

"Counterfeit Gods"

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[0 : 00] Let me invite you to come in and take a seat as we begin. It's good to see you all today. In the book of Isaiah, chapter 45, verse 22, God says this, Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is no other.

So we live in a world where it can be increasingly hard to tell what's real and what's fake, right? And that's not just the case on the internet or on a news cycle.

It's also true of the spiritual life. Sociologists and some philosophers of modernity describe it as the Nova effect. Every day there's an increasing number of options that seem to present themselves for our spiritual consideration and consumption.

Boom! They just multiply. But you know, in the midst of the book of Isaiah, the God of the Bible, one true creator and redeemer, has revealed himself definitively in Jesus Christ.

We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus. He makes himself unmistakably free to us. And this God says, I am God.

[1 : 19] There is no other. Turn to me and be saved. So in worship, we have an opportunity to respond to this call of God.

To turn to him. To find a real God who's made himself known and has saved to be rescued. So let's stand and let's sing together. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[3 : 20] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. This is my story.

This is my song. Praising my Savior all the day long.

This is my story. This is my song. Praising my Savior all the day long.

You were the word at the beginning.

[5 : 37] One with God the Lord knows time. Your hidden glory and creation.

Now we build in you, O Christ. What a beautiful name it is. What a beautiful name it is.

The name of Jesus Christ my King. What a beautiful name it is. The name of Jesus.

The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus.

You didn't want heaven without us. So Jesus you brought us down.

[6 : 44] When sin was great. When sin was great, your love was greater. The name of God. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus.

The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. What a beautiful name it is. What a wonderful name it is.

The name of Jesus Christ my King. What a beautiful name it is.

Nothing compares to this. Nothing compares to this. What a wonderful name it is. The name of Jesus.

What a wonderful name it is. The name of Jesus. Death could not hold you.

The veil tore before you. You silenced the lost. How sin and gain.

[8 : 11] The heavens are roaring. The praise of your glory. For you are raised to life again.

And you have no rival. You have no equal. Now and forever God you raise.

But yours is the kingdom. And yours is the glory. Yours is the name. Above all names.

What a powerful name it is. What a powerful name it is. What a powerful name it is.

And nothing can stand against. What a powerful name it is. The name of Jesus.

[9 : 20] And you have no rival. You have no equal. Now and forever God you raise.

Yours is the name of God. Yours is the kingdom. Yours is the glory. Yours is the glory. Yours is the name. Yours is the name. The name above all names.
What a powerful name it is. What a powerful name it is. What a powerful name it is. What a powerful name it is. The name of Jesus Christ my King.
What a powerful name it is. What a powerful name it is. Nothing can stand against. What a powerful name it is. The name of Jesus.
What a powerful name it is. What a powerful name it is.
[10:38] You may be seated. Good morning church.

Our reading this morning is taken from the book of Daniel chapter 7 verses 7 to 18. That is Daniel 7 verses 7 to 18.

It is on page 697 of the Pew Bible. When I am done reading I will say, This is God's word to which I invite you to respond, Thanks be to God.

In this passage, Daniel is already part way through describing a vision that he had received. So once again, Daniel 7, 7 to 18. I read, After this, in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong.

It had great iron teeth. It devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it.

[11:50] And it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots.

And behold, in this own horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things. As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat.

His clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool. His throne was fiery flames, its wheels were burning fire.

A stream of fire issued and came out from before him. A thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. I looked then, because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed, and given over to be burned with fire.

[12:58] As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven, there came one like a son of man.

And he came to the Ancient of Days, and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom, one that shall not be destroyed. As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me.

I approached one of those who stood there, and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me, and made known to me the interpretation of the things. These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth.

But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever. This is God's word.

[14:13] Amen. Let us pray. Father God, we thank you for the gift of your word, and for the ways it helps us to see you clearly.

In the midst of the increasingly self-promoting and boastful world that we live, we are glad that you remain the one worthy of all true worship. The Ancient of Days, in a class of your own, with no rival or equal, in heaven above or on earth below.

