

You Can't Buy Blessings With a 'Day of Atonement' Offering

Television preacher Steve Munsey says today is the most important day in the history of the world. He promises TV viewers that if you give your biggest offering on Sept. 23—on the Yom Kippur holiday—you will be healed of cancer, get out of debt and see your children return to faith.

Munsey even hints that you could become unbelievably wealthy if you follow his careful instructions. He recently announced on evangelist Benny Hinn's *This Is Your Day* program: "You're not going to become a millionaire. You're going to become a billionaire! But you must move now!"

The secret to obtaining this miracle? You must believe that God bestows special answers to prayer on Yom Kippur, the most important day on the Jewish calendar. And to unlock this blessing, you must bring a big offering in both hands. Suggested donation: \$300.

Most casual channel-surfers who hear Munsey's slick sales pitch will quickly detect that something funky is going on behind the curtain. The Chicago-based pastor is selling spiritual blessings with the same hypnotic skills of a used car salesman. What's tragic is that millions of Christians who should have the discernment to know better are being duped by this circus sideshow.

Munsey is not running this show alone. He is often featured on the largest Christian TV channels in the country, and this month he has pushed his Day of Atonement Offering message on programs sponsored by Hinn as well as evangelist Rod Parsley. In each case, "operators are standing by" to take calls from donors who are ready to win their blessings. Computer-savvy viewers are urged to donate online.

Forgive us, God, for turning the precious gospel message into a lottery—and for allowing charlatans to extort money from naive people.

For those who might be tempted to believe Munsey's flawed theology, consider some basic truths from Scripture:

1. You don't have to give money in an offering to obtain a spiritual blessing. TV preachers often stoop to gimmicks and manipulation in order to get donations. One of their favorite methods is to suggest that you can "unlock your miracle" by giving an offering. This is heresy. I often give offerings to my church, missionaries and charitable causes, but my generosity has nothing to do with God's blessings in my life. Salvation, healing, deliverance and answered prayers are all free. You don't have to bribe God or pay Him off.

2. God is not more active on the Day of Atonement compared to other days. Munsey has built his ministry on the idea that the Jewish feast days mentioned in the Bible are special, and that God shows special favor to those who celebrate them. This is in direct opposition to the core of the gospel, which tells us that we are made righteous not by following the law but by faith in Christ alone (see Gal. 2:16). The apostle Paul warned that if we ever think we can be saved by our works, we have been "bewitched" (Gal. 3:1).

It is true that we can gain spiritual insights by studying the Old Testament feasts—which all point to the ministry of Jesus. The Day of Atonement, for example, reflects how Christ entered into heaven with His blood and paid for our sins. But we do not have to celebrate this feast on Sept. 23 in order to gain the benefits of it. In the New Covenant age, every day offers the blessings of Christ's atonement!

3. You could suffer spiritual harm by listening to a false teacher. The apostle Peter rebuked the Samaritan sorcerer named Simon because he offered money to obtain an anointing

from the Holy Spirit. Peter said: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could purchase the gift of God with money!” (Acts 8:20).

But we have a problem today: We have church leaders who invite modern-day Simons on their TV programs and allow them to teach. These preachers are putting themselves in a vulnerable position with God by giving a platform to heresy. If you build a ministry on falsehood, it will crumble.

Don't be deceived. God's blessings are not offered to us only on certain days a year. You don't have to wait for a “blood moon” to appear in the sky four times in a row to receive an answer to your prayers. Because Jesus made complete atonement for us, His forgiveness is free to all who believe. There's no offering necessary!