The Lord Appears to Abraham

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 July 2026

Preacher: Willard Lyons

[0:00] Welcome to Built on God's Word, the preaching and teaching ministry of Highland Park Baptist Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.! Willard Lyons teaches on the life of Abraham.

! And so now we have a new episode, if you will, take place here.
Realize that it's, I think I looked at it, I think it was 25 years from the time God called him and he started his trek into Canaan to the beginning of chapter 18.
About 25 years time has elapsed. And so in that time, as we've viewed what took place and how God dealt with him in those 25 years, that he has become acquainted enough with God, so to speak, to be able to sense his presence and know when his presence is there with him.
And so we see that as we begin chapter 18 tonight, again, a year after the circumcision. So let's look at verses 1 and 2 of Genesis 18.
[1:27] And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre, and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. And he lift up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him, or before him.

And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door and bowed himself toward the ground. Now, probably around midday, he's sitting in, just barely inside his tent at the tent door. Now, don't know what he was doing. Now, think about Abraham just a minute. What does the guy do? My speculation, this is purely my speculation, is that good possibility that he's sitting there in the tent door in the hottest part of the day to cool himself off.
But also, while he's doing that, I've got an idea that's very probable that he's contemplating what's next. You know, it's not that God deals with him every day.
All right? There are specific moments of time where God appears to him or speaks to him. So he has undergone the right of circumcision as a token of the covenant relationship with God.
[2:41] And so now he's sitting there, I imagine, contemplating what the next step may be. And so as that takes place, recognize what happens here.

Three men begin to approach him. He looks up and sees these three men standing just a little bit away from him, gazing at him, no doubt. All right?
Now, from what we see in verse number 13 a little bit later, it's Jehovah that appears unto Abraham. One of them is Jehovah that appears unto Abraham. All right? And then two, what are described as angels, they're with him. Now, the word angels, remember, most of the time is the word that means messenger.
Okay? Now, they come in human form, all three of them. The two men plus God, Jehovah, appear in human form.
[3:43] Now, I realize there are some that speculate this may be the Lord Jesus. But let me remind you, be careful to interject things that aren't there.

Remember that when Jesus was manifest, he came incarnate in the flesh as that babe at Bethlehem.
All right? Don't have any indication he came prior to that in bodily form. All right? So, just keep that in mind if you will.
If you're one of those that kept thinking that, then God will forgive you. No, I'm kidding, of course. Not that he would forgive you. That's not what I'm kidding about, but I'm kidding.
I'm going to go on here. All right. So, we know one of them to be, from the discourse that follows, one of them to be God, to be Jehovah. He sees them as Adonai.
[4:43] And the other two, just simply messengers or angels that are with God. Now, three men that he sees. But remember what the book of Hebrews says.

The writer of the Hebrews tells us in chapter 13, verse number 2. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, because some have entertained angels unawares.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

You never know. Amen? You never know who's knocking on your door. You never know what that stranger is. All right? So, that's just a good way to think about that.
Yeah. So, verses number 3 and 5. And he said, that's Abraham. And he said, my Lord, or my word is Adonai, master, if you will.
If now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant. Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.
[5:45] And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort your hearts. Or comfort you, your hearts. After that you shall pass on, for therefore are you come to your servant.

And they said, so do as thou hast said. So, Abraham desires that they stay. Don't just move on here. Stay a while.
Let me give you a time to refresh yourselves, get you something to eat here. You can wash your feet. You can recline yourself under the tree, cool off, and we'll fix a meal for you here.
He tells them to comfort their hearts, or literally to strengthen their hearts, or the idea of refreshing themselves. Now, take note of a couple of statements here.
At first reading, you know, we can very easily get the idea that Abram is viewing these guys as just fellows that are passing through.
[6:52] He's going to do the hospitable thing, and, you know, let them rest, provide water for their feet, and water to drink, food to eat.

And then they pass on. But I think it goes farther than that. I think to this point in Abraham's relationship with God, he's begun to come to the point where he realizes that when he senses God's presence, God's going to do something.
All right? He's either going to tell him something, or he's going to do something, going to give instructions, whatever. But God's going to do something whenever he appears, because he doesn't just appear for no reason.
All right? So, take note again what he says. He said, my Lord Adonai, now I realize sometimes that was a common terminology when men come by, a terminology of respect.
But he said, if I have now found favor in your sight. All right? That word favor just stuck out to me.
[8:06] If I have found favor in your sight, don't pass away. Now, something else to take note of here. I'll fetch you a morsel of bread, comfort your hearts.

