

Because of his lack of guile, Nathaniel sees clearly, as does Jesus. They look upon one another and see beyond the superficial. Neither is judging the other merely by appearance now. This is the way of love and love not simply as a work of our own, but as a gift, as an entry into love's very being, an insight into God and what God is about. It's a moment of angelic vision, a piercing of the veil between heaven and earth, a thin place we cannot possess but which can possess us, if we too are without guile – a moment indeed then of innocence where we too see angels ascending and descending on one another. Jesus then as representative of us all, showing us our true end, the way forward, our nature without sin. These moments may perhaps only touch us briefly and rarely, indicators of that deeper life we enjoy, that we knew once and have yet to recover, to live in fully. Angels then as messengers of hope, encouragement and healing. Not to be feared by those without guile; visitors from a world not under our control and welcome for that. Nathaniel and Jesus see and speak clearly – this is visionary power which will perhaps get them both into trouble later for it relativises any vision those with guile may have of earthly power, of that desire to have and wield wealth or authority for its own sake. Or as St. Paul puts it: if our faith is in this world only we are the saddest or most unfortunate of people, on very thin ground, as it were, if we only but knew it.

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