

Vaccination and Scripture

- **Vaccine:**
 - “a substance used to stimulate the production of antibodies and provide *immunity against* one or several diseases, prepared from the causative agent of a disease, its products, or a synthetic substitute, treated to act as an antigen without inducing the disease”
- **Vaccination:**
 - “treatment with a vaccine to produce immunity against a disease”

- Per the definitions, it is obvious that there were no vaccines or vaccinations in biblical times. While some evidence exists of smallpox inoculation in China as early as A.D. 1000, vaccination proper may be considered to have begun with the innovations of Edward Jenner in 1796.
- **Strictly** speaking, then, we cannot use Scripture to *reject* or *defend* vaccination. But Scripture contains **principles** that can guide us.

- Scripture is God's Word, but it was written by humans in specific contexts. Since there were no vaccinations in biblical times, we should not expect that vaccines will be mentioned in Scripture.
- But Scripture speaks about health and healing—*spiritual* and *physical*

- **Spiritual Health:**

- God promised to deliver humanity from sin and death through His Messiah (Gen 3:15; 12:3; Isa 54:3-5; Dan 9:24-26; John 1:29; 3:16)
- Call to holiness (Lev 11:44-45; 1 Pet 1:15-16)
- Christ heals us spiritually:
 - He bore our iniquities and by His stripes we are healed (Isa 53:4-5; Matt 8:17; 1 Pet 2:24)
- God forgives our sins (1 John 1:9-10)

- **Physical Health:**

- God is the Creator of the body (Gen 1-2)
- God gave humans good food to keep us healthy and nourished (Gen 1:29; 2:16)
- The tree of life was an ‘immunizer’ —by eating of it humans would live forever (Gen 3:22)
- Sin intruded and the fall brought with it the weakening of the human system (without access to that which ‘immunizes’, Gen 3:24)
- God commands against wrong food (Gen 2:17; Lev 11)

- But God heals humans physically:
- Abimelech (Gen 20) & Naaman (2 Kgs 5)
 - God can strike people with diseases (Exod 9:9; 15:26; Lev 26:16; Num 12:10; Deut 7:15; 28:22, 27; 2 Chr 26:21)
 - God is our healer (Exod 15:26; Deut 7:15; 2 Chr 16:2; Jer 3:22; 30:17; 33:6; Ps 41:3; 103:2-3)—physically and emotionally.
 - Jesus healed sicknesses and diseases (Matt 8:17; Mark 1:32-33; 3:10). He still heals (Matt 11:5; Luke 9:2; Acts 28:8-9)
 - Prayer and anointing (Jas 5:14-15)

- God is interested in our physical health, but Scripture also allows natural/scientific treatments of sicknesses and diseases:
 - Priests served as infectious disease experts: ***quarantine*** and ***purification*** (Lev 13-14; Deut 24:8; Num 19:6, 18; Ps 51:7)
 - Uncleaness and the camp (Deut 23:10-11, 12-13, 14)
 - God expects humans to care for and heal the sick (Ezek 34:4; Matt 25:36; Luke 10:36-37)

- The sick need physicians (Job 13:4; Jer 8:22; Matt 9:12-13; Mark 5:26; Luke 4:23)
- Physicians bound wounds (Job 5:18; Ps 147:3; Isa 1:6; Ezek 30:21; Hos 6:1; Luke 10:33-34)
- Balm of Gilead (Gen 37:25; 43:11; Jer 8:22; 46:11; 51:8)
- A poultice of fig was applied on Hezekiah's boil (2 Kgs 20:5, 7)
- Medicine/remedies (Prov 17:22; Jer 30:13; 46:11; 51:8)

- Oil and alcohol used to soothe wounds (Isa 1:6; Luke 10:33-34)
- God promised Israel that if they remained faithful to the covenant, He would protect them from (*or* not afflict them with) diseases (Exod 15:26; Deut 7:15; 28:22, 27). This is a covenantal provision and does not mean that believers will not get sick (cf. Matt 25:36; Gal 4:13; 2 Cor 12:7-8)

