

GOD'S WORD

COMMERCIALISM

Commercializing Christ: Modern-Day Indulgence Sales; The Truth For Sale

I) BUYING AND SELLING IN THE HOUSE OF GOD!

– Which dishonours God *in Your Eyes/in Your Opinion*

FOOTNOTE 1: WHEN GOD'S PATIENCE WAS EXHAUSTED

A FEW EXCUSES USED FOR THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF CHURCH BUILDINGS:

Excuse 1)

"Jesus was preaching in the OLD Testament, not the New!"

Excuse 2)

"These passages of the Bible are obsolete: WE are now the temple of the Holy Ghost!"

EXCUSE 2 continued)

"These passages of the Bible are obsolete: WE are now the temple of the Holy Ghost

What Makes the House Holy?

a) The Presence of God!

- IN God's presence

FOOTNOTE 2: ALL OF NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE IS APPLICABLE TO EVERY CHRISTIAN

FOOTNOTE 3: JESUS PREACHED THE NEW TESTAMENT, NOT THE OLD. THEREFORE, ALL HE TAUGHT IS FOR EVERYONE TODAY

EXCUSE 2 continued)

"These passages of the Bible are obsolete: WE are now the temple of the Holy Ghost

What Makes the House Holy?

b) The Presence of God's People!

- AS God's presence

Excuse 3)

"Christ's anger, here, is merely because they were being dishonest in their business transactions!"

Excuse 4)

"But it's for God's work!"

Excuse 5)

"What harm could it do? If at all, this is only a minor sin; why concern ourselves with it?"

Excuse 6)

"But without being commercial we wouldn't be able to exist as a church/ministry, or to conduct this particular ministry!"

II) PREACHING TO ONLY THOSE WITH MONEY

OR

CHARGING MONEY FOR THE PREACHING OF THE WORD

– Which honours the preacher and dishonours the audience

- Books, Miracles, and Preaching For Sale
- A Result of Commercialism: Market-Based Preaching

GOD'S WORD COMMERCIALISM

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Commercializing Christ: Modern-Day Indulgence Sales; The Truth For Sale
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While it's been common in Roman Catholicism, an extremely disturbing trend has made itself known the last number of years in evangelical places of worship ... the practice of charging money. This is diametrically opposed to everything that God stands for. It flies in the face of the Word of God:

I) BUYING AND SELLING IN THE HOUSE OF GOD!

– Which dishonours God *in Your Eyes/in Your Opinion*

IN HIS ROUGHLY 33 years of life on earth Jesus rarely got angry. On one occasion Jesus was perturbed when His disciples prevented children from coming to see Him (Mark 10:14).

14 But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Mark 10:14 The BIBLE

On another occasion Jesus was angered when the Pharisees attempted to stop Him from healing on the Sabbath (Mark 3:5).

5 And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

Mark 3:5 The BIBLE

But in the only two instances in which we are shown Jesus' outright, passionate, rage, Jesus is at His most vehement. On these two occasions Jesus indeed surpasses Himself, flying into a rage, and, in fact, making whips and flogging people, violently overturning furniture, destroying people's businesses and means of earning a living, and physically casting people out of His presence and the presence of God. Jesus was

moved to this degree on two occasions¹ only ... and both for the same reason. The offense was not adultery, murder, nor cruelty. The unconscionable sin was that of buying and selling in the temple of God.

These two occasions address the identical concern. And these two instances flank His ministry: Jesus casts the merchants out of the temple at the beginning of His ministry (John 2:13-17) and at the end of His ministry (Matt.21:12-13; Mk.11:15-17, Luke 19:45-46) – in fact, the matter is so important that He not only is at His most vehement, but repeats the action! And He does it not only at the beginning of His ministry, but also at the end of His ministry, to show that its need has not only continued, but has remained applicable throughout!

But, despite the prominent position these actions of Christ hold in His earthly biography, many are loathe to obey Him themselves, as though what Jesus did was inconsequential!

While churches usually don't advertise well, they certainly are beginning to do business! Pre-schools, schools, weight loss businesses, thrift stores, dance studios, convention and meetings, etc., are found in our churches during the week, while coffee shops, Christian book stores, etc., join them, on Sundays. What's more, churches are now often selling coffee and snacks during church (or during mid-service break), and allowing the pastor or visiting preachers or groups to sell books, tapes, CDs, DVDs, etc., before, during, and after service. And along with the service's announcements, fund raising pitches are made, for baking and special fund-raising dinners, etc., and weekly church bulletin brochures are filled with fundraising flyers, advertisements for trips to the Holy Land with the pastor, Christmas banquet pricing, specials the church has secured on books the pastor or cell groups will be using in teaching, items church members have for sale, and advertisements by businesses owned by Christian businessmen.