After that you shall pass on. Now, look at the next phrase. For therefore are you come to your servant. Here's the reason you've come.
All right? Now, was it just to get refreshed? If Abraham sensed the presence of God in one of these men, which I think he does, then he's got to have a purpose.
Now, don't know that he knows for sure. I don't think he does at this point what that purpose is. But he realizes God has a purpose for being there. So he said, you've come for a reason.
That's Lyon's translation, a loose translation. All right? Let me do that for you because you've come here for a purpose. There's a reason for you being here.
[9:24] And they said, do as you say. All right? Do as you say. Now, so, they can kick off their sandals, wash their feet, be refreshed with a great meal.

Now, verses 6 and 8, we get a picture of what that meal is going to be. He didn't just go to the freezer and grab popsicles and give it to him. Abraham hasted into the tent.
That means he went quickly. All right? For those of you that don't realize what hasted means. Okay? He hasted into the tent unto Sarah and said, make ready quickly three measures of fine meal.
Knead it. Make cakes upon the hearth. It's interesting to me that he knows what the measurements should be. Amen? Yeah. Yeah. Take three measures of fine meal.
Knead it. Make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, fetched a calf, tender and good, gave it unto a young man, and hasted to dress it.
[10:35] He took butter and milk and the calf which he dressed, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. Now, they accept the invitation.

Abraham does what needs to be done to get a meal together. Tells his wife to take three measures of fine meal. They say that's about two and a half gallons or about 56 pounds of flour.
All right? And from that, she's going to make some little round cakes. All right? They cook them on the hearth. What they do, they fire up the fireplace.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

When that's burning good, they scrape the ashes off the hearth. They put the little round cakes on the hearth. Then they cover it up with burning embers.
All right? And they cook that. So, you know, it's going to take a while for all this to get done. It's going to take a while for the calf to get slaughtered and dressed. And all of those things.
[11:41] All right? He takes milk and he takes butter. And some say that's even curdled milk. All right? What is curdled milk?

Cutter's cheese. I'm thinking with the butter, it might be buttermilk. Who knows? All right? So you get an idea. It's quite a feast that he's fixing for them.
Now, he sets it before them while he himself, Abraham, stands under the tree while these men ate. That's traditional for the host to stand by out of politeness while his guests eat.
All right? So they're fixed a sumptuous meal. These guys must have been hefty eaters. Amen? For all of that food to be fixed for three men. Now, while they're eating, and while this is all going on, notice in verses 9 through 12 what takes place here.
Abraham says, all right, you're here for a reason. You didn't just pass by. That's my conjecture. And now Abraham's about to find out what that reason is.
[12:58] They said to him, where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, behold, in the tent. Now, remember, God has already told Abraham, when Abraham was anxious about what's going to take place with Ishmael, you know, oh, that Ishmael might stand before you.

God said, my covenant with you is going to be with Isaac, who your wife will give birth to. All right? And then he told him about the blessing of Ishmael.
But it's going to be to Sarah, he said, that you're going to have a son through which the covenant will pass. All right? So, they're sitting here eating.
And God says, Abraham, where's your wife? She's in the tent. All right?
Then he says, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life. In other words, according to the nine months time it takes to conceive and have a child.
[14:12] All right? That's the idea there. Lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.

Now, Abraham and Sarah were old, well stricken in age. And it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore, Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my Lord, being old also?
All right? Shall that take place? Now, you see the intended purpose of their visit here. All right? It was for Sarah, not for Abraham.
Now, she, at this point, did not know who these men were.
She did not realize one of them was Adonai. But when he spoke, it just caught her. You know, again, laughed within herself.
[15:25] How in the world can this be possible? He spoke, I'm going to return to you at this time when it lives again.

That's literally the idea. I'll return with you at this time when it lives again. And then at that time, your wife, Sarah, she's going to have a son.
Now, he's 99 years old. So, naturally speaking, beyond the age of having children, providing conception, much less she being old enough and past the age where she could conceive children.
All right? Now, she was at the vantage point behind the three men, especially behind Jehovah.
He could not see her. All right? She laughed within herself. Now, there's no idea of an outward expression here.
[16:34] They married, may have been a small one under her breath. How can this be? That's an email. But whatever the case, nonetheless, God heard that.

Or he knew that. That she laughed. And he knew that her laugh was different than the laugh that Abraham expressed when he got this information.
All right? Now, she laughed within herself, thinking that she was not heard or observed by any of these three men.
Now, so in verse 13 and 14, the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child which am old?
Not only to the fact that God heard that she laughed, he knew what she said to herself. Sarah needed to know that he heard.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[17:44] Or that he knew the secrets of her heart here. Because she needed to know who this was. That's visiting them and is speaking.

She needs to know it's God. It's Jehovah. Because she's going to have the son. The son of Abraham who is going to have the covenant relationship passed on to him.
And then on to his descendant. And then from them, the others. She's going to have to trust God to do what he said is going to happen.
What he's going to do. All right? And so he says to Abraham here, Where did she laugh? And she said, Surely I of a surety have a child.
Can I do that when I'm old? Then he says, Is anything too hard for Jehovah? Is anything too hard for him?
[18:48] All right? Is anything impossible or too wonderful? All right? At the appointed time. As of to say, like I said earlier.

