

Counterfeit

What do you think of when you hear about the Secret Service? You probably picture menacing men in sun glasses stoically next to the President of the United States. Images of agents diving in front of the president taking a bullet quickly come to mind.

Interestingly, that is not why the Secret Service was formed. In the days during and immediately after the Civil War in the United States, counterfeit currency was a problem. Experts estimate that nearly one-third of the money in circulation at the time was counterfeit. The Secret Service was formed on July 5, 1865 to suppress the counterfeiting.

Today, though most people only know the Secret Service as the president's bodyguards, it still acts as a police force against counterfeiting and financial fraud. Here in Australia it is dealt with under the Australian Federal Police.

In order to recognise counterfeit currency, officers spend long hours studying real money so thoroughly that they can spot a fake note just by looking at it or holding it.

Oftentimes, they can't even tell you why. They just know it's a fake.

Jesus warned us to watch out for counterfeit teachers. He called them wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15). Though it is unpopular today to talk about "false teachers" or say that a church is teaching "false doctrine," the Bible often warns us of the presence of false teachers and the dangers of false teaching.

The problem most people have is: How do you know who is telling the truth? Every church you visit says they are teaching the truth - that they are saying what the Bible says. Yet, each one is teaching something different.

Some would say that is because the Bible can be interpreted in different ways, that it is somehow vague or open to different people's points of view. If you read the Bible, however, you will find it is not vague. It is not ambiguous. It says what it says.

Just because a church or preacher talks about God, Jesus, love or peace, does not mean they are teaching what the Bible says.

So how can you know? How can you spot the counterfeit teachers and teachings? Simple. Just study the real currency. Open your Bible. Read, learn and inwardly digest it. The more you know what the Bible says, the more easily you will be able to spot a fake.

