



THE COVID VACCINE

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

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Since the Covid-19 epidemic started in early 2020, events have developed rapidly and the subsequent changes to our daily lives have been unprecedented. Hospitals were overloaded with sick and dying patients and a general fear of contagion has gripped people all over the world. Instead of hugging and handshaking we are now practicing social distancing. We got used to wearing medical masks (a feature until very recently only common in Asian megacities). There was the added drama of closing of businesses, with many people losing their jobs, city wide lockdowns, home schooling, quarantine, and the list goes on. This new Covid life all became our “new normal” very quickly. The change was huge, both physically and emotionally.

The most far reaching health impact of the pandemic is the ongoing worldwide administration of the different types of Covid vaccines. The idea behind these vaccines is to prevent another wave of outbreaks and reach global immunity against the disease. People who take a vaccine are much less likely to get infected, and less likely to transmit the disease to others.

The development and administration of the vaccine is therefore met with great anticipation all over the world. Firstly of course for health reasons. The vaccine is expected to protect a person from getting infected and becoming sick. Secondly, the expectation is that taking the drug would allow the majority of people to “go back to normal”. This means going out again to the shops, eating at restaurants, meeting family and friends and going on trips and holidays. People everywhere have a great desire to revert back to their old lives and enjoy themselves the way they used to.

Christians (like non-Christians) have been adversely affected just as much. But for the Christian, there is also the faith aspect to consider. This has a very practical side, such as not being able to meet in church. Millions of Christians are relying on Zoom to have some form of church fellowship. But also deeper spiritual questions arise out of the pandemic. About the will of God, about the meaning of life, about the purpose of suffering and death.

This is not unfamiliar territory for the mature Christian. Death and sickness play a significant role in the Bible. They connect all human beings from the beginning until now. We are all sinners, and sin leads to death. This is what the Bible teaches.

As Christians we know that we live in a fallen world. Ever since our first parents disobeyed God, sickness, misery and death have been part of our short earthly existence. Covid really has reminded everyone of this fact. Living on earth means coming to terms with the eventual demise and death of our bodies. Just as we started to think that sickness would be a thing of the past, Covid has dealt a

deathblow to that hope. Sickness is winning once again so it seems. Many Christians have lost loved ones or suffered themselves. This can be a heavy burden and even challenge our faith in God.

Thankfully, our faith also has a “toolkit” to deal with these life events. The most effective perhaps is simply trusting in God and knowing He is in control, no matter what. We need to remind ourselves again that hope is not found in the few years we spend in this world. Our hope is in Jesus Christ, our Lord who defeated death. He who suffered and died for our sins and took our sickness upon Himself. As Christians we can find huge comfort in our risen Savior. Death is not the end, but brings a new beginning, a promise of eternal life.

We must stand firm in this truth, that all those in Christ should not fear death but hope to rise again. But at the same time, we need a practical translation of this faith into our daily lives. We don’t want to be sick, we love life, we have family, children, elderly parents whom we love and who need protection. Many Christians work in healthcare, and pastors and missionaries must travel to bring the gospel to lost souls.

To be effective as Christians, we must provide a Biblical answer to the challenge of Covid-19. In this case, specifically to the taking of the vaccine. Should a Christian trust in the medical consensus that vaccination is the right thing to do? Or should we avoid the vaccine and simply trust God’s providence?

On the internet one can find a multitude of voices on the topic, also from sources that purport to be Christian. Some of these are pro vaccine, some express (justified) doubts, and a small but vocal segment is outright anti-vaccine. The last group is a fertile ground for the wildest opinions. Some of these fall squarely in the camp of what can be called conspiracy theory. Unfortunately for the Christian seeking honest information, many groups advocating these extreme positions claim to have the Bible as their inspiration. This familiarity naturally predisposes us to give them the benefit of the doubt, which can lead to negative consequences for the uncritical mind.

It is therefore the goal of the Bible study to separate the wheat from the chaff. We will look at the matter as objectively as possible, and apply our God given intellect, critical thinking, as well as our faith in the Word of God. It is my hope that with this article, seeking minds will be led in the right direction.

It is a good Biblical practice to approach any topic prayerfully and to study it from the perspective of the Bible. And this is what we will do in the coming sections. Before looking at the Biblical aspects, we first need to understand our topic. What exactly is the Covid vaccine and how does it work?

THE COVID VACCINE AND ITS WORKING.

Covid-19 is a viral infection caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is a type of Coronavirus. It is similar to the already known SARS (corona) virus that struck Asia in 2003. It consists of a piece of RNA (genetic material) surrounded by a ball-shaped membrane that contains what is called spike proteins. These spike proteins give the coronavirus its characteristic “spiked ball” look. The spikes act as receptors or connectors through which the virus can enter host cells in the lungs, nose and windpipe. The virus infects the cell and starts replicating itself in the host cell and producing toxins. The infected cell eventually dies and this is how the lungs are slowly degraded. Breathing becomes increasingly difficult as the illness progresses and more lung tissue is damaged.