- Preventive Health/Building Immunity:
 - (1) Healthy diet (Gen 1-2)
 - (2) “Dig, do, and cover” (Deut 23:13)
 - (3) Containing the spread of infections (Lev 13-14)
 - (4) *Balms* and *oils* **may** have had some preventive properties (Ps 23:3; 141:5; Jer 46:11; Dan 10:3; Mark 14:8; Luke 7:46; 10:34)
 - (5) Bodily training is beneficial (1 Tim 4:8)

- (6) Expert advice: Timothy (1 Tim 5:23)
- (7) The tree of life as an ‘immunizer’:
 - By eating of it humans would live forever (Gen 2-3)
 - It’s leaves will provide healing for the nations (Rev 22:1-3; Ezek 47:12)

- We will continue to live in a world that is decaying and dying (cf. Rev 21:4).
- But there is good news. God will eternally heal His people. Meanwhile, He can protect us against diseases. He can heal us if they fall sick or ill. But He also allows the use of medicine in the process of healing.
- Scripture does not address the issue of vaccines. But if Scripture allows the use of medicine (herbal or processed), we should not expect that Scripture will disapprove of responsible vaccination.

- *Because* God is interested in the health of His people, if they are able to discover responsible means of preventing diseases, we can assume He will not be displeased.
- A vaccine can be harmful to the body, every medicine can be harmful, but sickness is more harmful to the body.
- There are no biblical reasons to reject responsible vaccination, any more than there are to accept any other medicine or surgery.
- Vaccination does not defile the body.

- **The “Mark of the Beast” is not a vaccine:**
 - **Context:** Immediately prior to the second coming, the sea beast power will blaspheme God’s name and, by implication, direct people to its own name. The land beast will cause an image to be erected for the sea beast and will cause many people to receive the mark of the sea beast.
 - **Definition:**
 - a) name of the beast *or*
 - b) number of the beast’s name
 - c) the number is the number of a man/human
 - c) the number of the man/human is 600 60 6
 - d) believers will overcome not only the beast and its image, but also its number of its name

- 1. The mark of the beast will be a religious issue that will infringe upon God's commandments (Rev 14:12; cf. 12:17). *The vaccine is a health issue and does not require us to disobey God.*
- 2. The mark of the beast will involve forced and counterfeit worship—worship of the beast and its image (Rev 13:16-17; 14:9-10). *The vaccine does not require worship of someone other than God.*
- 3. The seal of God and the mark of the beasts are not going to be literal or physical seals or marks that people will hold or ingest into their bodies.

- The seal of God includes God’s name (14:1); the mark of the beast also consists of the ***name*** of the beast or the ***number*** its name (13:17). In the book of Revelation, “name” and “number” are not used in literal senses. *The vaccine is a physical medicine injected into the bloodstream. It is not a name or number of any entity that requires worship.*
- 4. The reception of the seal of God and the mark of the beast will take place at the beginning of the tribulation (Rev 7:2-3, 14). Those who “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ” (Rev 14:12) will receive God’s seal and will be protected from harm (Rev 7:2-3; 9:4).

- A person will not have the mark of the beast if he/she does not *follow, worship, or accept* the beast and its image. People will not receive the mark of the beast unknowingly. Cf. **Daniel 3**.
- The Covid-19 vaccination does not fit the biblical descriptions of the circumstances and nature of the mark of the beast.
- We need not entertain fears that we might be receiving the mark unknowingly through a vaccination.

- **Adventist Church and the Covid-19 Vaccine:**
 - Adventists place strong emphasis on health and well-being. This is why we promote wholistic healthy lifestyle and also operate many hospitals around the world. Jesus preached and taught about God’s kingdom and healed many sicknesses and diseases.
 - The church has made an official statement regarding the Covid-19 vaccination which:
 - encourages us “to consider responsible immunization.”
 - invites us to “take into consideration that the benefits of vaccination extend beyond oneself and help to protect the local and global community at large.”

- The statement is clear: the “decision whether to take the vaccine or not is not a matter of salvation, nor is it related ... to the mark of the beast.”
- An individual member may decide not to take the vaccine, but that is a personal decision, not the church’s teachings.
- We should continue to preach God’s kingdom. And we should also continue to uphold our health message that includes promoting healthful living and protecting ourselves and others from contracting diseases. While doing this, we will do well to stand firm in truth—not in conspiracy theories, but in the testimony of Jesus Christ, in whom alone we can be victorious.

Thank You

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