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Dear Associates and Friends,

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As I write these words the national elections in the United States are days away. The word “conspiracy” has been used by the press and by both major candidates for President of the United States. This concept of conspiracy is the subject of this month’s doctrinal article, “[Conspiracy in Scripture](#).” As you will read, conspiracies have been part of human interaction throughout history.

It is one thing to organize with others to improve our lives. It is quite another to organize with others to kill or destroy lives to take their wealth, their rights, their property, their family. People do such things because they are able and desire to do so, because that person or group is a threat, or because of some ideology or religious belief. The extent of conspiracies in Scripture was staggering to me. Most of the conspiracies were not sudden acts of villainy, they were meticulously planned actions.

As I examined the material for the article I was stunned what bloodthirsty thugs the Jewish religious leaders truly were in Christ’s time. Whenever confronted with opposition, whether Jesus, apostles, teachers like Stephen or later Paul, or simple members of the *ekklesia*, it seems their first desire was to kill those threatening their power and traditions. No doubt the Jewish religious leaders justified themselves for any action, no matter how evil. “**Now Caiaphas [the high priest] was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people**” (John 18:14). Even taking account of the political situation of the Jews with the Romans, Caiaphas was serving himself and other Jewish leaders.<sup>1</sup>

Only in one instance was it thought the new sect of Jews believing in Jesus’ resurrection should either (1) be left alone if it is of God, or (2) if it is not of God, it will die on its own. This advice was from Gamaliel, a famous scholar of his time (Acts 5:12–42). In the end, the leaders lost control of the Jewish people. More radical and popular leaders arose who led a rebellion against Rome, causing the destruction of government, the city, the Temple — and a million deaths (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, 6.420).<sup>2</sup>

Any time a disreputable and crooked government is in power, it quickly becomes a conspiracy against individuals, because all government is backed up with force, with the ultimate threat being deadly force. We require government to protect individuals from other individuals or groups who think what is yours should be theirs, without willingly selling or giving it to them. God mandates government when we live among people as a necessary evil sanctioned by Him in this present age (Romans 13:1–5).

There was another conspiracy that concerned God. It was a conspiracy unique to Israelites. Gentiles were allowed to worship any God they saw fit to honor. God allowed this because the Gentiles did not have a specific revelation from Him to learn from, nor did they have a special relationship with their Creator God. Israel, on the other hand, did have a special relationship with the Creator God. They were even told His personal name — YHWH (Genesis 32:29, 48:16; Exodus 3:15, 6:3).

All too often the Israelites thought they could be clever, worshiping YHWH at one time and place, and worshiping other gods at another time and place. They gravely ignored YHWH’s insistence on worship of Him alone, excluding all other deities. In the last years before the exile to Babylon, YHWH through Jeremiah the prophet describes the situation of Israel’s idolatry in Judah (Jeremiah chapter 11, see especially verse 13):

<sup>1</sup> I am sure most leaders of conspiratorial groups would say something similar, “We do X for the greater good of Y,” no matter what X is. The greatest massacres in history have often been committed in the name of some supposed altruistic purpose.

<sup>2</sup> Read what Jewish scholars in subsequent centuries thought about the beginnings of the downfall of the Jewish commonwealth in “[The Strange Ending to Sotah](#)” by Dr. Ernest Martin. Some Jewish scholars suspected Jesus was the messiah, and that the slide to destruction of the Jewish commonwealth began with events surrounding His death at Passover in 30 AD.

“And YHWH said unto me [Jeremiah],

‘A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. [Why? It was because ...] They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.’

Therefore thus says YHWH [now comes His condemnation and sentence of judgment],

‘Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.’”

*Jeremiah 11:9–11*

Israel’s rebellion against YHWH as their God, was the same story from the Exodus from Egypt until the exile to Babylon. The people of Israel foolishly thought they could conspire against YHWH to violate their “exclusive contract” He had with them. Worship YHWH alone they were told, what, hundreds of times? Yes, other gods, other *elohim* exist, but they must not be worshiped by Israel. Romans 15:4:

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime<sup>3</sup> were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures [we] might have hope.”

Jewish leaders in the 1<sup>st</sup> century did not commit the sin of worshipping gods in addition to YHWH. Unlike their forebears, the leaders of the Jews were faithful in their worship of YHWH alone. But they did deny Jesus as the Messiah because His correct teaching of written Scripture ignored their oral tradition and it was supported by miracles openly done, witnessed by thousands, including bringing the dead back to life.

**No Jesus, No Peace  
Know Jesus, Know Peace**

That trite bumper sticker saying reflects a passage in Romans:

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

• *Romans 5:1–2*

All are waiting. Believers know what we are waiting for, the hope Paul talks about in the above passage. Unbelievers don’t have a clue, but they are waiting also, for physical things such as better food, better security, a better life. All are waiting for something. In fact, “the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waits for the manifestation of the sons of God” (Romans 8:19), which will occur for believers when Christ returns (those dead as well as those alive). At present, “... we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now” (Romans 8:22). Sin has done all this, causing us to wait, some in pain, but it all is according to God’s plan. Christ offered to be the answer before sin ever came on the scene (Matthew 13:35; Ephesians 1:4; Hebrews 9:26; 1 Peter 1:20).

We will share in that glory, some before others, yes, but we all eventually will share in that peace, that access, that faith, that grace and that hope as we approach the glory God will give to all of us. Yes, there are conspiracies in this evil world, but they are as nothing compared to what God has set forth for us.

## **Thank You**

It gives us joy to give words like those above, and present the information in this month’s article. Your contributions help us continue to publish, study ... and then publish more. If you have never contributed to ASK, please begin doing so now, to the extent you are able. Thank you all.

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<sup>3</sup> The people of Israel in the Exodus and all through their history are an example to us (1 Corinthians 10:11–12).