



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## Jesus Is Not a Manageable Deity

By Jamey Hinds

Babies are cute. No one would ever deny that. And the earth-shattering, mind-blowing truth is that God, the One who created everything, became human—the Creator willingly became a part of his creation—in the form of a defenseless (and probably cute) baby. For how little is written in the New Testament about Jesus being a baby, there's so much that people believe.

The New Testament's focus is not on the birth of Jesus, but on his purpose for being born: his death on the cross. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:13–14).

"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. . . . Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:14–15, 17).

"And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh **by his death**, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him" (Colossians 1:21–22). "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6 nasb).

Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16 / 1 Timothy 6:15). "For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' So then each of us will give an account of himself to God" (Romans 14:11–12).

"Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9–11).

I pray our fascination with the baby Jesus doesn't remain infantile (see 1 Corinthians 3:1–4 / Ephesians 4:11–16). I pray our faith grows through our love for him and his word ( John 15:4, 7–8 / Romans 10:17 / Colossians 3:16).



## The Taming of Jesus

By DAVID DIESTELKAMP

"Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" was the question Jesus' disciples asked Him (Matt. 15:11). He knew—and He didn't apologize. Do you believe in an offensive Jesus? Do you believe in a Jesus who frustrated people by not feeding them? And then, when He sensed that they were being offended by His teaching, He taught what sounded to them like cannibalism? (Jn 6:60-66).

Jesus healed on the Sabbath even though He knew people were watching in order to accuse Him, even though He knew

it would offend their sensibilities (ex: Mk. 3:1-6). Why? And why did He do some miracles in strange ways—spit, mud, fingers in ears, slow restoration (Mk. 7:33; 8:23; Jn. 9:6; Mk. 8:22-25)? At times, Jesus spoke so much in parables that His own disciples asked Him what was going on (Matt. 13:10). And there's that parable of the unjust steward (Lk. 16:1-13). Why did He even tell that one? Oh, and there's labeling and name calling: hypocrites, blind guides, and snakes (Matt. 23:13-36). Does it make you uncomfortable to talk about the times Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple? (Jn. 2:13-16; Matt. 21:12).

The controversial, offensive, paradoxical Jesus has been tamed in most modern thought and teaching. We've figured Him out. We have explanations which make Him politically correct or less provocative. And like any other puzzle, we can Google His enigmatic statements and find entertaining three minute YouTube videos that satisfy our curiosity. To many, Jesus has been tamed—what can be said and known about Him has been said and is known.

The parables Jesus taught and the miracles Jesus did are intended to make a point that is beyond the obvious. Jesus wasn't just giving gardening tips with His parables and making people feel better with His healings (Matt. 13:11; Jn. 20:30-31). Jesus told His disciples that "...it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given" (Matt. 13:11). We're supposed to think and figure it out. And our thinking is going to have to be different from the worldly thinking that won't understand it (see also 1 Cor. 2:14).

How is Jesus both human and divine, the Son of Man and the Son of God? How is it even possible for the first to be last, to give to receive, to find rest under a yoke, or die to live? I know there are answers, good answers, out there for these things. But Jesus Himself usually didn't explain His words and actions. He wanted people to personally wrestle with them, to really chew on them, and to lay awake at night reasoning and meditating and praying to find the wisdom He brought.

All of our helps and explanations may be robbing people of the opportunity to think and reason through the amazing, and sometimes confusing, gospel message of God coming in the flesh and dying. Instead of allowing them to ask, we show them there is no question. Instead of allowing them to seek, we find it for them. Instead of allowing them to knock, we open the door for them. In all of this they find us and our explanations rather than finding the Lord. And the Lord we show them is tamed—fully defined, fully understood, fully explained, and fully comfortable. In other words, not the Lord of the universe. Not the One about whose life it was written: "if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (Jn. 21:25).

Go find Him in Scripture. He is anything but tame.