

Counterfeits

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[0:00] Is it real or false?

Is it real or false? Let me feel it. Is it real or is it a counterfeit?

Now there's some counterfeit money circulating in Australia today. An important question, is it real or is it false? When it comes to money, it's important to discern the true from the false in spiritual things too.

Today I want to address the subject of what I believe to be a serious latter day concern.

Counterfeits. Counterfeits. I believe we are living in a time of great religious deception.

I want to warn you in love to be vigilant as our Lord forewarned us to be. The church has lost its strength because of a weakening process and a white-washing that is going on, that is happening across the church of God worldwide.

[1:18] So we need to, as Revelation 3 verse 2, as the Spirit says to His church in Revelation 3 verse 2, it says, Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die.

Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die. The Spirit of God said that to the church at Sardis. We must be watchful and search out the truth and strengthen the church in these days we live in.

We must be one of the churches that are part of God's faithful church on the planet. And the book of Revelation tells of a time of telling signs of the end of the age.

As a woman called Mystery Babylon the Great. We read of her in Revelation chapter 17. If you'd like to turn there. Revelation chapter 17.

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials and talked with me saying unto me, Come hither and I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication.

[2:31] And the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness. And here we see, I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast full of names of blasphemy having seven heads and ten horns.

And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast. And verse 5. And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.

And verse 6. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her I wondered with great admiration.

We know through history we see many martyrs, many saints of God have been slaughtered. Verse 1 it says that this woman, this whore is the great whore.

[3:42] The great whore. Great. In other words powerful. She is powerful. Revelation in chapter 19 compares God's people, Israel, alike to a bride.

The woman of Revelation 17 is a counterfeit of God's people. A counterfeit, the devil's substitute people is the devil's counterfeit church.

In verse 1 it says that she sits on many waters. Verse 15 explains this to me that this church, this woman has sway over many nations.

This church has a dominion worldwide in its range. Verse 4 it says that she is adorned attractively. She is wealthy. She is arrayed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls and holding a golden cup in her hand.

And on closer examination we see that this golden cup is filled up with abominations, impurities and immoralities. And in verse 9 we see another clue as to this woman, as to where she comes from.

[4:58] She is located in a place of seven mountains. Revelation 17 verse 9, the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth.

The city of Rome is called the city of seven hills. The city of Rome is such a place, a city with seven mountains.

And it's a fact that the Vatican is the biggest financial power, wealth accumulator and property owner on planet earth today. They can't compute the billions that she is worth and the billions annually that she takes in.

The great whore is wealthy. And so is the Roman Catholic Church. This sad fact is that much of its wealth was acquired through the confiscation of the property of the pitiful victims of the Inquisition. Even if you died of natural causes, they dug your body up so they could make a mock trial and a burning of your bones so that then they could assume what wealth was in your estate and confiscate it from those that have inherited it.

[6:14] Rome is wealthy. I believe we are witnessing a rapidly approaching world order with a fusion of governmental and religious authority.

All roads lead to Rome. False religion today reaches broadly across many world leaders and influential people.

The reach is global. It's a fact that the popes down through history have long claimed dominion over the world and its peoples. Actually I don't like to call him Pope.

Because the Bible says call no man Father. And Pope means Father. He claims the title of God, Holy Father. What a mockery. Why unto him.

This one world religious system of the Revelation 17, the woman, is carried by the one world government, the beast. And they both have world domination.

[7:11] Men of God down through the ages have long recognised the great mother harlot as Rome and the Romish church. And she is seen here in Revelation 17 in all her glory, in all her true colours.

Scarlet and purple. Scarlet and purple. The colours of the Roman Catholic clergy. And in verse 5 we notice that she is called the mother of harlots.

The mother of harlots. We can discern that her harlot daughters are other organised churches who are allied and joined together with the mother church of Rome.

And this is what we are seeing. This unholy union. And I believe we are seeing clear evidence of this unholy union at work today. The World Council of Churches.

The World Council of Churches at its founding in 1948 adopted as its slogan, One Church for One World. One Church for One World.

[8:14] And the World Council of Churches has listed among its members many churches worldwide. Including various Australian churches. Such as the Anglican Church of Australia.

Churches of Christ in Australia. The Greek Orthodox Church. The Lutheran Church of Australia. The Religious Society of France. The Quakers. The Roman Catholic Church.

The Salvation Army in Australia. The Uniting Church in Australia. And associate members include the Baptist Union of Australia. And the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

Some will perhaps question, why does this, our church, identify as independent Baptist?

Independent. Some mistakenly think that that's because we're some breakaway splinter group from some other body.

