

THE PROBLEM WITH AN “APPLES-TO-ORANGES” COMPARISON

Many of us are familiar with the above expression. But it has an interesting history. It first appeared in a collection of proverbs in 1670 as “apples to oysters;” for the purpose of showing a contrast and dissimilarity between two objects. The popular modern-day iteration takes that thought a step further by exposing the erroneous analogy that claims two fundamentally different things are the same because they share one superficial characteristic; such as asserting that apples and oranges are the same because they are both fruits. The problem occurs when that kind of a comparison is made, while intentionally ignoring crucial differences for the purpose of supporting a certain perspective, by means of a false equivalency. For example, if two people have a fever does that mean they are suffering from the same infection? Of course not. I say all of this in order to clarify the apples-to-oranges confusion which currently exists among many Christians, in regard to an action taken by our Lord Jesus Christ, in John 2:13-16 –

“The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, ‘Take these things away; stop making My Father’s house a place of business.’”

This passage is often used to justify all kinds of behavior by Evangelical Christians. More often than not, it makes them guilty of an “apples-to-oranges” comparison. Here are 10 Biblical reasons why:

Reason #1: You are not Jesus –

You may be one of His flawed and fallible followers, but you are most certainly NOT HIM.

Reason #2: The Church has not permanently replaced Israel –

The replacement is temporary, not permanent. Just read Romans 11 and see for yourself.

Reason #3: There are no theocratic nations under God currently in existence on earth –

Why? There has only been one ordained by God: Israel under the Mosaic Covenant.

Reason #4: The purpose of the Church on earth is the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) –

This means that Jesus does not want any of His followers to engage in theocratic nation building.

Reason #5: No Christian has been given authority by God to “whip” nations into shape –

Instead of a whip, we possess the gospel of Christ for the salvation of those who are lost.

Reason #6: Jesus did not come to judge unbelievers but to save them. His example is our mandate –

Paul unmistakably confirms the Church’s Great Commission mandate in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13.

Reason #7: 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 also gives us the correct apples-to-apples comparison –

What Jesus did in Israel’s temple back then, has application for local church discipline, here and now.

Reason #8: The New Testament NEVER teaches, endorses or promotes Christian Nationalism –

So why is it being taught, endorsed and promoted in today’s American Evangelical Church?

Reason #9: Instead of establishing theocracies, we must be involved in building Christ’s Church –

Jesus Himself made that promise in Matthew 16:18 and He expects us to “help” Him fulfill it.

Reason #10: Planting a church is one thing, maintaining its focus is quite another –

We American Evangelicals have had it backwards for far too long. Instead of evangelism and discipleship, which plants a church and then maintains it, we have been overly preoccupied with looking at the unbelieving world with a critical eye and attempting to reform it. That will never happen! True change can only occur through spiritual transformation from within, and not by politically motivated legislation. So, let us follow the advice of the apostle in 1 Peter 3:15 and put away our whips, so that we can –

“ . . . sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence . . . ”