



April 29th, 2011

Luke 21:28 reads, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

Coming events cast their shadows before them. Many catastrophic events are prophesied to occur in the Great Tribulation, in fact, much worse events than we are seeing at present. We Christians are often tempted to think that we are seeing the judgments of the book of Revelation in present day floods, earthquakes, and cyclones (or tornados), but we are wrong. It would do us good to go back and read again the 6th to the 19th chapters of Revelation. What we are seeing at present does NOT compare with what we read there. We are NOT presently seeing billions of people dying as a result of a storm or an earthquake, but we DO see that in the Revelation. While we may think that the "small" disasters of the last year or two MAY be samples of judgment to come in the near future, if we are wise we will avoid (like the plague!) telling people that these ARE the judgments of the Tribulation.

There are two very simple reasons why "this" is not "that". First, the rapture has not yet come, and it must come before the wrath of God falls on a totally rebellious world. Second, anyone with one eye can read the Revelation and see that the groanings and travail of our present fallen world do not compare with the intensity of God's wrath to be expended upon the worldwide kingdom of the Antichrist when he arises after the rapture.

Many years ago we had here in north Queensland a dear Brethren chap who latched on to every nutcase theory that wandered by and then tried to use them to generate fear in sinners so that he could lead them to Christ. He threatened them with everything from the Jupiter Effect (remember that one?) to the very latest Illuminati conspiracy theories. He gathered a few timid souls together for a little while. Eventually, he ran out of things to scare them with, and drifted away to greener pastures.

Though there ARE frightening events aplenty and the news media makes enormous amounts of money out of them (and they keep many of the saints in a state of panic!), we need to remember that the Great Commission never was, "Go and scare sinners with twisted Scripture, with wild-eyed theories, and bad news talk show drivel." Rather, it has always been, "Go and tell sinners the gospel of salvation in Christ; Preach the message of the cross; Tell them God loves them and wants to save them!"

Bro. Buddy Smith

Table of Contents -

The Miracle of Corn -

Notable Quotes and Quotable Notes -

Interesting Links Methinks -

Therapy For the Funny Bone -

Birdsong -

Poems That Preach -

Atheists Mock (Harold Camping's) Rapture Prediction -

Tim Blair's Letter to Prime Minister Gillard -

The Best Use for Superglue Yet -

The Megachurch Disaster File -

Eddy-Torial -

THE MIRACLE OF CORN

(Friday Church News Notes, April 22, 2011, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - One corn seed typically produces a stalk bearing two cobs, each with 400 to 600 kernels per cob. Thus, it multiplies itself 1,000 fold or more in one generation. If you replant the 1,000 seeds from one corn stalk and each grows to maturity--each stalk bearing two cobs with an average of 500 kernels per cob (2,000 X 500)--you get one million kernels of corn. That's just the second generation. And if you plant those one million kernels and each stalk grows to maturity, you get a billion corn seeds in just three generations! This is an example of the bounty with which God has filled the world for man's benefit. "Such is the tremendous reproductive power of DNA, especially in primary producer plants that must generate sufficient food-web biomass so all consumers--including we humans--can survive" (Kenneth Poppe, *Exposing Darwinism's Weakest Link*, p. 33). Corn is self-pollinating, in that each stalk has both male and female flowers. The females are the ears that send out strands of silk that grow out of the top of the ear. (The flower is actually composed of the kernel, which is the ovule, and the silk, which is the stigma.) Each kernel of corn is individually pollinated by a strand of silk, which is covered with fine, sticky hairs that catch the pollen. The male flowers on the tassels release their pollen into the air. The pollen is held in anthers which contain large numbers of pollen grains, and when released the grains usually settle within 20 to 50 feet of the stalk. Thus it is advised to plant corn in blocks rather than in long rows. Each tassel contains from 2 to 5 million pollen grains, which translates to 2,000 to 5,000 pollen grains for each silk of the ear shoot. The emergence of the silk and the release of the pollen must be precisely timed. The pollen shed usually begins two or three days prior to silk emergence and continues for five to eight days, and it is shed in late morning after the dew has dried off the tassels (Ohio State University Agronomy Facts). The pollen shed is intelligent, responding to climatic conditions, stopping when the tassel is too wet or too dry and beginning again when temperature conditions are favorable. By this means the pollen is rarely washed off the silk by rain since it doesn't release during wet conditions. When the pollen comes into contact with the silk, it starts the growth of a pollen tube down the length of the silk and enters the female flower in 12 to 28 hours.