We rejoice with the thousand thousands that serve you, and join the innumerable hosts of creation to sing your praise. Yet, Lord, no sooner we rise from worship than the vision begins to fade, as we are sworn by the voices of beasts and idols that seek to usurp your position of worship in our hearts.

They speak great boasts and lies, promising to fulfill our deepest desires, things we only ought to seek from you, if only we would worship and serve them.

We would claim to be wise and spiritual enough to see through the folly and lies of their boast, Lord, but alas, we are often deceived. Even worse, Lord, more often than we dare acknowledge, we become like them, claiming to have achieved by our merit and skill the true victor who, through his

death and resurrection, rescued us from our sin and our reigns in majesty.

[15 : 54] We see him, to whom one day every knee will bow and tongue confess to his everlasting dominion. We see him who will fulfill our deepest longings, promising to wipe away every tear from our eyes, and to give us a share in his kingdom for our possession forever and ever.

We ask that you help us keep that vision. We ask that you have given to everyone who has turned from self-reliance and self-salvation to trust wholly in Christ, that a perfect ransom has been paid for you by God's own Son, the perfect Son of Man, Jesus Christ, and all your sins have been forgiven. So let's... This is...

Is... Peacarlúng... We... In all that score Bowing to the Father's will He took the crown of thorns Oh, that rugged cross My salvation Where you love poured out Over me Now my soul cries out Hallelujah Praise and hallelujah To Thee Please stand as we continue to worship The scent of heaven God's own soul

To purchase and redeem And reconcile the very ones Who nailed Him to the tree Oh, that rugged cross My salvation Where you love poured out Over me Now my soul cries out Hallelujah Praise and honor Now my death is paid It is paid in full Now the curse of sin

[18 : 58] Has no hold on me Whom the sun sets free Oh, is free indeed Now my death is paid in full Now my death is paid in full By the precious blood That my Jesus Now my death is paid in full Now the curse of sin Has no hold on me Whom the sun Whom the sun sets free Oh, is free Indeed Indeed Oh, that rugged crossacs my salvation And VI

Praise and honor run to thee See the stone is rolled away Behold the empty tomb Hallelujah, God be praised He's risen from the grave Oh, that rugged cross of salvation May your love float out over me Now my soul cries out Hallelujah Praise and honor run to thee

Praise and honor run to thee Please be seated Paul tells us in Ephesians 2 that the cross has not only removed the barrier between us and God, but also between us and one another.

The new community the church is a gospel reality So we pause to mention just a few things happening in our corporate life together First if you're visiting or if you're new Feel free to fill out one of our welcome cards in the pews in the boxes at either exit of the sanctuary and we'd be happy to connect with you or to pray for you Coming up next Sunday March 3rd After the service over lunch, we'll be hosting Trinity 101 Now Trinity 101 is a class for those who are interested in membership at Trinity Or if you're new and you just want to learn more about the church You can come to Trinity 101 as well Everyone's welcome to come to that You can fill out an RSVP for Trinity 101 on the home page of the website If you just go to our home page and scroll down there should be a button there to RSVP for Trinity 101 next Sunday Also next Sunday at 9 a.m.

Our adult Sunday school class is continuing in the book of Ephesians And next Sunday we're coming to that great passage in Ephesians 5 about marriage So if you'd like to come and learn more about a biblical vision of marriage and all those good things You come next Sunday at 9 a.m.

[22 : 50] To adult Sunday school Two more things a couple of weeks from now our youth group will be heading out on spring retreat March 8th through 10th or winter retreat sort of depends in New England How the weather decides to be that weekend?

