

HOW DO WE DETERMINE HISTORICAL FACT FROM SUBJECTIVE FANTASY?

Video clip transcript extracted from the talk: ISRAEL-Romans 9:4a

By Rev. Ernest O'Neill

The continued existence of Israel as a nation is one of the greatest arguments for believing that our Creator is as He is described in the Bible. Those of us who have begun to allow the Spirit of Jesus to run our lives, and certainly those of us who have not, all of us occasionally wonder, "Is this a perfect description of reality?

Is this a perfect description of the Maker of the universe? I listen to it Sunday after Sunday, but there are other scriptures--the Koran, the Buddhist scriptures and the Book of Mormon--that claim to tell us what the Creator of the universe is like. Why should we believe that this one is the only perfect picture? Why should we believe that Moses is right in what he says about God, and Joseph Smith, Mohammed and Buddha are wrong? After all, they all spoke about miraculous events and they all said that God spoke to them." Why believe this Moses above them? Why believe he is right and they are wrong?

Of course, the real issue is what really did happen when Moses said that God spoke to him. Was it actual fact or was it subjective fantasy? When Buddha sat under the bow tree, was it just a subjective vision or was it solid historical fact, God showing himself in a way that was undoubtedly God? When Mohammed had a vision, was that a historical fact or was it a subjective fantasy or illusion? When Joseph Smith claims to have received those golden plates that the Mormons base their religion on, is that historical fact or just a subjective fantasy? Loved ones, in our present age we are tending more and more towards irrationality. More and more men and women are saying there is no rationalism anywhere, there is no reason anywhere. All you can have is some kind of experience under drugs, or some kind of experience that is hedonistic; that is all a man or woman can hope for for reality. You can't find reason anywhere now in our universe. You can't find reality by reason. At a time like this it is really important for us to hold solidly to reason. If you do, it will become clearer and clearer to you that the God who is behind our universe is exactly like the God who is revealed in the Bible.

Let me share with you what one of the old theologians said, a man called Leslie. He said there are certain common-sense guidelines to help people to determine what is historical fact and what is subjective fantasy. There are four criteria that a fact ought to satisfy if it is a historical fact. First of all, it should be such as can be judged by the senses, by eyes and ears. That eliminates all purely subjective visions that people have. Secondly, it should be something that is done publicly before the world. It should not be something that is done only in the presence of a small group who have a vested interest in believing it. It should be something that is done publicly for the world to see. Thirdly, and this is kind of interesting in regard to ancient history, there should be not only monuments and memorials to this fact, but there should be acts that have been performed down through the centuries to insure that the public memory has never been distorted. That eliminates most of the myths and legends that gathered around the non-Christian religious leaders down through the centuries after their deaths. Fourthly, these memorials and monuments, or these customs, habits and practices should have been present ever from the time when the original fact took place. If you examine these books in this Bible under those four criteria, you will become convinced that the revelation of our Creator that you get here is the truth and the things actually happened as they are recorded here.

Full Sermon: ISRAEL-Romans 9:4a By Rev. Ernest O'Neill