

The Counterfeit Trinity

I once had a professor in Bible college say, “Students, when you preach, no matter where you start, move as quickly as possible to the cross of Christ! All our authority, our hope and our victory are all gained through the cross of Jesus Christ!”

Of course, he was right! There is so much to learn and teach and preach about Jesus Christ! He is our Savior; our Baptizer with the Holy Spirit; the Healer of our sick bodies and minds; and He is our soon-coming King!

So even if I begin with a current event or story to establish a theme in my sermons or blogs, I try to move on to Jesus Christ and how He is the answer to our problems. He is “the Way, the Truth and the Life.” No one comes to the Father except through Him and the drawing power of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Trinity

Our devotion to and faith in the Holy Trinity—Father God; Jesus, the Son of God and our Living Lord; and the blessed, abiding Holy Spirit—may cost us testing and trials in these “woke” days and, for some, even martyrdom. However, believers learn that death is just a doorway to eternity in the splendor of heaven and its rewards, which God has laid up for us there with the saints of all the ages!

The disciple known as “John the Beloved” is believed to have authored the last book of our Bible, titled “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” late in the first century A.D. This apostolic writing is an unveiling or revealing of a series of vivid visions from the Holy Trinity: Father God, through Jesus Christ, to John. The Holy Spirit is active in communicating truths to the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3 and applying the prophetic words throughout the revelations.

The visions contain certain symbolic images, including two “beasts” or metaphoric monsters who are identified as Satan’s delegated and empowered authorities on Planet Earth. Many, if not most, believers know very little about these evil entities.

Two Beasts and the Devil, “The Counterfeit Trinity”

In Chapter 12, verses 7-12 describe an angelic war in heaven whereby “the dragon and his angels” are thrown out and down to Earth. This “dragon” is referred to as the “serpent of old” (think of the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3) and then additionally identified as the Devil and Satan.

Pick any one of the above names and do a concordance study for context and consequences of their malevolent involvement with the people of God. This devil “has come down” to dispense “great wrath” on the witnessing church of this period “because he knows that he has a short time” (12:12, NKJV). This limited period is later specified as forty-two months or just the three and a-half years (13:5) of the Great Tribulation, about which Jesus taught His disciples (Matt. 24:21-24).

It is in Revelation 13 where we are introduced to the two “beasts” or monsters. The first “beast” rises from the sea of humanity and is given power, a throne and authority (v. 2) to rule over a coalition of governments and political powers therein (Rev. 13:1-10, 13), while the second “beast,” later known as the “false prophet,” rules over religion, philosophy and ideology (13:1-17).

This false, spiritual leader blasphemes against God, His name, His tabernacle and those who dwell in heaven (v. 6)! All the unbelieving ones remaining on earth, whose names are *not* written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, will worship this beast from the sea (v. 8).

Many may be surprised to learn that the term “antichrist” is not actually used in the book of Revelation at all. Rather,

John used the term in 1st John and 2nd John, two of the three small letters of pastoral counsel, which he wrote after writing the larger Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In those short epistles from Ephesus, John references the coming Antichrist, as well as many other antichrists who have already appeared—in those early decades and now over the millennia. He called them deceitful, destructive and divisive heretics (1 John 2:18, 22 / 4:2-3) who deny “that Jesus is the Christ,” who physically came to Earth for our salvation and to be Lord of our lives. John urged that believers needed to beware of such antichrist-deceivers: “For many deceivers have gone into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (2 John 1:7).

The unnamed writer to the Hebrew diaspora says that Jesus came to destroy the devil, who had the power of death, and to set free those who have all their lives been held in the bondage of the fear of death or perhaps even a fear of the devil or his antichrist (Heb. 2:14-15). But Paul emphasizes that Father God has not given His children a spirit of fear (2 Tim. 1:7) but of power and love and a sound [calm, confident, well-balanced] mindset! Instead of fear, we need the freedom of godly perspective concerning these end-times personalities.

With this background in mind, now let me quickly point to what John was specifically told about the “Counterfeit Trinity.” I urge you to stop now and read these brief Scriptures identifying the Counterfeit Trinity:

1. Revelation 12:7-12: Satan is thrown out of heaven.
2. Revelation 13:1-10: *The Antichrist* / The Beast from the Sea
3. Revelation 13:11-18: *The False Prophet* / The Beast from the Earth

On the basis of these prophetic words, let us avoid the

ultimate deception of the evil threesome by these active commitments today:

1. **Discern** the “spirit” behind the arguments and debates of our times or even the angry thoughts that pop into our minds. Prudently ask, “Are these thoughts and words from the Holy Trinity or from the counterfeit trinity?” Let us help each other to escape the ensnarements of Satan and his deceptive antichrists! See 2 Timothy 2:14-17a, 26; 3:1-5.

Patience in the last days is not passivity but calm discernment and consistent resistance to the one who would trick us, trap us and trample us if he could. “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7, NKJV).

2. **Determine**—in advance—to never deny Jesus as our Lord but to faithfully “endure to the end.” Have faith over fear!

Jesus warned that “...whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, him I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32-33).

The last days will call for courageous perseverance on the part of the saints still living at that juncture (Rev. 13:10). Our faith must not falter; our obedience to Christ must not fail. Make that determination now!

3. **Dedicate** each day to the Lord as a living sacrifice. Look at yourself in a mirror and consciously dedicate your mind and thoughts to be pleasing to Him. Commit your eyes, ears, hands and feet to holy and God-worthy efforts and activities only (Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:11-12).

Paul called for courage in the face of fear, endurance in the face of weariness and a holy transformation “by the renewing

of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2).

In conclusion, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. 12:11, MEV).

Dr. Jack Hayford has explained that the agelong warfare with evil will conclude with saints of the Great Tribulation season being victorious on the basis of their embracing of the cross ("the blood of the Lamb") and the authority of God's Word ("the word of their testimony"—v. 12). Jesus' redemptive victory on the cross is the basis of our salvation and the source of our confident, confessed faith (Heb. 11:13-16) and the grounds for our ultimate, spiritual victory (Col. 2:13-15).

"to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Eph. 3:21, MEV). {eoa]

Gary Curtis *is a retired minister and Bible teacher. He served Foursquare churches in Illinois and California for over 50 years, including being part of the pastoral staff of The Church on The Way in Van Nuys, California for 27 years (1988-2015). Now retired, Gary and his wife have been married for more than 50 years and live in southern California. They have two married daughters and five grandchildren.*

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