Notable Quotes and Quotable Notes -

The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God.

AW Tozer

Who Do I See?

One day a certain rich old man who had a miserable disposition visited his rabbi. The Rabbi took him by the hand and led him to a window. "Look out there," he said. "What do you see?"

"I see men, women, and children," answered the old man.

Again the rabbi took him by the hand and this time he led him to a mirror.

"Now what do you see?" He asked.

"Now I see myself," the old man replied.

Then the rabbi said, "Behold, in the window there is glass, and in the mirror there is glass. But the glass of the mirror is covered with a little silver, and no sooner is the silver added than you cease to see others. You see only yourself."

The labour of self love is a heavy one indeed.

Think for yourself whether much of your sorrow

has not arisen from someone speaking slightly of you.

As long as you set yourself up as a little god to which you must be loyal, how can you hope to find inward peace?

AW Tozer

Interesting Links Methinks

Why should anyone believe the Bible?-

http://web.mac.com/lcm7/Site/Welcome_files/Believe%20The%20Bible%20final.pdf

Amazing ability of a young Chinese pianist with no fingers on her right hand

<http://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/good-news/chinese-girl-no-fingers-one-hand-wows-piano-20110316-133233-487.html>

Excellent articles from FairHavens Baptist Church, Sarnia, Ontario

http://web.mac.com/lcm7/Site/Articles_New.html

Terrific photography of the Milky Way, taken from El Teide Mounbtai in Spain

<http://vimeo.com/22439234>

Therapy for The Funny Bone -

Grandma took her little granddaughter to see Grandpa in the hospital. When they got off the elevator, little Katy ran ahead to Grandpa's room, pushed open the door and climbed up on his bed. Breathlessly, she asked, "Grandpa, when Grandma comes in, will you make a sound like a frog?" Grandpa asked, "Now why would you want me to make a sound like a frog?" To which Katy replied, "Because Grandma says when you croak, we'll all go to Disneyland!"

Albert and Edna went to the state fair every year, and every year Albert watched people go up in a helicopter and fly over the city. He would always say to Edna, "Edna, I want to ride in that helicopter before I die." And Edna would say every year, "Albert, that helicopter costs \$50 to ride in, and \$50 is \$50." Years went by, and Albert and Edna were getting old, so Albert says to Edna, "Edna, I'm getting old, and I want to ride in that there helicopter before I die." Edna says, "Now look here, Albert, \$50 is \$50..." The helicopter pilot had listened to this discussion for years, so he says, "Look, folks, Albert's been wanting to go up for years now, so I'll tell you what I'll do. If you both want go up, and you can make the trip without making a sound, I'll give you both a ride for free. But if you make a sound, it will cost you \$50." So up they went. And the helicopter pilot turned it every which way he could and tried every stunt in the book, and they were totally silent. So, as he flares for a landing back at the showground, he says to them, "Well, you did it. You made it all the way around without making a sound."

To which Albert replied, " I almost said something when Edna fell out, but \$50 is \$50!"

Our little town has a blond policewoman. Recently, she spotted a blond driving too fast in a little red sportscar, so she chased her down and proceeded to book her for speeding. When she asked for her license, the blond driving the sportscar got flustered and couldn't find it in her purse. So she asked the blond policewoman what it looked like. She said, "It's square and has your photo on it."

After a bit, the driver found her mirror, and seeing her face in it, assumed it was her license, so she handed it to the blond policewoman. The policewoman looked into the mirror and handed it back, saying, "OK, you can go. I didn't know you were a policeman."

Birdsong

<http://www.wayoflife.org/files/47f2782ad34a81bee3311334c3090c5d-782.html>

April 26, 2011 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143 [begin_of_the_skype_highlighting](#) 866-295-4143 [end_of_the_skype_highlighting](#), fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

Birdsong is a wonderful icon of creation.

