Did God Create Coronavirus?

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Abstract: Infectious diseases are important diseases that seriously threaten people's health and social public health, and are related to national security and urban security system. COVID-19 has forced people's lifestyles to undergo tremendous changes and evolutions, and even threatened their lives. Governments at all levels and health departments launched investigations and quickly determined that the pathogen of such cases was novel coronavirus, which was confirmed and named 2019-nCoV by the World Health Organization. Pneumonia caused by this pathogen infection is called novel coronavirus. Compared with the major viruses transmitted among humans, we still know little about whether, what and how the novel coronavirus has changed, and the impact of these changes on the popularity of viruses among humans. Along with the panic caused by this unexpected pandemic, a question about faith emerged: Did God create this virus, which caused millions of people to suffer?

1. Introduction

The global scaled outbreak of the novel coronavirus-2019, also known as COVID-19 which is a mild to severe respiratory illness that is caused by an extremely infectious virus belonging to the family of Coronavirus, had in many ways greatly disturbed the daily lives of people all around the world. Infectious diseases are characterized by pathogens, infectivity and epidemic, and often have immunity after infection. Some infectious diseases are seasonal or local. The classification of infectious diseases has not been unified, which can be classified according to pathogens or transmission routes. To prevent infectious diseases, comprehensive measures should be taken to cut off the main transmission links. Currently, schools are closed and cities and country borders are under strict supervision. Around the world, students have lost their chance to enter schoolyards again at the beginning of a new term, doctors and nurses continue to risk their lives to care for patients infected with the virus and workers are still unemployed. In short , COVID-19 has forced a tremendous change and an evolution in the way people live their lives, and even possess threats to their lives.

Along with the panic brought on by this unexpected pandemic, a question concerning faith arose: Did God create this virus, the virus that caused millions of people to suffer? More specifically: if God is present, why would such a loving God create this virus? Why would he do this to people who have faith in him? According to the Oxford English dictionary, the basic definition of theology, theology is the study of a set Religion and beliefs, and religion is regard as the belief in the existence of God. Based on these definition, the premise of this question, “did God create Coronavirus?” exists, therefore it is a problem worth discussing.

2. Theological Thinking on Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia Origin

The outbreak of “COVID-19 outbreak” is an encounter between all mankind and an unknown virus in the world, and it is also a major public health event in the world. As a major public health event in the world, “COVID-19 outbreak” is not only a mirror, but also shows the true state of a society in a certain sense. A nation that is good at reflection is a nation with a high degree of rationality and self-consciousness, so that it can continuously gain the motive force for progress, because it can enable us to enhance the historical memory of suffering and not repeat historical mistakes. In real life, some people pay more attention to experience than to reflect on lessons. One

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of the important reasons why China can enter the fast lane of development is to keep open and integrate with the world, so that it has successfully acquired global development resources such as talents, knowledge, experience, technology and market. Self-confidence and theological self-consciousness are two sides of the theoretical study of Christian sinicization. In the general trend of deepening globalization of the church, we should also think about how to use our own faith resources, participate in, maintain and build a good Community of Shared Future for Mankind. In the face of sudden epidemic, human beings were caught off guard and suffered heavy losses. In the painful experience, people need to rethink the limitations of people and the power of faith again. The COVID-19 epidemic has spread all over the world, and the virus may have mutated. This fact shows that people need to study this complex epidemic from multiple disciplines and angles. To reveal if the existence of coronavirus was related to God, first, we need to remember that God created all life-forms on earth, and all life is extremely complex. Throughout the course of history, disease outbreaks have ravaged humanity, sometimes changing the course of history and, at times, signaling the end of entire civilizations. Archaeological, and anthropological study indicates that the epidemic happened quickly enough that there was no time for proper burials, and the site was not inhabited again. Since Circa happened so swiftly and the Chinese didn't record much detail about it, our knowledge are limited. However, It was not enough to prove that this disease may be arranged by God. Virus seems to be a weapon or a means of punishment from God. The COVID-19 epidemic prompted Chinese Christians to realize more deeply that a person's new life is not only about spiritual life, but also about physical health and safety. Under this background, the development and establishment of proper body theology by Christians will greatly benefit the personal belief life and community life.

