

A Little Child Shall Lead Them

A Biblical Theology of Children and the Kingdom of God



The Boy Jesus in the Temple, by He Qi

Hebrew and Christian Scriptures present a unified witness across millennia, genres, and authors: children are created in the image of God, people are to love children like God loves them, and God uses children to lead adults in worship, even into the Kingdom of God.

Join Abram Kielsmeier-Jones for a free, five-session Webinar series. Abram will present biblical exegesis, research, and pastoral insights. The sessions will use Accordance Bible Software, although attendees do not need to have Accordance to participate.

- 12/20/23: **Jesus the Child: The Vulnerability of the Incarnation at Christmas**
- 1/3/24: **Childhood, Personhood, and the Image of God**
- 1/10: **Children in the Hebrew Bible**

- 1/17: **Children in Jesus's Teaching and Ministry**
- 1/24: **Loving Children As God Does, Loving God As Children Do**

🕒 *Wednesdays, 12-1p EST*

📍 Register: abramkj.com/ChildTheology



Rev. Abram Kielsmeier-Jones has 20+ years of experience in all-ages pastoral ministry, worship music, consulting, training, and curriculum development. Since 2015 he has been leading Webinars and individual and group trainings for Accordance.

Today:

**Children in Jesus's
Teaching and Ministry**

Overview of Today's Session

Two foundational passages
for child theology

10 Things the Gospels Show
About Jesus and Children

Revisiting two foundational
passages for child theology

**Two foundational
passages for child
theology**

“Jesus called a little child and
placed the child in their
midst.”

Matthew 18:1-6//Mark 9:33-37//Luke 9:46-48

33 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “**What were you arguing about on the road?**”

34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “**Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.**”

36 He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, **37 “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”**

Mark 9:33-37 (NIV)

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children
come to me; do not hinder them,
for the Kingdom of God belongs
to such as these.’”

Matthew 19:13-15//Mark 10:13-16//Luke 18:15-17

¹³ People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” ¹⁶ And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Mark 10:13-16 (NIV)

10 Things the Gospels Show About Jesus and Children

1. Jesus welcomed
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- ▶ //Matt 18:2: He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them.
- ▶ //Mark 9:36: He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them....
- ▶ //Luke 9:46-47: An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him.

1. Jesus welcomed children into his presence.

- ▶ //Matt 19:14: Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."
- ▶ //Mark 10:14, 16: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.... And he took the children in his arms...."
- ▶ //Luke 18:15-16: People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. ... Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me...."

2. Jesus deliberately
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- ▶ //Mark 10:14: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."
- ▶ //Luke 18:16: Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

3. Jesus said that to
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- ▶ //Matt 18:5: "And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."
- ▶ //Mark 9:37: "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."
- ▶ //Luke 9:48: "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest."

4. Jesus lifted up children
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- ▶ Matt 18:3-4: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

4. Jesus lifted up children as exemplar citizens of the Kingdom of God.

- ▶ //Matt 19:14: Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."
- ▶ //Mark 10:14-15: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."
- ▶ //Luke 18:16-17: Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

5. Jesus taught that
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- ▶ //Matt 11:25: At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children."
- ▶ //Luke 10:21: At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do."

6. Jesus affirmed
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- ▶ Matt 21:14-16: The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, 'From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise'?"

7. Jesus healed children
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- ▶ Jairus's "12-year-old" daughter ("child"): Matthew 9:18-26//Mark 5:21-43//Luke 8:40-56
- ▶ The Syrophoenician woman's "little" daughter ("child"): Matthew 15:21-28//Mark 7:24-30
- ▶ A "boy" possessed by a spirit "from childhood," whom the disciples tried to heal and failed: Mark 9:14-29// Matthew 17:14-20//Luke 9:37-43
- ▶ A royal official's "child" in Capernaum: John 4:46-54

8. Jesus promised severe
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- ▶ // Matt. 18:6: "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."
- ▶ // Mark 9:42: "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea."
- ▶ // Luke 17:1: Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble."

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- ▶ Mark 10:13-16: People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

9. Jesus's theology of
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10. Jesus's care of
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by his own childhood.

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- ▶ Matt 2:16 (NLT): Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men's report of the star's first appearance.
- ▶ <https://abramkj.com/2023/03/04/jesus-was-born-infanticide-followed-did-that-inspire-how-he-loved-children/>

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Why in Mark 10 (and
parallels) did the disciples
rebuke those bringing
little children to Jesus?

The lesson:

learn and re-learn what

Jesus shows us about

children in our midst

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Webinar series with
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