

# EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

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## REACTIONS TO JESUS

By Andrew Dow

Jesus was about thirty years old before He stepped out and began His ministry (Luke 3:23). Prior to His baptism He had only been known as the son of a carpenter. He would have been the least likely person to change the world. When He was only twelve He was found **“in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed”** (Luke 2:46–47). No one expected Jesus to be engaged in such a discussion.

Even after He was grown, His humble reputation followed Him. When Philip came to Nathanael and told him that they had **“found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth”** (John 1:45), Nathanael replied, **“Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”** Jesus, who had **“no stately form or majesty ... nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him”** (Isa 53:2), was an unlikely candidate to become the most important person in human history.

It must have been odd to see this unlikely person teach an altogether unusual message. Jesus spoke paradoxical beatitudes (Matt 5:3–12), taught that the scribes and Pharisees were not righteous enough (Matt 5:20), and expanded Old Covenant laws (Matt 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43). It's no wonder there were so many different reactions to Jesus.

## Some Were Amazed

Following His ‘sermon on the mount’ we read, **“the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes”** (Matt 7:28–29). They recognized something about the way he spoke that was different. Shortly thereafter, Jesus and His disciples boarded a boat. When Jesus rebuked the storm the onlookers **“were amazed”** (Matt 8:27).

During His lifetime Jesus did some amazing things. The gospel of John records a few of the marvelous miracles that Christ performed so that we would be in awe of His power. John’s gospel concludes with the declaration, **“there are also many other things Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written”** (John 21:25). Who cannot help but be amazed at the life Christ lived.

We must be careful, however, that our relationship with Christ does not end at amazement. Too often people are content to be in awe of Christ without following Him further. We live among a world of *scholars* and *free-thinkers* who study the Bible to learn about who Christ is. Often they are amazed at what He accomplished in His short life, and the effect it continues to have on us today. They see His power, but refuse to obey Him. Just as King Agrippa answered Paul, **“In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian”** (Acts 26:28). Are we merely amazed or are we persuaded to follow His every command?

## Some Were Repulsed

Matthew 8:28–34 tells of a time when Jesus cast a multitude of demons out of two men. The text tells us that

the demons **“came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters”** (Matt 8:32). Those who were made aware of this miracle were not amazed. Perhaps they feared Jesus or feared for their livestock, but they were clearly repulsed by Christ’s power. **“And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they implored Him to leave their region”** (Matt 8:34).

This was a reaction Christ anticipated. While preparing His disciples to go out and teach He told them, **“Whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off in protest against you...’”** (Luke 10:10–11). This is a reaction we see today as well. People frequently come to recognize who Christ is, they see His power and Lordship, and then reject Him. We must never let this be our reaction toward Christ.

### **Some Glorified God**

After Jesus had been rushed out of **“the country of the Gadarenes”** (Matt 8:28), He crossed the sea of Galilee and returned **“to His own city”** (Matt 9:1). Upon his arrival some people **“brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed”** (Matt 9:2). Once again Jesus proved His power by healing the paralytic man. We’re told that the man **“got up and went home. But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men”** (Matt 9:7–8). Those who observed this miracle were moved to give glory to God!

This is the reaction that Jesus desires from all people. His mission on earth was to show people His Father. As Christ’s life drew to a close He told His disciples, **“If you**

**had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him”** (John 14:7). God and Jesus are one. Therefore, when we see Christ’s power we ought to be motivated to give all praise and glory to God. How great a God we serve—Who saw fit to send His Son to earth to demonstrate His power to a lost and dying humanity.

### Conclusion

For the son of a simple carpenter, Jesus Christ made an enormous impact in the course of human history. People have been reacting to Jesus from the beginning of His ministry, and they continue to do so even today. What will our reaction be? Will we marvel at His abilities, attempt to get rid of Him, or recognize who He is and glorify God?

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**AM LESSON:**  
Attitudes of Christ

**PM LESSON:**  
A Final Farewell  
(Acts 20:15–38)

**“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”  
(MATTHEW 28:19-20)**