

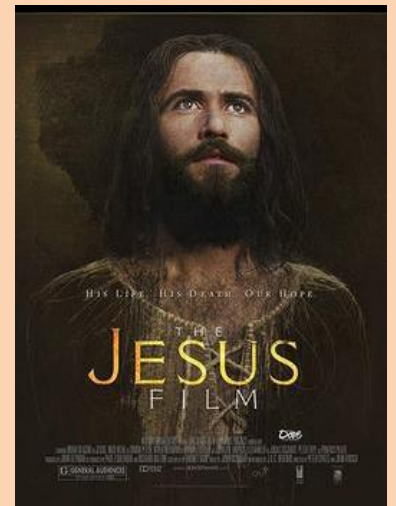


By Adauto Rezende

Years ago our church bought 300 “Jesus film” (VHS)¹ to distribute it in our community in Toronto. The idea

was to gift each home with one movie, so people could have an understanding about the person and the work of Jesus Christ. At the time, I was still a new convert, but I volunteered for the task joining the others. On the appointed day I went out with about 30 movies in a back bag and prayerfully I knock the first door. Few seconds a boy opened it and I asked if his mom or dad were home. He shouted to his mom telling her that a man had the VHS of Jesus in his hand. Immediately she shouted back: “Tell this Jehovah’s witness to get out of our home. Close this door now!” Instantly the boy obeyed his mom and shut the door in my face. I went to my second try expecting a better response. With the movie under my arm, I knocked, and a woman opened. Before I could say anything she told me, “I have told the last Jehovah’s Witness to stop knocking my door. Do not bother me.” The next thing I heard was a slammed in my face. In my third attempted the same story happened again. I just heard this man: “I am busy now Jehovah’s Witness. Leave me alone.”

Finally, in my fourth target, I stopped for a few minutes, had few deep breaths, and courageously I marched on to this small gate. Holding the movie with two fingers, I knocked and as soon as the woman opened her door and, before she could say anything I said to her, “Listen ma’am, I am not Jehovah’s Witness; I am here to give you this film for free.” She was very upset and looking straight into my eyes this woman said: “Why are you saying that? Do you have anything against us? I am a Jehovah’s Witness.” And the next thing I saw, it was the woman in rage closing her door in my face. I never forgot this episode of my first street evangelism venture. Up to that time, I never really give much attention to other religious groups. For me they were all the same, as most of them seemed to speak about God, Jesus and the Bible. Nevertheless, from that time on I thought to explore and to study about the several so-called Christian groups. I discovered among them so many similarities, and I knew that it was not going to be an easy task, as all societies claimed to be the ones who had the true Christianity. My questions were: Was it really important to spend my time and efforts with such tasks?



Would be a problem before God, these pluralistic theological views? Is there any problem with extra-biblical doctrines? Did unscriptural dogma these people teach would interfere with salvation? Is it factual that every group who claim to be Christian is actually Christian?

If such groups are presenting a false religion:

- Was it possible to find the true one?
- Where could I get resources to recognize the true from the false?
- What and where could I find it?

Soon after, I read a small article on counterfeit money. The information really helped me to deal with my challenge. They raised some questions related to fake cash:

- It is danger to receive, to keep or to use counterfeit money?
- Why is it important to detect a true from fake money?
- Is there any way to know the true from fake currency?
- What is the best technique to recognize a dollar denomination?

I will share with you some insights about counterfeit money to explain the analogy of both subjects.

How to detect counterfeit US money²

Counterfeit money will often feel distinctly different from authentic money:

- Authentic money is made from cotton and linen fibers. This differs significantly from normal paper, which is made from trees. Real money is made to be more durable and should feel crisp despite its age; normal paper becomes torn and soft when worn.
- The paper that banknotes are printed on is not sold commercially. Also, the chemical composition of the paper and ink is confidential. Even if you do not have much experience in spotting a counterfeit, you should notice a clear difference in texture.

- Genuine currency has slightly raised ink that is produced in the intaglio printing process. You should be able to feel the texture of this ink, especially if you are holding a new dollar bill.
- Run your fingernail over the portrait's vest of the bill. You should feel distinctive ridges. Counterfeiters cannot reproduce this.