3. How Does the Answer to This Question Differ among Various Religions?

Nowadays, the four most prevalent religions and beliefs in the world are Christianity, with 2.38 billion followers; Islam, with 1.91 billion followers; Hinduism, with 1.16 billion followers; and approximately 1.2 billion people who lack a belief in a god or deity referring as atheists. (World Population review 2021)Through analyzing how these major religions and belief view the relation between god and creation it is possible to answer this question standing in the perspective of each.

4. Christianity

Christianity refers to a monotheistic religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth---son of God, also it is the religion with the most followers around the world. In Christianity, God played a very important role in the creation of the world. In the opening chapters of the bible, the holy scripture of Christianity, it revealed God's pleasure in bringing life to existence. "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. And by the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so, on that day He rested from all His work. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on that day He rested from all the work of creation that He had accomplished," (Genesis 2) these words, quoted from the Bible, are only part of the evidence which confirms the Christians believe that God created the world. It includes things and objects that exists in physical means and in spiritual means, meaning all concepts people now hold as common senses. With these words, one can reasonably infer that to Christians, God created the coronavirus like he created every other life in the world as what the Bible inferred.

This answer now raises another question towards God, the " Problem of evil", this question was suggested by David Hume in his Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (1779 p.44). It states that"Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?"(David Hume 1779) Basically the question is that "Is God the creator of evil or is he also its victim?" This problem concerning philosophy and theology arises under the assuming circumstance that "God is almighty, God is perfectly good, and evil exists."(Patrick Sherry 2017)

Long before Hume points out this question, the problem of evil has been a positive argument for atheists: If God exists, there must be no evil in the world for God is almighty and perfectly good. There is evil in the world, therefore God does not exist. Evil by all means includes moral evil (evil caused by human action) and natural evil including all kinds of natural disasters and diseases.(Patrick Sherry 2017) COVID-19 obviously belongs to the category of natural evil. However, the Bible tells that Jesus died in order for people to be forgiven for their sins and receive endless life. (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 1:7) Moreover, the Ten Plagues of Egypt described in the Bible shows that God does not only create good things, it is possible for him to deliberately bring evil to existence. From these two events described in the Bible, one can see that God sometimes creates evil against evil. In the ten plagues of Egypt, he created natural evil, like diseases, against human evil (the Egyptian king's persecution towards Israelites); and sometimes he would have people suffer from evil, that may not be his creation, to be forgiven from their sins and to reach heaven. Standing in the position of a Christian, God did create coronavirus, an evil virus. But perhaps what God, the omnipotent and perfectly good Christian God is trying to reach through creating this virus is to eliminate other evil and have people be forgiven from their sins through suffering and gain a better afterlife.

5. Islam

Islam, the religion with the second most followers in the world, believe in and worship the one god in the Qur'an, the holy book of Allah. The followers of Islam are called Muslims, and they recognize Allah as their only god. The Qur'an, as the holy book of the religion, consists of the revealed words from Allah to the Muslims. Based on the following, Allah is the one who sends the coronavirus to the world. Base on the following text Allah's purpose of doing so is not limited to only one purpose.

To begin with, a well-known concept called "trials and tribulations" applies in this situation. Trials and tribulations refer to problems and difficulties encountered during one's life. Quoted directly from the Qur'an, it states that "Do you think you that you will enter Paradise without such as came to those who passed away before you? They were afflicted with severe poverty and ailments and were so shaken that even the Messenger and those who believed along with him said, 'When will the Help of Allah come?' Yes! Certainly, the Help of Allah is near!" Similar as what was inferred by the Bible to the Christians, the quote reveals that Allah created and sent this virus to Earth deliberately to have followers face problems and difficulties in order to have human be afflicted and to reach paradise.

Moreover, to the Muslims, Allah created this virus to test and strengthen their faith, also to see how they react to the trials he sent. In the Qur'an Allah says, "And We will test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient." The Qur'an also recorded how Allah expected his followers to respond to the test he gives, "Who, when disaster strikes them, say, 'Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.'" These words from Allah clearly reveals that this God of Islam intended to create the coronavirus to see if the Muslims are able to follow his teaching and to hold strong faith in him. If so, Allah has promised his believers a bright future where Allah himself will take care of everything.