Though all bird sounds are typically categorized as "songs," a distinction should be made between true songbirds and other birds that make various noises. For example, most ducks, eagles, and hawks are not songbirds. They quack or screech, but they don't sing.

I suspect that bird calls are often lumped into the "song" category because of the evolutionary philosophy underlying the field. It is assumed that the purpose for all bird noises, regardless of how pretty and complicated, is for such things as territorial marking and mating which supposedly acted as conditions for "natural selection." Evolutionists even theorize that the true song birds are more highly evolved (Les Beletsky, *Bird Songs from Around the World*, 2007, p. 7).

While there is no doubt that bird songs mean something to birds, the Bible believer knows there is more to it than this. Evolutionists are blind to the fact that pretty bird song has a much higher purpose, and that is to glorify the Creator and to please man, the crown of creation (Psalm 8:4-8).

Some birds have truly amazing musical abilities.

Pliny the Elder said in *Naturalis Historia* "that the song of the Nightingale was equal in beauty to any musical instrument that man could produce" (*Beautiful Bird Songs from Around the World*, British Library, 2008). Percy Shelley described the Skylark's song as 'a rain of melody' in his poem "To a Skylark." "Anyone who has stood beneath an ascending Skylark in full song will immediately appreciate this fitting description" (*Beautiful Songs*).

Many composers have transcribed birdsong. "Ornithologists have known for some time that bird songs use the same musical scales as our music. Decades ago it was noted that some of Beethoven's work could be heard from the

European blackbird. The music was the same as the opening rondo of Beethoven's 'Violin Concert in D, Opus 61.' Since these birds pass their songs from generation to generation, Beethoven could have gotten the lilting music from the forefathers of today's European blackbird! The songs of some species, like the song sparrow, follow the form of a sonata, beginning with a strong theme, then the theme is musically played with, and for a finish, the original theme is then repeated. Mozart had a starling as a pet. Once, having heard Mozart play his 'Piano Concerto in C Major,' the starling not only imitated it, but changed the sharps to flats! Mozart exclaimed, 'That was beautiful!' When the starling died, Mozart held an elaborate funeral for it. Eight days later he wrote 'A Musical Joke,' which contains the same elaborate structure found in starling song" (*Creation Moments*, May 12, 2010, citing "Music without Borders," *Science News*, April 15, 2000, pp. 252-254).

"French composer Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) ... dedicated much of his career to studying and expressing the musicality of birdsong. One of his most famous and ambitious pieces is the *Catalogue d'oiseaux*, a seven-book set of portraits that captures the spirit of species such as the Woodlark, Reed Warbler and Blue Rock Thrush" (*Beautiful Songs*).

Birds have two sets of membranes in their syrinx (voice box) so that they can produce independent sounds in two voices at once.

"Birds vocalize with the syrinx, a sound-producing organ located at the junction of the two bronchi at the base of the trachea. These two bronchial sides can actually be stimulated independently, so they can each produce different sounds at the same time, as happens in the clear, flutelike song of the Wood Thrush" (*Bird Songs: 250 North American Birds in Song*, foreword by Jon Dunn, p. 6).

Birds can take mini-breaths that are so brief and so perfectly synchronized with their songs they do not produce any discernible gaps in their songs.

"Birds give the impression of singing in long bursts for minutes on end without catching their breath. But they actually do this by taking a series of shallow mini-breaths, which are synchronized with each syllable they sing" (Gareth Davies, "Bird Songs," pbs.org, n.d., <http://www.pbs.org/lifeofbirds/songs/index.html>, retrieved Oct. 13, 2010).

The nightingale has a repertoire of 100-300 songs. A chaffinch can sing up to 45 notes per second and there can be several hundred notes per song (Stuart Burgess, *Hallmarks of Design*). Some birds transpose songs from one key to another. Others sing the same song in a variety of voices.

