M05A1 Revelation: Word of God, Part 2

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Christians sometimes wonder what people from other religions know about God. But unless we interact with other peoples we generally do not research it. I find that Muslims believe in God, often agreeing that Allah and God the Father are the same powerful God. This comes through shared acceptance of Abraham. They believe in Jesus as an honored prophet although not Divine. Muslims believe in sin, salvation and prayer, angels. Muslims believe in a humanly designed salvation. Your good deeds are weighed against your bad deeds. Whichever tips the scales determines your future at life’s end. God seems entirely a god measuring out justice. Unlike our Christianity with Jesus providing life when we deserve death.

Hindus whom I worked with a few months at a preschool ask for my prayers and wanted to pray for me. We prayed together. They enjoyed the Bible stories and about Jesus.

The idea that all religions share a foundation and lead to God and a shared salvation in heaven is gaining traction in America. God’s love is easily trivialized to his being unable to exclude anyone from heaven. (Easy grace) There’s concern among many for political correctness. We don’t want to offend. Mind you, there’s considerable pushback against political correctness. And of course there are people who delight in offending. We have a huge religio-political divide in America. I think we should find a way to respect and express kindness while retaining our morality and Christian convictions.

We can respect others while also being authentic Christian believers. We should not fall into the trap of allowing others to intimidate us into sharing a theology that shrinks itself to accommodate all religions as equal. We should not meld Biblical beliefs into a compromise with non-Christian beliefs.

In the preschool I worked at, composed mostly of Hindu children and a number of Hindu assistant teachers, we celebrated the birth of Jesus and told daily stories from the Bible. At least one story touched on the cross. Mind you, these were 3 and 4 year olds. But the parents knew what we taught.

And the teaching assistants heard and eagerly participated in these activities. I think they especially enjoyed singing the joyful Christian songs. What religion is more joyful, more hopeful than Christianity! What religion could possibly have more reason for joy than Christianity?

The preschool director did make the mistake of permitting a parent to lead in the Hindu activity Rangoli thought to bring good luck in Hindu ritual. Christians believe in blessings, not so much luck. When Hindus celebrated Diwali my wife as lead teacher presented Jesus as the Light of the world without speaking about Diwali. My wife and I did make what was probably a mistake when accepting the tikli dot on the forehead when attending a celebration of teachers in an anteroom attached to the temple. Afterwards it was a shock to see images to several Hindu Gods inside the temple.

Hindus didn’t mind praying to the Christian God because they see him as one of many gods. It’s difficult to imagine picking and choosing which Gods to adopt as one’s own. Accepting Hindu beliefs on par with Christian beliefs would mean accepting many gods while worshipping our preferred God in heaven. Any worship not firmly anchored on the Bible would resemble the condemned pagan religions in the Bible. Their worship places would be analogous to the high places condemned by God.

The only written revelation of God is the Bible. The Israelites were influenced by Egyptian religions and later by Canaanite religions. We in our recently arriving multicultural environment are susceptible to the influence of Asian religions. Yoga seems innocent until one understands the basis for what looks like simple meditations. But in Matthew 6:7 Jesus says, “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do.” Yet we modern peoples, like Israelites, want to be like everyone else.

In the first commandment we, along with Israel, are admonished to have no other gods. Yet he is compelled over 400 times to caution Israel to reject other gods, to reject intermarriage with non believers because of their unwise influence, to reject even “mention of the name of other gods.” Exodus 23:13.

In “the Pentateuch alone there are 420 references to the fact that only what God revealed to His chosen prophets is true revelation.” Lecture/article. In at least 3800 places God tells his people that only revelation through Hebrew/Jewish prophets is true scripture. Other books might have some truths that God would agree with. But he did not say them in these other books and they are probably entangled with non truths God would never share.

In Luke 16:31 Jesus effectively says “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” These writings contain all that’s necessary to live like him and by faith to receive the gift of salvation. All that’s necessary to live here and in the world to come.

The book of Daniel was shut up and sealed. It would be understood at the time of the end. Daniel 12:4. It would be understood only as history unfolded. But revelation was complete to obtain salvation. God does not intend to surprise us with a new requirement in order to be saved in the last days. It’s all there in the canon. We cannot add to the word of God. We can study to better understand God’s message but we don’t require more revelation.

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