The National banks have more warns to the population about identification of fake money:



- Notice the relative flatness and lack of detail on the fake bill. Look carefully at the printing quality.
- Real U.S. bills are printed using techniques that regular offset printing and digital printing (the most popular tools for all but the most sophisticated counterfeiters) cannot replicate. Look for blurry areas, especially in fine details such as around the borders--real bills have clear, unbroken borders-- and on the Federal Reserve and Treasury seals, where the saw tooth points should be sharp and well-defined in genuine bills. Portraits in fake bills may appear dull, blurred, and flat, while in real currency, the portraits are sharp and contain very fine detailing.
- Look for colored fibers in the paper. All U.S. bills have tiny red and blue fibers embedded in the paper. Counterfeiters sometimes try to reproduce these by printing or drawing these fibers onto the paper, but close inspection reveals, however, that on the counterfeit note you will see that they are printed on, rather than being part of the paper itself.
- Examine the serial numbers. Make sure that the serial numbers on a bill match, and look at them carefully. Fake bills may have serial numbers that are not evenly spaced or that are not perfectly aligned in a row. If you received multiple suspicious bills, see if the serial numbers are the same on both bills. If they are the same, then they are counterfeit notes.
- Compare the bill with another of the same denomination and series. If the bill feels all right, or if you are a little suspicious but unsure, hold the bill side by side with another bill. Different denominations, obviously, look different, so get a note of the same amount.

CANADA

What to do if you receive a counterfeit bill³:

Each business that handles cash should have a policy for identifying counterfeit currency and dealing with a situation when counterfeit money is received. The following advice from the Bank of Canada website provides a good guideline.

- a) If you suspect that a bill is counterfeit, look for problems with other security features. Try to identify problems with at least 2 security features.
- b) Always put the safety of yourself and your staff first.
- c) If you are convinced that the bill is counterfeit, stop the transaction and inform the customer that you believe the note is suspicious. Inform the customer that it is both your company policy and required by law for you to keep the note and hand it over to the police.

Free educational resources for merchants

- If your business regularly receives cash payments it only makes sense to invest in counterfeit detection training for yourself and your employees. You will want to learn how to spot counterfeit bills from both the new Canadian Journey series and older notes as well.
- The Bank of Canada has taken many steps to help business owners with this task and provide a variety of straightforward, useful resources -- free of charge. These include:
 - Online training: the Bank of Canada website has a series of training modules that provided a detailed explanation of things like the security features on the new Canadian Journey series notes. They also have follow-up quizzes for each training module.



According to governmental and private banks, it is significant to contrast and to find counterfeit currencies or you could be the next victim.

Researchers had found a group of people who have a simple way to recognize fake money: "People, who handle money many times, such as cashiers, can detect a lower-quality fake bill instantly just by touching it." You may not have that much experience,

but just about everybody has handled enough money that they can detect many counterfeits simply by feeling the texture, and paying attention, get to know the true ones.

In other words, more a person deals with the true dollar bill easier they can find the forged ones.

MY LESSONS FROM FAKE MONEY AND FAKE RELIGION

As I got the answered about questions on counterfeit money, I had a new approach to my theological questions.

I found amazing lessons that I applied to my investigation.

1. I have to be in a daily contact with the Scriptures:

This is the main key to recognize true Christianity. As people who handle money daily and can easily just by touching discern fake ones, you should daily study the Bible, therefore, when a fake doctrine appears you could easily discern its inaccuracy.

2. I have to understand that as fake money can cause loss so does fake religion:

Shortly, I will quote some Bible verses that will show you the spiritual danger to follow a counterfeit Christianity, to serve a false Christ and to embrace a false gospel.

3. I have to know that as governments give free tools for its population to avoid deception, God had provided free of charge resources to protect His people from spiritual fraud:

There are true teachers and godly people serving the true Jesus and preaching the true gospel. I had many good and faithful Christians that helped me to grow in knowledge of the Scriptures and in my faith. I also had discovered that as often I have studied the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit helped me and guided me in my Christian journey, "*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and will bring to your remembrance all things that I have said to you.*" John 14: 26

4. I should also understand the major similarities of cults.

You will discover that the cultists have a lot in common. Even though they claim to be a divinely selected group, there is a pattern among them. I will give you a very good research book that had helped me a lot in this area.

