

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Any Counterfeiters Around?

(Jerry Fite)

Oh yes, there are those making fake 20, 50 and 100-dollar bills, and passing them off daily. Sure, there are those selling “look alike merchandise,” from expensive watches to trendy sneakers, and marketing them as the genuine article. No doubt about it, in the capitalistic world of buying and selling for profit, counterfeiters seek their fortune through deception and fraud. If something is of value, you can be assured that there will be a false look alike not far off stage ready to enter and deceive.

While it is readily admitted that counterfeiters are at work in the secular world, few ever have their consciousness raised to be alarmed of counterfeiters in the spiritual realm. But the Bible identifies many counterfeit things existing, and if not identified, they will harm us eternally.

The Bible speaks of *counterfeit prophets*. Jesus says, “beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15). Does this sound like every spokesman for God is a true prophet? If we acknowledge with Jesus that there are “false

prophets,” can we pass them off as being harmless and benign when Jesus calls them “ravening wolves?”

Peter warns us of *counterfeit or false teachers* who “privily bring in destructive heresies, denying the Master that bought them...” (2 Peter 2:1). They are teaching an “easy religion.” You can live like you want and continue to satisfy the desires of the fleshly mind (2 Peter 2:18). These teachers are offering a counterfeit religion. They are promising “liberty,” when really, they are “bondservants of corruption” (2 Peter 2:19).

Were these false teachers harmless? Those following the teachings of such counterfeiters fall into a spiritual state before God that has “become worse with them than the first” (2 Peter 2:20). Like a dog returning to his vomit, and the sow returning to the wallowing in the mire, the once cleansed Christian returns to his old ways of sin. Spiritual death, or separation from God, continues to be the wage of sin, regardless of how many counterfeit teachers claim otherwise (Romans 6:23). We have the freedom to choose our Masters: Christ or Sin. If we

choose Christ, we must put to death the old man of sin (Colossians 3:1-9), and put on the new man created in the image of Christ (Colossians 3:10-14). There is no genuine “easy-do-what-I-want Christian religion.”

Paul warns us of a *counterfeit gospel*. He speaks of “another gospel” which really is not another gospel, “only there are some who trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:7). The only gospel that can be trusted is the gospel preached by Paul (Galatians 1:8-9). Men may try to be righteous according to their own standard of “think-so’s” and “I feel like,” but the only standard that makes us right before God is the gospel of Christ. For in this genuine message, the “righteousness of God” is revealed (Romans 1:16-17).

Be on guard! There are spiritual counterfeiters around. Take the true gospel of Christ revealed in the New Testament, and “prove all things; hold fast to that which is good (I Thessalonians 5:21-22). To not do so, is naïve and spiritually irresponsible. Your soul is at stake!