

SOLD

to the
**Highest
Bidder!**

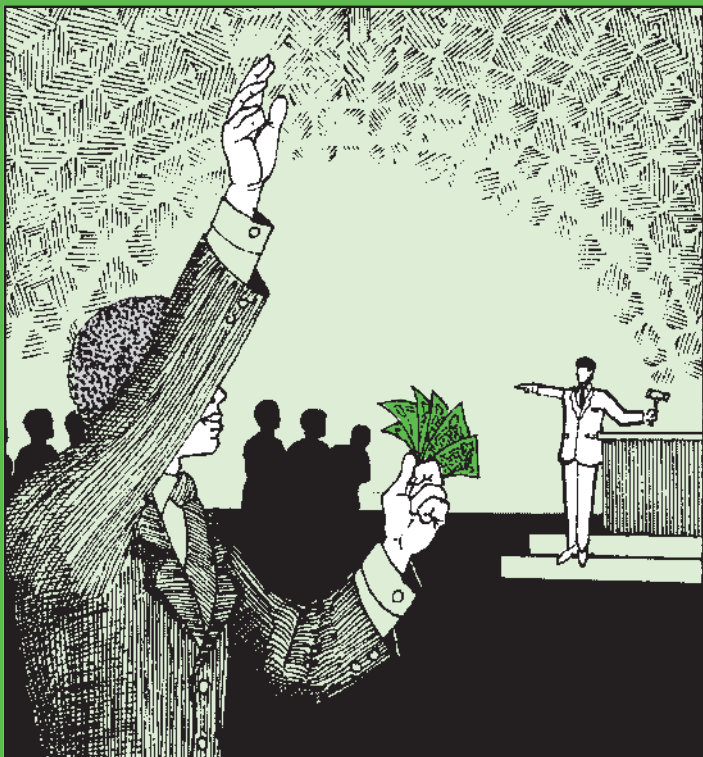


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SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER!

An Auction

The auctioneer starts the bidding off, "What will you give me for this beautiful little item? We'll start the bidding at one hundred; do I hear two? I hear two; do I hear three? Who'll give me three? Who'll give me three?" The bidding continues until others cannot keep up with the bids and the auctioneer finally says, "Going once, going twice, sold to the highest bidder!"



Auctions are well known in the cities. Goods that individuals want to sell are brought to the place of auction. Bids are taken as to the amount the people want to pay and the highest offer gets the item put up for sale. Usually the sale item is sold within a five minute time limit so this means that the bidding becomes fast and furious as those involved try to outbid each other and seek the attention of the auctioneer.

Another Auction

There is another type of auction going on today in various places of society – the auctioning off of principles and consciences. All over the world we see in the news people who are selling out and defecting from their previously confessed principles of right conduct. Sometimes these people even change their beliefs many times, like the wind, and are always ready with the excuse that what they did was right according to their principles and conscience.



True believers and disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ recognize that it is normal for those who only live for this world to act this way, as they are living for their own benefit. However, this auctioning off of principles has absolutely no rightful place in the Church of Jesus Christ.

I am not thinking of church bazaars, bingo games (gambling), dances or “haram-bees” or anything else that solicits money from the unbelieving world to support the work of God. While all these things show

how worldliness has entered into the Church, a far worse evil has crept in among the saints of God and it is the basis for believers being turned and led away from “the truth as it is in Jesus” (Eph 4:21 KJV).

All acceptable offerings to God have to come from true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and be given under the direction of the Spirit of God. Proverbs 15:8 reminds us that “the



sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD.” By contrast, we are told that it was “by faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain” (Heb. 11:4).

Church Shopping

The auctioning we see being done in the professing Church is done by people who call themselves true Christians but who attend and give their services to the church which offers them the most material benefits. Regardless of the differences in doctrine, these professed followers of Jesus Christ are ardently *church shopping*. They are the “wachumi” of the religious world,

out to get the best buys they can possibly obtain. These so-called believers are becoming servants of various church



groups not because of spiritual convictions based on the Bible but because their allegiance is based on the principle of “the auction” – sold to the highest bidder!

