfeit faiths are designed to cause people to be lost. All those who follow any of the many counterfeit faiths will lose their souls in eternity.