

True Response To Covid-19plague Reviewed From The Perspective Of Christian Faith

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Abstract: Yanto Paulus Hermanto. The COVID-19 outbreak created fear, worry and uncertainty in the lives of humanity. The impact caused by the deterioration in various fields of business, so that the affected entrepreneurs, workers and general public experience extreme stress. For this reason, this research was conducted in order to be able to answer the correct response in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak, as well as what actions could be taken by God's people at a time like this. Researcher tried to collect data relating to COVID-19, both from the Bible and from journals based on general knowledge, health, and theology. And it is expected from this data that a comprehensive picture of the COVID-19 outbreak can be obtained, and then responses and actions can be obtained by God's people. From the results of this research, it was found that the people of God must have the correct response to the plague of COVID-19, which is to be reasonable and not excessive, introspect yourself, watch and pray. And there are some concrete actions that should be done by God's people, namely following what is instructed by the government, forming small groups that can pay attention to each other, build and help each other, surrender this situation fully to God, and finally do an act of real love for others . Through the right response and action like this, it is hoped that all human beings will be able to overcome this epidemic well.

Key Words: Outbreak, COVID-19, Stress, Response, Action, Faith, Introspection, Love

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I. PRELIMINARY

The outbreak that spread as a result of COVID-19, which began at the end of 2019 in Wuhan, China, has an enormous and worldwide impact. This outbreak has spread to two hundred and ten countries with the number of people infected until April 26, 2020 as many as 2,931,787 people (Elflein, 2020, p. 1). And until now yet has not found a medicine that can heal perfectly those infected with the coronavirus. So that this plague caused tremendous fear for the inhabitants of this world. Not only because it has a direct, deadly effect on humans, but it also creates uncertainty for all humanity. All the people of the world experience the same thing. Almost all countries affected by COVID-19 make rules on personal hygiene, social distancing, quarantine and even lockdown. They began to reduce the activities outside the home, reduce direct contact, isolate those suspected or exposed to COVID 19, and some even closed their borders, so that no one entered or left their country (WHO, 2020, p.1)

Various business sectors throughout the world have experienced a decline. There are five business sectors most affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, which include first, Travel, Tourism and Food, second, Electric Vehicles and Automobiles, third, Steel, fourth, Electrical Appliances and Consumer Durables and fifth, Pharmaceuticals. The five business sectors experienced a decline both in terms of sales quantity, as well as in terms of increased costs due to raw materials that are difficult to obtain. With such business conditions, the unemployment rate rises, the number of people experiencing stress increases and the gap between the rich and the poor widens, so that crime automatically increases in this world (Ganguly, 2020, p. 1-5)

In accordance with the description above, this research was conducted to determine the response of Christianity to the coronavirus pandemic that has been happening as well as concrete actions that must be taken by Christians in various countries. Researcher do excavations from both the Bible and general knowledge to answer this problem.

II. METHOD

The researcher tried to use a qualitative approach in this research. Researcher collected data from theological and general books or journals relating to the coronavirus outbreak. Then the researcher do excavations from the data to find concrete steps to be taken by Christians at the time of this outbreak. Thus the results of this research can provide an overall picture of the COVID-19 outbreak. And finally the correct

response from God's people to the COVID-19 outbreak can be obtained; as well as the actions that should have been carried out by God's people at that time.

Research started with what is meant by a disease outbreak (COVID-19) in general science and in terms of health science. Then outbreaks of disease are reviewed from the Old Testament Bible (OT) and the New Testament (NT) according to theologians. From these three points of view, a clear understanding of what is meant by a plague (COVID-19) will be found, so that it is expected that the response of Christians is true and correct.

Likewise, researcher explore actions that should be taken by Christians both medically and in the Bible when the plague is occurring. So that it produces an action that is medically correct and in accordance with the Bible.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Disease Outbreaks (COVID-19) in General

Plague is a disease that is widespread and spreads to many people. Special COVID-19 outbreak is an infectious disease caused by acute coronavirus 2 respiratory syndrome. This virus is a large family of coronavirus that can attack animals. When attacking humans, coronavirus usually causes respiratory tract infections, such as flu, MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome), and SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). COVID-19 itself is a new type of coronavirus found in Wuhan, Hubei, China in 2019. Therefore, this new type of coronavirus is named coronavirus disease-2019 which is abbreviated to COVID-19. COVID-19 has since been found to be widespread to the extent that it has resulted in a global pandemic that continues to this day. Symptoms of COVID19 are generally 38 ° C fever, dry cough, and shortness of breath and the worst effect for humans is death (Setiawan, 2020, p. 1).