This time next year. I will return unto thee according to the time of life. He's going to give her nine months. All right? I'll be back.
And Sarah will have a son. All right? So God gives indication to Sarah that he's God. Because he knows what she's done.
Didn't say it out loud. He knew what she did. So now she realizes and recognizes that it's God. And he takes it a little bit further.
For her to understand there's nothing impossible with God. All right? Now, she needed to know, and God wants her to know, that the promise was made, the promise of her having a son was made, by the all-knowing, all-powerful Jehovah God.
[20:01] Then he reproved her for laughing. All right? Now, so, she's going to have a son.

And at the appointed time that God gave, she'll have that son. Now, brought to mind something. Turn over to Mark's Gospel.
Mark chapter 9. In verses 14 and following. Jesus has got a crowd of people around him.
Great multitude, it says in verse 14. And the scribes are questioning him. All right? Now, in verse 16, he asked the scribes, what question ye with them?
In verse 17, one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit, or spirit that produces dumbness, or making him mute.
[21:16] Wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him, and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away. And I spake to thy disciples, that they should cast him out, and they could not.

He answered him, and saith, O faithless or perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me. That's a good picture here.
All right? I think more so, he's focusing this in his mind to his apostles. All right? How, you know, King James calls us faithless, but it's more so the perverse generation.
How long will I be with you? How long shall I suffer with you? What's your, your ignorance, I should say, I guess. All right? Bring him unto me. So they brought him unto him.
And when he saw him, straightway the spirit tear him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, how long is it ago since this came unto him?
[22:17] And he said, of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him. But if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us if you could do something here.

Now, you know, I know Jesus is loving and he was compassionate in his earthly ministry.
But there's some times when he just expressed real indignation. He did that at the raising of Lazarus.
And I think you see it here. You know. Because think of it just a minute. Being in the presence of God in the flesh, how can you deny the possibility and the probability of he doing anything that's necessary to take care of a need?
All right? Because there were some doubters here. Now, look what the Father says. Well, first of all, verse 23, Jesus said unto him, that's unto the Father, if you can believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.
[23:40] All right? If you can believe, everything is possible to those that truly, genuinely believe.
Now, look at verse 24.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Straight away. Right away. The Father of the Child cried out. And the original rendering is the idea here. He's crying out with a piercing cry.
All right? I believe. I believe. Lord, help my unbelief. Interesting statement, is it not?
Yeah. I believe. As if to say, I believe you can do anything. You're God. I believe that. But Lord, help my unbelief.
What do you think he's saying there? It's almost like it contradicts itself, but it doesn't. What do you think he's saying there? I think what we can really pin down here is this idea.
[24:38] Yes, I believe you can do that. Lord, but there's areas in me, in my heart, in my mind, that still lack total faith.

Yeah. So, Lord, help me in that, that area, those areas that I have in my life that, you know, that still struggle in just totally abandoning myself or itself to who you are and what you do.
All right? Now, so, strengthen the areas of my weakness, of the weakness in my faith. Now, so, what's it going to take?
I mean, that's good for us to consider too and to recognize, you know, we've got to be willing to give up some things, I think.
And, you know, boy, boy, I'm trying to figure out the best way to say this. We've got to admit that we here in the good old USA live a life of luxury in comparison to a number of other countries.
[26:09] Doesn't make any difference how much money we make, how little money we make. We've got a good house to live in. We've got air conditioning in 100 degree weather.

Got an automobile to drive to church in. We've got a good church building to come together, to study together, to worship together. Yeah. Now, that, a lot of times, does or can lead to self-sufficiency.
before we eat, we pray, and we thank the Lord for the food and for the provisions of the day and all of those things.
But, how much of that really soaks in to the heart to cause us real abandonment, to tear and loose some things that hinder?
This reminded me of something when I was looking back over it today. Now, some of you have already heard this because I've passed it out at some point. But some of you have heard it and have forgotten it.
[27:21] Some of you haven't heard it. So, I'm going to read this. A.W. Tozer, a evangelist of eight years past, has written this in one of his books. To prayer, he prayed to the Lord.

And here's what he says. He said, Father, I want to know thee. That's a good, genuine, good, genuine desire. I want to know thee. But, my coward heart fears to give up its toys.
I cannot part with them without inward bleeding. And I do not try to hide from thee the terror of the parting. I come trembling.
But, I come please root from my heart all those things which I have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my living self so that thou mayest enter and dwell there without a rival.
Now, that's a good point. To dwell within me without a rival. Then shalt thou make the place of thy feet glorious. Then shall my heart have no need of the sun to shine in it.
[28:31] For thyself will be the light of it and there shall be no night there. Yeah. God wants to dwell within us with unhindered access to us.

