

On Dumbing Down God

Dub McClish

In recent years, *dumbing down* has entered the vernacular, meaning to diminish the original effect, power, or significance of an entity. Thus, one might say that the institution of marriage has been “dumbed down” by such things as the no-fault divorce laws, the number of men and women cohabiting and producing children without being married, and the pressure for state recognition of same sex “marriages.”

When one reads the descriptions of God in the Bible and compares modern concepts of Him among both theologians and the general populace, it is evident that men have “dumbed down” God in numerous ways:

- **God saves by His Grace alone.** That is, God requires nothing of man for him to enjoy the incomparable blessing of forgiveness of sins. True, all who are saved will be saved by grace (Eph. 2:8; Tit. 2:11; et al.), but the Bible never indicates that men are saved by grace **alone**. Were that so, then men would not have to believe in Him or in His Son (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24), and no one would be lost. *Grace only* “dumbs down” God’s grace.
- **God saves us by our Faith alone.** Were this so, then salvation would not be by grace alone. While salvation is by faith (John 3:16; Eph. 2:8; et al.), the Bible never indicates that any person was or ever will be saved by mere belief in Jesus. If God grants salvation at the moment one believes, then men need not confess their faith in the Christ (Rom. 10:10), repent of their sins (Acts 2:38; 17:30), or be baptized for remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; et al.). *Faith only* “dumbs down” God’s conditions of pardon through His grace.
- **God is all loving and gracious.** Undeniably, the true and living God fully embodies love and grace (1 John 4:8, 16; 1 Pet. 5:10; et al.), but no inspired man ever declared, “God is **only** love,” or “God has **only** grace,” particularly in the popular sense of His being hyper-tolerant and permissive. Rather, His love demands hatred and intolerance of “all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (Rom 1:18), and He will judge all men through His Son (John 12:48; Acts 17:31). To deny or mitigate His wrath against sin is to “dumb down” God.
- **God is only concerned with our sincerity.** He surely demands our sincerity, as the Bible’s numerous denunciations of hypocrisy attest (e.g., Mat. 23:13–33). However, this fact does not mitigate His concern that we believe and practice His doctrine (Mat. 7:21–23; Luke 6:46; John 4:23–24; 1 John 2:3–6; et al.). God demands sincerity **and** obedience. Any other view is to “dumb down” God.

Woe unto all who would “dumb down” God!

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