

# Coach House Church BEACONS

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## RATIONALISM

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10TH AUGUST 2020

On Christian TV shows I have sometimes seen short street interviews in which passers-by in shopping centres have been asked if they believe anything that is written in the Bible. Almost all the time the interviewees respond negatively, and their conclusions are that the Bible is a lot of tosh.

I suspect though that their answers are tosh because, when probed a little deeper, they seem never to have read the Bible. I suspect they have an anti-God bias and are therefore prejudiced.

This morning I watched an interview on YouTube in which Dr Jordan Peterson, a Canadian clinical psychologist, was talking about the rise of Neo-Marxism in the West, and the dangers thereof. It was an interesting interview. One was left with the impression that Capitalism, along with freedom of speech and thought were the antidote for Neo-Marxism. I can agree with the latter two things; but I felt that the sufferings that can be inflicted on people by unbridled Capitalism should have been addressed too.

This brings me to the Bible, and its rationality. In Leviticus chapter 18 there is a list of forbidden sexual relationships, which if they were followed today would do much to end sexual abuse. Prostitution (today euphemised as the sex industry!) is described as a source of evil in Leviticus chapter 19. Also, within those chapters is a provision for helping the poor by not over-reaping fields and vineyards so that the poor may have food to eat. (I wonder if Karl Marx and his minions knew about this? Marx, being a German-Jew, probably did but obviously decided to ignore it. Millions were starved to death in the quest for a Communist paradise!)

Also, within the Mosaic law (Leviticus 25) was a provision for arresting poverty: it was the year of Jubilee that came round every 50 years. Everyone could start again with a clean slate. Money was kept in its place-subject to God. No one was permanently saddled with debt and the threat of destitution. Think what this might do for our society. Is there a lesson here for Capitalists I wonder?

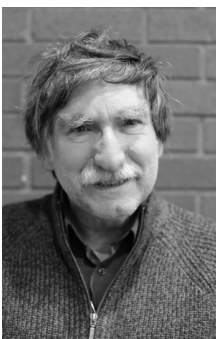
Even the land itself was given a sabbath year off every seventh year! (Leviticus 25). I don't know anything about agriculture and farming, and I know diddley squat about gardening, but I think God does, and He made provision for the land to rest and recover. I wonder if we do. Or perhaps we have concluded we know better! Just as in our wisdom we work seven days a week and ignore God's command to have one day off in seven. What could the Creator possibly know about our health? There's nothing wrong with being rational about things. God even invites people to reason with Him (see Isaiah 1:18). I say this because people have accused the Bible of being a book of tosh, as mentioned above. Only it isn't, it's full of sense – wisdom actually. To be a Christian doesn't mean you have to assassinate your brains! And there is something called sanctified common sense!

It's quite rational to believe that dead people don't come back to life. I'm not talking about medical resuscitations of people who have been clinically dead for a few minutes because of heart attacks etc. I know that medical science can do this, to a point. But we all know that people who have been dead for hours and days and weeks and longer don't tend to rise and re-join the living. That's an absolute fact. (By the way, zombies don't really exist!). John, in his Gospel, tells us that on one occasion Jesus raised a man from death who was in his grave and decaying! Jesus waited until this point because He wished to demonstrate the truth of His claim to be the Resurrection and the Life. This is in John chapter 11. Jesus could have raised everyone in the cemetery if He had chosen to – even the long dead. But He limited Himself to just Lazarus.

The people of Jesus' day were not fools; they knew that the dead stayed dead. The Jewish people, apart from the Sadducees, believed that the dead would be raised at the time of judgement and not before. The disciple Thomas was perhaps the scientific officer (a sort of Mr Spock in Star Trek but without the ears and green blood!) amongst the others. He was very rational. He would not believe that Jesus was risen from death, physically, unless he could do an experiment which involved close-up touching and examination of Jesus' crucifixion wounds. Jesus granted him this, and quite rationally, Thomas concluded that Jesus was bodily risen from death, and called Him his God and Lord!

Jesus told Thomas that those who later believed in Him would be blest, without having to see Him to believe Him risen. That's us. John tells us at the end of chapter 20 of his gospel that the things he had written were written so that we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that by believing we would have life in His name.

The Bible is a rational book; God is rational; it is rational to believe in a risen Jesus. May you believe and trust in Him. Amen.



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