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Satan's Counterfeits Revelation 13

Anything that is extremely valuable will be counterfeited. Fake gems have been around for thousands of years. Now there are Synthetic gems, lab-grown gems that duplicate a stones physical and chemical properties. There are simulated gems, whose color and look are similar to the natural gem but are very different physically and chemically. Cubic Zirconium is a simulated diamond. It may look a lot like a diamond...but it's not the real thing at all. The fakes are getting more and more clever and more and more convincing that they indeed are the real thing. One must be very careful about getting the genuine article, for if you are not sure of the source, you can almost assume you have purchased a fake. For some things you may not care if you get the real thing...but if you had paid real thing prices, invested like it was the real thing and treasured it as if it were the real thing. Maybe you received it from a friend like it was the real thing. It comes as a very sad shock to discover you have been coddling after a fake for all these years. Nobody likes to be deceived and yet the Master of deception has been working his craft for thousands of years on the people of this world.

Satan has worked hard for thousands of years to counterfeit the best that God has to give. Satan also has worked hard to take that which only belongs to God alone, that which is only deserving of God Almighty. We know the conflict started long ago in Isaiah 14:14 We read that Satan stated "I will make myself like the Most High" It is that pride that goes before a fall, and great will be the fall of Satan. We know his time is running out. Last Sunday in Revelation 12, we read that Satan in the last days knows his time is short....so he is going to work overtime. He will work overtime to fight against God and his people, overtime to accuse. Overtime to deceive. Satan's time is short so he will work overtime to counterfeit and try to steal as much glory as he can away from God Almighty, the One who truly deserves our worship, glory and devotion.

As you turn in your Bibles to the book of Revelation 13. We will be studying Satan's last gasp effort, working overtime to counterfeit the best God has to offer...here we see Satan trying to counterfeit the Savior of the world Jesus Christ and the indwelling comforter, the Holy Spirit. You see, just like there is a Holy Trinity. God the Father, God the Son, Jesus Christ and God the Holy Spirit, there is an Unholy Trinity. Satan, the Father of all lies, The Antichrist...who is the beast out of the sea in the first half of Revelation 13 and the False Prophet...who is the beast out of the earth in the second half of this chapter 13. Satan, the Antichrist and the False prophet. The very fake and very evil unholy trilogy. READ with me about first the beast out of the sea, the political ruler of a one world government also known as the antichrist and then in verses 11 to the end of the Chapter, the beast out of the earth, or cheerleader for the Antichrist, a false prophet who is religious in nature.

What is this Antichrist like? In verse 1 of chapter 13, John looks and sees a beast coming slowly out of the sea. 10 horns and 7 heads, ruling crowns, or diadems on the horns and blasphemous names tattooed on the heads. A body like leopard, feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion. Powerful ruler, controlling political authority empowered by the dragon, or as we know from the previous chapter, placed in power and empowered by Satan himself. There are several descriptions for this beast in Scripture. Here the beast out of the sea. Ez. 28 The prince of Tyrus. Daniel 9, the prince that shall come. Daniel 11 The willful king. Matthew 24:15 he is called the Abomination of Desolation. II Thess. 2:3 The man of sin. Daniel 7 he is called the little horn. Keep your finger in Revelation but turn with me for just a moment to Daniel 7. We can't read the whole context, but Daniel here is describing the characteristics of the final evil empowered world ruler, the antichrist. (DAN. 7:7-8, 20,25)

We see in verse 20 this is a very charismatic individual. Impressive in appearance and larger than all associates. In Revelation 13 we read how he will emerge from the sea, sea often refers to mass of humanity. He may emerge slowly or inconspicuously, but he will then assert himself with compelling charisma and draw the whole world to be enamored with his ability to lead and move people. In verse 8 we see his political genius as the little horn that plucks 3 other horns. He is able to take over 3 other kingdoms and assimilate them into his own and will without the

means of war rise as leader over them all. Daniel 9 "By peace he will destroy them all" He is clever and charismatic yet he is also cruel and ruthless. Daniel 9:23. "Wear down the saints, the tribulation saints."

From the beginning he will appear to be a brilliant and benevolent dictator yet, as time goes on he will be seen and cruel and ruthless, especially to those who try and buck his leadership for a global community under a one world religion. We will talk more about the heads and what they mean when we get to Chapter 17 but for now its enough to know the heads and horns represent kingdoms and these kingdoms are empowered by Satan and all come under the control of the beast out of the sea, the Antichrist who will look a whole lot like Jesus Christ, but will be a horrible and terrifying fake.

