

For Sale By Renter?

by John Nickell

Ever seen a sign like this? I doubt any of us have. It should be obvious why a sign like this should never fly. The person who's selling the item, whatever it is, doesn't have the legal right to sell it. The renter could establish their own terms based on what the item means to them, and since they haven't bought the item out right they have no idea of the true cost and energy associated with owning it. How many of us really had an idea of what owning a home was like while we were renting? Also if the renter wants to keep the true owner happy and less suspicious he may charge you more than you might pay the owner directly.

This arrangement may work out great for a time. The renter gets your participation in their plan, and may reap some financial benefit, and you get the feeling that you've found a great deal. If you haven't checked the small print, you may think you actually own it. The real problem will come later. The true owner will come back. Not only will he be furious at the renter who has attempted to sell his property and/or violated his contract, but he will give you two options, re-negotiate to his terms or be evicted. The terms that the owner may give you may be a more stringent deal than you had previously or they might allow you greater freedoms.

In my mind many denominations and "Christians" have taken God's church which Christ purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28), and are selling God's salvation on the terms that they understand. This has taken many forms.

- **Some renters are selling a never-expiring salvation that is proof to any dents, breaks and discoloration that sin wreaks on our lives.**
- **Some renters are selling salvation that comes at no cost; you don't need to give up any of your current habits; this salvation will cover anything.**
- **Some are selling a salvation that you can buy early for your kids.**
- **Some are selling a salvation that acts upon you in which you really have no say, which sounds good if you are one that it acts upon, but not good for the one who salvation passes over.**
- **Some are selling a salvation that requires obedience to multiple sets of guidelines.**

When put this way it may sound kind of silly but let's take a serious look at why these examples aren't the true way to salvation.

Paul outlined clearly in many of his letters that God requires us to continue and strive for perfection, lest we become disqualified (1 Cor. 9:27) and that we cannot consider ourselves to have already obtained salvation while on this earth (Phil. 3:11-14).

Paul outlined in Romans that we can't use grace as an excuse to continue in sin (Rom. 6:12-16) once we have knowledge of God's plan. We must continue to live good lives in the sight of God (Titus 2:11-12; 3:8).

Jesus showed early on that those who respond to the gospel have to believe it (Mark 16:15-16). To believe in something you have to be able to understand it. Despite how young kids seem to be when they pick up on the latest technology that we struggle with, an infant or young child isn't capable of understanding the costs and true weight of the decision of committing their life to Christ.

Romans tells us that one must hear and believe the gospel to obey it (Rom. 10:14), that God is not a respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11). Paul also says in 1 Timothy 2:3-4, that God desires all men to be saved.

The New Testament clearly shows us that both by example and by comments that the Old Testament has been completed with Christ's sacrifice and resurrection (Col. 2:14). We do not need to cling to commands outlined in Old Testament worship, like circumcision and animal sacrifices. (Acts 15:19-29)

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We also conflict with God when we bring forward those acts which God has given us newer direction on. (Gal. 5:1-4)

We should be able to see that those who are reselling God's salvation with their own devices put themselves and their followers in a dangerous position. That position is one of not being in obedience to God. Those who are not in obedience to God are not saved and do not have the opportunity to receive the reward of a life lived in obedience to God. (1 John 2:2-5) Like anything we buy here on this earth it is best to get it directly from the owner. Salvation for us was bought by Christ through life on this earth and with the shedding of His own blood. He knows the challenges we face (Heb. 4:14-16) and intercedes for us to God when we ask for forgiveness (Heb. 7:24-26). God has given us the entrance terms and conditions for us to 'own' salvation in the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Bypass the other renters than change the rules, or add to them so that when Christ comes back you will not be stuck with a worthless piece of paper and a life mis-spent.
