

# *Jesus Transforms Opposites To Allies*

A sermon by Pr. David Johnson

The third law of motion states that for each action there is an equal and opposite reaction. When a rifle fires a bullet, the explosion of gunpowder is the action and the recoil of the rifle is the reaction. Both are caused by the expanding gas of the exploding gunpowder.

Anytime you take an element of the divine and combine it with any part of humanity, there's going to be a reaction, either positive or negative. Most of the time, the initial human reaction to any divine visitation is negative: Fear or Shame.

This is because, at our core, we are antagonists with God. Ever since the earliest days of Eden we've wanted to be God, which is like putting the two positive ends of a magnet together. One of the magnets has got to move; and for many people, who are like fixed magnets, their demand is that the "God" magnet give way. At which point, God says, I don't think so, resulting in an inevitable byproduct for the "human" magnet, being fear or shame.

However, if the "human" magnet is flexible, allowing for a turning of direction, the invasion of divinity can be the source of great joy and fulfillment. As we've seen with the angelic visitations of Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, and Joseph...something had to give way, and each visitation was met with a willing reception.

But even as each character received the messages humbly, we're still met with spiritual (and cultural) discomfort, for each recipient had become confronted by, and connected to God, for better and for worse.

C.S. Lewis put it this way, *"Until you have given up yourself to Him, you will not have a real self. . . The more I resist Him and try to live on my own, the more I become dominated by my own heredity and upbringing and surroundings and natural desires. The only way to find ourselves is to find the One who made us ... Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ, and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in."*

**Matt 6:33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**

The Christmas narrative is filled with people who when confronted by the divine, felt fear, but humbled themselves to God.

**Luke 1:11-12 - Zacharias**

**Luke 1:26-30 - Mary**

**Matthew 1:18-21 - Joseph**

**Luke 2:8-11 - Shepherds**

**Matthew 2:1-2, 10-11 - Magi from the east**

Zacharias, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds each experienced a similar emotion when visited by their heavenly messengers: fear, confusion, and uncertainty. But because their hearts were flexible and responsive to

God's promptings, the magnets of their hearts were soon turned and they experienced a remarkable joy. The Magi likewise, were responsive to the numerous influences that drew them to the Christ-child.

But there was one who, much like the various attitudes we've addressed in the early chapters of Romans, showed the fleshly reactions of defensiveness, resistance, and deadly anger.

**Matthew 2:3, 7-8, 16 - Herod the king**

Herod, that hardened, self-centered, sin-twisted ruler, would not allow the "magnet" of his heart be turned and instead became defiant. He refused to turn. On the contrary, he decided that it was God who must go. He was so consumed with the destructive emotions of pride and selfishness, jealousy and fear, that he lashed out, thinking that he could deal with the Son of God as he had with his own sons. And the resulting effect was the death of countless innocents, all male children under 2 years of age.

Yes, when Divinity invades humanity things must change, there is always a reaction. Either we allow our poles to reverse, resulting in union with God and an unspeakable eternal joy. Or, we stand in defiant disobedience, polarized from God, and consumed with the pain that comes from our alienation from Him.

We are all confronted with the actions of God, invading our daily lives, as He did all those centuries ago. But what will be our reaction? Will we be a Mary who proclaimed, *"Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word."* Or will we be like Herod and the people described in Romans 1:21-22, *"For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools..."*

What direction are your spiritual magnetic poles facing? You may want to be an Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, shepherd, or Magi - compliant and responsive. But all too often, your reaction to God's divine appointments may be like Herod: cool, doubtful, and resistant - cloaked in "common sense." But don't give up. Remember the words of the Angel who first shared the Good News, the Gospel, with Mary, "For nothing will be impossible with God." The wonderful message of the Christmas story is that Jesus came for polar opposites like you!

**Is 9:6-7 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;**

**And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of {His} government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.**