

# **Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 4, Transmission and Translation, Genesis 1 Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

## **1. Abstract of Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 4, Transmission and Translation, Genesis 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This lecture by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt covers the Old Testament's transmission and translation history. **He explains the processes of inspiration, canonization, transmission, and translation**, highlighting potential errors introduced at each stage. **Different translation theories are compared and contrasted**, using examples from various Bible versions including the KJV, NASV, NIV, NLT, and The Message. **Dr. Hildebrandt also provides a brief overview of Old Testament history**, focusing on key periods and figures, and concludes by discussing the creation account in Genesis and the implications of different interpretations. Finally, he emphasizes the importance of focusing on the meaning of scripture rather than minor textual variations.

**2. 31 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 4 – Double  
click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the  
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link  
there (Old Testament → Introduction → Old Testament  
Literature).**



**Hildebrandt\_OTLit\_  
Session04.mp3**

### 3. Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 4, Transmission and Translation, Genesis 1

#### Old Testament Translation and Genesis Study Guide

#### Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What are the four processes involved in bringing the Word of God to people, as discussed in the lecture?
2. What is the difference between a "word-for-word" translation and a "meaning-for-meaning" translation?
3. What does the term "Ugaritic" refer to and why is it useful for Old Testament translation?
4. What is the "archaic language problem" and how does it affect translation of older texts?
5. Why did the King James Version translators struggle with the word translated as "silver dross" in Proverbs 26:23?
6. According to the lecture, what are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the King James Version (KJV)?
7. Why did the New International Version (NIV) translators add the word "crops" to their translation of Proverbs 26:23?
8. What is a "weltanschauung" and how can the concept of creation affect one's weltanschauung?
9. What is the key difference between "inspiration" and "illumination" as used in the context of this lecture?
10. What are the three main periods in the Old Testament that the lecture covers?

#### Answer Key

1. The four processes are inspiration, canonization, transmission, and translation. Inspiration is God speaking to prophets; canonization is the collection of authoritative books; transmission is the copying of the texts; and translation is the rendering of the text from one language to another.

2. A "word-for-word" translation attempts to directly map each word from the original language to a word in the target language. A "meaning-for-meaning" translation attempts to convey the original meaning of the text using natural language in the target language.
3. Ugaritic is an ancient Semitic language closely related to Hebrew. It was discovered in 1948; texts in this language are helpful in understanding the context and meaning of words in the Hebrew Bible, especially when the word is used only once in the text.
4. The "archaic language problem" refers to the changes in language over time, such that words or phrases can become obsolete or have different meanings. This affects translation because older terms might not carry the intended meaning for a modern audience.
5. The word "silver dross" is used only once in the Bible, making its meaning difficult to determine from the context of Hebrew. The King James translators had difficulty determining the meaning and relied on differing explanations from Jewish scholars.
6. The KJV has the advantages of beauty and traditional usage, but the archaic language can be challenging for modern readers. Additionally, the translators lacked information that is available today, making some translations inaccurate.
7. The NIV translators added the word "crops" because the term "gathers" is not clear enough in modern English; it was necessary to clarify that it meant "gathers crops" within an agricultural context.
8. A "weltanschauung" is a German word that refers to a person's worldview, or way of seeing the world. The idea of creation has a major effect on weltanschauung because it influences how one views their purpose and relationship to God.
9. "Inspiration" refers to God's perfect communication to a prophet, resulting in a perfect, flawless text. "Illumination" refers to the Holy Spirit helping an individual to understand the meaning of Scripture, which is subject to the fallibility of the human interpreter.
10. The three main periods covered in the lecture are the primeval period, the patriarchal period, and the period of the kings and prophets. The lecture further divides this last period into the united and divided monarchies, the exile, and the rebuilding of the second temple.

## Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of understanding the historical processes of inspiration, canonization, transmission, and translation when interpreting the Old Testament. How does each process contribute to the Bible we have today?
2. Analyze the different translation theories discussed in the lecture (word-for-word literal, modified literal, dynamic equivalence, and paraphrase). What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach? Use specific examples from the lecture to support your answer.
3. Considering the example of Proverbs 26:23, explain how recent historical and linguistic discoveries have influenced the translation of the Old Testament. Why is it important for translators to be aware of such discoveries?
4. How do the historical events of the Old Testament, such as the Exodus, the United Monarchy, and the Babylonian Exile, shape the message and content of the Old Testament? Give examples.
5. Discuss how the lecture's emphasis on human error in the process of transmission and translation can affect one's faith. Is it still possible to have confidence in God's word? Why or why not?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Inspiration:** The process by which God communicated His Word to the prophets, resulting in the original, inerrant texts.
- **Canonization:** The process by which the authoritative books of the Bible were collected and sanctioned as sacred scripture.
- **Transmission:** The process of copying biblical texts from one generation to the next, during which scribal errors can occur.
- **Translation:** The process of rendering a text from one language (e.g., Hebrew, Greek) into another language (e.g., English).
- **Word-for-Word Literal Translation:** A translation theory that attempts to match each word in the original language with a corresponding word in the target language.

