



# Unexpected Jesus: The Gospel as Surprise

*Craig Hovey*

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## **Unexpected Jesus: The Gospel as Surprise** Craig Hovey

How can Christians live with a surprising God? How can we know and trust God without taming God or reducing God to an idol? Is knowing God the same thing as being open to God? Is God's freedom to act independently of our knowing him actually how we know him most genuinely and deeply? In "Unexpected Jesus", Craig Hovey explores in depth the idea that the Christian gospel is a surprising encounter that calls for people to risk living with a God who shows up in unexpected ways.

The Gospels often portray Jesus Christ as elusive and difficult to grasp. Hovey helps the reader to "unexpected" Jesus—to preserve Jesus's reality as a surprise rooted in the resurrection. As living and free, the joyous presence of Christ in the world is also unfathomable and uncontainable. Jesus's being free and surprising—unexpected—strengthens Christians' trust in God and helps them to live in God's world.

"In a world overpopulated by studies that claim to explain the historical Jesus, Craig Hovey reminds readers of the surprise of Jesus in the gospel, in the story of the church, and in the lives of Christians today. Through flowing prose and pithy observations, Hovey challenges the church to take up the difficult task of living out the truly surprising life of Jesus."

—C. A. Reeder, Assistant Professor of New Testament, Westmont College


"This book surprised me! I expected, in some sense, a guide to Jesus and the Christian life. Instead, I found myself reading a book of deep and challenging theology. No, not instead! I found myself learning Jesus and the Christian life just as I was reading deep and challenging theology. It is the kind of book that might, for example, and by God's surprising grace, turn a senior seminar on Christology into an event of faith, an encounter with the unexpected Jesus. Don't miss it."

—Douglas Harink, Professor of Theology, The King's University College

"Craig Hovey has written a surprising book about the surprise of the gospel. He ranges easily and widely from the gospels to Plato to Nietzsche, always keeping his focus on how Christian convictions and practices shape daily life. Hovey's refreshing study will encourage believers to walk with a God who defies our expectations in his unswerving faithfulness."

—Peter J. Leithart, Senior Fellow of Theology, New Saint Andrews College

Craig Hovey is Assistant Professor of Religion at Ashland University in Ashland, Ohio. He is the author of *Bearing True Witness: Truthfulness in Christian Practice* (Eerdmans, 2011), *Nietzsche and Theology* (T&T Clark, 2008), *To Share in the Body: A Theology of Martyrdom for Today's Church* (Brazos, 2008), and *Speak Thus: Christian Language in Church and World* (Cascade, 2008).

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