Some birds sing DUETS. These include the Australian magpie, Eastern whipbird, African shrike, African robin-chat, passerine, plain-tailed wren of Ecuador, California towhee, Long-tailed manakins, Buff-breasted wren, Rufous-and-white wren (*Thryothorus rufalbus*), Panama bay wren, Marsh wren, and the African shrike. Some birds engage in countersinging and antiphonal singing, with one bird singing part of a song and the other bird singing another part, moving back and forth, possibly spontaneously composing "variations on a theme." Some pairs of songbirds, such as the African shrike, African robin-chat and Eastern whipbird (of Australia) perform this type of singing. Antiphonal singing requires knowledge of the duet by both partners and split-second timing in its execution. The whip-crack sound made by the male Eastern whipbird is actually a very rapidly ascending or descending whistle. Amazingly, the whistle stretches from 500 to 8000 Hz in just 0.1 seconds. The female often adds two notes to the end of the male's whistle. Some birds even sing MATCHED DUETTING in a group of four. "The two pairs of courting birds will deliberately compose a song with four parts over a period of time. The songs are often very beautiful, with great musical structure, and involve split-second timing of the four participants." Matched duetting was discovered by a team of researchers in 2002 among the plain-tailed wrens (*Thryothorus*) in Ecuador.

As the morning mists rose on the slopes of Ecuador's Pasochoa volcano, the burbling of plain-tailed wrens came through the bamboo thickets. Two researchers started their standard procedure of catching wrens, banding them, and letting them go. Soon, however, they were startled when a small cluster of wrens settled into a bush and began singing together. It turned out to be 'one of the most complex singing performances yet described in a nonhuman animal,' says Nigel Mann. "This social oddity has musical consequences. Often, three or more birds sing—males, then females, then males, and so on—to produce what sounds like a single melody.

'It's quite difficult to work out what's Charlie's contribution, what's Mary's,' Mann says. Yet the scientists did work out the score. At rare moments in the several weeks of observation, Mann or Dingess picked up clues to which bird was singing when one singer perched closer to the microphone than the rest of the chorus did. From these hard-won moments, the researchers realized that songs typically repeat four phrases: ABCDABCD.... Only males sing the As and Cs, and only females sing Bs and Ds. Each singer knows 25-to-30 variations on each of its two possible parts, and for each variation of A, a particular variation of B usually follows, as do particular Ds after Cs. When more than two birds strike up a tune, they double up on the parts so precisely that if one bird stops singing, the tune keeps going. The males sing the same variation of A with precise timing, followed by the females chorusing the same version of B, then back to the males for the same C, and so on. The parts shift back and forth at least twice a second. It's the first four-part, synchronized chorus with alternating parts recorded outside human music, Mann, Dingess, and Peter J.B. Slater of the

University of St. Andrews in Scotland report in the March 22 *Biology Letters*. And when one considers the split-second alternation, the birds' singing surpasses human vocal virtuosity (Susan Milius, "Just Duet," BioMusica.blogia.com, 2002). "The white-crested laughing thrush also sings a group chorus. Each individual has its own phrase to contribute to the song: the result is like one bird singing. White-browed sparrow weavers sing group choruses, which they use to defend their territories. Remarkably, each bird is an expert sound mixer. It can also produce the whole chorus on its own. The sound produced by one individual will sound as complex as that produced by nine" (Gareth Davies, "Bird Songs," <http://www.pbs.org/lifeofbirds/songs/index.html>, retrieved Oct. 13, 2010). (The idea that the weavers are using the choruses to defend their territories is speculation, based on evolutionary assumptions that bird song evolved through natural selection.)

Some birds are adept at mimicking other birds. A mockingbird was recorded in Arizona singing a series of different songs for 90 seconds without repeating any one song. A Crissal Thrasher was recorded in Arizona imitating the following birds in one session: Killdeer, Red-tailed Hawk, Western/Cassin's Kingbird, Lesser Goldfinch, Mockingbird, Plain Titmouse, Flicker, House Sparrow, American Robin, Sparrow Hawk, Abert's Towhee, and Song Sparrow. Some birds can even recreate other sounds in nature and man-made noises. Starlings in the Shetland islands can mimic sheep. The Australian lyrebird, the king of feathered mimics, can imitate such things as the whirring of a camera's motor drive and shutter, car engines and alarms, rifle-shots, explosions, a baby's cry, a dog's bark, and the screech of a chainsaw. There is a sound clip online of Chook, a lyrebird at the Adelaide Zoo, imitating the sound of construction equipment (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeQjkOpeJwY>). See also http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Superb_Lyrebird.