6. Hinduism

Currently, Hinduism has the third most followers in the world. To many, Hinduism may seem to be a polytheistic religion with more than one god or goddess, however, Hindus, the followers of the religion, generally worship only one god or goddess as the most special one among all. Therefore, Hinduism is regarded as a monotheistic religion. Most Hindus have their own different personal god, such as Shiva, Krishna whom they pray to regularly. Still there are three gods regarded as the most important gods in Hinduism, The Trimurti, the three gods with the most divinity. The Trimurti consist typically of: Brahma, the creator; Shiva, the destroyer and finally, Vishnu, the preserver.

Since the question that is being discussing in this passage is closed link with creation, Brahma, the creator in Hinduism is key to answer this question standing in the position of a Hindus.

Brahma, as the myth of Hinduism goes has created the universe as he was born from a golden egg. Somehow, other myths reveals that, the other two god of the Trimurti, Shiva and Vishnu designed the universe and what should the universe include through dreaming, Brahma is just the one who follows their blueprint and does all heavy lifting. Under this way of thinking did the two other gods of the religion created the coronavirus in their mind and have Brahma brought the virus into existence like how other lifes on earth were being brought into alive? To the Hindus other than the kind of followers described below the answer to this question is a Yes.

On the other hand, some Hindus actually treat the coronavirus as a deity. India has always had a history of worshiping god or goddess during the outbreak of a certain plague or diseases, such as the goddess of smallpox, goddess of cholera and so on. (Bhavya Dore 2021) Now, during the outbreak of COVID-19, some people in India even see the “corona devi” which means the goddess of coronavirus as their god to worship. To them, did God create coronavirus? The answer is a definite No, coronavirus to them is a god.

7. Atheism

Atheism refers to the absence of belief in the existence of deities. This definition of atheism clearly reveals that atheists do not believe in the existence of God, or any other kind of deities. To atheists, COVID-19 is not a creation of anyone or anything beyond this world. Instead, the origin of the virus is something that could be introduced in the aspect of science, one of the most popular explanations is that COVID-19 originated from bats.

Throughout history, human beings have always been wondering and trying to explore their relationship with nature. Therefore, two major methods were created; science and religion which are contradicts each other. The differences between science and religion can be revealed through their explanation for the creation of the world. One of the most well-known scientific ways of suggesting how the universe was created is the “Big Bang Theory” which states that the universe began as just a single point, then expanded and stretched to grow as large as it is right now and it still continues to stretch itself. According to the religious way of thinking how the world came into existence, one of the most accepted explanation is the creator, he, she or it created the whole universe, they created the universe out of nothing and brought all life into existence. On one side atheism represents the science way of thinking, the objective way of thinking. On the contrary, believers in deities can be seen as a way of attributing natural occurrence of events to a mythical god or a religious representative instead of logical reasoning. However, the greatest flaw in the Big Bang Theory and most other scientific explanations is that it fails to give a proper explanation of how all their theories begin. The Big Bang Theory fails to explain questions like “How did that ‘single point’ happen?” “Why the universe begins to stretch itself at that specific moment?” Religion, on the other hand, provides a seemingly flawless reason that seems to solve the entire problem. Even though these two ways of thinking seems to be different superficially, nevertheless, they possess no essential differences. Both religion and science play the same role in people’s daily life as providing mental guidance for them. They are both something that people would believe in, something that people view as the answer for why they exist, and why everything else exists. Still, as what was mentioned previously atheists do not believe in the existence of god or any kinds of deities, therefore their answer to this question is a no. However, the thinking process that lies beneath the answer No to this question reached through the scientific reasoning and the answer Yes reached through the religious method are actually similar.

8. Conclusion

One famous Asian proverb states that “There are a thousand Hamlets in a thousand people's eyes.” Same kind of logic applies to the answer of this question, different people holds different opinion towards this question, as well as different explanations to their responses. Whether or not this virus

was a divine creation or a natural occurrence, the truth is through the suffering caused by COVID-19, we gained a lot. From the scientific way of thinking we gained the advancements in technology, from the religious way of thinking we gained even more. No matter how did coronavirus came into existence, our beliefs and faith will lead us to get through.

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