A vaccine is a medicine that can prevent such a virus from infecting a person’s body. How does a vaccine generally work? A vaccine is essentially a piece of genetic code that resembles the virus. It is wrapped in a delivery mechanism like a membrane to bring it into the body. Its working could be compared to a small computer program like the ones running on your laptop. These programs tell the computer how to process information. The vaccine is like a software program and instructs the miniscule molecular machines in our cells how to fight the disease.

A vaccine enters the body’s cells and transfers the genetic information (“computer code”) into the cell. There it “teaches” the cells how to disable the virus. Then the special T-cells in the body that are responsible for our immune responses start to make the instructed antibodies. These antibodies work against the virus and the person is immune to the disease.

Well known vaccines are: the polio vaccine, the smallpox vaccine and the yellow fever vaccine that is mandatory for many tropical countries. These vaccines have virtually eradicated the viral infections that they were designed to attack. Vaccines have been highly succesful at fighting illnesses and reducing the number of deaths to sickness worldwide. A general fear of vaccines is therefore slightly irrational as it is the sickness we should be more afraid of. Vaccines have saved millions of lives.¹

There are two types of vaccines that were developed to battle Covid:

- mRNA type vaccines
- Viral Vector type vaccines

The first type, mRNA type vaccines, is the newest type of vaccine. The Pfizer Covid vaccine and the Moderna vaccine are mRNA type vaccines. This type of vaccine

¹ <https://today.uic.edu/ten-million-lives-saved-by-1962-breakthrough-study-says>

works by supplying a specially made genetic code of mRNA (a kind of genetic code) to certain cells in the body, which teaches these cells to make the *spike protein* that is found in the Covid virus (so not the virus itself). The result is that our immune cells start making antibodies against these spikes, as they are being recognized as a foreign entity. These antibodies will break down the spikes and disable them. As soon as a real Covid virus enters the body, the same antibodies will attack these spike proteins and disable them. The body has effectively learned how to destroy the spikes, and the Covid virus particles are no longer able to attach themselves to cells in the body. This makes the vaccinated person immune to Covid, since the virus cannot reproduce itself anymore in the cells.

The great advantage of this type of vaccine is that there is no need to expose the person to a potentially dangerous virus type substance. This is how older vaccines used to work: you are injected with a weakened or killed variant of the real virus. The body then responds to the weakened virus. However, there is a risk that the person might actually become sick from the viral material. This is not possible with the mRNA type vaccine, since the virus is not part of the vaccine, but only the RNA information for the spike.

A potential disadvantage of the mRNA vaccine is that the genetic information in the vaccine could have adverse effects in the body. There have been many reports (mostly on anti-vaccination and certain conspiracy sites) that the mRNA vaccine will enter into and/or alter a person's DNA. If this were true, it would be a serious problem, as our DNA is our biological identity. Any sudden changes to it could cause cancer and other terrible diseases. However, there is simply no evidence that this could happen with the Covid vaccine.

The reason is basic biochemistry. The transfer of RNA back into the DNA would violate one of the main rules of genetics, which says that mRNA is always transferring out of DNA and never back into it. This **central dogma of molecular biology** explains the flow of genetic information within a biological system. It is often stated as "DNA makes RNA, and RNA makes protein". This law was first formulated by Francis Crick in 1957, and published in 1958.²

The vaccine RNA is also broken down quickly in the cells after it has delivered its functionality (code) to the cellular "machines". Therefore, there is no plausible risk that a person's DNA is altered by the vaccine. The vaccine RNA does not enter the core of the cell, but works outside the core in the cell's plasma and surface.

Of course, this is the theoretical framework of the vaccines effect, and must be continuously monitored and verified, especially about the long-term effects in the cells.

Currently however there is no scientific evidence that the mRNA vaccine is harmful to the body or can permanently change a person's DNA. There are viruses (called

² 16. Crick FHC. Nucleic acids. *Scientific American*. 1957;197:188–200.

retro viruses, like HIV) and even experimental vaccines that do change the DNA, but neither the Coronavirus nor the Coronavirus vaccine have the ability to enter or change the DNA. This is confirmed by all the available official research into the vaccines safety³.

*"There is no plausible way that mRNA vaccines are going to alter your DNA. It would violate basically everything we know about cell biology."*⁴

The other type of Covid vaccine is the viral vector type vaccine. The Astra Zeneca vaccine is a viral vector vaccine type. The viral vector technique is a more traditional technique. It works by using a harmless "imitation" virus to prompt the body to start creating antibodies against the harmless virus. When the body encounters the real Coronavirus, it recognizes it from the earlier harmless virus and can disable it as well.

