

# Conspiracy Theories

## By Paul R. Blake

"But these rail at whatsoever things they know not; and what they understand naturally, like creatures without reason, in these things they destroy themselves" (Jude 10, RSV).

Did you know that aliens from space have joined forces with the Trilateral Commission and NASA, and they are flying around in black helicopters abducting people for experimental purposes? Are you aware that the World Bank, the European Common Market, and the FBI are plotting to secretly implant invisible bar code devices in the foreheads of people that will enable them to track their every step? Have you heard that the CIA, International bankers, and white supremacists have conspired to introduce AIDS and crack cocaine into minority communities in order to eliminate them?

Have you finished laughing yet? These stories would be funny if it weren't for the fact that some people take them so seriously that in their minds these silly myths are elevated to the status of reality. Their faith in these fairy tales is so strong that their whole lives are spent trying to prove the stories to be true, and in preparing for the imaginary wars they believe are inevitable. Some of them build bunkers and compounds, stocking them with food and supplies in the unlikely event that such a holocaust should occur. Some abandon common sense, fact, and logic because they contradict the conspiracy theory. Still others become so paranoid by dwelling on imaginary plots against them that they are unable to function in civilized society. It is sad.

Jude wrote of people who so lived by their own earthly senses, sensual appetites, and physical interests that high and holy matters were beyond their comprehension. Their knowledge was limited to their own personal experiences, and their understanding was reduced to the level of brute animal instincts. They were so lost in the realm of physical interests and earthly thinking that they destroyed themselves. Jude cites the examples of Cain, Balaam, and Korah to illustrate his point.

Cain chose his own way... the wrong way. He worshipped God as he desired, rather than according to what God had asked. As a result, God rejected his offering and accepted the scriptural sacrifice of Abel. Immediately, Cain became jealous. Instead of seeing that his mistake was directly causal in God's rejection of his oblation, he fueled his envy to the level of rage and killed Abel.

Balaam eagerly pursued reward... the wrong reward. He selfishly abandoned truth for personal gratification and advantage. Ironically, he professed to side with the Lord regardless of who was against him, and then joined a conspiracy against God's people just to make money. For earthly gain, he sacrificed his principles and became that which he once condemned.

Korah said no... to the wrong side. He took his disagreement with God's established order to the level of open rebellion, and was destroyed for it. This is merely the next logical step in the progression of one who chooses his own way and pursues his own self-interests.

One must quickly learn that the world does not revolve around him and that everyone isn't "out to get him." Christians who think on spiritual things (Phil. 4:6-9) are not susceptible to the depressing, paranoid, obsessive thinking of those who are jealous like Cain, greedy like Balaam, or rebellious like Korah. Christians do not worry about conspiracy theories; they know that God is in ultimate control. Even if governments work together to harm God's people, they know that governments cannot separate them from the love of God nor take away their home in heaven (Rom. 8:28-39).

One must resolve to avoid the thinking that will lead him into the same kind of foolishness as the secular conspiracy theorists. Otherwise, it will turn on him and eventually destroy him spiritually.

One must avoid being jealous of his brethren to the point that he assumes evil motives in them. No one but Deity can read the hearts of others. It is presumptuous for one to believe that his brother is acting out of malice or greed until his words or actions prove it.

One must avoid becoming cynical. That is a difficult task in the world in which we live -- a world that believes lying is an acceptable means of getting ahead. The Christian must not allow his natural skepticism toward sinners to govern his relationships with brethren. He must stop assuming the worst.

One must avoid becoming fearful of fellow Christians. Rather than postulating that a brother who used a different word for love is heading off into error, first sit down and talk with him about his understanding of truth. If all brethren who disagree would do this, then potential for learning would increase. If all brethren who disagree would do this, then potential for factions would decrease. If all brethren who disagree would do this, then scriptural fellowship would grow as we all come to "speak the same thing" (1Cor. 1:10).

Often these attitudes lead to sins. One who assumes the worst in others isn't very far from voicing those assumptions. Based on a few ambiguous facts, he imagines his brother is evil, he speculates about what his brother might be intending to do, and then he discusses it at length with others.

The scenario is as follows: 1) one man writes something questionable (he needs to be corrected in a scriptural manner - Gal. 6:1; Acts 18:24-25).

2) Another man, assuming that the first man is out to destroy the church, extrapolates and expands the article's error and potential for harm all out of proportion. For example, brother A. teaches that Paul's thorn in the flesh definitely is eye trouble. He needs to be shown that he cannot prove that from the scriptures. However, because of this error in judgment brother B. is convinced that brother A. has completely abandoned the word of God and is planning to lead the whole church into denominationalism.

3) The second man then proceeds to publicly excoriate the first man, giving voice to his unproven suspicions.

4) Eventually the fuss escalates to the point where both sides are engaging in partisan, worldly behavior defending themselves against what they believe to be a conspiracy targeting them and their work.

The objective observer will note that sinful behavior often takes place on both sides of "perverse disputings of men," and he will avoid involvement (1Tim. 6:20-21). In fact, the scriptural approach to such nonsense is clearly outlined. "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself" (1Tim. 6:3-5).

This is not to suggest that one should not contend earnestly for the faith, but rather it is an admonition to be certain that it is THE FAITH for which one is earnestly contending. Enough error exists in the world today without brethren becoming fearful and imagining it where it does not exist. Do not assume the worst in fellow Christians. Seek to understand one another and speak of things that you know to be true. Do not "speak evil of things which... [you - prb] know not" (Jude 10).