Some of the material benefits they are seeking are schooling, travel abroad, a monthly salary, a place of honor or greater respect. All of these things may be good in themselves, but to have material benefits affect our obedience to the Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, and to draw us into disobedience to Him has to be recognized for what it is – *sin!* The Lord Jesus said, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things



which I say?” (Lk. 6:46). The apostles were threatened with beatings and imprisoned for being faithful to the Lord but they told

their accusers, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). They never sold out to the highest bidder!

Auctioning of Principles

Let us look at the “auctioning of principles” which goes on in the world. In the political sphere, we often see a goodly number of defectors from the various political groups. The media refers to these politicians as “political chameleons” because they seem to change – like this reptile changes its color – to coincide with whichever political group benefits them the most at the moment. They seem to have no thoughts of being faithful to their political beliefs nor to their constituency – the people they represent. Their change of political persuasion seems to be motivated only by selfish gain. In one instance, a politician said matter-of-factly: “I was asked to defect from my party, but the other party only offered me a low sum; if they had offered me more I would have considered the offer.”

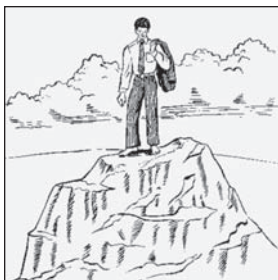


Reader! What are your thoughts about this politician's convictions? Doesn't he



indicate that he was acting just like those who are called "chameleons"? Another politician said that during the same campaign he was offered a good sum of money to defect from his group but

responded, "I will not sell my conscience for any amount of money." What are your thoughts about this latter man? He was evidently a man of conviction, an honorable man, a man faithful to the trust his supporters had placed in him. Of the first politician God says, "He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his

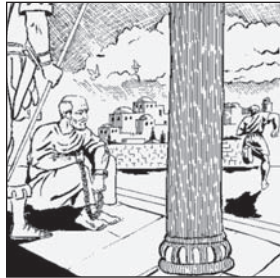


ways" (Jas. 1:8). The second, however, reminds us that "it is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2). Thank God for those who remain faithful in spite of the temptation to violate their principles for material gain!

Now let us look at three examples from Scripture of the auctioning off of principles and conscience among the people of God.

Demas

Demas left the ministry with the apostle Paul due to the stigma of Paul being imprisoned as a faithful servant of Jesus Christ: “Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Tim. 4:10). Galatians 1:4 says that our Lord “gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world” (KJV). Demas had left the Lord’s apostle to follow this “evil world.” The word “world” stands for the evil influence which comes from the prince of this world, Satan, rather than the physical earth.



True believers in the Lord Jesus know from Scripture that *the world* appeals to the flesh (the old nature we inherited from Adam), whereas the path of faith only promises the believer trials, persecution and hardship in this world which rejects

the Lord: "For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1:29); and "You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3); and "To this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21).



Gehazi

In 2 Kings 5, after Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, was healed through the prophet Elisha, he wanted to give gifts to Elisha. However, the prophet of God refused, for he wanted Naaman to realize fully that the power of healing came from God, alone, and not himself. But Elisha's servant, Gehazi, went after Naaman and lied saying that his master had changed his mind and would



accept some gifts on behalf of two needy young men. After he lied and fraudulently received the gifts, he returned home to his master. When Elisha asked where he had gone, he lied again but then Elisha told him that what he had done was revealed to him by the Lord.

The conclusion of this deceitful lusting after material gain is a warning to us now in this Church age. It is an admonition to us of how we *should not* conduct ourselves “in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). Elisha’s admonition to Gehazi is also for us today: “Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants?” (2 Ki. 5:26).

In other words, are we to make money and acquire riches through the gospel? No! If we do, we become infected by the disease of the world: “‘Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever.’ And he went out from his presence leprous” (2 Ki. 5:27).

Leprosy is a picture of sin. The old nature’s tendency to sin eventually appears in the actions of man. No doubt, here it is a picture of the lust for material riches which was prophesied by Elisha. This example is a

warning also about those preachers whose main topic is money rather than “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).

The gospel to the unsaved world has no price tag on it, for the price has been fully



paid by Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. Elisha's words, “Is it a time to receive money?” is similar to what the apostle Paul said: “What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I

may present the gospel of Christ *without charge*” (1 Cor. 9:18).

Our desire is that all true believers will follow the pattern set forth by Paul: “I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:33-35).

