

The Lord Jesus opens the way for each of us to "ascend to heaven" and to bring "heaven to earth" in the daily circumstances of our lives. God's kingdom is present in those who seek him and who do his will. Through the gift of faith God opens a door for each one of us to the heavenly reality of his kingdom.

John 1:47-51 (alternate reading: Luke 9:46-50) Jesus saw Nathan'a-el coming to him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" (48) Nathan'a-el said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." (49) Nathan'a-el answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (50) Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." (51) And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Meditation by Don Schwager

What would you give to see beyond the visible – to "see heaven opened and the angels of God"? When Philip brought Nathaniel to Jesus, Jesus did the unthinkable! He brought revelation to Nathaniel – revelation of how God sees each of us individually in the deepest recesses of our hearts where no visible eye can perceive the deepest thoughts and longings we have for peace, happiness, and spiritual fulfillment. Nathaniel was very startled that Jesus knew him so intimately even before Nathaniel had the opportunity to meet Jesus. Jesus knew

Nathaniel's deepest thoughts and his hunger and longing for God.

What is the significance of Jesus' revelation of seeing Nathaniel "under the fig tree"? For the people of Israel, the fig tree was a symbol of God's blessing and peace. It provided shade from the midday sun and a cool place to retreat and pray. It is very likely that Nathaniel had been thinking about God "under the fig tree" and reflecting on God's promise to give his people Israel a savior who would free them from oppression. Perhaps he dozed off for a midday nap and dreamt of God's kingdom like Jacob had dreamt when God gave him a vision of a great ladder which united earth with heaven (see Genesis 28:12-17). Nathaniel recognized that Jesus truly was the Messiah and the Lord of heaven and earth because Jesus offered him the greatest gift which only God can give – the gift of friendship with God and free access to God's throne in heaven.

What does Jesus mean when he says "you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man"? One of the most remarkable revelations recorded in the bible is the dream of Jacob (Genesis 28:12-17). God had opened a door for Jacob that brought him and his people into a new relationship with the living God. In Jacob's dream God revealed his angelic host and showed him the throne of heaven and promised Jacob that he and descendants would dwell with the living God. Who are the angels and why do they intervene between heaven and earth? The scriptures tell us the angels are God's servants and messengers. "They are the mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word" (Psalm 103:20). The angels belong to Christ and were created for and through him (Colossians 1:16). The Letter to the Hebrews speaks of the role of the angels in God's plan of salvation: "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14) The angels are not only messengers but protectors and guardians as well. "For he will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:11). We are not alone in our struggle against sin and evil in the world. The armies of heaven fight for us and with us in the spiritual battle for our hearts, minds, and wills. Do you know the peace and security of a life submitted to God and to his way of peace and happiness?

Jesus' response to Nathaniel's new faith is the promise that Jesus himself will be the "ladder which unites earth with heaven". Jesus proclaims that he is the fulfillment of the promise made to the Patriarch Jacob and his descendants. Jesus is the true ladder or stairway to heaven. In Jesus' incarnation, the divine Son of God taking on human flesh for our sake, we see the union of heaven and earth – God making his dwelling with us and bringing us into the heavenly reality of his kingdom. Jesus' death on the cross where he defeated sin and won new life for us through his resurrection opens the way for each of us to come into a new relationship with God as his sons and daughters. The Lord Jesus opens the way for each of us to "ascend to heaven" and to bring "heaven to earth" in the daily circumstances of our lives. God's kingdom is present in those who seek him and who do his will. Through the gift of faith God opens a door for each one of us to the heavenly reality of his kingdom. Do you see and believe the heavenly reality with the "eyes of faith"?

"Heavenly Father, through your Son Jesus Christ, you have opened the way to heaven for us. As you revealed yourself to your beloved patriarchs and apostles, so reveal yourself to me that I may glorify you in my daily life. May I always find joy in your presence and never lose sight of the kingdom of heaven."

Supplementary Reading

oN loVING IN-IAWS

{xtypo_quote} ... wherever you go, I will go... – Ruth 1:16 {/xtypo_quote}

I couldn't help but think about my mother-in-law when I read today's reading. Like Naomi, she is a widow with two sons. She is also one of the kindest souls I know.

As a daughter-in-law, it's not difficult to love Mama. I am truly blessed to be a recipient of her love and concern. I have witnessed her enormous capacity to give when my husband and I lived with her during the first few years of our married life. Her generosity has touched and changed many lives. One of her passions is to help seminarians finish their schooling to become priests. She cannot resist anyone in need. She will give away even the last few pesos in her wallet.

We've all heard stories about women who don't get along with their in-laws. That's why Ruth inspires me to no end. She left her family and chose to stay with her mother-in-law.

Perhaps I will not be given the same choice or circumstances but today I ask myself: How good am I at loving my in-laws?

May we be challenged to love them extraordinarily as Ruth did. – Lallaine Gogna

REFLECTION:

Reality check: Rate yourself at how you have shown your love lately.

May I be a witness of Your love and affection to those closest to me.

For meditation/readings of the previous days/months , please click any of the following links:

Written by Bobot Apit

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<http://his-ways-better-than-our-ways.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.mabuhayradio.com/sections/the-daily-bread.html>

<http://butuangularforum.org/cgi-bin/dboard/YaBB.pl?num=1229339492/220>

GOD BLESS US ALL! O Theos Na Mas Evlogisi!

PRAY

as if everything depended on **HIM** **ACT**

as if everything depended on **YOU**.

<http://www.tlig.org/en/messages/>

Daily Mass and Gospel [Meditation Broadcast \(Tagalog\) ex. DWX-25a](http://www.mabuhayradio.com/sections/the-daily-bread.html) Phil Tin

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