

MEDITATION ON “TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL”

A few years ago there was a TV program by this name that aired for nine seasons. I confess to never watching the program but the title is very intriguing and set me to wondering...who in the Bible has actually been physically touched by an angel? As I began to research this question it became apparent that physical contact was indeed a rare occurrence. However, when an angel, whether it be the preincarnate Christ, so called the angel of the Lord, or another angelic being, physically touched mortal man, it had purpose; and therefore worthy of our attention.

The first recorded instance is found in Genesis 19. This chapter contains the account of Lot and his family as they were delivered from the torrents of fire and brimstone that rained down upon the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The angels (in the form of men) physically “laid hold” their hands and compelled them to flee. Angels are sent to preserve us.

Genesis also holds the account of Jacob wrestling with an angel whom he knew to be God Himself. That night, Jacob, who had always been self-sufficient and resourceful, recognized his need, and was therefore determined to secure God’s favor. The confrontation was indeed physical and Jacob received a permanent reminder of his need for God when the angel touched the hollow of his thigh, putting it slightly out of joint. Jacob, whom God had chosen to be the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, was being prepared for the mission. Angels are sent to prepare us.

Elijah was another individual who was touched by an angel but for a different purpose. Chapter 18 of First Kings records the account of Elijah’s contest with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, as God validates Elijah’s person and ministry as His prophet. After slaying the impotent prophets of Baal, Elijah, emotionally spent and under threat from Jezebel, broke. His confusion is noted as he flees from Jezebel’s vow to take his life but pleads with God to let him die. During this despairing state, as he sleeps under utter exhaustion, he is touched by an angel and commanded to “arise and eat.” Angels are sent to provide for us.

The Bible also records Daniel as being touched by the angel Gabriel four times to arouse and strengthen him; that he might clearly understand the enormity of the end-time prophecies revealed to him. Without the book written by Daniel, the book of Revelation would be largely incomprehensible, especially the “seventieth week.” Angels are sent to prompt and provoke when necessary.

Apart from the angel who binds Satan for 1000 years and those angels who minister to our Lord, there is no mention of any living person receiving the touch of an angel in the NT. While we may be convinced of their constant attention to us, what does the Bible say? May we not unreasonably expect to receive the touch of an angel?

Psalms 91:12

They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Most likely, we already have.