

Straight Bible Talk

Manchester Church of Christ, Share Christ's Love and Share His Message

Weird and Bizarre Beliefs

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People are amazing. The things that people believe and the things they refuse to believe are a never-ending case for wonder.

There is the "Flat Earth Society." There are those who believe that NASA shot the moon pictures in some desert out west. There were those who believed (several years after World War II ended) that Hitler was still alive. One fellow that I knew claimed to have seen him walking on the street in a city near Philadelphia. And that was in the late 60's!

How can one explain such bizarre beliefs. Obviously, those who hold such beliefs do not think they are bizarre. In fact, they may think that our beliefs are bizarre because we do not agree with them.

What does all of this have to do with the Bible? Many of the reasons for rejecting the Bible cannot be explained. The reasons have more to do with emotion than with reason. As explanations they are total failures. The person just does not want to believe that the Bible is true.

For now, just consider one thing. If the Bible did not come from God, how do you explain all the prophecies of Jesus found in the Old Testament? Here are some of those prophecies.

Jacob predicted, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes." Shiloh is a Hebrew word, which roughly translated, means "He whose right it is." About 1800 years before Jesus came, there was prediction that the one who rules would be born from the

tribe of Judah. Jesus was. There were eleven other tribes from which he might have been born. Jacob's prediction was that the ruler would come from Judah. This is hundreds of years before David (from the tribe of Judah) became a king.

Moses wrote God's prediction, "I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him." Among all the prophets whom God sent to speak to Israel, Moses stands out. To Moses, alone, was the law given. Moses alone was privileged to see the "back parts" of God. Moses was prophet and judge, but especially, he was the Lawgiver to Israel.

When Jesus taught, he taught with authority. When he had finished his Sermon on the Mount, "the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes. Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Moses. Not only did Jesus teach with authority, but he backed up his claim with miracles, amazing feats that demonstrated clearly that God's power supported the claims of Jesus. When Jesus forgave sins, he backed up his claim of authority by empowering a lame man, paralyzed and carried to Jesus by his friends, to walk.

When Jesus came to Jerusalem for the last time, he rode into the city on a donkey. This was in fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy of how the Messiah would come. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; he is just and endowed with salvation, humble,

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"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Acts 17:31

All scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible unless

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and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Someone might argue that it was very easy for Jesus to fulfill such a prophecy. Knowing what Zechariah had written, it was a simple matter for Jesus to obtain the donkey and ride into town. The crowds, seeing him on the donkey, celebrated his entrance into the city with shouts of praise. The difficulty lies in what follows. The ride signaled the beginning of a kingdom. No kingdom, no fulfillment! Jesus fulfilled the prophecy.

When the son of David sought to usurp his father's kingdom, he rode into Jerusalem as a conqueror. But he had a plan for ruling. He had supporters, advisers and an army. He was ready to wield his power to secure his kingdom.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem with supporters and advisers, but no army. As an obstacle to the establishing of his kingdom were the Roman army and the Jewish leadership who wanted no part of a Messiah. It would appear that Jesus had no plan for bringing to reality the kingdom of which he was the king. Yet Jesus had a plan. His plan was that he would die and rise again from the

dead on the third day. After convincing his followers that he was alive again, he would ascend to heaven and there sit on his throne.

Anyone might have read the prophecy and sat on a donkey while riding into Jerusalem. To establish a kingdom and insure its survival was quite another matter. The kingdom of Jesus not only survived it has outlived the Roman Empire and all others. It survives today in those whose lives are dedicated to serving Jesus.

The plan of Jesus to become a king was predicted by David, "Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 'Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!' He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury, saying, 'But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.'"

The rulers of the Jewish people opposed Jesus. They condemned him with a charge of blasphemy.

Both Pilate and Herod (the governor and the king) had an opportunity to release Jesus, but refused. The people cried out for his crucifixion. The prediction of the psalmist came true. Yet, in fulfillment of the prediction, Jesus became a king and rules to this day.

These are but a few of the many examples of prophecy that Jesus fulfilled. There are many more that give us details from his birth, to his teaching, to his death and resurrection, all foretold hundreds of years before he was born. Copies of these writings, containing these prophecies, exist that were made before Jesus was born. God is the author of the Bible. Only God could have known the details of Jesus life before he was born.

You ought to believe the Bible. Your future depends upon your obedience to the God who has given us His word.

(The following passages may be consulted for the quotations above:

Genesis 49:10

Deuteronomy 18:18

Matthew chapters 5 through 7

Mark 2:1-12

Zechariah 9:9

Psalms 2:1-6)