It will either be a spring retreat or a winter retreat If you are in middle school or high school Our youth group meets every Sunday after the service in the fellowship hall classroom downstairs So if you want to learn more about youth group, you can come talk to me after the service and Beth and I be happy to connect you with our youth group leaders And get you plugged into to our youth ministry Last thing Good friday and easter are coming up believe it or not easter is march 31st this year And we'll have our good friday service on march 29th at 6 30 as well Let me encourage you to start thinking who you might invite to come with you to either of these services These are great services to invite friends who might not normally come to church And the gospel will be clearly presented in both of those services So consider who you might bring along Well As a church We see of our city as we reach here locally We have an impact globally And john and anita hinkson Have been at the vanguard of this work for many many years here in new haven and at yale university through their work at the rivendell institute

Many of you know and love john and anita As they have been members here at trinity for Well Probably longer than most of us right john But not all of us And they have been mentors and models for Last thing that he wrote before the lord took him He identified some of these challenges that we the church in america Really really discouraging We we really are struggling With attractiveness and we have a deep need For transformation Conformity to the image of christ Second one that tim

mentions Is uh We we seem to be really challenged with our ability to take the wonderful good news of the gospel And communicate it Such that it is actually heard As good news We have this challenge we struggle with this challenge Of thoughtful translation Of the gospel Such that it's heard As good news

So those are a couple of the challenges that we face and again I I don't mean to be over dramatic As a church as a people of god across the ages we've always faced challenges like these So nothing new here But these are a couple of the challenges that we at rivendell are trying to put our attention to And and anita and I have been Seeking to respond to these challenges all the years that we've been here many decades And uh trying to cultivate disciples of jesus as growing image bearers and witness bearers Mark 2 13 describes jesus it says of jesus he went out Again And the people came to him And he taught them See that he went out He was missional He took the initiative to connect with those around him and he did it again and again and again This was his this was his practice And he went out and the people came to him

That was he was attractive They found something in him that just drew them to him He went out And the people came to him and he taught them He was able to impart He had good news to offer them And he communicated that So that's what we that's what we try to do We seek to sow to present and future in that sense It's also a place where so much of the discourse that animates our nation is kind of forged It's it ideas of the currency of the university So it's a wonderful place to bring gospel truths there And particularly We find ourselves I'm convinced In a time where to use Paul's expression A wide door for effectual service is opened to us As he says in first corinthians So what is this new wide door?

[27 : 06] Well I'm going to try to make this super short I love this stuff as an historian The university has long operated Unicipate So as a result many Christians in the academy Have found themselves undergoing this very secular apprenticeship As they are cultivated in their disciplines And have very few models Or very much opportunity to begin to ask the question Well what bearing does my faith have in this discipline?

What are some of the riches that the gospel might bring To the questions that my discipline asks The challenges that we face So very little of that is done Now lately Here's some of the good news Lately This enlightenment model of how we should do the university Is really starting to fray significantly And it's a fascinating story I'd love to tell it in like some time But this supposed neutral rationality That the university prizes Really like a suit That you could just take off And leave behind Isn't it more like a skin That you just bring with you inevitably?

In fact Inevitably we see through lenses That we each and every one Have been grinding all our lives Through all of our experiences And that's what we've got To engage with knowledge with So all this to say That this old model The enlightenment model of the university Is really fraying And now people are realizing Hey We inevitably bring our perspectives Let's bring them In the hopes that they can contribute So we want to try to encourage Christians To begin to think this way And in terms of their contribution That they can make In a sense To sow to What we might call A Christian renaissance Whereby we as believers In our different disciplines Are beginning to ask Well what are some of the riches Of the gospel That I can bring to bear In my discipline Some of the motivations Some of the insights Some of the intuitions That I can then bring to bear On the puzzles And the projects

That the academy has For the common good And notice For the common good This is the way We need to frame it In contrast to a way That often it can be tempting To frame it in In terms of the culture war Where we're thinking In terms of a power struggle Okay These people think this way And we think differently And we just need to beat them In this power struggle No, no, no We need to think in terms Of the common good And this sort of Christian contribution Brought into the context Of the academy Is going to require Some sort of sensitivity And thoughtfulness In its contextualization To really make a contribution But there is a contribution To be made So how do we go about Sowing to these things?