Verse 3 we see how the antichrist is vaulted to power. A lethal wound is amazingly healed and all the world stands in wonder at who this might be. Can you picture the Headline News of Global Community. Our most loved leader of Global Community, President Nickolai Carpathia was shot and killed by an assassins bullet this afternoon in full view of his whole cabinet during a peace parade celebration down the streets of Rome heading toward the Basilica of St. Peter. All of the world mourns the loss the leader, whom they had pinned such great hopes on. He had almost single-handedly pulled all the governments of the world together and united the most divisive religions to bring them under one peaceful and tolerant tent, we know as Our Global Community. Our leader was pronounced dead on arrival after being life flighted to the World Hospital of Rome. The incredible loss in world leadership is immeasurable. No man has done more to solve this worlds problems or drawn more fighting nations to peace. For three days his body will lie in state as the governors of the 10 world regions and United States all grieve over the loss. At the memorial funeral while all networks are watching, while the speeches of grief and greatness are being delivered. This world leader will sit up in his coffin, shake himself off a bit. Climb out of his box and stride over to the microphone and begin to deliver a very powerful speech on forgiveness and world unity. He will calm the fears of the people, show them his wounded head now healed and express his greatest wish to unify all nations and religions. Does this sound too incredible? Truth is often stranger than fiction. We don't know

exactly how it will happen but we know that this leader will be wounded with what appears to be a fatal shot and then healed miraculously. The world is amazed and all he garners a huge following. While resurrection from the dead seems beyond Satan's power, but not healing a near fatal wound. Here is the great counterfeit..a fake resurrection from the dead for all to see. This is Satan's version of Jesus Christ. Jesus was God in man and here the beast is Satan in man.

This fake resurrection, will vault the Antichrist into world power and acclaim as we see in v. 4 they will worship the beast and Satan who put him in power. The inhabitants of the earth cry out v. 4 who is like the beast? Who could possibly fight against the beast? We know the answer..but that doesn't come until later. The Beast and Satan receive the adulation the worship and honor of the people. Remember, Satan loves to steal away what is rightfully God Almighty. Here he steals worship.

We read in v. 5 the beast has a mouth. Speaking arrogant proud words. Blasphemous words. To blaspheme means to assume names and attributes reserved only for God. To blaspheme means to use the names of God in an irreverent manner. To curse God, to speak evil of God to ridicule or belittle the things of God. To diminish and take lightly the things of God that are holy. Lets stop there for just a moment. Are we ever in danger of blaspheming God? Oh we may not say we are all powerful and all knowing like God. We may not outright curse God or speak evil of Him. But what about failing to give God the honor and glory due His name? Are we ever guilty of slighting God when He should be having all the attention? Do we joke and ridicule and belittle the things of God. Do we ever catch ourselves acting in an irreverent manner. Do you find your mind wandering off to football games and food during prayer and worship when God should be receiving glory. Worse yet, are you talking with your neighbor, joking around, poking around drawing attention to yourself that God should be getting at that time? If you are...then you are guilty of partnering with Satan in stealing God's glory. Don't do it. Don't steal that which belongs to God.

The beast here has a mouth, a very charismatic orator. Speaking with power and authority. V. 6 Against God, Against His name. Against His tabernacle, Against those who dwell in heaven. This reminded me of

some of those tapes I've heard of Adolph Hitler speaking. He had an incredible way of captivating people with his speech. He often began very low and slow and quiet. People listening almost had to lean forward to hear him. But by the end he was up on his tip-toes almost screaming at the top of his lungs, and the people listening were whipped into a frenzy, clapping and shouting heil Hitler ready to do whatever he would ask them. The antichrist will be clever, charismatic, convincing, a powerful speaker and brilliant politician. And will make war with all the tribulation saints still on the earth, because Satan will always oppose the people and things of God. That what Satan lives to do...oppose God at every step of the way.

Everybody in the world will worship this beast, except those whose names v.8 have been written in the lambs book of life. Some believe that originally the book of life held every name of every person that would be born in the world and then as the unsaved died, their names would be blotted out or erased from the book of life. But probably v. 8 simply means that the book of Life was a register of all who have or will receive God's gift of eternal life, having been God's plan predestined before all time. It was also God's plan before time, that Jesus, the lamb that was slain, would be the perfect sacrifice for sinfilled human beings.

Just a note of encouragement before we go on to look at the second beast. If you read through this chapter, over and over you read the phrase, "and it was given to him.." The antichrist power is only allowed to go as far as God Almighty allows it. Yes, as bad as it gets, it never gets out of God's control. There is a leash on Satan and God is holding the other end. God only allows Satan to bark and bite so far.

Verse 11 begins the description of another beast. The Greek word *allos* means another of the same kind, indicating a close relationship to the first beast...even though in outward appearance they look different, they are really cut from the same cloth and both come from the pit. While the first beast of the sea was a political ruler, the second beast is a religious ruler. He looks like a lamb but speaks like a dragon. Why does Satan make the false prophet to look like a lamb? Do you see the continued deception and continuing efforts to counterfeit God's best. Satan continues to be the fake and counterfeit of all God's best gifts. That includes counterfeit religions. Does it seem strange that here in the

tribulation time when Satan seems to have a very long leash, that there is such an emphasis on religion? Do you see why it would be necessary for a one world political ruler to have a one world religious ruler in his back pocket and as his greatest fan? Here it is the false prophet whose words are like a dragon and come straight from the dragon himself.

