

Acts of Jesus, Lesson 19: Countering the Counterfeits

- The oldest thing ever counterfeited was true religion counterfeits were the stumbling blocks for the Jews throughout the O.T.
- In the N.T., the apostles and writers were almost constantly having to steer believers around that which was false.

What constitutes a counterfeit?

- Like counterfeit money, real counterfeits are those that come very close to the real thing, so close that they can fool you unless you are paying careful attention.

1. In our text we're going to see a guy who is going to give us example of a counterfeit

- ✓ **Acts 8:4-11** – Simon is a counterfeit – one that the Samaritans have been accepting for legal tender for a long time.

1. Notice first of all that he exalted himself V. 9c – this is a mark of a counterfeit.

- Counterfeit Christianity exalts personalities and makes much over people.
- Paul speaking on behalf of other apostles and Christian leaders of his day said, **II Cor. 4:5.**

2. Counterfeits seek to put a mediator between a person and God.

- ✓ **V. 10c** -- “the Great power of God” verses “Come to me to get to God”

3. Counterfeits claim to have a special touch with God or word from God that no one else has.

- ✓ Simon “*I’m somebody great*”.
- ✓ Joseph Smith who founded the Mormons was almost a reincarnation of Simon the sorcerer in that was magician who claimed to be able to find treasure with the special stones had a following.

4. Counterfeits often wield real power.

- ✓ When God sent Moses to deliver the people of Israel from bondage, one of the signs He gave Him was that if he threw down his staff it would turn into a snake. But the sorcerers of Pharaoh did the same thing. How did they do? With demonic power.
- ✓ Don’t be wowed by supernatural stuff -- be wowed by the truth.
- ✓ Satan would love to give you a shortcut to wonderland.

5. Really good counterfeits are a part of or at least start out as a part of our churches.

VV. 12-23

- ✓ Sounds like Simon is really saved but there are some indications here that he really wasn’t.
- ✓ **V. 20** – “perish” = apollyon in the Greek = same word that Jesus used in **Mt. 7:13**
- ✓ So, what is Peter saying here? “**May your money go to Hell with You**”
- ✓ **VV. 21a, 23** --Are believers in the bonds of iniquity?
- ✓ Early church fathers tell us that Simon indeed demonstrated the fact that he was a counterfeit later on by founding a very dangerous cult that dogged the heels Christianity for a period of time.

6. Counterfeits will claim to be able to manipulate God.

- ✓ Simon was a sorcerer/magician --- Sorcery by definition is a manipulation of the supernatural to get what you desire.
- ✓ In Christianity it is the exact opposite --- The Supernatural manipulates us if you will.
- ✓ Sorcery says if you do these certain things, the supernatural will be at your bidding.
- ✓ Counterfeit Christianity says if you’ll do these certain things...pray in this certain way...**believe** long and hard enough === God will do what you want.
- ✓ There are true Christian who believe this which doesn’t make them counterfeit, but the theology is counterfeit!!