

Consider the Great Love of God

“Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the LORD” (Ps. 107:43). One of the best spiritual exercises for our minds and souls is to “consider”, “meditate” and “revel” in the great love of God.

Have you ever considered the origin of the concept of a loving God? Most people, at least in America, have some view of a loving God. And yet, at the same time, an increasing number of Americans believe that all religions are basically the same, certainly embracing a God of love who calls people to an ethic of love. We should not be so quick to assume such things.

I am no expert on anthropology or ancient history, but I would suggest that the concept of the love of God is not as pervasive through ancient history and contemporary religions as many assume. Rudolph Otto, in a classic work of religious history, “Idea of the Holy” studied religion in ancient culture. He found no remnant of a loving Deity which shaped the cultures and worldviews of ancient peoples. He discovered no evidence of belief in a personal, loving God who initiates a love relationship with people. He discovered that ancient people believed in a deity or deities who controlled people by fear and terror, and who had to be appeased through offerings, rituals and priests.

But are not all religions basically the same? All religions in the 21st century have evolved into a similar belief that God is love. This is the assumption of the many religious people in America. In fact, our churches are filled with people who have such assumptions.

I would argue that there are insights we can gain from the study of other religions. Yet the idea that all religions are basically the same, all embracing the love of God, is at best unreasonable and at worse, ridiculous. All religions do not root their doctrine in a loving God. Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism would reject monotheism and certain the doctrine of a personal, one God construct.

Islam, while monotheistic, would find the concept of a loving, personal God who enters into a loving relationship with people, distasteful, if not blasphemous. God is the Holy, Almighty One. He is not a Father, nor a Friend.

Where does the concept of a loving God originate? It is revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. I do not mean that all people who believe in a loving God embrace the God of the Bible. I am saying it is in the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone that reveals a personal God of love. The revealing of God’s unfailing love in the O.T. is culminated in the work the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Meditate and pray on the culminating love of God in Jesus Christ. “I pray that you, being rooted and established in in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” Eph. 3:17-20