Well one By engaging That is Finding And maybe forging Contexts In which It is very natural For us to be able To bear witness to Christ Finding or forging Those places It's very natural To just speak of these things One of the places That I've made reference To a few times now Is a sauna Where a whole lot of people From the university hang out And they're sitting there And we have conversations About meaningful things All the time There's a place Dinner tables Hikes So many places That we can find Where it's natural To communicate the good news But then also Coming

on the side Believers And helping to equip them To be able to do These things well Creating a womb If you will Where these good Capacities can gestate So what Anita and I have done In our particular task At Rivendell Is putting together It's a lot of fun And you know There is such a hunger For the gospel We're finding Yeah You remember how

[31 : 09] Jesus said to Paul In Corinth I guess it was Go on Go on Communicating the gospel For I have many people In this city And we trust that the Lord Has many people In this city I'll just give one Quick illustration As I say One of the wonderful places We found Is the sauna Of a local gym That we go to Where a lot of University folk hang out And it's Come to have a reputation Of a place where you can go To talk about These meaningful things In fact Just the other day There was a fellow That came up And he pressed his He pressed his face Up against the Glass door And he said Hey is Is this the place Where we talk about Meaningful things in life I've heard That there That you guys do that And is this Says yeah Come on in Come on in So when he comes And he He was a ripe old age He was a professor emeritus That was there And he comes in here Come on in Come on in And here You've been here before

No first time We'll take the Take the lower bench here Not a humble thing It's just less hot Yeah yeah Come on in And we're going at We're going at Gospel conversation And Kierkegaard And Hegel And that And he's just having So much fun And as I'm watching him About 10-15 minutes in But it was just so wonderful You don't know How long it's been Since I've had Conversations like these I really need these And we're finding this Again and again and again So the harvest Is ripe and white So we just want to be Workers to go out there And thank you For your partnership in this You as a church Have come alongside us And allowed us to do this All these many years And we're really grateful For this partnership In Asia, Africa, South America The Middle East The Pacific Islands In your providence You have gathered people here In New Haven From all these places So we thank you For the faithful labors Of John and Anita And how through their work They have Let our love for you

Lord Jesus abound With the freedom Of your love for us Your forgiveness of sins The hope we have in you Of a good and certain future The purpose you give To each and every day Be like a stream That wells up in our hearts Pushes over the banks You are God And there is no other You're the one we've been Looking for this whole time And now where else Would we go?

How deep the Father's love for us Cause my sin upon his shoulders Ashamed I hear my mocking voice Why should I gain from his reward?

I can't Before we begin I want to do something real quick This is not a book giveaway Sorry, I will need these For the next couple of weeks Or months Three books on the book of Revelation If you're interested in Finding something to read Blessed by Nancy Guthrie It's new It has a whole series of podcasts If you want to listen Rather than read It's been very good Vern Poitras The Returning King A Guide to the Book of Revelation It's small But very powerful And then The commentary that I've spent Most of my time is Greg Beal This is Little Beal There's a big one So this is This is your user friendly version It's only 400 pages Instead of 800 So But If you're looking for those They also were sent out A couple weeks ago In the weekly newsletter As an attachment And if you need to find that again You can contact the church office And we can direct you again To getting those We continue in the book of Revelation

[35 : 15] If you were here in the fall You would remember that when We looked at the situation Of the churches in the first century One of the pressures they faced Was the rise of the cult of the emperor In the first century There were slowly but growing Worship of the emperor Throughout the Roman Empire Initially it was only Worshipping dead emperors So you had to have been In the past tense In order to get a temple built for you But by the end of the first century They were starting to build temples To living emperors And the emperor was being exalted To a high level And Christians were facing A challenge Because the empire they lived in Was providing great things It was providing peace It was providing security It was providing economic prosperity The travel The roads that they built The ways that they improved society For many people