May we not let the love of the things in this world take away from us the rightful

place of honor for our Lord so that our families and children do not miss out on the blessing of the Lord: “Do not love the world or the things in the world ... the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 Jn. 2:15,17).



Money Changers

The last example of making merchandise of our principles and conscience is found in John 2:14-16: “And He (Jesus) found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business.



When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those

who sold doves, ‘Take these things away! *Do not make my Father’s house a house of*

merchandise!” In his letter, Jude writes, “I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to *contend earnestly for the faith* which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

“The faith” we are considering is not just the gospel (that is, our Lord’s life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven), but it is all the revealed will of God for His people in this present Church period. The word to heed from Jude is that we should “*contend earnestly for the faith*” – not sell it, trade it, or use it for material advantage. May we be able to join God’s servant in saying, “Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor. 4:1-2).

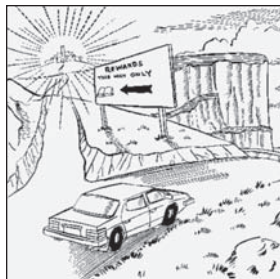
Coming of Babylon

After the Lord Jesus Christ comes for His Church (the true believers), the world will experience seven years of ever-increasing trouble. During this period, known as the

Tribulation, all the churches, no matter what creed they hold, will become one world church but without the truth of God in it. This church is prophesied in Revelation 17-18 and is named "Babylon" which means "confusion." These two chapters tell us of the world church's destruction by the world ruler called the Beast.

Why is this world church called "the false bride"? Because she is not betrothed to the Lord Jesus! She has no heart for the Bridegroom who gave His life to redeem us. She is called the Harlot because she accepts any man and uses him for her pleasure without truth or righteousness and without God and the Bible. She is a "fornicator" to the truth of God for she has the name of Christ but is found entirely unfaithful in heart and works and even called "the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev. 17:6).

For what is this false church known? *Her lust for the things of the world!* "He (the angel) cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fall-



en, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury” (Rev. 18:2,3).

What a change from the beginning of the true Church when the apostle Peter said to the lame man at the temple door, “Silver and gold have I none” (Acts 3:6). “Babylon” is forming now in the various denominations that put the Bible aside and follow their own humanistic thinking. Included in these defections from the truth is the acceptance of practicing homosexuals into the communion of the church and in some cases accepting them as ministers. Truly, this is worse than Sodom and Gomorrah, because it attaches itself to the Holy Name of Jesus Christ. In other cases, women are accepted as having a public place in the gatherings of the church. Certainly this is “Babylon” (confusion) because it is not in God’s plan of order for His house (I Cor. 14:33-36; I Tim 2:8-15). The word for all of the Lord’s true believers connected to any denomination or group which does not follow the Bible and its injunctions of holi-

ness and obedience to “the truth” is, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins” (Rev. 18:4).

Test of Faith

Scripture warns us against the snare of desiring the riches of this world. Matthew 6:19-21 admonishes us: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth ... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven ... for where your *treasure* is, there your heart will be also.” Again, Colossians 3:1-3 exhorts us, “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your *life* is hidden with Christ in God.” Our *treasure* and our *life* is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself – “This is the true God and eternal life” (1 Jn. 5:20). May we be able to say with the apostle, “For to me, to live is Christ” (Phil. 1:21); and also, “I live by the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).



How about you, my friend? What does your “most holy faith” (Jude 21) mean to you? And how much does it mean to you? Would you be like those previously mentioned “chameleons” who sell their principles to the highest bidder? Would you advertise that your faith is up for auction? Would you be a servant of man just so that your tummy can be full or to gain a place of honor or perhaps to enjoy the temporary pleasures of this world?



Remember, Christian brother or sister, the Lord Jesus died for the sake of *the truth*. Do you have the same convictions because of His love? Strong convictions leave indelible marks upon this world whether for the bad or for the good. To have godly convictions centered on the Bible and the Lord Jesus gives honor to God when we “stand” for the truth in the midst of a world vacillating in the darkness of sin. The following two stories are examples of men who stood for right principles.

Gau-Hong

The first was a very brave man committed to a righteous cause. He is not generally known in the world but in his homeland of Taiwan he is considered a hero. Two hundred years ago a tribe of “head-hunters” lived in the mountains. The Taiwanese were terrified of them and tried to think of ways to stop their raids. A courageous man named Gau-Hong decided to move to the mountains for a while to befriend this tribal people and learn their language. He succeeded in gaining their trust and becoming their friend.