And, as usual, these individuals and institutions seek to systematize their sin, to, "delineate their deviancy," seeking, as in other cases, to make disobedience to God, into orthodoxy, or common practice. Sin, like, "misery, loves company," and seeks to legitimize itself by historical or Theological revision, and common practice by as many people as possible ("Mob Rule," or, "Doctrine by Democracy"). The feeling is, that, if enough people do it, it must be okay, or, at least, 'my own sin will get lost in the crowd.' Also, knowing that God provides very clear direction regarding His house, those who would disobey Him naturally feel a need to revise God's Words, and bring into question the validity of His Instruction. As Satan's original temptation to Eve to sin: "Did God REALLY say...?"

For this reason many excuses for disobeying God in relation to this matter have been formulated. A few of them are addressed below:

FOOTNOTE:

¹WHEN GOD'S PATIENCE WAS EXHAUSTED

While these two occasions are the only ones in which Jesus' patience with individuals was exhausted during His earthly ministry, resulting in their dramatic punishment, these occasions are not unprecedented in the annals of His Father's dealing with man.

God's, "getting fed up," with man is related in the events of: the Great Flood (Gen. 6-8), the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 19), God's desire to destroy the rebellious Israelites in the desert (Deu. 9:14), and His planned destruction of satan and sinners in the events of the Last Judgement.

It should additionally be noted that all such occasions are, with God, without exception, "the last straw," and so rare as to be otherwise without precedent. Such a response from God is always in recognition of the state of utter depravity and irreconcilability of the guilty. This, "giving up," on the part of God, and His subsequent, 'delivering them up to destruction,' is explained in detail in Romans 1:18-32, in which the sins responsible include homosexuality, idolatry, fornication, murder, hating God, and more. Jesus reached such a state of exhausted patience with sin, on these two occasions, 'giving up,' on the sinners, and casting them out of the Presence of God. For the sin of despising the house of God, and buying and selling within it.

A FEW EXCUSES USED FOR THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF CHURCH BUILDINGS

EXCUSE 1 *“Jesus was preaching in the OLD Testament, not the New!”*

Jesus’ entire ministry was the New Testament. Jesus didn’t come, preach the Old Testament, then switch and teach the New Testament, then die and resurrect! His entire ministry was the New Testament!

16 The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the Gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into It.

Luke 16: 16 The BIBLE

Jesus never preached Old Testament doctrine; His entire message was New Testament doctrine. If Jesus’s Words and doctrine were in fact merely a continuation of the Old Testament we could legitimately disregard everything He taught, as being merely Old Testament commands for the Jewish nation, and not teachings of righteousness intended for an international New Testament audience (and, in fact, this is exactly what this excuse attempts: to de-legitimize the Words and commands of Christ)! Such an argument would limit the New Testament, and our responsibility of obedience to merely those sections of the New Testament outside the Gospels; and there are many heretics who attempt to de-legitimize those sections of the New Testament, saying that they’re not the Words of Jesus!

While the Holy Spirit, He Who characterizes and enables the New Testament was indeed not given until the Day of Pentecost, He was given only because of the non-presence of Jesus.

13 In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which Is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 1: 13 The BIBLE

Before the Holy Spirit was given, it was the presence of Jesus that enabled the disciples. It was the presence of Jesus, not of the Holy Spirit, that established the New Testament; the Holy Spirit is only the representative, the proof, the token of Jesus. Jesus said, not that the Holy Spirit established the New Testament, but that it was Jesus.

19 And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me.

20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you. **Luke 22:19 The BIBLE**

EXCUSE 2) *“These passages of the Bible are obsolete: WE are now the temple of the Holy Ghost!”*

Some would suggest that, as the people of God are now (in the New Testament) called the temple of the Holy Ghost,

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost Which Is in you,
Which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

1 Corinthians 6:19 The BIBLE

... that the physical building in which we worship is now merely a building, little different from any other building of stone and wood. For this reason, say they, we may do almost whatever we want in a church building, and hold the structure in the same low regard we might show any other structure of earth and wood.