Transmission that occurs is through people. People who have contracted COVID 19 will infect others. Transmission is through small drops from the nose or mouth, which are released when the person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets are relatively heavy and cannot travel long distances and will soon die into the ground, but if the droplets hit the face and enter the mouth, nose or eyes, the person affected is likely to be infected. That is important why when talking to one another, you must maintain a minimum distance of 1 meter and wear a mask and glasses to cover your mouth, nose and eyes. But when these drops land on objects and surfaces around people such as tables, door handles and handrails, then someone holds the object, then the virus has moved into the person's hand, and when the person holds his face with that hand, that person can contracting (WHO, 2020)

Thus the COVID 19 outbreak, together with other diseases that have circulated before such as influenza, bird flu, swine flu, SARS and other infectious diseases. This relates to a clean lifestyle, endurance and social patterns that exist in the community itself.

Therefore, the Christian response to COVID 19 in general is the same as responding to other infectious diseases. Not too much but to be reasonable, and still maintain endurance to stay fit, maintain cleanliness and keep a distance from other people, especially if the person is sick.

Plague in the Old Testament Bible

Sickness and death were the result of the first humans to sin in the garden of Eden. In the beginning, there were no evil parasites or dangerous viruses, all that God created was very good (Gen. 1:31). Then everything changes due to sin entering the world (Rom. 5:12; 8:20). Even though the Old Testament does not explain this explicitly, illness and death have become an undeniable reality. The OT emphasizes that only God has the highest authority to hurt and heal (Deut 32:39; Job 5:18).

God made a difference between the Egyptians and the Israelites. God attacked the Egyptians with various diseases but promised to heal and protect the Israelites if they listened to His voice (Exodus 15:26; Deut. 7:15). Likewise, when the Philistines snatched the ark of God from the Israelites, God angered and caused them to suffer ulcers and cause panic in all the Philistine areas (1 Sam. 5: 6-12).

Plague was one of four terrible punishments against Israel, along with war, famine, and wild animals (Ezek 14:21; cf. Deut 32: 24-26; Rev. 6: 8). On several occasions in the OT, God caused the people of Israel to suffer plague because of their unfaithfulness. For example, when David agreed to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel when God did not order him, God was angry with David. And the Lord brought pestilence upon the nation of Israel and 70,000 Israelites perished (1 Chron. 21: 12-14). Another example of King Joram who brought the people of Judah to disrespect the Lord, instead made them worship other gods. So the Lord caused a great plague to all the people and attacked the evil king with a severe disease that could not be cured in his stomach, and he died in extreme pain (2 Chron. 21: 12-19).(Tabb, 2020. P. 1-2)

Thus if you see what is happening in the OT, then a plague is a punishment from God due to sin and human violation of His word. Therefore, the response of Christianity to this epidemic is so that all humans on earth inspect themselves, is there any sin that has continued to be committed? If the answer is yes, then the

correct response is to humble yourself before God, confess your sins and repent. And God promised, if sinful people turn around and repent of their evil ways, then God will hear from heaven and forgive their sins, and restore their land (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Plague in the New Testament

In the NT Bible, the Lord Jesus foretold that the sign of God's second coming and the end of the world would be war, famine, pestilences and earthquake (Matthew 24: 7; Luke 21:11). The Lord Jesus reminded us that these signs are only the beginning of suffering for His people, before His second coming.