He almost persuaded them to give up the cruel practice of head-hunting – killing people and shrinking their heads to the size of an orange and then keeping them as souvenirs or for idol worship. But one day they told Gau-Hong that their biggest festival of the year was about to take place. This time however, instead of raiding the lowlands, they would take just one head. The gods had demanded this. Gau-Hong tried to persuade them to change their minds, but he failed. At last he said to them, “If you must take one head tomorrow morning, kill the first traveler who comes along the hill path.”

The next morning, a man in a brown

coat and red hat came riding along the appointed path. The head hunters sprung out and speared him to death. Only when they went to take his head did they recognize that it was their



friend Gau-Hong. Their sorrow was great. The year was 1769 and from that day head-hunting ceased in Taiwan. Today a statue stands in that nation as a memorial to

Gau-Hong's righteous stand which changed the ways of a tribe and had an impact for good on a whole nation.¹

Auca Missionaries

The second example of men standing firm for their convictions is that of a group of five young missionaries who flew into a dangerous part of the Ecuadorian jungle to make contact with the Auca Indians. While this tribe was few in number, they were greatly feared because they killed any outsiders who came into their territory. But these young men wanted to reach them with the good news of eternal salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

They went knowing the dangers. They carried pistols but would only shoot them in the air to frighten the Aucas if they attacked.

The initial contact went well, but then the Aucas became afraid that others would follow the missionaries and take their land; so they attacked and killed all five young men, leaving behind widows as well as orphaned children. Did these missionaries die in vain? No! Today some of those Aucas who killed the missionaries have been born again and are themselves missionaries to other tribes in the jungle. Also, today, all over the world there are servants of the Lord helping others in so many ways, who were inspired by these five men who stood for the truth.²



Not For Sale

These missionaries were not like Demas, who loved this present evil world. Their purpose in life was to do the will of the Father even as their blessed Lord did (Jn.

4:34), and they were happy to be able to lay up for themselves “the true riches” in heaven where moths and rust do not corrupt nor thieves break through and steal (Lk. 16:11). They were poor in this world’s goods, and yet made many rich; they were as having nothing yet possessing all things (2 Cor. 6:10).

They loved not the world and they laid down their lives for others. Though they are dead, they are still speaking to us today by the conviction and testimony of their steadfast principles: “God has displayed us ... as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men” (1 Cor. 4:9). The Lord Jesus Christ has done far more than what any other person could do for us: “For He (God) made Him (the Lord Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we (sinners) might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

Professor or Possessor?

Dear Christian friend, how about you? Are you ready to live for *the faith*



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FAITH = TRUTH

which is *the truth*? Perhaps you are only a false *professor* of the faith and not a true *possessor*! The Bible warns of those who have a head knowledge of God but do not possess the Spirit of God through repentance of their sins, faith in the Lord Jesus and new birth into the family of God. Hebrews 12:16 warns those who profess faith in Christ and yet are not saved, “lest there be any fornicator (spiritual fornication is idolatry) or profane (worldly) person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.”

Dear unbelieving friend, don't auction off your soul to the false promises of the devil. Satan makes promises which he cannot keep, and the only thing he will give



you is an eternity in hell. The world promises to fill your heart with joy and satisfaction but it cannot do this. Christ alone will fill your heart to overflowing and He will keep every promise He has made! The Lord Jesus said, “I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice” (Jn. 18:37).

SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER

“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Heb. 3:15). Jesus said, “I am the way, *the truth*, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn. 14:6). Truth does not lie! Come to the Lord Jesus today, and accept Him as your Savior: “You shall *know the truth*, and *the truth shall make you free*” (Jn. 8:32).

And the Spirit of God says to His people, “*Buy* (make it yours) *the truth* and do not sell it” (Prov. 23:23). God is offering salvation free to us at His great cost – the death of His Son! You don’t know how long this wonderful offer will last. Your opportunity is now! What is your decision? *What will you do with the Savior?*

END NOTES

1. From *Maid in Taiwan* by Barbara North.
2. From *Through Gates of Splendor* by Elizabeth Elliot.

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