The New Testament has much to say and to teach about fake Christianity. In the gospels and almost all the epistles, there are always warnings from Jesus and the apostles against spiritual deception. I had selected some Scripture verses to clarify and to explain possible doubts and concern about the subject.

I. **What did Jesus say about the theme?**

“And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many... For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders.” Matthew 24: 4,5,24

Jesus clearly stated that his disciples should be attentive, wise and informed about false Christianity. Why would the Lord recommend these things to his followers? It is important to remember that He was answering the following questions of his disciples, *“Tell us,” they said, “when this will happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” Matthew 24: 3.* Jesus said that in the last days an increasing wave of fake Christs and prophets would appear to deceive humanity. And he also mentioned how counterfeit Christians would do miracles, therefore would not be by miracles we could recognize the phony Christians, but by the doctrine they teach:

- *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” Matthew 7: 21-23*
- *“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8: 31-32*
- *“Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death.” John 8: 51*
- *“If you love me, keep my commands. “ John 15:15*
- *“Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.” John 14: 23*

II. What did the apostles write to the churches about cultists?

a. *The apostle Paul wrote:*

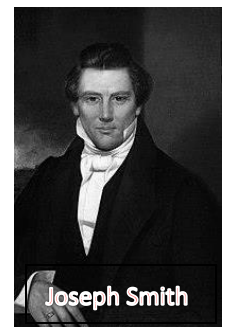
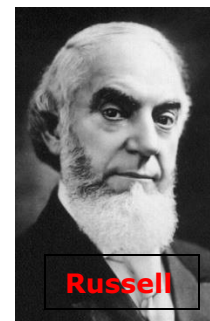
- *“But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.” II Corinthians 11: 3-4*

According to Paul, Christians had to make sure that the Jesus they are following is the one described in the Bible. The one born of a virgin, the Son of God and the son of Man, the perfect person ever lived on earth, without sin, the one who offered himself as the sacrifice to save sinners, therefore he was crucified, died on the cross, buried and three days later he rose again. He is equal with the Father in all the divine attributes and worthy of glory, honor, praises. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Paul spoke about the true Holy Spirit that Christians receive when they repent and accept Christ as their personal savior and Lord. The true Spirit will anoint, guide, teach and comfort the disciples and glorify the person of Jesus Christ. He is also divine as Scriptures teaches. He has the same divine attributes that the Father and the Son have, such as Omnipotence, Omniscience and, omnipresence. And finally he said that Christians should know how to discern the true gospel. The Apostle summarized the gospel in his first letter to the same church with these words:

- *“Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the*

THE MORMONISM

Joseph Smith Jr. (December 23, 1805 – June 27, 1844) was an American religious leader and founder of Mormonism and the Latter Day Saint Movement. When he was 24, Smith published the Book of Mormon. By the time of his death, 14 years later, he had attracted tens of thousands of followers and founded a religion that continues to the present with millions of global adherents.



THE JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES

The Jehovah's Witnesses was begun by Charles Taze Russell in 1872. Russell claimed that the Bible could be only understood according to his interpretations.

Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,..." I Corinthians 15: 1-4

In his next letter addressed to the churches of Galatia, Paul was very concerned with cultists infiltrating among the disciples and disseminating false-doctrines. He wrote:

- *"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!" Galatians 1: 6-9*

Amazingly, this letter was written almost two thousand years ago, and to my surprised when I read it, I discovered that many times I had religious' visitors in my house, bringing besides the Bible an extra book in their hands, affirming that their founder had received another "revelation" from an angel. It is exactly what Scriptures warned Christ's followers. Another important reason cited in the verses is that such people who preach another gospel is under a curse. No matter how polite, how generous or, how smart they are, the fact is that according to the Scriptures they are like danger beasts after their prey:

- *"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves." Matthew 7: 15*

Paul also sent a letter to his co-worker Timothy warning of demonic actions among false-teachers to take some away from the faith:

- *"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. I Timothy 4: 1-2*

b. The apostle Peter also mentioned in his letter about such problems.