No. This church fellowship of ours, alike to many worldwide, of like faith, is independent from an ecumenical hierarchical organisation.

[9:18] Or any such bodies or ecumenical Baptist churches. We are independent as historically God's people were so gathered down through history. Not in some hierarchical man-made institution.

But in locally constituted, self-governing, biblical churches. With our allegiance not to the councils of men, or so-called popes, but to the word of God.

As the foundation, the foundation of our faith and practice. So, in other words, we do not join arms with liberal churches of whatever persuasion, including the Baptist Union of Australia.

As much as there's many good, godly men and women in such churches. Sadly, we do not join party with them because of the faulty foundation. I put it to you that the ecumenical movement and many churches and parachurch interdenominational movements today are acting in accord with the

great whore of Revelation 17.

They've got that same mindset, that same global, liberal, astray from the Bible approach.

Ecumenical means to establish worldwide.

[10:32] It's the same global agenda of the great whore of Revelation 17. So, as a church, prayerfully, we're determined not to participate in what is called the ecumenical movement.

Because to join with that is to ally ourselves with that which is doubtful, potentially doctrines of devils. And it's a counterfeit unity. Now, there's a local ecumenical council in our fair city here. An ecumenical council, and they join in joint projects. Some various doubtful religious bodies are a part of this religious council that meets in Elizabeth.

Including the Seventh-day Adventist Church, for example. Now, Seventh-day Adventism is a dangerous and deceptive false religion.

Seventh-day Adventism is a cult. It was founded by a deceived woman who thought herself a prophet, and it reveres her extra-biblical writings as scripture.

[11:36] The Seventh-day Adventists teach a works-based salvation. They are saved not by grace, through faith, but they believe by works, and by their keeping their salvation by their works.

One of the core tenets of their faith is to accept the writings of Ellen White, the false prophetess. She's been seen to be false in her prophecies.

I can go into the details for those that wish it. And they consider her writings, quote, a continuing and authoritative source of truth. Ellen White stated, and I quote, it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works.

My Bible says different. The Bible says different, Ephesians 2, for by grace are you saved through faith, and that is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

Some will question, why doesn't your church join in with the local ecumenical group and its outreaches? Things such as, for example, the upside down circus, which is a local thing that's just happened.

[12:50] The answer is we will not join forces with false doctrine. There is a growing trend these days to water down the Gospel. The Word of God foretells a falling away, an apostasia.

Apostasia is the word that stands in our Bibles for falling away. Apostasia means a defection from the truth, a forsaking of the truth.

It literally means apo, away from, and stasia, foundation. In other words, apostasia, away from the foundation. And we have, friends, today a sure foundation, God's unchanging truth.

God's Word is sure and true. Our Lord urges us in Colossians 2 verse 8, beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of man, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ.

Beware lest any man spoil you. Friends, the modern church is being subverted and paganised.

Beware lest any man spoil you. Here's a picture of Archbishop Runcie, I believe his name, from the Anglican Church, joining together with the Druids.

[14:05] He's a member of the Druids, which is an outrightly pagan society. Many churches are taking on the thinking, the mindset, the practices of an unbelieving pagan world.

And this is extending its reach in all kinds of areas. Friends, today biblical Christianity is becoming a hate crime. I hate crime.

Biblical separation is mocked and scorned and derided. Many people who claim to be Christians are against it. There's a lack of discernment, a total lack of discernment, including in levels of leadership.

A youth pastor said this, a youth pastor said this, he said, I am a strong Christian and love the Lord with all my heart. The problem is, I really enjoy reading the Harry Potter books.

And nothing about them conflicts with my spirit. Nothing about them conflicts with my spirit. This is just the tip of the iceberg. This is just a very innocent example you could put.

[15:10] We could say much worse things. It's just the tip of the iceberg. A dangerous spirit is at work. A deadly poison contaminates the minds of many.

Because there is an all out onslaught against biblical Christianity. Friends, today there's forces, there's evil forces at work that want to redefine Jesus. They want to redefine Christianity and redefine the truth.

People have lost grip of God's absolute truth and placed their trust in an illegitimate authority of men's fickle feelings and fans. And for many they would rather have a uniformity based on compromise.

And we need to be careful of it too. I need to be careful of it too. I don't want to make any mistake in that regard. Pray for me. Pray for this church. We want to hold our cause. Friends, today it's way more acceptable to the mega church masses, to their biblical unity based on the cross and sound doctrine, to have a uniformity based on compromise.

We will not be silent. We will say sound doctrine. We will speak it. We will declare it no matter what. Our world has embraced a crossless Christianity today.