All the vaccines have been tested on thousand of volunteers in clinical trials⁵. This guarantees a basic safety of the vaccine at least in the short and medium term. In addition, these tests provide information on effectiveness against infection. This information however must be balanced against the fact that clinical trials have been fast tracked. Normally it would take many years before a vaccine can be released to the public. This creates some additional risk to public health, as not all side effects will have been documented in the trials. We are currently seeing evidence of this, especially in isolated incidents where people have died shortly after receiving the vaccine.

Investigations of these incidents are ongoing, but there have been clear cases where people have died due to blood clots in the brain or due to heart attacks or seizures, where a plausible link with the vaccine has been found.

However, the numbers are tiny compared to the overall risk of Covid itself. For an average person, the total risk of dying of Covid once being infected is 20,000 times higher than the risk of dying due to the vaccine. The risk for an *infected* person dying due to the Covid infection is about 2 %, while the risk of dying due to the vaccine is 0,0001%:

Based on the figures announced on Wednesday by the UK medicines regulator, if 10 million imaginary people were given the AZ vaccine you might expect to see 40 of these clots - with about 10 clots having fatal consequences.

If you delayed vaccinations for our 10 million people by a week, about 16,000 might catch coronavirus, based on current levels of the virus. If they were all older adults, say 60-year-olds, maybe 1,000 would end up in hospital and 300 of them

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/safety-of-vaccines.html>

⁴ <https://www.deplatformdisease.com/blog/no-really-mrna-vaccines-are-not-going-to-affect-your-dna>

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/distributing/steps-ensure-safety.html>

*might be expected to die, far more than the 10 deaths from clots after vaccination that we mentioned earlier.*⁶

However, one should also consider the age factor. About 90% of Covid deaths are people over 55. Taking this into account, the chance for a younger person to die of Covid once infected drops to 0,2 %. This means that the risk of Covid is still 2000 times higher.

Only if you calculate the risk of dying of Covid overall (so not if you are infected) do the risks for vaccination for young people become roughly the same as the risk of dying of Covid, namely about 0,0001 %, which is smaller than the chance of being billed by lightning.

Based on the statistics, the risk of dying because of the vaccine is minimal compared to the far greater risk of dying of a Covid-19 infection. There are in fact cases of people who initially refused the vaccine and eventually died or got very sick with Covid⁷.

Currently, young children under 16 are not considered for the vaccine. This is not likely to change in the future, as an 80% level of vaccination is sufficient for herd immunity (the level of immunity that will mathematically stop the spread of Covid). Also, most vaccines are not approved for nor tested on children.

For younger people between 16 and 55, the odds are a bit different. Although overall the risk of vaccine death is exceedingly small (1 in 300,000), the risk of Covid death is also small (about 1 in 100,000). The long-term effects of the vaccine are currently unknown. This would add risk in the long term of course. On the other hand, Covid can and does mutate. Slightly deadlier variants have already been found (in the form of the UK, Brazilian and Indian variants). In addition there is the risk of long-term effects of Covid itself, which can be devastating (like a permanent loss of smell and certain neurological problems).

The final and perhaps most important reason for taking the vaccine even for young and healthy people is that doing so will help stop the spread of the disease to others, especially vulnerable and elderly people. By taking the vaccine, the total population will reach immunity faster and therefore many deaths can be prevented.

So in conclusion, from a purely medical perspective, there is no sound reason to refuse the Covid vaccine. The benefits of being protected and protecting others by far outweigh the risks of the vaccine itself.

⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/explainers-56665396>

⁷ <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/ont-doctor-admits-3-covid-19-patients-to-icu-after-they-turned-down-vaccines-1.5389713>

Having reviewed the medical evidence, let us turn to the Biblical aspect of the Covid vaccine.

THE PURPOSE OF SICKNESS IS TO POINT A PERSON TO CHRIST

John 11:3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. 4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby

Biblically speaking, the origin of sickness is explained as the result of the fall of man. Sickness also remains on the earth as presents a stark reminder that we need a Redeemer who will defeat all sickness and death. We cannot heal ourselves.

Is 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Sickness in a Biblical context is the result of the fall of man and hence ultimately is caused by the sin of Adam and Eve. God never designed the earth to include sickness and death. This is clear from the Bible text where the created order is called *very good*:

Gen 1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

As a result of the sin of Adam and Eve, the ground from which Adam was taken, was cursed by God.

Gen 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

The ground (the dust) being cursed had profound effects on human and animal life. It means that the very nourishment for our physical bodies (our food) is slowly poisoning us. We cannot live without food, but at the same time our food, that comes from the ground, has side effects that ultimately bring sickness, decay and death.

Gen 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Illness and epidemics should be expected to always exist on the earth, and are a normal part of the fallen world. Throughout our lives, sickness can come and is simply a by-product of living in a cursed world. Particular cases also exist. There is illness that is directly caused by God as a kind of punishment. In that case, prayer and repentance can bring healing. There is also sickness that is coming

from the devil or through works of demons. Here the Lord can bring about miraculous healing by our honest repentance. In some cases, the sickness needs a casting out of the devil by the church in Jesus Name.

