

Series: God & Abraham #1275

Title: Genesis 15.1

Do Not Fear, Abram

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. I really appreciate and value the time you give to this broadcast or podcast. And yesterday was one of those days when I would have liked about thirty more minutes with you. However, we are dealing with this very firm time limit because of the radio *and* even on the podcast I have been told that one of the reasons you listen is because this short time makes it manageable for you to digest the content amidst your busy schedule. So, I always have to fit the task to the time, *but* I am free to repeat something the next day and that is how we shall we begin.

What was said last time is (partly) repeated this time, because it is valuable to our understanding of one, who God is, and two this clarifies what is sometimes considered a New Testament mystery – as it certainly was for the Jewish religious rulers in Jesus’ day. Had Abraham actually met Jesus Christ? Let me share with you again *just part* of what I said last time and then connect it to fresh insights for today as we come into the weekend.

Part of Genesis 15, verse 1 says, **“the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying ‘Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you...”** The word of the Lord came to Abram. And God said, “I am.” Well, Jesus is the Word and Jesus *is* the I am. We meet Christ in Genesis, *again*.

I believe the Word who meets with Abram in this vision is Jesus Christ. This is another of His pre-incarnate appearances, so common throughout the Old Testament. This is a theophany. The Second Person of the Triune God – Jesus the Son – appears in the world, *not* for the first time at His birth in Bethlehem in the Gospels, but rather here, in Genesis. In this vision Abram encounters God the Son.

Where did I get this idea? From John chapter 1, verses 1 and 14 and Hebrews chapter 1, verse 2. The Bible says Jesus Christ *is* the Word. We looked at those verses. In the Bible, the Word of God, is both the written word and the Living Word (Jesus). We speak of the Word of God and most often by that we mean written Scripture (the Bible) but by the Word of God we also mean the person of Jesus Christ. So when Genesis 15, verse 1 says, “the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision” I take “the word” here to mean Jesus Christ. Abram’s vision is a theophany, a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. *Who* does Abram see and hear? Jesus! And this is because Jesus is God. He is the Lord and the word of the Lord came to Abram.

Second, we have the words, “I am.” “The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying ‘Do not fear, Abram, I am” followed by “a shield to you.” Jesus is the I am. And this here is the first of the great “I am” statements in Scripture. And we looked at some of the other “I am” statements of Christ in John and Revelation. “I am the Light of the world.” “I am the way and the truth and the life.” “I am the door.” And “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says Jesus. He *is* the I am.

And so, going back to Genesis 15, verse 1, when the Lord says to Abram in the vision, “I am” I take this to be the Person of Christ, God the Son, the pre-incarnate Jesus, who speaks to Abram.

Furthermore, in John’s Gospel there are two stunning statements by Jesus that connect, deeply, to Genesis chapter 15. Listen to this, verse 56 of John 8, Jesus says to the Jews, **“⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.’ ⁵⁷ So the Jews said to [Jesus], ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’ ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”**

Here is what I hope you captured. In verse 57 the Jews ask, “have You seen Abraham?” Jesus answers, “yes” in both the previous verse (56) and the later verse (58). In John 8, verse 56 Jesus says Abraham saw Christ. “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.” And in verse 58 Jesus says Christ saw Abraham. “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” That is another “I am” statement from the Lord and what He is saying is that since I (Jesus) am God, since I am pre-existent, then I exist before Abraham and therefore I have the power to visit Abraham.

Abraham met Jesus Christ. And *when* did Abraham see Jesus? In the vision, in Genesis 15, when the pre-incarnate Christ Jesus appeared to and spoke to Abram! We must connect Genesis 15 – the whole chapter – to John’s Gospel chapter 8. Jesus claims that Abraham met Him. And when did the two meet? Answer: in the vision, in Genesis chapter 15. *Of course*, Jesus is telling the Jews *the truth*.

Alright. I am depending on the Spirit of God to make this clear to you. By His grace, I am doing my best to demonstrate that the Person of the Godhead who appeared to Abram in this vision, described for us in all of Genesis chapter 15, is God the Son. Jesus *is* the Word and Jesus *is* the I am. Now, continue to follow me closely. This is new, fresh on a Friday: you want further proof that Abraham hears from Jesus? Listen to what the Lord said, **“Do not fear, Abram.”** That was Genesis 15, verse 1 again. In the vision the first words out of the mouth of the Lord are: “Do not fear, Abram.”

Oh! That sounds *just like Jesus*. Doesn’t it? If you read Jesus, then you know it does. If you take notes, prepare to jot down some Scripture references and give these a read on the weekend. These are very practical because many of us are fearful about so many things. Frankly, there is a lot happening at a fast pace in today’s world and it is easy even for Christians to get anxious, worried; to be afraid. But here we have these precious words of comfort from God, “Do not fear.”

In Luke’s Gospel in chapter 2 this happens. Beginning in verse 8, **“There were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”** At the announcement of Jesus’ birth what does an angel say? “Do not be afraid.”

In Luke chapter 5 Jesus performs a miracle and provides an abundance of fish to the first disciples, after Simon Peter in particular doubted the Lord. After the great haul of fresh fish we read this beginning in verse 9. This Luke chapter 5, verses 9 and 10. **“For amazement had seized [Simon Peter] and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.”** Do you catch the word of the Lord, “Do not fear.”

Then, down in Luke chapter 8, a man named Jairus (an official in the synagogue) came to Jesus and pleaded that Jesus come to his home and heal his only daughter (about age 12) who was dying. Listen now to verses 49 and 50 of Luke chapter 8, **“⁴⁹ While [Jesus] was still speaking, someone came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, ‘Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher anymore.’ ⁵⁰ But when Jesus heard *this*, He answered him, ‘Do not be afraid *any longer*; only believe, and she will be made well.”** And, after Jesus told the man “Do not be afraid,” He supernaturally healed that little girl!

Read this in Luke 8 and marvel at these words of Christ, “Do not be afraid.” Doesn’t that sound very similar to what the Lord told Abram *all the way back* in Genesis 15?

Uh oh! I wish we had more time together again today! Because I could sit here for the next hour reading to you time and again from the Gospels and other sections of the New Testament when Jesus said, “Do not fear. Do not be afraid.” So, we will pick up here again on Monday, Lord willing. The word of the pre-incarnate Christ came to Abram in a vision, saying ‘Do not fear, Abram...” How awesome. Join us again on Monday because God Is!

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