These amazing feats require not only a wonderfully-designed voice box but also marvelous intelligence, not only to control the voice apparatus but also to identify and recall them.

Poems That Preach -

Lord
I crawled across the barrenness
To you with my empty cup
Uncertain
In asking any small drop of refreshment.

If only I had known you better
I'd have come running with a bucket.
Nancy Spiegelberger

Atheists Mock (Harold Camping's) Rapture Prediction as 'Nonsense'

Audrey Barrick
Christian Post Reporter
Mon, Apr. 25, 2011

"The Rapture: You KNOW it's Nonsense. 2000 Years of 'Any Day Now,'" says the atheist group's billboard in Oakland, Calif. "Learn the Truth at our Rapture Party, May 21-22."

Jesus is returning next month, according to one controversial group, and atheists are ready for it. They're throwing a "rapture party." While Christian radio broadcaster Harold Camping tries to warn the world that the rapture – where Christians will rise and join Jesus – will happen on May 21, the group American Atheists is calling it "nonsense" and advertising a party for "heathens and sceptics." "The Rapture: You KNOW it's Nonsense. 2000 Years of 'Any Day Now,'" says the atheist group's billboard in Oakland, Calif. "Learn the Truth at our Rapture Party, May 21-22." The billboard is designed to mock "two millennia of

false predictions that the world was about to end." Parties to celebrate "another rapture that wasn't" are scheduled for Houston, Fort Lauderdale and Oakland, where Camping's radio ministry is based.

The ad was erected in response to billboards that went up in recent months that say Jesus "is coming again" in May. Spearheaded by Camping's *Family Radio*, the ads direct the public to wecanknow.com where they are told that May 21 is the day that the rapture of believers will take place and October 21 is *the day God will destroy the world*. AA President Dave Silverman,"Self-declared Christian prophets have a long track record predicting the end of the world" "This is nothing new," said American Atheists President Dave Silverman in a statement. "Self-declared Christian prophets have a long track record predicting the end of the world. What distinguishes this latest round of warnings, though, is the sheer scale, and the cultural backdrop of 'gloom and doom' over everything from the economy to the environment."

Interestingly, atheists aren't the only ones rejecting the prediction. Christians have argued that predicting the date for the end of the world is unbiblical. No one can know the day or the hour, they say, *citing Scripture*. "The end of times is something that we all expect and hope for and look forward to but most Christians aren't in the business of trying to predict that date. They are working toward that date," Dr. Thomas B. Slater, professor of New Testament at Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology, told *The Christian Post* in an earlier interview. Still, *many evangelical Christians don't deny that the last days are near*.

A recent Public Religion Research Institute and Religion News Service poll, conducted after Japan was struck by its largest earthquake in recent history, found that *67 percent of evangelicals believe natural disasters are evidence of the end times*. Pastors are also getting up in their pulpits, preaching that *the end of the world really is near*. Pastor Greg Laurie from Southern California admitted that the "end of the world" message has been preached many times before but recent events such as the massive earthquakes in Japan and New Zealand and the unrest in the Middle East *make it evident that the return of Jesus Christ is closer*. But again, Christians – *except for Camping* – *are not sure when that day will be*. In the meantime, while atheists party and "plan a secular future with like-minded people," Christians are being urged to get right with God and bring people to Christ.

An Open Letter to Prime Minister Julia Gillard regarding Her Proposed Carbon (Dioxide) Tax -

DEAR Prime Minister Gillard, Thank you for making the weather nicer by forcing us to pay more for everything. Who knew that fixing the global climate was so simple? Still, one or two questions remain about your new plan and a few related matters. Yours in climate justice, Tim Blair

* BY how much will your carbon dioxide tax reduce Australia's temperature?

* IF after five years there has been no recorded decline in temperature, will the tax be abandoned?