It was something that they wanted To be a part of And yet And yet The emperor was increasingly Being raised up And of course We also know That for the Christians It wasn't always a great thing When the emperor Had so much power In society Because when the emperor Decided he didn't like Christians Or he wanted to blame Christians For things that were going wrong Persecution ensued And there was great suffering In the church In the midst of this Imagine yourself As a first century Christian And thinking You know what They're right That's the life I want I'm just going to

say Okay I'll worship the emperor How bad can it be Now We sit here in church And we think Would we do that Well You know There are lots of stories Throughout human history Where people Captivated by something That met their longings In particular ways And showed great promise And power Turned their allegiance To these things This is what happened In Germany In the 1930s This is what happened In America As white people Embraced a view Of race That was so contrary To God's plan In the church And listen It happens globally It happens politically It happens societally It happens personally When we laugh With the bully Rather than stand up For the kid Who's picked on At school Or when we Allow A colleague To continue Speaking poorly Of one of your Co-workers Unfairly And unjustly

How easily We get caught up In things Greater than us Because we want To belong Because we want To prosper Because we want To find life This morning We're going to look At Revelation Chapter 13 And if you want To turn there It's page 972 In your pew bible We're going to be Looking at a picture And we're in a section In Revelation 12 through 14 Where we see That there's a real Spiritual warfare Going on That we are involved In right now Between the forces Of God And his kingdom And those Who would stand Against it And we saw There was a dragon In the Revelation Symbolic language The dragon Symbolizing Satan Pursuing the woman Who was giving birth To the church And these pictures This image

Of this grand battle And so this is what We saw in chapter 12 In chapter 13 What we see Is an extension Of that vision We see going back And saying Okay how did this Battle How was this battle Waged And what we will see Is that the battle Here is waged Through counterfeit Power And being a symbol Of Satan So here we go Then the dragon Became furious With the woman And went off To make war On the rest Of her offspring On those who keep The commandments Of God And hold To the testimony Of Jesus And he stood On the sand Of the sea And I saw a beast Rising out of the sea With ten horns And seven heads With ten diadems On its horns And blasphemous names On its heads And the beast That I saw Was like a leopard Its feet were like a bear's And its mouth Was like a lion's mouth And to it The dragon gave his power

[40 : 17] And his throne And great authority One of its heads Seemed to have A mortal wound But its mortal wound Was healed And the whole earth Marveled As they followed The beast And they worshipped The dragon For he had given His authority To the beast And they worshipped The beast Saying Who is like the beast And who can fight Against it And the beast Was given a mouth Uttering haughty And blasphemous words And it was allowed To exercise authority For forty-two months It opened its mouth To utter blasphemies Against God Blaspheming his name And his dwelling That is those Who dwell in heaven Also it was allowed To make war On the saints And to conquer them And authority Was given it Over every tribe And people And language And nation And all who dwell On the earth Will worship it Everyone whose name Has not been written Before the foundation Of the world In the book of life Of the lamb That was slain If anyone has an ear

Let him hear If anyone is to be Taken captive To captivity he goes If anyone is to be Slain with the sword With the sword Must he be slain Here is a call For the endurance And faith of the saints Then I saw another beast Rising out of the earth It had two horns Like a lamb And it spoke like a dragon It exercises all the authority Of the first beast In its presence And makes the earth And its inhabitants Worship the first beast Whose mortal wounds Was allowed to give breath To the image of the beast So that the image Of the beast Might even speak And might cause those Who would not worship The image of the beast To be slain Also it causes all Both small and great Both rich and poor Both free and slave To be marked On the right hand Of the forehead So that no one can buy Or sell Unless it has the mark Unless he has the mark That is the name

Of the beast Or the number Of its name This calls for wisdom Let the one Who has understanding Calculate the number Of the beast For it is the number Of a man And his number is Six Six Six And this is God's word So what do we do With this Well today I want To take a classic Bible study approach To this We're going to explain it What does it actually say And then we're going To interpret it What does it mean What does it mean For us And then we're going To respond to it How do we then Respond to the truth Of this passage So if you're taking Your notes There's our outline First we're just Going to explain it And we're going To start There are two beasts That are obviously They dominate this chapter Right Two beasts Are the central images And what are they Well clearly they are Agents of the dragon They are like him They have horns