James 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

God will protect Christians from sickness. The Lord promises the Jews that they will be spared from epidemics and judgement through illness.

Ps 91:2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. 3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. 5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; 6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. 7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

God can heal sickness miraculously as well. Jesus healed many sick, He raised people from the dead. He healed a man who had been sick for 38 years. Also today we must have faith that God heals. We should therefore not be afraid of Covid, of sickness in general and certainly not of vaccines. God is in control.

Mark 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

As Christians our hope is not on this body that will one day perish. Our earthly existence is like a vapor that arises and vanishes again. What will stay forever is the living Word of the Lord. Jesus Christ has defeated death, and one day we will be raised to life with His body. This faith should be our everlasting hope.

Rom 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Therefore, any sickness or illness will point us in a compelling way to Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the maker and healer of the body. He will also raises us to new life if we abide in Christ. Sickness reminds us of the sickness He took from us whenever He performed a healing. It also points us to the moment when He defeated sickness forever by dying on the cross. So, in this life we suffer with Christ for a brief time, while we wait for the blessed hope of the resurrection and eternal life, in which there will be sickness no more!

Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In conclusion, all sickness is ultimately for the glory of God. This is a strong statement and can be hard to accept. However, we can understand this by realizing that Jesus took our illnesses and defeated them by His death and resurrection. Therefore an illness should point us to Christ, our Healer and Savior. It reminds us that we desperately need Jesus, and that He is our heavenly Physician.

THE BIBLE IS NOT AGAINST MEDICINE

Some Christians think that taking any medicine or seeking medical help reveals a lack of faith or can be considered unbiblical. This is a misconception. Examples of bona-fide use of medication are found in the scriptures.

There is a godly use of medicine (this would include vaccines as well). This means that the medicine should be taken combined with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Ultimately, He is our Healer, either through medication or vaccines, or by His direct (miraculous) intervention.

Faith is our primary entry point for seeking healing, even with the aid of modern medicine. The woman with an issue of blood for 12 years was healed because of her faith when she secretly touched *the Medicine* (Jesus' flesh).

Mark 5:34 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

There are several examples of the Lord working through an agent of medicine. When king Hezekiah was sick until death, the prophet Isaiah gave him an instruction to use a lump of figs for healing purposes.

Is 38:21 For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover. 22 Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?

An example of a bronze age "vaccine" is the brass snake which Moses erected in the desert at the command of God. The Israelites who looked at the brass snake received healing from the snake bites that were terrorizing the camp.

Num 21:8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. 9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Jesus compares Himself to a doctor. It is highly unlikely that Jesus would use this analogy if He disapproved of medicine and physicians in general.

Luke 5:31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick

Medications are therefore not anti-faith. God is the author of all human wisdom. The Bible explains that Solomon, through the Holy Spirit, acquired much wisdom about earthly things. God can work through elements of the earth, like water, wind and even animals and plants.

2 Ki 4:33 And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. 34 And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

There are several Biblical reasons to take the vaccine:

1. To support the common good in society, such as protecting vulnerable people against Covid.
 - *Phil 2:4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*
2. It is a manifestation of love to other people, the greatest of which is to have sacrificial love. Not even of life and death but simply to be able to sacrifice something for someone else's benefit (perhaps your fear of vaccines).
 - *John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*
3. It is evidence of personal faith in Christ. Our faith is not in the earthly body of dust, but in the heavenly body of Christ.
 - *Phil 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

The general theme is to take medication "in the Lord", namely combined with faith in Christ as being pre-eminent in everything. James reminds us that the medical "agent" which could be considered medicinal was used by God to heal:

Ja 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord

The COVID vaccines are controversial in Christian circles because during testing they use cell tissue that was grown from an aborted embryo. This is indeed a concern. As Christians we are advocates of life and should be against abortion of unborn life. To be clear however, there is no ingredient made of or containing aborted fetal material for any vaccine. No fetuses were killed to produce the vaccines. But some vaccines do use cells during the testing phase that are lab-grown from cells that originally come from a fetus aborted in the 1980's⁸. We need to realize that other medicines and vaccines might also use this technique. This fact is not something that a Christian would be comfortable with, and it does raise ethical and moral concerns.

This concern should however be balanced against the impact and scope of the effects. We should not carry a burden that is not reasonably ours. For us to

⁸ <https://www.nebraskamed.com/COVID/you-asked-we-answered-do-the-covid-19-vaccines-contain-aborted-fetal-cells>

consider taking the vaccine a sin, there must be a sufficiently direct relation between the sin (use of cells developed from aborted fetal tissue) and the action (taking the vaccine). The Bible makes it clear that the responsibility for sin does travel endlessly however.