- **Dynamic Equivalence Translation:** A translation theory that focuses on conveying the meaning of the original text using natural language in the target language, rather than a strict word-for-word approach.
- **Paraphrase Translation:** A translation theory that focuses on communicating the broad ideas of the text using contemporary language.
- **Ugaritic:** An ancient Semitic language closely related to Hebrew, discovered in 1948, which has helped provide insight into the meanings of Hebrew words.
- **Archaic Language Problem:** The challenge in translating older texts due to the evolution of languages, where words or phrases have changed meanings or become obsolete over time.
- **Scribes:** Individuals who were responsible for copying biblical texts by hand, often making mistakes.
- **Weltanschauung:** A German word meaning "worldview," referring to a person's overall perception and understanding of the world.
- **Illumination:** The work of the Holy Spirit in helping believers understand the meaning and application of Scripture.
- **Primeval History:** The early history of the world as described in the Old Testament, typically referring to Genesis 1-11.
- **Patriarchs:** The founding fathers of the nation of Israel, including Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- **Exodus:** The event of the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt, led by Moses.
- **United Monarchy:** The period when the tribes of Israel were united under a single king, notably Saul, David, and Solomon.
- **Divided Monarchy:** The period when the kingdom of Israel split into two separate kingdoms: the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.
- **Prophets:** Individuals who were chosen by God to speak his message to the people of Israel, often calling them to repentance.
- **Babylonian Exile:** The period when the people of Judah were forcibly taken to Babylon as captives, following the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC.
- **First Temple:** The Temple in Jerusalem built by Solomon.

- **Second Temple:** The Temple in Jerusalem rebuilt after the Babylonian exile.

## 4. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document based on the provided lecture transcript from Dr. Ted Hildebrandt:

### Briefing Document: Dr. Ted Hildebrandt's Lecture on Translation and Genesis 1

#### Overview

This lecture by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt focuses on the processes involved in understanding the Old Testament, specifically emphasizing translation and the opening verses of Genesis chapter 1. Dr. Hildebrandt outlines the journey from divine inspiration to the text we have today, discussing key steps like canonization, transmission, and translation. A significant portion of the lecture is dedicated to different theories of translation, exploring the challenges and nuances of moving between languages, using examples from Proverbs and other biblical passages. Finally, he provides a brief historical overview of the Old Testament leading up to Genesis 1:1-2 and introduces some of the key themes and figures.

#### Key Themes and Ideas

1. **The Journey of the Word of God:** The lecture emphasizes a series of processes from God to the reader. These processes include:
  - **Inspiration:** God speaks to prophets, who then record the message. Hildebrandt states, "God inspires the prophets. So God speaks to the prophets and we call it inspiration." He considers this process 100% accurate.
  - **Canonization:** The collection and sanctioning of authoritative books. This process occurred over a thousand years as the Jewish people collected and placed sacred texts in sacred places.
  - **Transmission:** The copying of books from one generation to the next. Hildebrandt stresses that scribes, being human, made mistakes, noting, "Yes, scribes make mistakes, and do they make mistakes because they are evil? No, they make mistakes because they are human."
  - **Translation:** The process of moving the meaning of the text from one language to another. He points out, "Do different versions and per-versions translate things differently? Do they have different theories of how they do translation?"
1. **Translation Theories:** Dr. Hildebrandt explores various theories of translation, outlining the strengths and weaknesses of each.

- **Word-for-Word Literal:** Translating each word directly, one for one. This approach is limited, as languages do not align perfectly (e.g., "car" in English can refer to a car, toy car or train car). He says "Do any languages match up word-for-word?" and then answers, "No, they don't line up that way".
- **Modified Literal:** Primarily word-for-word, but with adjustments when the literal approach fails to make sense.
- **Dynamic Equivalence (Meaning-for-Meaning):** Focusing on translating the meaning rather than the exact words, capturing the intent of the original text, but often moving away from literal word translations. An example is his explanation of the Hebrew word "hesed" and its various English translations, such as "love," "steadfast love," "loyal love," etc. He says, "What dynamic equivalence does it translates what?--meaning-for-meaning. Is that very different than word-for-word?"
- **Paraphrase:** An approach to translating where the translator renders the message into their own words, often for clarity and better communication in modern language. The Message is given as an example of this.