Read more at <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/theres-a-lot-you-havent-told-us/story-e6frezz0-1226013109403>

The Best Use for Superglue yet -

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-1377764/Nurse-deadly-heart-tumour-saved-doctors-SUPERGLUE.html>

Superglue to mend a broken heart? A novel use for superglue in cancer treatment. The Daily Mail reports: When doctors discovered a rare tumour in Jamie Arliss's heart they thought there was nothing that could be done to save her. There is no-one alive in the world with such a tumour - and they thought the mother of one was doomed. But then cardiologist Christopher Cave came up with a radical idea to save her. He filled the golf-ball

sized tumour in her heart with superglue - which amazingly has stopped the tumour growing and saved her life.

The Megachurch Disaster File - #1-

What is the future of Megachurches that were built on the wisdom (?) of men? According to I Cor. 1:19,20 the wisdom of men is condemned to fail, every time it arises in opposition to the wisdom of God as revealed in Holy Scripture. Very few preachers (at least it seems they are very few in number!) are willing to stick their necks out and say that the megachurches of our day were built on man's wisdom, but it is true. The Crystal Cathedral, founded by Robert Schuller on the teachings of Norman Vincent Peale, is coming unravelled (see below.)

(I think we should start a file called "Megachurch Disaster File", and keep track of the self destructions as they happen. Heads Up! would be pleased to publish any accurate reports you send. Please include documentation. BroB)

SCHULLER AND DAUGHTER AT ODDS OVER THE ISSUE OF HOMOSEXUALITY
Prominent Pastor, daughter at odds over homosexuality [Excerpts]

A recent move to ban homosexuality from the Crystal Cathedral sparked opposition by the church's founder who says he disapproves of a covenant requesting choir members to abstain from homosexual practices.

The Orange County Register reported that former Pastor Robert H. Schuller strongly opposed the covenant, stating that it went against the message of tolerance and acceptance that has permeated the Garden Grove mega-church for years.

The California pastor noted that he has a "reputation...of being tolerant of all people and their views" and is "too well-educated to criticize a certain religion or group of people for what they believe in."

Peter LaBarbera, founder of Americans for Truth about Homosexuality (ATH), notes that Schuller is compromising the Word of God. "It's mystifying to hear Christian leaders like Robert Schuller now distancing them from the commonsense biblical truth," he reacts.

Schuller reportedly did not know about the covenant, which was spearheaded by his daughter and current senior pastor, Sheila Schuller Coleman. The former pastor said the church does not "test" nor "require" anyone who comes to the ministry to be a Christian.

<http://www.onenewsnow.com/Church/Default.aspx?id=1316956>

Eddy - Torial - So What About Conspiracies?

Mentioning the subject of conspiracy theories (see the paragraph below Heads Up!) will likely get me into a lot of hot water.

As a young pastor I had a family in the church that were deeply committed to a "Christian" conspiracy theory (the Illuminati version, at least.) So I listened intently to the 33RPM records they loaned me and was convinced it was all true. I began watching for anything in print that dealt with the evil conspiracies that existed all around us (so I thought) and knew all the names of the devious and demonic groups and their leaders. I read all I could find on the subject.

But I began to notice some problems. I noticed that my addiction to "conspiracy-ism" stole my joy and made my ministry sterile. I noticed that I began to see behind every bush (yep, every bush, even George I and II) a cloak and dagger plot to take over my church and my mind and my city. I even climbed up to the top of our little church's tower to see if I could hold them off with my little .22 repeater rifle (!) I began to detect a "creeping paranoia" in our church. It was contagious and was spreading from the family who told me about

it to others in the church, so that we were fast approaching a dead end, and maybe even the death of the church.

God was very good to our little church. We had the opportunity to purchase the old church building we were renting so we brought it to a vote, and the conspiracy family voted against it, thinking that we needed a new church building, not an old one. Well, the church grew after they left and it thrived and souls were saved, and when I visited there recently, the building was full of joyful saints. I looked pretty close, but didn't see a trace of conspiracy anywhere.

I have some dear preacher friends who see conspiracies on every side. That's their privilege, I suppose.