Deut 24:16 The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

When the apostle Paul walked the streets of Rome, one could make the case that these streets were built by pagans and dedicated to false gods. That they served the Roman army which had devastated and violated the holy land. However, we know that God wanted the apostles to travel the Roman roads to spread the gospel. Similarly, if the vaccine allows us to do an infinite amount of good (bring people to Christ and serve God) it will in Gods eyes outweigh the evil that was done in the past to make it. Sometimes evil things are used by God to bring about the good, such as the life of the patriarch Joseph testifies⁹.

When Timothy the pastor of the church in Ephesus was ill, the apostle Paul recommended him to take some alcoholic wine¹⁰. He did this while an overall abstinence from alcoholic wine should be the Christian standard. A serious study of the Bible prohibits a Christian from ever consuming alcoholic wine. Nevertheless, in certain circumstances alcholic wine can find its use, in this case in the form of an anti-septic medicine.

This is not to say that we should accept everything. As Christians we must challenge the things of this world including medicines such as vaccines. It is necessary to ask tough questions and scrutinize information from the government. We are called to test everything and keep what is right. Our fact finding must have a reasonanble limit however. This is especially true of the many alternative views on the vaccine that can be considered conspiracy theories. What should our attitude be towards this phenomenon? How far should we go in our exploration of the weird and wonderful world of vaccine skepticism?

⁹ Here it is meant the evil done by his brothers to sell him to slavers, only to end up in Egypt as a type of savior (Gen 50:20)

¹⁰ See 1 Timothy 5:23

A CHRISTIAN CANNOT SUPPORT CONSPIRACY THEORIES

To answer the question in the earlier paragraph, we must first take a slight detour and explore the phenomenon of conspiracy theory. Since the advent of Covid, the world has been hit with many conspiracy theories, one more outlandish than the other. To name a few of them, in order of plausibility, from the somewhat remotely possible to the extremely outlandish:

- The Covid virus was deliberately created in China as a bioweapon to destroy the western economies and achieve world dominance¹¹.
- The Covid virus was created by the CIA as a bioweapon to defeat the economy of China and retain world dominance (for CIA fill in....Mossad, Putin, etc)
- The Covid virus is caused by the 5G wave spectrum found in mobile phone networks.
- The Covid virus/vaccine is a bioweapon created by Bill Gates (or insert favorite villan) and people in the UN/WEF/Illuminati (or insert favorite group) to depopulate the earth and create a New World Order.

You may smile at some of the weirdness here but this is a serious problem for Christianity. How can new believers take our faith seriously if becoming a Christian means believing in these things as well? We must learn the truth about all these theories and their origin.

First we need a definition. What is a conspiracy theory? There are many possible definitions, but one I found helpful is this one¹²:

A conspiracy theory explains certain world events as caused by the secret and evil dealings of a hidden group of powerful (elite) people, who work together in covert ways to achieve certain undisclosed and malicious political, religious or economic goals, while at the same time covering up their perverse actions.

Now there is nothing absurd about people working together to achieve certain goals, even if this happens behind the scenes. Most political and business deals are done in this way, but it doesn't make them a conspiracy theory. **Conspiracies do exist, but conspiracy theories are fake.**

The key difference to notice here is the element of secrecy in every aspect:

- Secret actions

¹¹ There are some credible reports that the virus may have accidentally escaped a military biotech laboratory in Wuhan. This theory however is at present unproven and still under investigation. Unfortunately the Chinese government does not allow a full investigation at time of writing (May/June 2021)

¹² Inspired by a definition in this article: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/christians-conspiracy-theories/>

- Hidden group
- Covert ways
- Undisclosed goals
- Covering up

This pervading secrecy prevents anyone from properly exposing or discovering what is going on, due to the hidden nature of the conspiracy. This makes the conspiracy theory so powerful and so attractive: in the mind of the conspiracy believer, it can survive almost any critical examination. Since it is so hidden and secret, it becomes self-sealing and can incorporate new elements and arguments repeatedly. If there is a powerful counter argument, simply make it part of the conspiracy theory and voila, its back in business in a bullit proof version. The downside is that the adding of extra bells and whistles make the theory evermore complex and frankly, more silly.

So ultimately, conspiracy theories are ludicrous, because they cannot be verified or dismantled by rational arguments one way or another. Conspiracy theories of course are lies, they are made up, concoctions and fabrications, fake news and deceptions. They are indeed the subject of blind faith. This is the crux of the matter, because its about faith, but he wrong kind of faith. Its about surrogate faith in something else then the Lord. Its about faith in secrets, hidden things and in the occult.

All conspiracy (the word conspiracy is derived from the Latin for *plotting together to do evil*) is born in the realm of the devil. But not the conspiracy itself is the devils work, as of course it doesn't exist in the form presented. But the *lie of the conspiracy* is the work of the devil. The promotion of the conspiracy theory is where the hidden evil is.

