

Conspiracies in the Bible

What exactly is a conspiracy? Webster's Dictionary defines the word 'conspire' as "to join in a secret agreement to do an unlawful or wrongful act or an act which becomes unlawful as a result of the secret agreement."
By Terry M. Thacker
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'Conspiracy' is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "A combination of persons for an evil or unlawful purpose; an agreement between two or more persons to do something criminal, illegal, or reprehensible (especially in relation to treason, sedition, or murder); a plot."

Some people see conspiracies where there are none. In the Bible, King Saul wrongly accuses his servants of conspiring to withhold information from him that his son Jonathan has conspired with David (not true) to stage a coup against him (I Samuel 22:8). In verse 13, Saul also wrongly accuses the priest Ahimelech of conspiring with David against him. In Amos 7:10-11, Amaziah the priest falsely accuses Amos of conspiring against King Jeroboam.

Other people, however, categorically deny the existence of conspiracies and plots, often to their own detriment. For example, although Johanan warns Gedaliah that Baalis the king of the Ammonites has conspired with Ishmael to assassinate him, Gedaliah refuses to believe that such a plot has been hatched against him and even accuses Johanan of speaking falsely against Ishmael, who later does indeed kill Gedaliah. (Jeremiah 40:13-41:2)

In the news-saturated era in which we live we cannot help but be exposed to the conjecture by this person or that person that there is a conspiracy to do this or to do that against this person or group or that person or group.

The nature of a conspiracy is that it is secret. Thus, how can it be either proven or disproven? For example, it has been conjectured that the COVID-19 virus was launched intentionally on the world in order to rein in civil liberties and to help bring about a new world order. Is this true? Some people say, "Yes" and others say, "Of Course not." Neither side will be convinced otherwise.

Even after nearly 60 years, some people cannot be persuaded that there was a conspiracy to assassinate President John F. Kennedy, choosing to believe the conclusion by the Warren Commission that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone gunman and that no one else was involved.

I am of the persuasion that there was indeed a conspiracy involving several individuals to kill Kennedy. Can I prove it? No. Many plots and conspiracies throughout history have been proven, while others have not and will have to wait until the great judgment day for their revealing.

I am of the firm belief that the COVID-19 virus was developed intentionally and launched on society for nefarious purposes. Others will accept everything that they are told by the media and will just as passionately assert their belief that the flu was purely natural in origin and that there was no conspiracy whatsoever involved in its development. Some people choose to believe whatever they are told by the powers that be and will refuse to contemplate otherwise.

Conspiracies in the Bible

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So what is the point of this essay? This compilation of conspiracies recorded in the Bible is provided in order to give the absolutist naysayer pause to reflect that he should not categorically dismiss out of hand the possibility of the existence of a conspiracy, whether in the case of the COVID-19 virus or some other situation.

The word 'conspired' is found in the Bible 19 times while the word 'conspiracy' is found ten times. Conspiracies are hatched all the time and this listing of conspiracies mentioned in the Bible is just the very tip of the iceberg of the plots and conspiracies that have been hatched in the minds of men and women throughout the history of mankind.

- Abram and Sarai conspire to deceive Pharaoh as to their marital status (Genesis 12:11-13)
- Rebecca and Jacob conspire to deceive Isaac into giving the blessing to Jacob, thus depriving Esau of the blessing (Genesis 27:6-13)
- Simeon and Levi conspire to kill Shechem and the other males in Shalem because Shechem defiled their sister, Dinah (Genesis 34:13-17, 25-26)
- Hamor and Shechem conspire with the men of their city to become rich from intermarrying with Jacob's family (Genesis 34:20-23)
- Joseph's older brothers conspire to get rid of him (Genesis 37:18)
- Joseph's older brothers conspire to deceive their father Jacob into believing that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal (Genesis 37:31-33)
- Pharaoh conspires with his fellow Egyptians to enslave the Hebrews (Exodus 1:8-10)
- Korah and other leaders of the Israelites conspire to challenge the leadership of Moses (Numbers 16:1-3 and 19)
- The Gibeonites conspire to deceive Joshua and the Israelites into believing that they are from a far-away land (Joshua 9:3-15)
- Abimelech conspires with the men of Shechem to dethrone and kill the sons of Gideon (Judges 9:1-6)
- The men of Shechem conspire to dethrone Abimelech (Judges 9:22-24)
- Samson's wife and the Philistines conspire against Samson to obtain the answer to Samson's riddle (Judges 14:15)
- Delilah conspires with the Philistine lords to rob Samson of his strength (Judges 16:4-5)

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• The Ziphites conspire with King Saul to capture David (I Samuel 23:19-20)