They have crowns They For the first beast The second beast Speaks As if he were dragon They come with power And authority Again we see the authority Given to the first beast By the dragon

His authority His thrones His power The second one Shows power By doing miraculous things These miraculous things Are a part of the wonder Of these beasts You know it's fascinating Because beast seems To be a negative image And yet what we see here Is that people marvel at And flock to And end up following these beasts Partly why Because they're doing miracles The first beast Has a wound That should have killed it And yet it lived And the second beast Performed signs and wonders Using imagery That we might have pulled From the Old Testament When in First Kings 18 Elijah calls

They come with this This massive Powerful image Of That's calling the world To respond to them Now You're here And what you see in Daniel Is that These are actually Representative Of governments And political powers They're kings And kingdoms That will rise up Against God And his kingdom In the world The final thing We need to explain here Is the number Because everybody Knows this number Right And you know In the last couple of years People have wondered You know Is getting a vaccine The mark of the beast Or is using a tap card On our credit card The mark of the beast Or There are all these Different ways In which we've wondered Well I'll tell you what When we talk to Bible study Bible commentators About what the number 666 is They don't know [45 : 20] They have a lot Of really creative ideas There's this whole thing Called gemetria Where you Take letters And you line them up With the numbers In the alphabet So A is 1 And B is 2 And then you add them together And if you put Nero Caesar Transliterated from Greek Into Hebrew In just the right way You might get to 666 And The most compelling Argument That I found Is that we have Seen numbers In the book of Revelation Be symbolic of things Throughout the whole book And we know That the number 7 Is the number of perfection Or completeness Or fulfillment And so the number 666 Is the not quite number And it's repeated Three times It is the Counterfeit number This is almost like The perfection of God But not quite And this idea Of counterfeit Is not something That I just made up As we look Through this passage

In fact What you see Is this beast In its compelling Nature and power Is like Christ And the Holy Spirit The first beast Is like Christ Think about What we know About Jesus He said All authority Has been In heaven And on earth Has been given To me Therefore go And preach the gospel The first beast Is given authority And power By the dragon Right Jesus rises From the dead And says to Thomas Put your hand In the wound In my side The mortal wound That should have Killed me Put it in my hands And feet And the dragon Comes and says I have a mortal wound Too And it's Been healed The counterfeit So that we might Be led astray Into false worship This of course Is a pattern That we know

Is throughout The Bible Romans 1 25 Talks about this We exchange The truth of God For a lie And worship And serve The creator The creature Rather than the creator Who is blessed So What is this imagery about?

It's about these beasts Who come like Counterfeit saviors Counterfeit gods That promise Power And victory And success And salvation But who are not The true And living God And this whole vision Seems to be given So that The church Might be prepared To see it clearly And to respond With perseverance This is what verse 10 Is about You may have wondered It was kind of a weird Interlude Right?

It's this Look with me In verse 10 Right? If anyone has Here Let him hear Oh That if anyone Is taken captive To captivity He will go And if anyone Is slain With the sword With the sword Must he be slain Here's a call For the endurance And faith Of the saints In the face Of these beasts Knowing what They're gonna do For true Christians To stand firm In believing And following Jesus They will suffer These things They will go To captivity They will go To death And the call Is to persevere Through that Because there is A greater hope On the other side That we see In verse 9 We'll talk about This at the end But those Whose names Are written In the Lamb's Book of life The Lamb who Was slain For us Even if we die Persevering In faith in him Yet we will live Because of that

[49 : 14] And so this is The purpose That God gives us For this Passage This is Smorgasbord of images What do we do With it Well If you were At our Sunday school A couple weeks ago This is gonna be A review There are lots Of different ways That people Have interpreted it There are four Schools of thought Throughout the church One of them Is fairly patently Not true Because they tried To identify The beast With particular people Along the way In history And so You know Charlemagne Might have been The beast Well he wasn't Because it wasn't The end after him So whatever it was We know that can't be it Right And so But there are three others That are worth Worth considering One is called The preterist Which sees These as images That would be fulfilled

In the first century So this is all about The Roman Empire Christians facing The Roman Empire And the challenges That they face And the beast Might be Nero Or Domitian

Or Diocletian It might be Addressed Ready If this might come Right If you're familiar With Hal Lindsay In the late great Planet Earth Or Tim LaHaye Jerry Jenkins In The Left Behind This is their take Right So Nicholas Carpathia Is the beast In this In this image If you're familiar With that The third school Of thought Is called The idealist thought That says These images Are giving pictures Or seem to describe Some stuff In the first century And they do seem to We do think That there is a growing Or a trajectory Where at the end It will get worse And there may very well Be a particular Beast Or antichrist And we'll get to that In a minute There may be Something in the future That we'll get to But even now We see that These things are going Going on That these dynamics Are true In the life Of the church In the world

So we don't have To choose And say But we can say The beast Have expressed themselves In Rome They are expressing Themselves In our world today And they will express Themselves In the future And this is This is Consistent With what we see In other parts Of the New Testament In particular Where it talks about What happens In the future Josh is going To help me Given our time We're not going To read all Of these passages But when Jesus Talks about the future And the coming When the disciples Say tell us When will these things Be and what will be The sign of your coming At the end of the age Right Matthew 24 He says Many will come Not just one But many will come In my name Saying I am the Christ In verse 5 And then in verse 11 He'll say Many false prophets Will arise So Jesus is saying Look You're going to see

This over and over again Right And then it says But at the end There will be An end to this And The one who endures To the end Will be saved Paul In 2nd Thessalonians Chapter 2 Talks about A figure called The man of lawlessness And he takes his seat In the temple of God Proclaiming himself To be God That is the very nature Of the counterfeit That we see Right And it seems to be An individual here But then in verse 7 It talks about The mystery of lawlessness That is already at work So we see the ongoing nature And yet maybe A future person Who will embody this In its fullness 1st John Talks about this If you remember When we preached The 1st John Tyler did a great job With this The antichrist Is coming But I tell you now Many antichrists Have come And then in verse 22 Here This is the antichrist He who denies The father and the son So is it one Or is it both Well The New testament image Is that These both These are both true So if you're wondering Why we take this Interpretive approach Why we do it this way It's because we think The new testament Actually gives us A complex picture But are ultimately Leading us to destruction I was actually struck By what John Was talking about earlier With regard to the enlightenment Because Good heavens The enlightenment Was an intellectual movement That gripped the western world And maybe the whole world For hundreds of years Exalting human reason And logic And understanding To such a height And it had a promise Of a It presented a promise Of progress Of success Of utopia Of fulfillment And it was beastly

[54 : 18] For those underneath it Because it was the enlightenment That produced things Like the french revolution So we can Yale university Opened up Mental health Sites To care for Advocate for positions We can support candidates But let us Never ever Confuse them Or let them Take a counterfeit role That God means To have in our lives Alone In the person And work Of Jesus Christ Katie and I Were talking about this The other day And she said You know One of the things That's scary Is that The church Can be the most Gullible And vulnerable To this Because we come To everything With religious fervor But we need To make sure That our religious Worship is clear

So that As we live out Our lives For Christ And for his kingdom We do so In a way That makes Christ The center Of all that we do And friends We do need to Recognize as well My time is short So But I just want To recognize That deceit That it's not Just things Out there Because the church Itself is constantly Under attack The false prophet The second beast Comes And as you look Ahead in Revelation In chapter 17 You will see That there's this Unholy trinity Of the dragon The first beast And the second beast Who is then later Called the false prophet And we know That there are Dynamics within Our church Even today We know That there is Such a desire In the western world And even Throughout the whole world Where the gospel

Doesn't become The gospel Of Jesus Christ This is why Cults are so Attractive Because they tell you You must do These things And then you're okay And the gospel Of grace Is that we will Never be good enough And that only By the blood Of Jesus Shed for us And our coming Trains people To no counterfeits Do you know What they do?

