

Some Have Entertained Angels Unawares

Genesis 18; Hebrew 13:2

Abraham had many dealings directly with God and with God through angels. In Genesis 18, we read of one of those events. In this episode, the meeting between Abraham and the angels of God is quite mundane; they appear before him as three men. Abraham's immediate response (after bowing) is to wash their feet, ask them to rest, and prepare food for them.

Though they appeared as normal men, and ate food, Abraham, who feared God, respected them and served them the best that he had.

One of our brothers gives the following testimony. It was during the time that he was hearing the Divine Principle lectures for the first time, and considering joining the church. He worked in Las Vegas, in the night shift as a casino card dealer. He was in a bar after work – it was morning time. Into the bar came a man badly wounded, bleeding. The bartender kicked the man out. Our brother felt for the man, and followed a trail of blood around to the back of the building. There he found the man lying on the ground. Our brother brought the man water, and wrapped his wounds with his own shirt. The wounded man looked at him, and said these words: “On this day, you will be with me in Paradise.” That day, later at our church, our brother was reborn.

(Find other stories of people helping strangers, and having wonderful, spiritual outcomes. I believe that this wounded man could have been an angel.)

There is a famous medieval French legend, of a saint who worked as a ferryman at a river. Late one stormy night he was awakened from his sleep by a voice, very clear, calling him to bring him across the river. Usually no one would call for such a task on such a night. But the ferryman struggled to wake up, and got on his clothes, and went out. The voice he had heard came from someone across the river. How could he have it so clearly on such a night? He got in his boat, and began across. Rowing was very difficult, against the waves. But after he was halfway across, the river became very smooth. The man on the other side, waiting for the ferry, was covered with a robe and cowl. It was clear to the ferryman that the man was a leper. And he had a hideous stench about him. The man was like death itself. He got into the boat, and the atmosphere became cold, frigid. Again the waves whipped up, and getting back across was very difficult, all the more difficult because the passenger was so wretched. When they reached the other side, the passenger said, “I am so hungry. I am so hungry. Please, can you give me

something to eat?” Against his better judgment, the ferryman brought him into his hut. He had very little food, but he gave him what little he had. The ferryman, you see, was a sincere Christian, who was all his life striving to fulfill the ideal of Christ, to imitate the love of Christ. He tried to view this wretched stranger as someone whom Christ would love and care for. The man ate. Then the man said, “I am so tired. May I sleep here for a while? Please let me sleep in your bed.” Again the ferryman consented, but with incredible anguish and loathing for this hideous, deformed leper, struggling against his desire to love completely and absolutely. Also, leprosy is very contagious. Finally, lying in bed with the ferryman, the leper said, “I am so cold, I am dying from cold. Please let me lie beside you.” He lay on top of the ferryman. The flesh falling off the bone. Please, please, make me warm, make me warm. The ferryman embraced the leper. At the point of embracing death, the leper transformed into Jesus Christ, and the ferryman was raptured with Christ into heaven.

Jesus said, when you minister unto the least of these, you minister unto me.

Thus the biblical mandate for social service is given. The most wretched seeming person may be an angel, and even if not an angel, is representing Christ himself.

This is difficult to believe. “That dirty bag-lady? That bedraggled dope-addict? Always with their hands out, barely intelligible words...that is Christ himself?” The only way to know is to give something, give anything, even a quarter. A cup of coffee costs fifty cents nowadays – give half a cup of coffee, a quarter. Then look into their eyes. What do you see? Maybe nothing. Maybe you got ripped off a quarter. But maybe you have just entertained an angel unawares.