That is why a Christian can never believe in conspiracy theories, because he would then also believe in the mother of all conspiracies which was uttered by Satan in the garden of Eden. The first conspiracy theory believers were Adam and Eve!

Gen 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil

This is the worlds first conspiracy theory. It basically states that God is conspiring with the angels to mislead mankind to prevent them from becoming gods.

The devil is called the father of lies by Jesus for this very reason: he is the origin of all false theories, false doctrines and lies:

John 8:44(b) He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it

Christians are vulnerable to conspiracy thinking, because we *do* believe in an invisible world where good is battling with evil in an epic fight. We have the book of Revelation which speaks about an elite conspiracy to dominate the world. But the book of Revelation is the revealed Word of God! That is the major difference.

Rev 13:7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world

So the conspiracy (not conspiracy theory!) described in the Book of Revelation doesn't give us the right to spread all these obviously fake stories that mostly act to confuse and ridicule our faith. There is knowledge from above and there is different knowledge, which is devilish.

James 3:15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

The fact is that wisdom from God gives peace and joy, and not strife and confusion. This is one major way in which we can discern truth from falsehoods. We discern by the Spirit of Jesus, who is Truth.

In addition, as a practical piece of advice: think critically before you believe anything. Ask yourself these questions about any given theory:

- Is this theory consistent with the revealed Word of God in the Bible?
- How do I know that what I believe is true? Do I have any solid proof?
- Are there good reasons to be skeptical about it? Are there obvious weaknesses and counterarguments that I have not considered?
- By promoting it, do I malign the character of certain people that I have never met in my life? (Doing this is an act against Christian charity, a sin.)
- Do I know the lifestyle of the authors of the videos that I watch? What is their faith? Do they live holy lives or are they dubious characters and charlatans?

We do not get our wisdom from YouTube videos that are being passed around. We don't get our information from conspiracy websites. Therefore, if you are a Christian, it is your duty to properly study and be informed about a matter before you start throwing around fake news. You do not want to be the propagandist of Satan. You don't want to end up being the middle man of his lies.

We cannot just believe something because it appeals to our emotions and sentimentality. God only accepts our faith if it is rooted in truth. And the Truth is Jesus Christ our Lord.

Col 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Yet this is what many Christians do when they spread conspiracy theories. They spread false information and even dare to use the gospel as an excuse. But we cannot spread information that we do not know to be true! We have no right to do this. Besides, it is intellectually lazy to not investigate matters but still spread conspiracy theory.

Matt 18:15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

There is a profound difference between conspiracy faith and Christian faith. That difference is the Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom of God. Our faith is rooted in the plausible eye witness testimony of many reliable witnesses in the Bible.

2 Pe 1:16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. 19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

We know the apostles and their character. We know our church leaders as men of integrity and love. But do you know the people that teach conspiracies? Do you know about their lives? Do you know if they are saved? Would you trust them with your eternal life?

If the answer is no, then we should stop taking them seriously.

Belief in a conspiracy theory is revealing a lack of faith in Christ and His eternal power and glory. It implies that we, just like Adam and Eve, have fallen for a deception, believing something out of hearsay.

2 Cor 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Conspiracy theories are occult in nature. Occult means hidden. They are distractions from the real, genuine faith in Christ and His Word. It is a well-known fact that many Covid conspiracy theories are peddled by occultists, satanists,

antivaxxers and white supremacists¹³. We are not on their side nor should we want to be. We have the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of Truth and Love

John 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Therefore, their origin is from the devil, and they must be exposed and rejected. If we don't do this and clear our minds regularly by immersing ourselves in prayer and in the Word of God, the risk is that we will be deceived like the world will be by satan.

2 Thess 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Satan, the father of all lies, has always been fighting against the truth of God and of His people, the Jews and against the church of God. The hands of the devil therefore can be seen in many conspiracy theories from the anti-semitism contained in them.

For instance, the successful vaccination campaign in Israel, with over 80% of people over 60 vaccinated already, has sparked anti-Semitism in the form of hatred against Israel and accusations of Israel spreading the disease. This is an old hallmark of the devil that wherever he is active, hatred against the Jews will appear.

A Christian must for all these reasons unreservedly reject all conspiracy thinking, while at the same time being critical towards the information floating around. We should not be blind believers of the media or the government. But this is not in the same category of the intentional lies coming in the form of conspiracy theory.

As Christians we have one more reason to reject these theories. The first thing the devil produced after the resurrection of Christ was a conspiracy theory of what really happened:

Matt 28:13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. 14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. 15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

So, are we going to *accept* conspiracy theory from so called Christian groups, while at the same time *reject* conspiracy from the enemies of Christ? What is our standard to distinguish these? What are our criteria for truth? Our Christian character must reject this conspiracy thinking, because it is contrary to the Spirit

¹³ For instance, in Holland, the leader of the movement that denies Covid and warns against taking vaccines is a well-known radical left-wing activist and new-ager.

of Christ, who is about love and honesty. A conspiracy thinker has neither faith nor righteousness nor love. He is a worldly and egotistic person.

