

“Conspiracy theories: their place in Religious thought—Vaccines.”

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By nature, human beings have a tendency of seeking to find some alternative explanation whenever an enigmatic incident arises. When leprosy struck the human race about three thousand years ago, it was believed to be a curse inflicted upon its victims by the gods, including the God of Israel. Thus our fellow citizens who were victims of leprosy were subjected to alienation and humiliation for something not of their own fault.

Recently, following the Corona virus outbreak, we learnt that some 5G phone towers in Europe were burnt down supposing that they were the source of the deadly virus spread through the cell phone, a device that we all have become endeared with. In the USA, some people including physicians for God's sake, have gone in front of cameras to declare that the corona virus vaccines may have something to do with the prophetic number “666” found in Rev 13:15-18.

The problem with many christians today is that they are anxious to find an application of Scripture in isolation of the much needed context. Seeking to know the context of Rev 13 will take us back in time to the First Century CE, during which time the letter to the Seven churches was written. We would read about how the Roman emperor through the practise known as apotheosis was deified after death, thereby making him an object of worship for all Roman citizens. Eventually, Roman emperors began to demand worship while still alive which was the case with emperors Nero and Domitian. Like it is the case with many governments today, the emperor's image was engraved on monetary coins—signifying his sovereignty.

How Revelation 13 would change from its intended meaning, to being linked with vaccines against COVID-19 in the 21st Century, can only be anybody's guess. While vaccines may not be guaranteed with a 100 percent degree of safety, and in fact nothing in the world does, they have thus far done more good than harm in eradicating disease. On May 8, 1980 for example, the World Health Organization (WHO) after a long concerted effort against smallpox through vaccinations declared, “The world and all its peoples have won freedom from smallpox.” Yes, the battle against smallpox was won at last through immunization.

So why is it that many people including christians in good and regular standing continue to fall prey to unfounded conspiracy theories? Why not strive to uphold facts over fiction?