- *"But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has*

long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.” II Peter 2: 1-3

Peter called the false-teachers, actors and liars and their teaching fables. Again, Scriptures warning through Peter that such cultists denied Christ's deity and His redemptive work on the cross. They are also after the money and prestige, therefore, under divine judgment.

c) ***The apostle John wrote:***

- *“Watch out that you do not lose what we[a] have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. 11 Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work.” II John 8-11*

He urged Christians to know the true gospel, the true Jesus, the true doctrine and to discern the false teachers. He also cautioned about the danger of being misguided by false teaching. He said to check the doctrines out. Is it the true gospel? Is the true Jesus? Otherwise, get away from them.

Mentioned the Scriptures above, it is clear that salvation is for those who follow and know the true Jesus, who had accepted the true gospel, who had received the true Spirit and worship the true God.

A person can be very religious, very philosophical, practicing good works, self-flagellation, knocking doors and deliver religious magazines, however, if they are not serving the true Jesus, accepted the true gospel, have the true Spirit, they are completely lost.

Who takes the sinners to heaven are not religions, but a person. His name is Jesus Christ. He said:

- *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me..” John 14: 6*

Paul, the apostle, wrote:

- *“If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you*

believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved” Romans 10: 9-10

Peter, the apostle, wrote:

- *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12*

John, the apostle, wrote:

- *“From Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.” Revelation 1: 5,6*

MY LAST VHS

Coming back to the 300 hundred videos, we distributed almost all. I had just one left at home. Soon after this evangelistic campaign, I heard an almost audible voice telling me to share the gospel with my physician. However, I was afraid to obey it. I felt intimidated, as he was a man of few words and always straightforward in his interaction. For weeks the voice persisted speaking and I kept struggling to comply with it. Finally, I said to myself: “I will take this last movie and give it to him, nothing else.” Then, I wrapped it and took it to his office. After my appointment was over, before leaving the room I threw the VHS at him from a short distance and then, I ran out from there.

Two weeks after, I had to see him again. Arriving at the office, the waiting area was full, and I had not yet seated, when he saw me and called my name. He took me to a private room near the examination room, asking me to wait there. About ten minutes after, he came in, and looking straight into my eyes he said: “Do you know the movie you gave last time you came in?” I was afraid with the question and answered him a quick yes. He replied, “I, my wife and my children all accepted Christ as our personal Saviour and Lord. Thank you that you brought me this blessing present.” The man became a very faithful Christian, travelling hundreds of times on short mission trips carrying the gospel and his professional skills to the needy.

ARE YOU A TRUE CHRISTIAN?

Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord?

If you don't and want to know how to do it you must:

- *Admit you are a sinner: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" (Romans 3:23)*
- *Be willing to turn from sin (repent): "In the past God overlooked people's lack of knowledge; but now He commands all people everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30)*
- *Believe that Jesus Christ died for you, was buried, and rose from the dead: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16)*
- *Through prayer, invite Jesus into your life to become your personal Saviour: "For, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:13)*

What to pray: Dear God, I am a sinner and need forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ shed His precious blood and died for my sins. I am willing to turn from sin. I now invite Christ to come into my heart and life as my personal Saviour.

To God be the glory!

RESOURCES ABOUT CULTS

In the link bellow there is a great study done by Dr. Walter Martin that would be of great help for you on the subject. Dr. Martin was recognized as the leading authority on cults. He was the author of a dozen books, many booklets, and uncounted articles. His Kingdom of the Cults is the standard reference. Dr. Martin taught at various seminaries and Bible colleges through the years and mentored many who have since become leaders in the counter-cult ministry field. He was deservedly called "the Father of cult apologetics."

1. *Jesus (also known as The Jesus Film) is a 1979 biblical drama film directed by Peter Sykes and John Krish, and produced by John Heyman. In Jesus, the life of Jesus Christ is depicted, primarily using the Gospel of Luke as the main basis for the story.*
2. <https://www.wikihow.com/Detect-Counterfeit-US-Money>
3. https://www.canadaone.com/ezine/nov06/catching_counterfeit.html

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