

The Counterfeit Religion — What Is It All About?

By Anand Peter

"No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house" (Mark 3:27).

The kingdoms of this world, with their power and glory, belong to Satan (Luke 4:5-6). Satan is like a strong man who takes us into his house and holds us captive there, making us his own possession, his property. Only Jesus, through His redemptive power, can enter Satan's house, bind him, and plunder what he holds. In other words, Jesus came into the world to set us free, and to restore us to our full humanity. Satan represents every force that captivates our capacity to love — everything within us, and everything without, that actively opposes the compassionate, reconciling love of Jesus. Perhaps the original sin is our tendency to be so desperately independent of God, so given over to our own self-centred nature. Not only our hearts, but the world at large, opened its door to let the evil forces in, and let them dominate us. Jesus, however, came to us bearing an even greater force: the strength of His gentle invitation to step out of that evil-dominated house, into the larger territory of His love, and of His community of love.

Satan knew, from the very beginning, that Jesus had His own plan of Salvation, one that would set mankind free from the bondage of sin and bring them into His Kingdom. Satan prepared his own strategy to counter that plan, and works hard, still, to draw man back into his fold. Man's constant struggle to remain within the Grace and love of Jesus, resisting the evil forces of Satan that would carry him off from the eternal bliss of that love, is the cause of much of the world's religious chaos. The evil one realised that the only way to keep hold of those he had already captured, and to prevent them receiving Salvation, was to make them believe they had already attained it.

It is by no means an easy path, to walk toward the Salvation Jesus offers. And so Satan devised his own religion, counterfeiting the plan of Jesus, so as to persuade those who fall for it that they are already saved. They become enslaved to sin, and are bound for eternal damnation — a fact hidden from them by the very pleasures of sin they enjoy. He lays his trap cleverly enough that even those who have known Jesus may walk into it, and become part of his counterfeit religion.

Throughout human history, Satan may be seen constantly at work, establishing and re-establishing this dominion of his counterfeit religion. Those drawn into his web of lies and sin worship him, in effect, whether they know it or not. Yet Jesus, through the blood He shed upon the Cross, through His death and Resurrection, has conquered Satan; and the Gospel teaches us the true way into the Kingdom of Jesus. He knew, all the while, of Satan's relentless counterfeit plans, and gave us His indwelling Spirit to counsel us, and to keep us from harm. All that is required of us is to remain in Jesus, holding fast, in unwavering faith, to His power, His love and forgiveness, and His profound teaching.

This counterfeit religion of the evil one is not, let me say by way of caution, simply the other religious orders of this world; most of them, after all, believe in God, whichever name they know Him by. The

deceit of the evil one will come to an end only at the second coming of Jesus Christ, of which it is written: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

Amen.