[16:27] The comfort and ease of men wants to just tickle people's ears, just eat you where you scratch, and just delight in the praises of men rather than the glory of the Lamb. We don't want to make that mistake, brothers and sisters.

It's a dreadful mistake. Biblical truth and evangelism today is equated with hate and intolerance. It's like they're putting a plaster on our mouths to keep us quiet.

It's an unholy mess. How are we to interpret these signs today in the light of Bible prophecy and the strong warnings of God's word? Friends, I urge you this morning that we need to be vigilant, we need to be watchful and strengthen the things which remain.

It is clear that error must be withstood. And as preachers, we'll often not make many friends when we do this. Paul said in Galatians 4.16, I therefore, am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth.

Paul urged the Ephesians in Ephesians 5.11, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

[17:36] Some translations of the Bible do not give the full picture here. They simply say expose the works of darkness. But God's sure word says rather reprove them.

Reprove is much stronger. It's saying speak against them. It's saying that this is what we must do. Speak against them. It's not just exposing, it's reprovng error.

Because friends, there's a war on against biblical Christianity today. And Paul warns that a false spirit and a false Jesus will come. We see that in 2 Corinthians 11.

You might like to turn there. 2 Corinthians chapter 11. We're talking today, is it real or is it false?

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11 verse 2.

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy. For I am a spouse to you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

[18:36] But I fear less by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety. The serpent tricked Eve through his sneaky ways.

He beguiled her, he tricked her, he fooled her. So your mind should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. He goes on, for if he that cometh preaches another Jesus, whom we have not preached.

Or if you receive another spirit, which you have not received. Or another gospel, which you have not accepted, you might well bear with him. Paul says of a time where there will be another Jesus, another spirit and another gospel.

Let me quote a church statement to you. And I want to tell you this morning, this church statement I wholeheartedly agree with.

This church statement says this. This church disapproves of ministers or churches participating in any of the modern ecumenical organisations on a local, national or international level.

[19:45] In such a manner as to promote the ecumenical movement. Because we believe that the basis of doctrinal fellowship of said movement to be so broad, the ecumenical movement, so broad that it includes people who reject the inspiration of scripture, the deity of Christ, the universality of sin, the substitutionary atonement and other cardinal teachings, which we understand to be essential to biblical Christianity.

This church forthrightly declared it would have nothing to do with the ecumenical movement. What church states this? It is a statement of the General Council of the Assemblies of God in the United States.

That was where the Assemblies of God once stood. That was where we once stood. That is where the Church of God once stood. Where the Assemblies of God once stood.

My, how they have lost their way. How they have lost their way today. Their ministers no longer take such a stand. They sit around the table with all kinds of churches and ministries, together with all manner of religious leaders who are masquerading as ministers of Christ.

They sit around the table with Seventh-day Adventist churches and Catholic churches. Unbiblical doctrines abound.

[21:13] And Hillsong plays for the Pope at the World Youth Day. This is the World Youth Day in Australia. Everybody just claps and sings along. Just join the band.

Just go with the flow. Just join in. Let's all be one big happy family at the World Youth Day. And shortly after Hillsong struck up the band, the Pope celebrated Mass.

Woe to them. Revelation 17 tells of Babylon. It speaks of the false religions that claim to be Christian.

I'm not saying that these folk are not Christian. I think many of them are. But deception prevails people. Deception is creeping, creeping, creeping in.

Babylon has crept into the church. In much of its ritual and thinking. In the old days it was all sort of the Catholic ritual and sacerdotalism.

[22:12] You know, all the smoke and bells and such things. But it's a little bit more sneaky now. Babylon has crept into the church and into its thinking.

And it's hidden in plain sight. Here's a picture of a Hillsong concert. Why have they got a pyramid there?

Why is there a pyramid there? Hidden in plain sight. Hidden in plain sight. These things are more and more happening.

It's woeful. Tozer said this. The 17th chapter of Revelation tells about that great mystery. The Babylonian. The great mother of harlots. The abomination of the earth.

We see spiritual unfaithfulness everywhere. Here's Billy Graham having an audience with the Pope. No. Not everybody gets to do that, you know. You've got to be in the inner circle.

[23:10] This harlot has children. She's not only a harlot, but she is the mother of other harlots. This is Tozer continuing. And these harlots are nothing else than apostate churches claiming the name of the Lord, not living the truth of the Lord.

End quote. Friends, the great whore Babylon speaks of apostasy. We see the picture of this woman on the scarlet beast with a cup filled with fornication, with pictures of adultery.

It pictures spiritual unfaithfulness. Spiritual unfaithfulness is happening all around us. Babylon relates to Babel back in the Old Testament.