

THEY PROMISED

(This poem was written on Monday, 13th October 2008.¹ Much of the phraseology is lifted, word for word, from both well (and lesser known) false preachers within Pentecostal Christianity. It explores the mental anguish resulting from the gross manipulation associated with Prosperity Teaching.)

“God wants you rich!”

So they asserted

“Receive this word of knowledge!”

So they advised

“Enjoy the fullness of blessing!”

So they counselled

“Realize your full potential!”

So they encouraged

“‘Name and claim’ your blessing!”

So they exhorted

“‘Come out of your mind’ and ‘go with the flow!’”

So they nagged

“Don’t analyse, just receive the blessing!”

So they pressurised

“You can have a life of flourishing abundance!”

So they promised

“You are the King’s kids!”

So they said

“Be part of God’s mighty army!”

So they shouted

“God is doing a new thing!”

So they stated

“Touch not the Lord’s anointed!”

So they threatened

“Exercise the power of faith, faith, faith and claim your miracle!”

So they yelled

With itching ears

We eagerly heeded them

Rushing forward in meeting after meeting

To receive a *‘special anointing’*

Every word they uttered

We treated as *‘gospel’*

As a revelation of the divine;

We were so confident

It was God’s *‘party time,’*

That revival was guaranteed and

That a whole myriad of miracles would soon

Confound the doubters

¹ It first came to mind during the previous afternoon whilst swimming in a certain Leisure Centre

After all, we were the *'manifest sons of God,'*
The new breed of believer
Members of *'Joel's army'*
Capturing territory for the Lord,
And ruling all the nations for Him
Our sole purpose was
To get the world ready for
Jesus' return!

Dominion was ours and
We had the right to exercise it,
As the new *'Masters of the Universe'*
Our power had no limits
"Revelation knowledge"
Was ours for the taking
Our initiation into *"deeper mysteries"*
Transported us to *"a higher plain of spirituality*
Where we could communicate with angels!"
Our eyes were opened
We would not die
But be like mini-gods
Knowing the difference between good and evil

But –

They promised us blessing
We got cursing

They promised us wealth
We got poverty

They promised us health
We got sickness

They promised us abundance
We got hunger

They promised us success
We got failure

They promised us victory
We got defeat

They promised us peace
We got war

They promised us strength
We got weakness

They promised us laughter
We got tears

They promised us joy
We got misery

They promised us light
We got darkness

They promised us revelation
We got confusion

They promised us life
We got death

They promised us everything
But in the end
We got nothing
But disillusionment, destitution and despair

Surely –

We are a betrayed generation
Directionless, purposeless and lost
Failure, oppression and poverty
Is now our only lot
What we thought of as faith
Was nothing more than an enticing illusion
We had exalted ourselves in the place of God

Consequently –

Instead of being *'filled'*
We were left empty

Instead of being *'set free'*
We were left in bondage

Instead of being *'delivered'*
We were left enslaved

Instead of being *'blessed with flourishing prosperity'*
We were cursed with frustrating poverty

Now –

A crushing sense of shame haunts us
Our savings have all but gone
And we don't know where
Our next meal is coming from
Financially, we're ruined
We can't meet our bills,
Nor can we pay our debts
Our marriages are breaking-up
And we're losing our homes
Our children go hungry because of our poverty
An overwhelming sense of desolation
Weighs heavily upon us
All our hope is gone
We have no money and
Our cupboard is bare
Bailiffs hammer on the door
Noisily demanding an entrance
So they can evict us out onto the street
A terrible reckoning has befallen us
Yet it seems so unfair
That our children should suffer too
We're even pawning their toys
To help us *'pay our way,'*
Dependent upon the cold charity of others
We feel totally dejected, humiliated and crushed
Many of us are sick through stress

Oh, how eager we were
To follow the preachers of prosperity
The great liars of our time
Whose faith was nothing more than proud foolishness
Whose testimonies consisted of hollow, empty boasts
How we hung upon their every word
Oh, the time we wasted in their endless meetings
How greedily we gulped-down their poisoned '*new wine*'