V.12 he has authority like the first beast yet, seems to always be subservient to the first beast. He makes the people worship the first beast, antichrist...whose fatal wound was healed. v. 13 he performs great signs and wonders and miracles. II Thess 2:9 'one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan with all power and signs and false wonders and deception.' Be cautious of those who put on signs and wonders. the evil side also has plenty of power and tricks up there sleeve and can look very religious too. Remember to consider the source of the signs, the focus, who is getting the glory and the fruit all must be carefully and prayerfully weighed. Many people in this day will be deceived.

In verse 14 we see the false prophet will set up an image to honor the first beast and force everyone to worship it. He will breath air into it, make it appear like it has life. We know that God alone can breath life, but this will seem very convincing. Whether it is done by ventriloquism or speakers or some mechanical or supernatural means or a little of both. There will be this image set up in what I believe was once the temple of god in Jerusalem and this image where the Antichrist and false prophet force people to worship will be the abomination of Desolation. We know we are in the thick of the Great Tribulation when this happens. Reading from Matthew 24:15 "When you see the Abomination of Desolation spoken through Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place...get out quick because it is going to get ugly fast."

Whoever does not bow down and worship this image will be killed. Allegiance must be sworn to the Antichrist, the One world ruler or else die. How? He will control the economic systems. No one will be able to buy or sell unless they carry the mark that signifies allegiance to the Antichrist and One world government. It doesn't matter who you are, poor, rich, talented, connected, free or slave...No mark and you go hungry. You will not be able to buy or sell.

Now 100 years ago when preachers expounded this passage that seemed a bit far fetched that One person or government could control the whole world's buying and selling ability by a number code. Not anymore. We are rapidly heading to a cash-less, paper-less economy. More and more of us are buying things with merely a pass of a plastic card and the number on it debits our account. You can buy gas, hamburgers...just about anything without real money. I talked with someone last week who was in a rush to get some things and her ATM card suddenly decided to stop working. What if your name was keyed in to void all your cards. It would be pretty tough wouldn't it? It is very easy to see how much control could be obtained if one could choose who could use and who could not use credit cards. Just like God has marked and sealed His 144,000 witnesses. Satan will have his counterfeit mark. During the Great Tribulation there will be a tattoo either on the right hand or Forehead that will affirm or deny ones allegiance to the World Dictator. No mark, no buy. This will be somehow connected to the Beasts name or number. That number is the very famous 666.

Now I want to assure you that believers will not be here, we will be raptured into heaven spared from the wrath and condemnation of God. So we do not have to live in fear of accidentally taking the number of the beast. Be assured it will be very clear that the number means allegiance to the Antichrist. The mark of the beast is not the Visa or Master Card. The mark of the beast is not even the Safeway club Card. It is not as one group says, all those who worship on Sundays.

It has been very popular to identify the Antichrist as an apostate Jew. The logic is this. The Antichrist must make a covenant with the Jewish people, so they must think that he is there Messiah, so He must be Jewish. But, that is pretty weak evidence. I believe the Antichrist could easily be a Gentile as a Jew. Much ink has been spilled over people trying to connect a political figure with this number 666...probably because it teases people into trying to calculate the name from the number. You can connect just about any name with 666 if you play the numbers game. Some people thought it was Hitler. A pretty good choice. They saw that if you assign 100 to the letter A. 101 to letter B etc. until the letter Z is 125. Then take Hitler's name. 107 for H, 108 for I etc. and add them all up all the numbers for T-L-E-R, it will come to the figure of

666. There has been speculation for hundreds of years as to who it is, From Hitler to Kissenger. From Lenin to Gorbarchov. From Sadam to Aotola Komeni. But, no one will know until the day it arrives. No one knows the exact identity, only what He will do and what He will look like as he rises to power. It could be that He is alive today. he may be some 3rd world obscure politician. We don't know.

But we do know how we can be assured that we don't have to live through this terrible time. That is to come to belief in God right now. If we accept Jesus Christ right now we don't have to go through the terrible. If you are not sure where your going to be during this time. If you are not sure where you would go when you die..I would love to talk with you after the service or drop by my office this next week.

Satan is a master counterfeiter. He will provide fakes for all the best that God has to offer. God offers genuine love and intimacy and relationships, while Satan passes off cheap sex, physical pleasure without commitment and calls it love. God offers the real thing, community, transparency and acceptance and Satan offers the neighborhood bar. God offers forgiveness of sin. Freedom from guilt and a live cleaned up by the transforming power of God's grace. Satan offers to take care of our problems by covering them up. Drink to drown out the sorrows, drugs to make you forget or not care about it for a couple hours...until you sober up. God offers joy and happiness, peace, faithfulness and long term solid character changes. Satan tries to convince us if we buy that stuff we will be happy, if we change that commitment we will be happy, after all we deserve it right now.

Satan wants to convince us that this world is all there is, so why bother to think pass this life. Why bother to invest in eternity. But folks this world is just a dot compared to eternity. The rest of life after physical death, eternity is a long line that keeps on going. We need to be living like life is a line not a dot. Don't buy into Satan's counterfeits. Spend time with the genuine. Spend time with the real thing so you don't get tricked by the fakes. There are a lot of them out there. Pursue what lasts. Don't be caught fooled by the Master counterfeiter.