

## Conspiracy Theory (Part Two)

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Violent governmental conspiracies are something we have a tendency to associate with other nations that seem to be in throes of head of state changes so frequently that the head of state remains in power, it seems, only as long as his guards can protect him.

The first in this series of commentaries explored the biblical fact that conspiracies to overthrow the government are not all that unusual to the Israelitish people. One might be moved to think that because of the influence of the Christian faith, such a process wouldn't take place. But they do. Four American presidents have been murdered while in office, and a fifth president resigned under heavy pressure. Abraham Lincoln, James Garfield, and William McKinley were assassinated within about a 20 year period as we approached the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

John Kennedy was assassinated in 1963 and an attempt was made to kill Ronald Reagan about ten years later. Though wounded, he survived. In addition, Richard Nixon resigned under heavy pressure from political enemies.

Researchers have shown that in most cases the murder was preceded by a great deal of precise planning, all the while violent political turbulence also accompanied within the overall culture, thus showing that political turbulence and assassinations seem to go hand in hand.

As we begin today, we are going to first take close looks into the term "conspire." Taken in a mild sense, conspiring is going on almost all the time even though the head of state is not the target. In fact, any one of us can be a target. We don't have to be a famous person to become a victim.

*To conspire* and *to plan*, though not related in terms of deriving from the same roots, involve the same process. *To plan* means to scheme or to design

for the attainment of some goal or object. *To conspire* also involves planning thoughts to attain an object or goal, but the contrast lies in their differing purposes or the attitude in which the thinking is being done. Conspire has evil intent written all over it. Forms of the term *conspire* appear 30 times in the King James Version.

My dictionary defines it as, “To combine secretly in an evil or unlawful enterprise.” The *-spire* portion of the term entered English from Latin. Its verbal root is the as the words *inspire*, *expire*, *aspire*, *transpire* and *perspire*. That root has some aspect of the action of breathing. The prefix *con-* indicates “with.” Thus, the term can literally mean, “with breathing.” Thus the term suggests two or more people huddled together, whispering to each other, and thus the secretive aspect comes to the fore.

The attitude or intent attached to the word in its normal use starkly reveals the negative associations that cling to the word. A thesaurus reveals such terms such as: scheme, intrigue, collude, connive, machinate, and plot, as synonyms for conspire. By contrast, its antonyms are terms like: contribute, combine, cooperate, concur and work together.

Conspiracies are joined to, and thus empower, what is generally considered as essential for disrupting an ongoing program—it could be a business program where people are conspiring against you and they don't like the program as it is being conducted by you, the leader, and so you become the object of their scheming. Or in the case the public, even tearing an entire culture apart in order to achieve something considered better by the conspirators. Thus the term almost always indicates the planning done by a person or group that is not in power, doing so in order to overthrow those in power. Just come down from the government thing to business, and you will begin to see that this happens in business quite frequently. Somebody is pulling the rug out from under somebody else, and they have conspired with others to make sure this occurs. That's why I say that anybody can be a victim of a conspiracy. In addition, it also tends to be used to indicate that the entire operation is evil and that those conspiring do so for personal gain.

One of the clearest biblical examples of conspiring is the collusion of the chief priests, scribes, and the elders, and then later Judas, and their combined action taken to assassinate Jesus. "Chief priests, scribes and elders" indicate

men involved in the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council. Their motivation was clearly one of envy of Jesus' spiritual power in combination with His popularity with, and acceptance by, the people. As early as John 5:18, John reveals this group was already plotting to kill Him. This was years before He was actually assassinated. That verse also shows that they were seeking justification—this justification was for their own good—for so doing:

**John 5:18** Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him [this indicates that, well before this, they were already plotting to kill Him. When you do you think they started? Perhaps as early as John 2 or John 3.], because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

Here was their justification for what they were doing. He wasn't sinning, of course, but they wrongly believed He was, and therefore, they justified themselves in their operation to kill Him. Their understanding was warped, but they had motivation to continue their conspiring.

Matthew 26:3-5 adds that this that occurred was considerably later than John 5 and John 7. In fact, John 7 directly mentions killing Him twice and alludes to it two other times. These guys were bent on accomplishing this, and those in the crowd (at the Feast of Tabernacles) were well aware that a conspiracy was afoot. Time-wise, Matthew 26 begins but two days before Jesus was crucified:

**Matthew 26:3-5** “Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people [there they are again] assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him. But they said, ‘Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.’”

They wanted to get away with their dirty deed without any stain on their reputation or their lives. That's the way conspirators are. They want to escape blame.

**Matthew 26:14-16** “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me

if I deliver Him to you?’ And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.””

We see in this drama the major elements that bring conspiracies into being. First: Two or more people who believe that as things are and that appear as though they will continue to move, is a condition that they will suffer loss of power, authority, income or social status. This is the glue that holds everything together: personal gain. Thus the conspiracy begins with a common purpose with at least one other person, but more than likely, more than that. The object valued by them will be the bond that holds them together and builds until they are willing to take risks to hold on to it.

Second: The conspirators believe they are justified by the conviction that their cause is righteous. Remember John 5:18: "He broke the Sabbath! He equates Himself with God!" That was *their* justification for killing Him. Conspirators will always come up with a justification for what they are doing. They come to believe they are either promoting or defending something righteous from which others will benefit. They start patting themselves on the back. They frankly come to believe they are doing everybody a favor. They have deceived themselves.

Third: They personally will gain as a result of the success of their plot. With these three convictions, they throw themselves into the plot.

In the plot against Jesus, the major points are clear in each case, except for Judas. This is interesting, because God gives no clear hint what motivated him. But we do know that he permitted himself to be bribed into doing the dirty deed.