

The Gentle but Formidable Jesus

by John Daniel Jones

Jesus is both gentle and formidable, combining seemingly opposing qualities in His character.

Scripture: Matthew 11:29

Topics: "Christology", "Righteous Anger"

Description

John Daniel Jones delves into the dual nature of Jesus as both gentle and formidable, emphasizing that true gentleness includes the capacity to be formidable in the face of evil. He challenges the notion that gentleness equates to weakness, highlighting how Jesus' meekness was not softness but a strength that could blaze into holy anger when faced with injustice. The sermon explores the concept of the 'wrath of the Lamb,' showcasing the paradoxical combination of patience and righteous anger in Jesus' character.

Transcript

"Every one that falleth on that stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust"

(Luke 20:18).

We think of Him as the "gentle Jesus"--"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," as our child's hymn puts it. He spoke of Himself as being "meek and lowly in heart." He dealt tenderly with the sinful and the erring. He never broke a bruised reed or quenched a flickering wick. As we picture to ourselves this gracious, loving Person who went about doing good, "formidable" is about the last word in the world we should think of applying to Him. But is there any essential and irreconcilable antagonism between gentleness and formidableness? Is it quite impossible for these two qualities to exist in one and the same Person? If a person's gentleness never became formidableness, would that person be anything like a complete person? Would not gentleness that never became formidable in face of evil and wrong--would it not cease to be a virtue and become a rather contemptible vice? A man who does not become formidable, terrible even, to the wrong-doer can lay no claim to being a perfect man. Now our Lord was meek; but His meekness was not softness. And He was gentle; but His gentleness was not a foolish and easy good-nature. Jesus was formidable as well as gentle, terrible as well as meek. The Bible is never afraid of combining seeming opposites in its descriptions of Jesus. For example, it speaks of "the wrath of the Lamb." "Wrath" and "Lamb" don't somehow seem to fit each other. The Lamb is the symbol of patience, meekness, gentleness, and so has come to stand for Him who went as a Lamb to the slaughter, and, "as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." Wrath would seem to fit lion rather than

Lamb. But the Bible talks of the "wrath of the Lamb"--the wrath of Him who bore with uncomplaining patience the rude insults and murderous cruelty of evil men. It declares that that gentle and infinitely patient Jesus can blaze out into holy anger, and the wrath is the more terrible just because it is the wrath of the Lamb.

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