

Conclusion...

Who could have seen, from beginning to end, the magnificent fulfillment of these things? These are matters into which angels longed to look (I Pt I:10-12). Only God, in His infinite wisdom, possessed the plan which was executed in the fullness of time through Jesus (Gal 4:4).

How could the people all around Jesus have everything so wrong, and yet Jesus still perfectly accomplish His plan? He could do so because He was who He claimed to be: the Son of God (Lk 22:70)

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Sunday: Bible Study 10:00am
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Wednesday: Bible Study 7:30pm

COMMON SENSE SAYS NOT TO...

by Bob Pulliam

In the movie, *A Miracle on 34th Street*, a line occurs that is perhaps common thinking, even in religion. It says, "Faith is believing a thing, when common sense says not to." The line is applied to believing in Santa Claus, and I can understand why one would have to rule out common sense for that kind of "faith." But Bible faith is not of that caliber.

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17). One hears the evidence and evaluates it. I like to draw an analogy with a jury on this point. In the course of a trial, a juror must draw conclusions based on the evidence presented. The juror can only draw the final conclusion in the case, based upon the faith that was established by evidence.

One who believes the Bible solely on the basis of a feeling he has, does not have Bible faith. I know that sounds harsh; but it is true. This is a sentimental feeling. It really has nothing different to distinguish it from the feeling expressed by the line noted in the above mentioned movie.

There comes a time in everyone's life, when they must decide whether it is, or is not, reasonable to believe the testimony of the Bible. At the beginning one may believe because mother, or father, instilled that faith

within; but eventually they must stand on their own. Especially in this age where humanism is the "state religion". Humanism strives to tear down belief in God, and religious ties, and is especially active in our school systems today. It is important that we raise our children with this danger in mind, never taking for granted the faith they could have, if we simply present the evidence and answer their questions. Make it very clear... Faith is not believing a thing when common sense says not to!... You may call that a wish; a pipe-dream; or a fantasy. Faith comes by evaluating the evidence, and believing because there is better reason to believe, than not to believe.

EVIDENCES FOR FAITH

THE MESSIAH DECLARES...

by Bob Pulliam

From Genesis to Malachi, the Old Testament prophesies the coming of one who would be Messiah. A great amount of detail is given regarding this coming king. But while the Jews had a great amount of information about the coming Messiah, they still had fully misunderstood Him. Thus, one of the greatest aspects of the Bible's prophecies finds it's place among the evidences that declare, "There is a God!"

The Great Expectation...

That the Jews were expecting a great earthly kingdom is no big surprise. They had visions of the Messiah's kingdom being every bit as grand as that of David and Solomon's. To further heighten their expectations, the Romans held Judea with a firm grip, and the Messiah's coming would have to be with a spectacular display of power.

One passage that conveys the thinking of the people is Luke 19:11. Luke tells us that Jesus spoke a particular parable because *"they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately."* They knew Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem, the capital from which they thought He would reign. ***But the people were wrong.***

The disciples were ready to fight the mob in the garden, who came to take Jesus prisoner. Peter even cut off the ear of the high priest's servant (Jn 18:10). They thought Jesus needed to be defended on this occasion.

They thought He would remain alive to sit on David's throne in the city of Jerusalem. ***The disciples were wrong.***

The rulers of the Jews were the only ones enacting God's plan (Jn 11:49-53); but this did not make them right. They looked upon Jesus as a pretender to the throne of David. In their minds, He could not be the Messiah, because they also thought the Messiah would have political aspirations like unto theirs. Jesus did not fall into line when they sought

Him, and questioned Him. They had Him put to death because of their own envy (Mt 27: 1 8). ***The rulers of the Jews were wrong.***

The prophets made the call hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth, fulfilling what had been revealed. Yet, when He came, everyone was dead wrong about His mission, death, resur-

rection, and current reign! How could everyone be so wrong, and Jesus still be able to fulfill what was right?...

The Unexpected Twist...

Now while everyone was expecting the Messiah to establish a physical kingdom, He actually brought a spiritual kingdom. The only kingdom that would actually fit all of the descriptions given in the Old Testament. Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12 describes the Messiah's role as a sin offering. If Jesus were just another Jew, as some claim, and the Jews were not looking for this sin offering of Isaiah, then how did Jesus come to fulfill the unexpected? I have an answer, because I believe what the Bible says about the fulfillment of this ancient passage. God brought these things to pass.

Perhaps nearly as persuasive is the role of the disciples. Here were men who had it all wrong during Jesus' ministry on earth. They sought preeminence over each other (Mt 20:21; Lk 22:24). They would have destroyed a village of the Samaritans for not receiving Jesus (Lk 9:5 1 ff). Here was a group of men who needed Jesus to keep them in line. Especially, to keep them from trying to lord it over each other! Yet, after Jesus' departure, they fall into line as if He is still with them. The reason is?... He was! Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth (Jn 16:13). In Acts, all bickering over preeminence is gone. The predominant theme is the risen Christ, rather than, "who is greatest?". Focused upon this truth, the apostles go forth in the name of their Master who still lives, and leads from heaven.

“The prophets made the call hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth, fulfilling what had been revealed.”