

**January 3, 2010**  
**Isaiah 61:10-62:3**

## **A Match Made in Heaven**

**Whenever there is a convergence of opposites, a "manifestation" is born.**

Scientists watched a huge meteor crash onto the surface of Jupiter.

They excitedly estimated the size of the new crater that had been formed on the planet's surface. They thrilled to the spectacle of huge billows of dust (or ice) that rose up into what passes for "atmosphere" out there.

They theorized on the long-range planet-wide effects of the collision on Jupiter.

It took a while. But eventually someone asked what should have been the most obvious question about this whole phenomenon of meteors crashing into planets: "What if it had been us?"

In the last few years, astronomers have discovered and charted the trajectories of hundreds of new comets, meteors and other big, hard things hurtling through space toward our small, blue planet.

So far, so good. Now there are scientists, engineers and technicians feverishly working together to try to develop a kind of "meteor defense system."

Already there are two or three different designs on the drawing board that promise either .....

(1) to shove an offending asteroid off its earth-targeted course or

(2) To blow it up into small, relatively harmless-sized pieces. Although these designs look pretty impressive on paper, they all share two common weaknesses.

First, developing the technology and the hardware to actually build these systems would cost about a zillion dollars.

Second, by the time we can locate a potentially hazardous heavenly body crashing toward us, we would need to have launched our defense mechanism about four years before.

Our reaction capabilities are just a tad slow.

The prospect of the heavens and earth coming together is both exhilarating and frightening. Whenever two entities from such different places intersect, there are bound to be explosions, dust storms, even major climatic shifts.

We have a God who likes to shake us up. We have a God who delights in putting opposites together and then watching the dust fly.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." How could two things be more different!

The heavens-- God's realm, kept strictly separate from the earth by the firmament, a place completely unknown and unknowable. The earth-- simultaneously wet and dry, swarming with all sorts of creepy, crawly things.

But God was able to top the divine self and to create once again two things totally different: "God created human-kind...male and female God created them" (Genesis 1: 27).

Not only are men and women pleased and cursed by their essential otherness (Remember the wonderfully titled bestseller *Men Are From Mars: Women Are From Venus?*).

God also had the outrageous audacity to suggest that people should commit themselves to celebrating these differences by establishing a sacred covenant between them.

That concept of covenant so pleased God that it led to God's craziest notion yet. God established a sacred covenant, an eternal promise of faithfulness, between the Creator and the creation.

Having initially kept heaven and earth at safe distances from each other, God bridged that chasm with God's own promise to remain in eternal relationship with the creation.

And yet...still this was not enough for God. Yes, there was a covenant. But there was not yet a connection. Ten days ago, we celebrated the day on which the greatest attraction of opposites ever took place.

The Divine became incarnate in the tiny, fragile Christ child.

In the history of the Christian church, there is a tradition that spoke of the event of the incarnation as the marriage between heaven and earth.

The offspring of this marriage was Jesus the Christ--the enfleshment of the transcendent and immanent.

In more traditional faith-language, Jesus is described as the bridegroom and the church his bride. Here again, the union is between two opposites.

Where these representatives of heaven and earth converge, their alignment results in a manifestation, a miracle--nothing less than the salvation of the world.

Page 4

In the coming new year, the greatest hope we could have as heirs of this promise, the greatest resolution we could make, is that 2010 may be a year in which we experience heaven and earth coming together in our lives.

For whenever there is a convergence of opposites, a manifestation is born.

And what better place than the church for there to be a manifestation of converging opposites?

It is in the diversity of the church that rich and poor manifest charity; the young and old manifest understanding; the sick and the whole manifest encouragement;

the able and differently-abled manifest mutual support; diverse racial groups manifest vision; men and women manifest cooperation; and saint and sinner alike manifest an explosion of the grace of God!

What manifestations shall we pray for in the coming year? What manifestations can our faith and that of our local church bring to birth in 2010?

What opposites can we help bring together?

AMEN!