Several years ago, I decided to study everything the Bible had to say on the subject of conspiracies. Here's a short summary of what I discovered:

A Few Observations about Conspiracies -

I. Conspiracies are found in the Holy Scriptures -

A. Joseph's brothers against Joseph – Gen. 37:18-20

B. Absalom against David – II Sam. 15:12, 31

C. Many of the men of Israel against their kings – I Kings 15:27, etc. (about 20 references to conspiracy during the Divided Kingdom, recorded in the books of the Kings and Chronicles)

D. The tribe of Judah against the Lord – Jer. 11:6-10

E. The prophets, priests, and princes against the Lord – Ezek. 22:25 ff

F. Sanballat and Tobiah against Nehemiah and Jerusalem – Neh. 4:8

G. More than forty Jews who banded together to kill Paul – Acts 23:12,13

II. There appear to be other examples of conspiracies, though they are not called such -

A. Gen. 11:1-9 – Nimrod and his people against the Lord

B. Numbers 16:1-3 – Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against Moses

C. Dan. 6:4-7 – Persian princes against Daniel

D. Ezra 4:1-6 – The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin against the rebuilding of the temple

III. The greatest conspiracy of all time was against Christ -

A. Predicted in Psa. 2:1,2 (realised by the apostles – Acts 2:24-26)

B. Begun in Luke 4:28,29

C. Ending in His crucifixion – Matt. 26:14,15,57, 59; 27:1, 12, 18, 22, 23, 39-43, 62-66;28:11-15

IV. The definition of "conspire" - Eng. "con (with) and spire (to breathe)" – The Hebrew word "qashar" means "to make an unlawful alliance." The Greek word is "sunomosis" which means "a swearing together, or a plot."

V. Conspiracies are consistent with the evil character of the Devil -

A. Isa. 14:12-14 – Lucifer's rebellion is seen in his ambitions against God

B. John 8:44 – His lies are the basis for the conspiracies of men

C. Rev. 13:7,13,14 & 17:1ff – His ultimate objective is to rule over all mankind

VI. There are examples in Scripture of men imagining conspiracies which never existed.

A. I Sam. 22:8,13 – Saul's accusations against his son, his servants, David, and against the high priest -

B. Amos 7:10 – An accusation against Amos, the prophet.

VI. God has given us biblical guidelines for responding to conspiracies, real or imagined -

A. Psalm 2:4-12 -

1. v.4 -He treats them with derision – The laughter of ridicule
2. vv.5, 9 -He warns them of His wrath – At the hand of the one they conspire against
3. vv. 6-8 -He speaks with authority of the rule of His King, the Lord Jesus Christ
4. vv. -10-12 He calls on them to repent of their rebellion

B. John 19:10-12 -

1. v.10 – Pilate expresses surprise that Jesus is not afraid of him (and the conspiracy of the Jews)
2. v. 11 – Jesus points out to Pilate that God is ruling over even the conspiracy of the Jews and the power of Rome. And that His adversaries (probably the high priest?) will be held accountable for their crime. (Note the balance here of Divine Providence and Man's accountability)
3. v. 12 – Note Pilate's response to the wisdom of Christ – He sought to release Him.

C. Matt. 10:28-31 -

1. v. 28 – Jesus instructs His disciples not to fear men – (Note the equivalent verse in II Tim. 1:7)
2. v. 29-31 – Jesus assures them that God is involved in a)their suffering – v.29; b) the tiniest details of their lives – v.30; c) And that He accounts them to be very valuable. - v. 31

A few concluding thoughts:

The Lord Jesus is our example, in every area of our Christian life. He faced a REAL conspiracy of evil men who desired nothing more than to kill Him and silence Him once and for all. As we read the gospels we see Him confronting His enemies right from the first (Luke 4) and He did so without fear. Because He knew the Father's timing for His death, he sometimes withdrew from His enemies. Other times he surprised them by walking among them and ministering boldly to the common people. He rebuked their hypocrisy (Matt. 23), their errors, and their unbelief. The question will be asked, "Did He ever warn His disciples about the conspiracy?" Yes and no. He told His disciples what His enemies were planning almost before they planned it. His disciples became aware of the danger of ministering in Judea (John 11:7-10) and warned Him against returning. But He then taught them (and us) to walk in the light and they would not stumble. It is most interesting and instructive for us that the Lord NEVER displayed a paranoid fear of His enemies. He NEVER fretted over what they were up to. He NEVER taught His disciples to fear them or their schemes. And He NEVER used the devious, conspiratorial attitudes and actions of His enemies as an evangelistic tool. Read carefully the words of the gospels. You will not find even one case where the Lord persuaded even one person to repent and believe in Him because the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians were plotting His death. Though He did urge men to fear God, He never once even suggested that they should fear any man.