John was given a vision of this. In Revelation 6: 7-8, he sees and hears the Lamb opening the fourth seal. And in his vision he saw a yellow green horse and the man who was riding it was named death and the kingdom of death followed him. And they were given authority over a quarter of the earth to kill with swords, famine, pestilence and beasts. (Jeremiah, 2020, p. 1)

It is very clear what Jesus said and John's vision in the book of Revelation are two words that are interrelated and mean the same (Glazerson, 2020). Plague or infectious disease that is rampant and brings death is one sign of the imminent arrival of God. Therefore the Christian response to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak must be a warning to be more on watch by living according to what God said and also praying every time to ask for help from God to escape this great difficulty. And for His people who act in this way, then the second coming of God is not something frightening, it is something that has been prepared and expected (Matt. 24:43; Luke 12:39)

Actions during the COVID-19Pandemic Accord with Christian Faith

The current COVID-19 outbreak occurred in 210 countries. Each country has its own policy to deal with this outbreak. The Bible tells God's people that each person must submit to the government above him, because there is no government that is not from God; and the governments that exist are established by God. And whoever opposes the government actually opposes the decree of God, and God will bring judgment (Rom 13: 1-2). Thus, the right course of action for God's people at the time of this pandemic was to follow what was instructed by the government above him, because it was done for the good of his people. This is an act of faith that must be done by God's people. Because what he does is in accordance with the word of God written in the Bible. (Carter, 2020)

In this uncertain situation, many people experience stress. They feel themselves worthless anymore, maybe the business that is being undertaken is declining even it has not produced anything, experiencing illness, and pressure from outside parties and within the family, all of which can cause a peak level of stress and if left unchecked it will become a problem that great for both the person and his family. In such conditions they need someone to talk to and share a struggle with. Therefore, a community that builds one another is needed. The church and God's people must rise and form small groups that can care for one another, build one another and help one another. This is the next act of faith that God's people need to do. (Ratnasari, 2020)

Individually, there needs to be an awareness that continuous and excessive anxiety will cause the immune system to weaken and facilitate disease. Therefore, the Lord Jesus reminded everyone not to worry about their lives, but gave everything to God in prayer and requests with thanksgiving (Phil. 4: 6). (Jacques, 2020). People who continue to worry means that he does not believe in God who is able to do everything. Surrender to God, signifying accepting whatever happens in his life, because everything comes from God, as Job said when everything he had finished in a day, "Naked, came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD (Job 1:21). Acts of faith like this that will bring peace from God. (Jeremiah, 2020).

On the other hand the current conditions needed a high level of caring from God's people. The Lord Jesus wants His people to show real love for each other at a time like this (Hofreiter, 2020). If someone is hungry to be fed, if someone is sick, take care, if there are those who are naked, give them clothes. And verily when the Lord comes, He will rejoice in the person who is doing good and God says, "When I am hungry you give me food, when I am naked you give me clothes, when sick you take care of me" So actually when someone acts to help others, in fact the person has done it for God (Matt. 25: 31-46). Acts of faith like this are requested by God from His people. (Ratnasari, 2020, p. 1)

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the true response of God's people to the current outbreak of COVID-19 should not be too excessive but be reasonable, and still maintain endurance to stay fit, maintain cleanliness and keep a distance from others. Likewise with what was conveyed by God in the Old Testament, the correct response to this pandemic was so that all humans on earth could introspect themselves, was there any sin that had continued to be committed? If the answer is yes, then the true response is to humble yourself before God, confess your sins and repent. And God promised, if sinful people turn around

and repent of their evil ways, then God will hear from heaven and forgive their sins, and restore their land (2 Chronicles 7:14). Whereas in relation to what His Word says in the NT, the true response to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak must be a warning to be more on watch by living according to what God says and also praying every time to ask from God to escape this great difficulty.

Whereas actions that are consistent with the Christian faith during the COVID-19 outbreak included several things:

First, follow what the government is instructing, because all governments are determined by God for the good of the people.

Second, the church and God's people form small groups that can care for one another, build one another and help one another. Through this group there will be many people and families who can be helped early on. Third, every person of God's people is not worried, but surrenders to God wholeheartedly through prayer. Surrender to God, signifying accepting whatever happens in his life, because everything comes from God. And when this is done the peace from God will fill his heart and mind so that the calmness from God covers his life. Fourth, take concrete acts of love to others, if there are hungry people who are fed, if there are sick people treated and if there are naked people are given clothes. These acts of faith were supposed to be carried out by God's people in this COVID-19 period.

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