Is 48:16 Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.

The devil came to steal and destroy. His deceptions take many forms. Some even religious shaped ones. Do not be fooled by people calling themselves Christian who at the same time misinform and spread ridiculous lies. Even we must correct our own brothers and sisters with love if they do these things:

2 Tim 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

We must guard our own heart and our mouth. For what is in the heart ultimately will come out of our mouths. If our witness is to be authentic and acceptable, we must focus on preaching Christ and not get sidetracked. Christians should realize that conspiracy thinking makes us look foolish in the eyes of the world, and diminishes our witnessing for Christ. For who would accept anything from someone who believes in wacky things and is afraid to take a vaccine?

Rom 14:16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of

2 Cor 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ

It is the responsibility of a Christian to test their faith and believe in things that are true. There is no excuse for allowing yourself to believe in things for which there is no evidence.

It simply means you must discipline yourself and study the Word of God, and study the topic prayerfully and carefully. We cannot use our faith as an excuse to believe weird things. God will hold you accountable if you spread false information or willfully damage someone's reputation.

Matt 12:36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

We have firmly established that the Covid vaccine is not the product of a conspiracy theory. But can it have something in common with a prophecy from the Bible? Can, in short, the vaccine be the mark of the Beast, which after all is

described in the Bible and contains strong conspirational elements. We need to explore this topic as well.

THE COVID VACCINE IS NOT THE MARK OF THE BEAST

Many are asking if the Covid vaccines could have anything to do with the 666 mark of the Beast. To support this, they point to certain fringe interpretations of the well known verse in the Book of Revelation whereby they conclude the mark (charagma in Greek) is really a needle (injection). In their eyes the vaccine is the same of “not being able to buy or sell”. Is there any truth to this? Although certain superficial similarities are temptingly close, there are good Biblical grounds to reject the connection.

The key mistake made here is to focus only on the *nature* of the mark. By doing that, a wide range of options is available, and none of these can be conclusively proven (only speculated about). From the Bible text alone, we simply cannot conclude what the mark exactly is, just as we cannot deduce the name or identity of the antichrist as a certain living person (something the Christian world again and again is trying to achieve with dismal results).

We need a different approach to answer the question about the mark of the Beast and refute that the Covid vaccine is the 666. This requires us to take a step back and look at the bigger picture for a moment.

We must simply investigate the *conditions* under which the mark of the Beast will be administered (in fact *forced* upon the world at the penalty of death)

- Firstly, the Beast has made himself known and is in a position of world leadership.
- There will be a one world government system and currency in place.
- Religions have been marginalized, especially Christianity will be under severe persecution.
- He will sit in the temple in Jerusalem and call himself God. This also implies that the third temple has been rebuilt in Jerusalem.
- There is a peace treaty in place between Israel and the Muslim world, especially concerning the Palestinian population.

Since none of these conditions have been fulfilled even in a remote sense, the mark of the Beast cannot be the vaccine. True, some 666 hints (like shops being closed to unmasked people, and the plans for a vaccine passport) are visible in the Covid measures, but the Bible is so succinct in its description of the antichrist, that there cannot be any doubt. For instance, vaccine passports already exist in many countries, but these are clearly not the 666. The Covid vaccine simply doesn't cut it when compared to the descriptions in the Bible.

Also, the vaccine does not actually prohibit someone from buying and selling. People can still buy and sell even if they don't have the vaccine. Of course, it is possible that the Covid vaccine is a forerunner of an eventual “vaccine” that is the mark of the Beast. But one must stretch the truth beyond reason to arrive at this

conclusion for Covid-19. At least we should be skeptical and await further developments, which is what wisdom would require us to do.

Covid is not a unique event. There have been pandemics before. The Spanish flu of 1918-20 was far deadlier than Covid. We should also expect more of these events as the day of the Lord draws near. The Bible does predict that pandemics will be part of the end times. Jesus says that these are only the beginning of sorrows. By the time of the four horsemen, the pale rider arrives, and he is bringing devastation on a scale that's simply impossible to compare to the Covid pandemic.

Rev 6:8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

So, while it is wise to be vigilant and watchful, the Covid vaccine does not meet any of the standards that can make it the 666 mark. When this mark comes, we will surely know and there will be no doubt whatsoever. Once the antichrist is here, people will know. But then it's too late for most unfortunately. There will be no conspiracy theory needed to recognize the mark of the beast once it arrives. The Bible will be enough.

SHOULD A CHRISTIAN TAKE THE VACCINE?

Ultimately the decision depends on your own conscience and faith. God does not intend to micromanage our lives. He has given us an essential gift, that is free will. We must make up our minds within the limits of the special revelation of the Word of God in the pages of the Bible. Regarding the vaccine risks, these exist, but also, we know that God protects us from any deadly thing. Can we ever say that we are truly safe in the flesh? The work of God comes with risks, whatever we do.