However, six chapters after Jesus casts out the merchants (near the beginning of His ministry in John 2), in John 8, when Jesus is asked to condone the execution of a woman who, by adultery, has defiled her, fleshly 'temple of the Holy Ghost,' Jesus is understanding and forgiving, saying, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more." In comparison, when, six chapters previously, Jesus finds that the stone temple of God, in Jerusalem, is defiled, He becomes irate! While Jesus would not condone others' violence against the adulterer, and both personally and publicly pardoned her, He did become personally violent against those buying and selling in the temple – He personally flogged them – and on two different occasions! Yet, when some Christians today are given the choice, they would rather Jesus switched His reactions! Apparently God's priorities for both are not what these liberal Christians would do! Unlike the desires of many Christians, in the New Testament God would neither stone a person to death for adultery, nor allow His houses of worship to be defiled by commerce!

8 For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways,
and My thoughts than your thoughts.

10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither,
but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to
the sower, and bread to the eater:

11 So shall My Word be That goeth forth out of My mouth: It shall not return unto Me
void, but It shall accomplish that which I please, and It shall prosper in the thing
whereto I sent It.

Isaiah 55:8 The BIBLE

So, judging by Jesus' actions, the desecration of which temple is more serious to our Lord? And, in comparison, just how much respect is given each, by today's liberal Christian? And finally, what are we as individual Christians (and much more, Christian leaders) going to do about this – continue as is, or adjust our actions accordingly (not by decreasing our respect and treatment of either, but by increasing our respect and treatment of both, to be comparable to that given each of them by Christ Himself – DESPITE what other Christians may do or say!)

Yes, the New Testament Christian is, indeed, the temple of the Holy Spirit ...

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost Which is in you,
which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

1 Corinthians 6:19 The BIBLE

... but Jesus Himself made a concerted and repeated effort to show us His respect for God's, "stone and wood house," in the New Testament!

17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

I Cor. 11:17-22 The BIBLE

EXCUSE 2 continued)

"These passages of the Bible are obsolete: WE are now the temple of the Holy Ghost!"

What Makes the House Holy?

a) The Presence of God!

Two chapters after Christ, in Matt. 21:12-13, casts the merchants out of the temple for the second time, Jesus actually defines what it is that makes a, "house of God," so sacred. Jesus, speaking in the NEW Testament, not the Old, and teaching NEW Testament doctrine, for NEW Testament Christians,² says:

FOOTNOTE:

² ALL OF NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE IS APPLICABLE TO EVERY CHRISTIAN

25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

John 21:25 The BIBLE

In other words, God chose the events in the Life of Jesus, that we read of in Scripture to be the **only** events and Words of Jesus that He wanted to use in Scripture! John 21:25 tells us that there are many more events and Words of Jesus that God could have used in Scripture, but that God chose not to use. By this, we know that EVERY event and Word of Jesus used in Scripture is for US... for EVERYONE who reads them (God excluded from Scripture anything and everything from the life of Christ that was not applicable to EVERYONE reading the New Testament.) For this reason, we read that:

16 All Scripture Is given by inspiration of God, and Is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

II Timothy 3:16 The BIBLE

There is an unquantifiable amount of Jesus' history that was never written in the Word of God, because it wasn't applicable to us! (i.e., things Jesus said to individuals which were none of our business, and might have confused Jesus' Words to us, as individuals.) Therefore, we can know that everything that is written within Its pages is for US! In giving us His Word, God sifted through all of Jesus' history, and gave us exactly, completely, and solely that which is applicable to us, and required of us. Put simply, there is no extraneous, extra, nor unnecessary, "filler," material in the Bible, in particular, the New Testament: it's all intended for us!

16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him that sitteth thereon.

Matthew 23:16 The BIBLE

Jesus thus states, in the NEW Testament³, not the Old, and teaching NEW Testament doctrine, for NEW Testament Christians, that:

FOOTNOTE:

³**JESUS PREACHED THE NEW TESTAMENT, NOT THE OLD. THEREFORE, ALL HE TAUGHT IS FOR EVERYONE TODAY.**

16 The Law and the Prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

Luke 16: 16 The BIBLE

Jesus WAS and IS the New Testament! The Old Testament ended with John the Baptist; the New Testament began with Jesus! The suggestion that Jesus' Words ANYWHERE were for only an OLD Testament audience would nullify ALL that Jesus taught! Jesus did NOT teach during the Old Testament, nor did He teach nor preach the Old Testament. Jesus Is and brought the New Testament!

16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

Luke 16:16 The BIBLE

15 And for this cause He Is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

Hebrews 9:15 The BIBLE

That is why, when Jesus came along, John decreased, then died, during Jesus' sojourn on earth, in order for Jesus to increase, and flourish, and that the New Testament might begin at that time.

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all.

32 And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

33 He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God Is true.

34 For He Whom God hath sent speaketh the Words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him.

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand.