They give them The real thing And they make them Study it carefully And they look At the ink And they feel The paper And they look At the design And they notice The watermarks And there are All these different Tests that they use But they give them The real thing And then when They start to give them The real thing Mixed in with Counterfeits They kind of know Even when they don't Even when they can't Tell you exactly What it is They go Yeah this doesn't Feel right And then they look At it And they can find Why it's Why it's a counterfeit Friends This is how we Respond to this Chapter of the Bible We need to look To Jesus We need to know Him so well That we won't Get drawn away By the counterfeits That our world Seduces us with By the counterfeits That our church Falls into In false teaching We know At the end That Jesus

Will win In Revelation 19-20 These The beast And the false prophet They are judged By the one Who comes Riding on a white horse And they're cast Into a lake of fire And they will be destroyed And the counterfeit Will be shown For what it is In verse 20 In chapter 20 Verse 10 The dragon Will likely be cast Into the same Lake of fire These counterfeits Will not last And if we put Our hope in them There They will destroy us But instead Let us Set our hearts And our minds On the Lamb Who was slain I want to close By just Reminding us Of what Scripture Tells us Jesus Born of all creation For by Him All things were created In heaven And on earth Visible and invisible

[58 : 46] Whether thrones Or dominions Or rulers Or authorities All things were created Through Him And for Him And He is before All things And in Him All things hold together And He is the head Of the body The church He is the beginning The firstborn From the dead That in everything He might be preeminent For in Him All the fullness Of God Was pleased to dwell And through Him To reconcile To Himself All things Whether on earth Or in heaven Making peace By the blood Of His cross And in Philippians 2 Paul reminds us That though He was In the form of God He did not count Equality with God A thing to be grasped But emptied Himself Taking the form Of a servant Being born In the likeness of men And being found In human form He humbled Himself By becoming obedient To the point of death Even death On a cross Therefore God Has highly exalted Him And bestowed on Him The name that is above

Every name So that at the name Of Jesus Every knee should bow In heaven And on earth And under the earth And every tongue Confess That Jesus Christ Is Lord To the glory of God The Father Friends Here's the thing I want you to see In both of these passages Do you know What is unique About the glory Of Jesus He died for us He laid down His life He didn't take His power And impose it on people He didn't force But He came And He loved And He laid down His life for us One of the ways We know That there's a counterfeit Is when it says You can either Wield your power Without any restraint Or you can have it all Without any cost Because neither of those Are the gospel And my friends We need to gird ourselves up

But if we see Jesus If we know How great He is Then no matter how hard That storm will be We will persevere And we will be those Whose names are written In the Lamb's book of life The Lamb who was slain Let's pray Lord we thank you That you are a great God And a great Savior And Lord we ask for your help For we are wayward And our hearts do so often turn Lord we are deceived Lord save us from this And by your spirit Give us discernment So that our loyalty And our worship to you Would be full We pray this in Jesus name Amen Well friends As we close our service As the music team comes up We're going to sing a song Oh Lord A fount of perfect wisdom

My eye is good Am I unending need Faithfulness My refuge in the night O Lord My rock My redeemer Gracious Savior Of my ruined life My guilt And cross Laid on your shoulders But in my place You suffered blood And died You rose

The grave And death Are conquered You broke My bonds To sin And shame You rose You rose Now gave And death I conquered You broke My bonds To sin And shame Oh Lord My rock And my redeemer May all my days Bring glory To your name May all my days Bring glory To your name Friends Thank you for joining us For worship We hope you'll stick around For fellowship There's coffee downstairs

[64 : 14] Don't forget next week Trinity 101 We'd love to have you join us Please sign up if you can And I think That's the end So let me send you out With a benediction Now to him Who is able to keep you From stumbling And to present you blameless Before With a benediction To don't forget To don't slip Into wash And Ral■ah

Don'tvs Tik Not Pas I thought you were going back to birth school.