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• David's men conspire to kill King Saul (I Samuel 24:4)
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- The Ziphites conspire with King Saul to capture David (I Samuel 26:1)
- Abner conspires with King David of Judah to take the kingdom of Israel from King Ishbosheth (II Samuel 3:12)
- Rechab and Baanah conspire to assassinate King Ishbosheth (II Samuel 4:5-6)
- Amnon and Jonadab conspire to seduce Tamar (II Samuel 13:1-5)
- Absalom conspires to dethrone King David (II Samuel 15:12)
- Adonijah, Joab and Abiathar conspire to take the throne of Israel from the rightful heir, Solomon (I Kings 1:5-7)
- Baasha conspires to dethrone King Nadab (I Kings 15:27)
- Zimri conspires to dethrone King Baasha (I Kings 16:9 and 16)
- Jezebel conspires to have Naboth murdered (I Kings 21:8-13)
- Ahab's 400 false prophets conspire to deceive him into going into battle at Ramoth-Gilead (I Kings 22:6, 20-23)
- Jehu conspires to assassinate King Joram (II Kings 9:14 and 10:9)
- Jehoiada conspires against Athaliah to restore the throne of Judah to the rightful heir, Joash (II Kings 11:4-12)
- The servants of King Joash conspire to assassinate him (II Kings 12:20-21 and II Chronicles 24:25-26))
- Unnamed individuals conspire to assassinate King Amaziah (II Kings 14:17-19 and II Chronicles 25:27)
- Shallum conspires to assassinate King Zachariah (II Kings 15:10)
- Menahem conspires to assassinate King Shallum (II Kings 15:13-15)
- Pekah conspires to assassinate King Pekahiah (II Kings 15:25)

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• King Hoshea conspires with Egypt to rebel against Assyria's dominion over Israel (II Kings 17:4)

- Adrammelech and Sharezer conspire against their father, King Sennacherib of Assyria, to assassinate him (II Kings 19:37)
- The servants of King Amon conspire to assassinate him (II Kings 21:23)
- Ishmael conspires to assassinate Gedaliah (II Kings 25:25)
- King Joash and the princes of Judah conspire to kill the prophet Zechariah (II Chronicles 24:21)
- The servants of King Amon conspire to assassinate him (II Chronicles 33:24)
- The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin conspire to thwart their efforts to rebuild the temple (Ezra 4:5)
- Sanballat, Tobiah, et. al., conspire to fight against Jerusalem and hinder the rebuilding of the city walls (Nehemiah 4:7-8)
- Sanballat and Tobiah conspire to thwart Nehemiah in his project to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 6:2)
- Sanballat and Tobiah conspire to send Shemaiah to make Nehemiah afraid in order to thwart him in his effort to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 6:10-13)
- Bigthan and Teresh conspire unsuccessfully to assassinate King Ahasuerus of Persia (Esther 2:21)
- The enemies of Israel conspire to destroy Israel as a nation (Psalm 83:1-5)
- The people of Judah conspire against God to disobey Him and to serve other gods (Jeremiah 11:9-10)
- The false prophets conspire to do harm to others and pursue their own greed (Ezekiel 22:25)
- The Chaldean magicians, astrologers and sorcerers conspire to deceive King Nebuchadnezzar concerning the interpretation of his dream (Daniel 2:9)

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- The presidents and princes of Persia conspire unsuccessfully to have Daniel removed from office and executed (Daniel 6:4-5)
- There are several instances in the four gospels that describe the conspiring of the religious leaders, including the Pharisees, the scribes and the chief priests, to kill Jesus or to entangle Him in His words. Several of these events mentioned in the books of Mark, Luke and John are the same events mentioned in the book of Matthew (Matthew 12:14; 22:15; 26:3-5; Mark 3:6; 11:18; 14:1; Luke 6:7, 11; 20:19-20; John 5:16; 5:18; 7:1; 7:19 and 25; 7:30; 11:47-53)
- Judas Iscariot conspires with the chief priests to deliver Jesus into their hands (Matthew 26:14-15; Mark 14:10-11; Luke 22:3-6)
- The chief priests conspire to kill Lazarus (John 12:10-11)
- Ananias and Sapphira conspire to deceive Peter and the church at Jerusalem concerning the proceeds of the sale of a certain possession (Acts 5:1-2)
- Synagogue leaders conspire to bear false witness against Philip in order to silence him (Acts 6:11-14)
- The Jews of Damascus conspire to kill Saul (Acts 9:23)
- The Jews and honorable women and the chief men of Antioch conspire to persecute and expel Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:50)
- The unbelieving Jews of Iconium conspire to persecute and kill Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:2-5)
- Jews from Antioch and Iconium conspire with the people of Lystra to kill Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:19)
- Unbelieving Jews in Thessalonica conspire against Paul and Silas (Acts 17:5)
- The Jews of Thessalonica conspire against Paul and Silas in Berea (Acts 17:13)
- The Jews of Achaia conspire against Paul (Acts 18:12-13)
- Demetrius conspires with his fellow silversmiths in Ephesus against Paul (Acts 19:24-28)
- Several Jews conspire unsuccessfully to kill Paul (Acts 23:13)

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have tried to be thorough in my research into the conspiracies mentioned in the Bible, although it is certainly possible that I might have missed one or two. Whether or not that is the case, the above listing of 63 conspiracies serves to prove that conspiracies do indeed exist and that they are not uncommon.

Should we live our lives as paranoiacs, fearful that around every corner there is a conspiracy against us? No, of course not. But neither should we naively dismiss out of hand the idea that conspiracies to do evil against unsuspecting individuals and groups of people do not exist.