John 3:26-35 The BIBLE

- i)* God, “dwelleth therein” – within the physical, wood and stone building used for His worship.
- ii)* For that reason the house of God (“temple”) is greater than the gifts to God within the house of God.

Jesus was not sent to preach Old Testament doctrine; Jesus Was and Is the NEW Testament. Jesus states that God dwells within the building used for His worship. And He states that because of the fact that He lives in the physical house of worship, what is within it is made holy (sanctified).

The modern Christian loves to read verses such as:

4 Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee. Selah

Psalm 84:4 The BIBLE

1 I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord

Psalm 122:1 The BIBLE

16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read

Luke 4:16 The BIBLE

52 And they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen

Luke 24:52 The BIBLE

... but if there were no particular place of God, these verses and many more would be moot/unimportant! Why would we gain such pleasure considering spending time in God’s house, rather than merely as God’s house? “The house of God,” cannot be simply re-interpreted by liberal Christians as, “the presence of God,” because God differentiates between His child’s personal time in the presence of God, and the corporate gathering together of His people as the presence of God.

IN God’s Presence

11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Psalm 16:11 The BIBLE

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I Am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Matthew 28:20 The BIBLE

EXCUSE 2 continued)

“These passages of the Bible are obsolete: WE are now the temple of the Holy Ghost!”

What Makes the House Holy?

b) The Presence of God’s People!

Where God’s people are gathered together in His Name the place is sacred, and, as spoken by God, is to be recognized and sanctified as such. It is not only the place that is holy, but also the presence of God

and His people make it holy. And as such, it is to be a sanctified and respected place of worship of God, and of ministry to God's people.

AS God's Presence

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Hebrews 10:25 The BIBLE

20 For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there Am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 18:20 The BIBLE

God thus identifies, "the Church," as being as much, 'the location,' of His people, as, 'His people,' themselves. And, if God's people are a sacred thing, not to be hindered, so, also, their location.

EXCUSE 3) "Christ's anger, here, is merely because they were being dishonest in their business transactions."

Jesus cleansed the temple twice: once, at the beginning, and once, near the end of His ministry. The first time, related in John 2:13-17, Jesus referred to their making the temple a house of merchandise

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not My Father's house an house of merchandise.

17 And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up.

John 2: 16-17 (Psalm 69:9) The BIBLE

The second time Christ cleansed the temple, written of in: Matt.21:12-13; Mk.11:15-17, Luke 19:45-46, near the end of His ministry, Jesus quotes Jeremiah 7:11, and declares their attitude toward the temple as being comparable to the disdain one would give a den of thieves.

11 Is this house, which is called by My Name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord.

Jeremiah 7:11 The BIBLE

Jesus, in the New Testament citations, quotes a mere four Words from the verse in Jeremiah and expects that the rest of the quotation, "in your eyes," or, "in your opinion," will be understood by His hearers, as it's integral to the passage He's quoting. The Old Testament passage rebukes those who fail to respect, or who even despise the temple of God. God doesn't mean, in Jeremiah, that the temple has necessarily been made a literal, "den of thieves," or, "a place where robbery takes place," but that, in their eyes, it's become despised, a, "place of disrepute," or simply, just a place that's not worthy of the respect God requires of it ("... a den of robbers in your eyes"). Jesus' reason for anger is more their attitude of disdain toward the temple than for their actions (the disciples recognized this on the occasion of the first cleansing, realizing that Psalm 69's "zeal of [love/enthusiasm for] Thine house" referred to Jesus).

In John, a passage of Scripture (Psalm 69:9) is quoted to illustrate the attitude of Jesus. In the Synoptics, a passage of Scripture (Jeremiah 7:11) is quoted to illustrate the attitude of the merchants and of those passing through the temple. Jesus also cast out those who bought, and those who carried things

through the temple – purchasers and couriers are not, “thieves!” Jesus’ rebuke was not merely for criminal acts; it was for those who did things in the temple other than what Jesus and His Father had always intended - for those who showed the temple less respect than what it deserved, being the house of God! Jesus rebuked them, "It is written, My house is the house of prayer (Isaiah 56:7)," but ye have made it a den of thieves (“in your eyes” – Jer. 7:11).

15 And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves
 16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.
 17 And He taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Mark 11:15-17 The BIBLE

1 The Word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
 2 Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this Word, and say, Hear the Word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD.
 3 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.⁴
 4 Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these.
 5 For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour;
 6 If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt:
 7 Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.
 8 Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.
 9 Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;
 10 And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?
 11 Is this house, which is called by My Name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD.
 12 But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel.
 13 And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not;
 14 Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.