Alright. Likewise, his word. That's why Paul writes in one of his letters let the words of Christ dwell in you to be at home have unfettered access access to you in all richness and something else.
Alright. So, that's what we need to consider. Yeah. Is anything impossible for Jehovah? No, of course not.
Nothing's impossible. impossible. But it does beg the question for us, doesn't it? How many of the things we are faced with that sometimes we agonize over?
We agonize over them more than we needed to and maybe the reason being that we have not so totally focused ourselves on the reality of who God is and the fact that nothing's impossible with him so that our faith isn't as strong as it needs to be to trust him to do those things.
[30:05] So, good thing for us to take note of. Alright. So, God says at the appointed time I will return and Sarah will have a son.

Now, look in Genesis 18, 15, verse 15. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not.
And why? Because she was afraid. He said, Nay, but thou didst laugh. Yes, you did, Sarah. You did laugh.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

So, he rebuked her for the fact that she lied. You did laugh.
And she knew that he knew. Alright. Now, God here is wanting to correct her and does correct her to strengthen her unbelief or to straighten out her unbelief and also to strengthen her faith.
[31:14] It's vital. It's important that she be brought to believe everything that he promised without question, without even reasoning whether the alleged impossibility would even enter into the equation here.

She has to be brought to a full conviction that he is totally able to do what he said he could do and would do. That he's totally able to perform what he said.
And the reason be twofold. Because he's God and because he said it. Amen? What's the old adage?
God said it, I believe it, that's good enough for me. Yeah, just leave the I believe it out. God said it, that's good enough for me. Yeah, yeah.
All right. So, so, she's coming to the understanding that the one that's speaking to her was the Lord God.
[32:26] All right? But she needed to be exposed, that sneer within her needed to be exposed so she could recognize and realize that God possesses all knowledge.

He's omniscient so that she can be brought to that full conviction of his character and his nature and who he is and be able to exercise that total trust in the fulfillment of the promises that he has made.
Now, so, Jehovah repeats the fact that she did laugh, leading her to discern that this was indeed God standing before them.
Same thing that happened, you remember, with Jesus and Nathanael. When Jesus was calling out his apostles, you remember, and the fact that Philip had, he had called Philip and Philip ran to Nathanael and said, he said, Nathanael, come, we've found the Messiah and it's Jesus of Nazareth.
Remember what Nathanael said? Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Yeah, impossible.
Alright, he said, come and see. So, he follows him there and Jesus sees him coming and he says, Nathanael, a man in whom there is no guile.
[34:04] Nathanael said, when did you see me? How do you know me? When you were sitting under the fig tree before I ever saw you, I knew you.

And that's all it took for Nathanael. He was an easy believer. Amen? Yeah, my Lord and my God, you are the king. Alright? Same thing took place there.
Isn't it a joy to experience freshness from the Lord? Something fresh about himself. that we may never have either seen or experienced before that he shows us?
Sure it is. Sure it is. Yeah, that's why it's the living word of God. Amen? Yeah. Such a joy. Now, so, Hebrews 11, verse 11 said, through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed and was delivered of a child when she was past age because she judged him faithful who had promised.
Amen? Yeah. Boy, that visit did tremendous things in the heart and mind of Sarah from all that took place there.
[35:27] Alright? Alright? She began to realize and learn more and more of the faithfulness of God. Yeah. Don't you wish we had a fly on the wall?

I'll fly on the tent wall of Abraham and Sarah. How after this time took place, after God goes on to depart after a bit, they'd sit there together and just go talk over what happened.
I could see Sarah saying, this is a tremendous thing here. God's really going to do this. And I could see Abraham saying, what did you expect?
Look what else he's done for us in the past. Yeah. That would be an interesting conversation to behold. Alright, let's pray together.
Father, we are grateful again for your loving kindness. faithfulness. I thank you, Father, for your faithfulness to us. And I thank you for allowing us to see time and time again through your word, the fact that you are faithful.
[36:40] That you are faithful not only to biblical characters that we read about, but through that we know you're faithful to us as well. We see that for the things you've done in our own lives in the past, and we can trace those to the present day and rejoice that you remain faithful and you always will because of who you are.

So, Father, I pray, God, that you will enable us to embrace that, to live that, to seek you in what you're doing and what your desire is for us step by step, so that we might simply follow you through

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

faith, trusting you to do what you will through us each time, each day.
We thank you for that. Thank you for these that are here tonight. Pray your blessings upon them. Pray it all in Jesus' name, for his sake. Amen. Amen. To learn more, visit us in person or see the website at highlandparkbaptist.net.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host