



1 Let brotherly love continue. 2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. 3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. (Heb 13:1-3)

The reality of the interaction of angels with God's chosen people, as well as those who are lost in trespasses and sin, is well recorded in Holy Scripture. Hagar met with the Angel of the Lord twice in the Wilderness. The Angel of the Lord stayed the hand of Abraham to spare Isaac from sacrifice. The same Angel appeared to Moses at the Burning Bush and Passed Over the Chosen of God in old Egypt. There are too many instances to enumerate in a simple devotion, but I would be remiss if I did not mention that important visitation of the Angel Gabriel to the young virgin, Mary, *26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. 29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. (Luke 1:26-33)*

In the case of Abraham on the plains of Mamre (Genesis 18:1-8) three angels appeared to Abraham, and one of these was the Lord. The Greek word for angel is 'Aggelos,' meaning a messenger sent by God – or an envoy of God. The definition does not restrict angels to heavenly beings for they often appear as men. But I believe that each of us can be messengers of God to the needy and hurting around us.

I like to relate an incident that happened to me 55 years ago in the Tennessee foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains which I shall never forget.

One Friday night in the Fall of 1961, I had a date with a really nice and pretty young lady to go to a ball game in Copper Hill, Tennessee. I was a high school student and didn't really know my way around much - but thought that I did. I borrowed my mother's car and picked up my date.

We had to drive about 50 mile through the mountains of East Tennessee to get to the game. It was a really lonely and desolate drive, the moon was out in its brilliance and reflected off the waters of Lake Ocoee as we drove. The mountains stood brooding and joyless on the opposite side of the road.

When we reached the halfway point in our travels, I had a flat tire. No problem. I went to the trunk to get the spare and there WAS no spare. Later I learned that my mother had left it at a service station for repair and forgot to pick it up. An automobile would pass by only about every 10 minutes. I did not know what to do, and I was also concerned for my date.

Finally, I began to signal any car that came by for help. At last a pickup truck stopped full of hunters. I offered \$20.00 to them to take me the 20 miles to Copper Hill to get the tire repaired (it was all I had). They declined saying that they had been away from home for 3 days and wanted to get back to their families - as if 40 minutes more would have made a difference.

They acted sad to leave us - but they did! After a few more minutes I saw a car coming around the mountain slopes in the distance. He was really driving fast, but in desperation I signaled him to stop. It was a rough, older model car. The occupants were two of the roughest looking men I had ever seen. They had long sideburns (which was unusual at that time -1961 - in East Tennessee) and several days growth of beards. They were dirty to boot. Now I wished I had not stopped them. They asked gruffly, "What's the problem, boy?"

I asked if they would take me to Copper Hill, Tennessee (about 20 miles) to fix the flat. I offered again the \$20 bill if they would take me. They looked gruffly at each other and said, "Get in!" I asked if my fiancée could go, as I was afraid to leave her on the desolate road. They shook their heads affirmatively.

I felt very uncomfortable as we began to drive off. I was fearful that they might just kill me outright and rape my fiancée. All sorts of possibilities filled my young imagination. Then as they began driving 70+ miles an hour around the mountain roads I began to be concerned less about them and more about being killed by plunging headlong down the mountainside.

Finally we arrived at a service station in Copper Hill. They got the tire from the trunk for me and had it repaired, for which THEY paid. They bought my date and me a coke. And we headed back.

Arriving back at my mother's car, they replaced the tire onto the wheel themselves and waited to see if the car battery was not drained from the flashing caution lights we had left on. The car started and I got out to pay the two rough-riders for their trouble. When I offered the money, they looked at each other and the driver said, "No. You keep your money, son. Our reward will come when you find someone who needs help and you give it." That was all. They drove off to see their own families that had been waiting one month to see them at Gatlinburg. They were big, strong railroad workers and came home only once each month. They also had very BIG hearts.

I learned a really valuable lesson that night - angels can be bright and shiny, but they can also appear as dirty, grimy workmen, and . . . you can't judge a book by its cover!

These two taught me early in life to stop and help when someone needs it regardless of my own schedule.

Thanks for reading my true story.