FOOTNOTE:

⁴ 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Psalms 23:6 The BIBLE

4 One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple.

Psalms 27:4 The BIBLE

15 And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.

16 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.

17 Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

Jeremiah 7:1-17 The BIBLE

'Has this place become *despised, dishonourable, and disreputable* **in your eyes?**'

EXCUSE 4) "But it's for God's work!"

Some suggest that, if the advertising or merchandising done in the house of God is for God's work, it's justified! But it was exactly for the, "work of God," that the sellers of oxen, sheep, and doves, and moneychangers, were in the temple! That was exactly where those animals were needed (for sacrifices). The moneychangers were there to convert Roman currency, the money used on the streets, into temple currency, the only coinage considered by the Jews to be holy enough to be used as tithes and offerings and put into the coffers, or, "cast into the treasury (Lu. 21:1)," of the sacred house of God. The people who did commerce in the temple did so for the, "work of God," – the very same people Jesus whipped and cast out of the temple for doing that in the house of God!

22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the Word of the LORD, He hath also rejected thee from being king.

I Samuel 15:22-23 The BIBLE

EXCUSE 5) "What harm could it do?"

If at all, this is only a minor sin; why concern yourself with it?

This was the **only** sin at which Jesus ever flew into a rage, whipped people, overturned furniture, and physically cast people out! a MINOR sin? "What harm could it do?" Ask Jesus.

8 For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8 The BIBLE

EXCUSE 6) "But without being commercial we wouldn't be able to exist

as a church/ministry, or to conduct this particular outreach/ministry!"

The end definitely does not justify the means!

Sometimes we develop tunnel vision, an inability to see farther/wider than what we're doing now, or have done before. We fail to see, "outside the box," to be able to see any other solutions.

Perhaps we have overstepped our commission from God. God definitely WILL provide the means, for the ministry He has commissioned!

Perhaps our commission in this place/way/time is finished.

One is tempted to wonder how effective the ministry of Paul the Apostle would have been if he had relied on the gifts and support of others.

When, to sacrifice to God, King Saul saved rescued sheep and oxen from the God-ordained complete slaughter of the Amalekites (I Samuel 15), Saul was enabling a ceremony of sacrifice that could not have been possible otherwise. Those animals were exactly what was needed to sacrifice to God; surely God would be pleased! But Saul at that moment lost the kingship of Israel because, in saving those animals from slaughter, he had disobeyed God's express command! Sometimes, what seems like what would be a great ministry is enabled only by disobedience to God, by commercializing His house, no matter how, "minimally."

22 Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the Word of the LORD, He hath also rejected thee from being king.

I Samuel 15:22-23 The BIBLE

The end definitely does NOT justify the means!

II) PREACHING TO ONLY THOSE WITH MONEY

OR

CHARGING MONEY FOR THE PREACHING OF THE WORD

– Which honours the preacher and dishonours the audience

11 The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.

Micah 3:11 The BIBLE

CHRISTIAN BOOKS ARE written, requiring payment before a copy may be obtained! What is this other than preaching for hire, denying preaching to those who cannot pay! Jesus was willing to live in city parks (Garden of Gethsemane) and eat others' garbage (the 12 baskets of trash collected after the feeding of the five thousand and the seven baskets after the feeding of the four thousand) rather than charge money to those who wished to hear the preaching of the Word of God. Keith Green *gave away* his music and books to those unable to purchase them; he exemplified the example of Christ.

"Signs and Wonders," Seminars are held in various places, guaranteeing that the participants will come away from the conference with the ability to perform miracles, healings, etc. The catch? The conference costs the participant a few hundred dollars!

17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

Acts 8:17-23 The BIBLE

Many pastors and evangelists preach nothing but, "give." Some concentrate on preaching about, "seed faith," or make **prosperity doctrine** a major part of their preaching. A few miracles, and the moving of the Holy Spirit, and then, again, "give."

But Jesus gave John the Baptist the example of His preaching to the poor as an evidence of His very Messiahship - of His commission from the Father!

5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

Matthew 11:5 The BIBLE

22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached.

Luke 7:22 The BIBLE

A Result of Commercialism: Market-based Preaching

Christianity has become a great money-maker, a "cash cow." This determines what is preached, and is perhaps the greatest cause of need for most of the sermons on this site about populist disobedience: when cash is the object, one seeks to provide what people wish to buy! Christianity becomes a bottom-up economy, determined by the market, rather than a top-down supply, provided by God!

1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Isaiah 55:1 The BIBLE

Commercialism in God's house was the ONLY reason Jesus ever whipped anyone and physically thrust them out of God's house! Far be it from US to despise His house!