As a people we loved stupidity
We showed this by
Plunging into '*rivers of blessing*'
Unaware that their filthy and polluted waters
Would sweep us into a vortex of ruin

Our places of worship
Became theatres of depravity
Only now has the realization dawned that
Power-hungry dictators were our apostles
Frenzied witchdoctors our prophets
Loud entertainers our evangelists
Sly manipulators our pastors
And boastful egotists our teachers
These were the people
We willingly placed upon pedestals of power and grandeur
How we loved their boastful testimonies and winsome smiles
After all – they made us feel good!
We happily handed over our hard-earned money
Laughing uproariously as we did so
In our vain hope of receiving it back at some future date
Surely God would '*multiply our seed of faith*'
And we would be rich, rich, rich!
After all, wasn't poverty a sign that we lacked faith in Him?

How frivolously entertained we were by their preaching
How they added sparkle to our dull and dreary lives
How we convulsed with laughter at their antics
Swooning on the floor in response to their hypnotic suggestions
We would often hear them yell '*let the fire fall!*'
Totally unaware that it was a fire of judgement
They were invoking

We believed in them because they told us
What we wanted to hear
We desperately clung to their lying fantasies
Willing them
To be true visions of God

Indeed –

We were so easily smitten
By their promises of easy wealth that
We applauded their acts
We cheered their claims
We laughed at their jokes
We even waved colourful banners
In their '*celebration meetings*'

But we were fooled
Because we had first fooled ourselves
We believed that God
Would grant our every selfish wish and whim
All we ever needed to do
Was to apply the *'right technique'*
In order to gain His blessing
He was our *'sugar daddy'* and our *'slot machine'*
Dispensing money, blessings – anything really
Whenever we wished for it

Yet –

All the while
We failed to see how you, Lord
Are set to topple every idol
We treated your Son, Jesus
As another source of entertainment
We regarded Him as
'A love is all you need' figure'
Willing to give us
All we ever wanted
Your Spirit we regarded as
A source of sensual excitement
Treating Him as our slave
And *'calling Him down'* whenever we wished
He was the *'channel'* we used
To greedily claim our blessings

We even thought that certain politicians
Were hand-picked men of God
Leaders chosen to save the country
Their party representing your Kingdom
Yet all they wanted from us were our votes and our taxes.
We were used and then discarded
They never kept their glibly made promises
And now they've brought us to ruin

How the world laughs at us
'Stupid, dumb Christians' they call us
Our lust for popularity has backfired
The media views us with scorn
And even the best of people pities us
Shaking their heads and exclaiming
'How did they get into this mess?'

Now reality has caught up with us
And the result is agonizing torment

God –

If you're still there
Please forgive us
For blindly following
The false prophets and false teachers of our age
We hungered for *'signs and wonders'*
But not for you, oh Lord
We mistook our own selfish passions
For the promptings of your Holy Spirit
Through pride we ignored your correction and

The warning signs you sent
To call us to repentance
We glibly dismissed those who told us the truth
As being '*negative and judgemental*,'
'Pharisees' we called them

Please!!!
For the sake of your dear Son
The Lord Jesus Christ
Get us out of this mess
And end this time of wretched desolation

Dear God, forgive us
Remember how your Son
Died for us at Calvary
Recall too His one perfect sacrifice
And His blood poured out
On our behalf

For the sake of Christ
Hold back your wrath
And lighten our chastisements
Free us from our addiction to materialism

Listen to any priestly intercession
He may make for us
Heed any prayers He may offer

Remember too
How He covered all of our sins
Opening the way for us to pray to you
For His sake show us mercy
And grant us the strength to love and to follow you
With an undivided heart

In this hour of
Darkness, disillusionment and despair
Please save us from ruin
And grant us a new beginning
For the glory of your great Name
Take pity and hear this prayer
Amen