So it comes as no surprise to us that the apostles followed the example of their Lord. They, too, knew of the plots, the intrigues, the schemes, and the conspiracies of their enemies. But their focus was on Christ and on the gospel.

It is just here that conspiracy theories present the greatest danger to the Lord's people. Even if every theory were proven to be true, the schemes of men are not as great a threat to us as the possibility that our focus could be turned away from the methods and message of Christ, away from the preaching of the gospel. I suspect that there is behind all the conspiracy theories a secret agenda (a conspiracy?), and that is to wear out the saints by enticing us to worry and fret over the follies of angry lost men. Let us thwart the enemy's plans by rejoicing in the good will of our Father and the good news of our Saviour no matter how they conspire to afflict us.

There is a chorus we sing that goes like this:

What though wars may come

With marching feet,
And beat of the drum?
For I have Christ in my heart
What though the nations rage
As we approach
The end of the age?
For I have Christ in my heart.

That ought to be good enough for us.

Buddy Smith

A year or two ago I received a letter from a brother who was quite upset with me for not being upset over conspiracies. Here is my reply to him:

Dear brother _____

I supposed this would be your response, but hoped it would not be. When you have time, read over the (things you sent) and see where the saving message of the gospel appears in them. If it is there it certainly is not the central focus. According to our dear Lord Jesus, the gospel is to be our main emphasis, not wars and rumours of wars. There is a question I like to ask conspiracy theorists and it is this, "How long is it since you talked to a sinner about his need to be saved and simply gave him the gospel?" The ones I have queried over the years tell me they do not have the time to talk to the lost about their eternal souls. They are too busy telling them about the Jupiter Effect (which never happened) or the Millennium Bug or the Illuminati or Benjamin Creme or Obama's Black Helicopters or whatever it is that is wearing out the saints this week.

We have these specialists among Baptists, too, and they are often just as spiritually sterile as the ones you find among the pentecostals.

Conspiracies are a fact of history. In fact, Psalm 2 reveals the fact that the greatest conspiracy of all time is that of Jew and Gentile against the Messiah. In Acts 4, the apostles spoke to the Lord about it and referred to the Psalm 2 verses. Reading these verses provoked me to study the gospels last year and see how this evil conspiracy against Christ developed and how he responded to it and how he taught His disciples to respond to it. I came to the conclusion that there are approximately 70 passages in the gospels in which the Jews' conspiracy against Christ is exposed. In many of these our Lord speaks of it and reproves it (as is the Lord's approach to it in Psalm 2), but there is not one single verse in the gospels (or elsewhere in the Scriptures) in which He teaches that we, His disciples, are to fear our conspiratorial enemies or to focus on their devious and demonic strategies. Rather, He shows us that we are to focus on preaching the gospel to the lost, serve all men, love the brethren, and trust God to deal with our enemies.

I want to increasingly throw down the gauntlet to the dear brethren who specialise in conspiracies by asking them, "What is the Great Commission? Is it preaching your conspiracy theory or preaching Christ crucified?"

It is my increasing perception that many of my dear brethren are infected with the paranoia of worldly men instead of the faith of the brave soldiers of Christ. Oh, the brethren baptise that paranoia so that it becomes a "pious" paranoia, but it still results in a life that is motivated primarily by fear, and ultimately produces sterility.

It is one of the new forms of gnosticism. Conspiracy theorists think that they possess "knowledge" that the ordinary Christian who just reads his Bible can never have, and who is therefore "uninformed" and "ignorant" and "sleepy".

May the Lord deliver us from elitism in all its forms.

Bless you, my brother,

Bro Buddy