Mark 16:18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Therefore, there is no predetermined answers. The Bible does not tell us if we should take vaccines or not. What it does provide is a spiritual and moral framework for guiding our minds. If our subsequent actions to not cause a direct sin or are a violation to Gods Word, we are free to decide left or right.

Acts 23:1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day

Let us examine ourselves. Based on the available information and our faith in God, we should be able to make a decision that brings peace with God and with our own conscience.

There are many good reasons to take the vaccine:

- To protect yourself against Covid.
- To protect others against Covid, thus doing a good work, as we are supposed to love our neighbor.
- To speed up the eradication of Covid from society.
- To open churches and have the Biblically mandated fellowship with or brothers and sisters.
- To be able to travel and share the gospel with a dying world.

The risks are, as far as we know, acceptable:

- The risk of death is 2000 times smaller than the risk of dying of Covid once infected.
- The side effects are minimal in the short term, and more and more information becomes available.
- The vaccine does not alter DNA or damage genetic material in the body.
- It is not a bioweapon or secret 666 mark.
- The only valid medical reason not to take the vaccine is the risk on longer term, of which of course little information is available. This is where everyone's personal judgement is necessary to make the right choice.

- Probably there is no need for children and healthy young people to take the vaccine.

The Bible is not a manual for interpreting the ever changing media news cycle. We cannot use the Word as a magnifying glass to shape our understanding of world events. It is the Word of God that teaches us about the character and identity of God, the creation of the universe, of life on earth, about morality, sin and redemption, salvation and the Kingdom of God. God has created each of us with the unique ability to respond to this Word and to follow Christ. God wants to fill us with His wisdom by the Holy Spirit.

It is by this wisdom that we make decisions about matters such as vaccines. Our own conscience should make the final call. The Bible says that anything that is done against our own conscience, which is God given faculty, can be called a sin.

Romans 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

So, if someone is not comfortable taking the vaccine, he or she should not take it, and continue examining themselves in the Lord. If someone else is convinced he or she should take it, they should take it in the Lord. Whatever we decide about the vaccine, it is a personal choice based on faith in the power of Jesus Christ our Lord. That is the power of God in you, and of your free will.

THE ULTIMATE VACCINE

The ultimate spiritual vaccine is the Word of God. The Word of God was made flesh in Jesus Christ our Lord and God. When Jesus Christ came into the world, He came to defeat the works of the devil. These evil works that He destroyed include sin, sickness, lies and false information, taking their power away.

The best antidote against the deceptive works of the devil is to give our life to Jesus Christ, and worship Him as our only God. God is one, and He has manifested in flesh for our salvation (Mark 12:32, 1 Tim 3:16, Col 2:9). Our Adamic bodies, that come from the dust of the earth, will ultimately demise and return to the dust. Vaccines will not change this. Therefore, the most important decision in this life is to take the only real Vaccine: our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said: I am the life (John 14:6). He has the Words of life. He is the vaccine against eternal damnation in hell. To take this vaccine, we need to focus on Him, and begin a process of investigating ourselves. This is called repentance. This means actively moving away from sinful choices and start living according to Gods Law of love and obedience.

The first step is to take the "Shot". This is called being born again. Jesus said that only if you are born again of the water and the Spirit, you are protected against the main sickness of this world, namely eternal death in hell.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

This life changing decision carries some risk, namely losing one's old life, bad friends and perhaps ill deserved reputation, but it also means to gain eternal life.

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

This new birth of water and Spirit is our ultimate Vaccine against sin and death.

Once we are baptized in Jesus Name, our call is to holiness. Leading a godly life of faith and prayer is much more important than our beliefs in vaccines and politics. Today, many Christians lead worldly, sin infested lives. It is time we spend time in earnest prayer and fasting, and repent from our fleshly desires.

The overall situation in the churches gives reason to be pessimistic. Over half the evangelical Christians believe that casual sex is acceptable. More and more think gay marriage is ok. Many are addicted to pornography, alcohol and different forms

of entertainment. Christians couples routinely get a divorce although God strongly condemns the dissolution of a marriage.

All these problems are caused by a forgetfulness about serving a holy God. The best vaccine is a holy life in Christ. So that we may rest assured at the end of our lives that we have not lived in vain.

2 Tim 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This Bible study has explored the relationship between our Christian faith and the Covid vaccine. We have studied the working of the vaccine, looked at arguments pro and contra, and investigated the role of critical thinking and even exercised the debunking of conspiracy myths. In the end, the Bible does not tell us what to do with a vaccine. This decision is a matter left to our own judgement and conscience. But the Word of God does give us the some powerful starting conditions to begin thinking and praying about it. Then we need the faith in Christ and His Spirit to lead us to the right choice. This choice is a free one, as Christ comes with freedom. For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Rev 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you abundantly.