#### 1. Examples of Translation Issues:

- **Proverbs 26:23:** The King James Version translates a word as "silver dross," which, due to a lack of context (only used once in the Bible) was not well understood at the time. Dr. Hildebrandt explains that the discovery of Ugaritic texts revealed that the word actually refers to "glaze" used on pottery. He notes, "This word 'silver dross' is only used one time in the Bible. What's the problem with that? Meaning is determined by what? What determines meaning? I've said it about fifty times at least. What determines the meaning of a word? Context."
- **2 Corinthians 8:1:** The phrase "We do you to wit" in the KJV, an archaic usage of "to wit," illustrates the need for modern language. Hildebrandt rephrases it as "I want you to think about the grace of God."



- **Proverbs 10:5:** The King James "He that gathereth in the summer is a wise son" is given and compared to the NASV, NIV, and The Message translations, demonstrating the different translation approaches. The NIV added "crops" in for clarification. The Message paraphrased as "Make hay while the sun shines, that's smart. Going fishing during the harvest, that's stupid." He states, "While I respect Peterson, he's a genius, the problem with one person translating is, is it possible that it can be flat, flat, flat, genius, flat, flat, flat, genius. Do you know what I'm saying?"
- **The use of "child" instead of "son":** Hildebrandt notes his frustration with a translation of "son" as "child" when it was clearly meant to be an older child in the context of the passage. He says "'Listen my son to your father's instruction.' Doesn't that sound very different than 'listen my child to your father's instruction'?"

#### 1. **Scribal Errors and Translation Mistakes:**

- Dr. Hildebrandt emphasizes that scribes made mistakes during the transmission of the text. "Did the scribes make errors? Yes, they did." and further states, "It's not whether you agree with me or disagree with me. I can give you a Greek Bible and it will list the problems down at the bottom, in the footnotes."
- He points out that translators also make errors due to their own human limitations. He acknowledges, "Translators make mistakes," and then points out that he himself was a translator on the NLT.
- Despite these errors, Dr. Hildebrandt stresses that no major doctrine is affected by these scribal or translation errors. He says, "Is any major doctrine affected by all the scribal errors? Is any major doctrine really affected? The answer is: 'No.'"

#### 1. **Illumination vs. Inspiration:**

- Hildebrandt distinguishes between divine inspiration (given to the original prophets) and illumination (the Holy Spirit helping readers understand the text). He notes "In other words, illumination is different than inspiration." He also notes that illumination is a flawed process as it is interpreted by humans and can be different from person to person, "Have you ever had one pastor tell you one thing and the other tell you something else. You get two different messages. So what I'm saying is you've got to be careful with illumination because it comes through a human being."

### 1. **God's Use of Flawed Processes:**

- Hildebrandt argues that God used flawed processes (scribes making mistakes, translators not being perfect) to accomplish his purposes. He suggests that God may have allowed the originals to be lost so that people would not worship the book, but worship him.
- He concludes that "God used flawed processes. His initial process inspiration there's no problem with. Providence did not preserve it perfectly."
- He finds this comforting, stating that if God can use flawed processes, he can also use flawed people. "If God used flawed processes to accomplish his purposes, then can God use me, a flawed person, to accomplish his purposes too. Yes."

### 1. **Importance of Focus on Meaning:**

- Dr. Hildebrandt states, "Plurality I think the point is not to focus on the jots and tittles, but focus on the meaning of Scripture, and I guess that's my point. Don't focus on the jots and tittles so much, the little points, focus on the meaning of Scripture and what it means for your life."
- He emphasizes the importance of focusing on the meaning of Scripture and its impact on one's life, rather than getting caught up in minor textual discrepancies.

### 1. **Historical Overview of the Old Testament:**

- He provides a brief overview of Old Testament history, which he divides into nine turning points: Creation, Patriarchs, Exodus, Settlement of Canaan, United Monarchy, Divided Monarchy, Exile, Return from Exile, and then the Second Temple.
- Key dates that he asks students to remember include Abraham's date of 2000 BC and David's date of 1000 BC.
- He also emphasizes the role of prophets in challenging the kings of Israel and Judah. He states that the message of the prophets can be summarized in one word: "repent."
- He discusses the division of the kingdom, the exile of Israel to Assyria (722 BC), and the exile of Judah to Babylon (586 BC), and their subsequent returns.

## 1. Creation and Evolution:

- He notes the debate between creationism and evolution in the Christian church. He states, "Even, by the way, do we even have a debate here at Gordon College in terms of how much and how you scale the evolutionary processes into or out of some these discussions."
- He raises the question of whether God could have used evolution to accomplish his purposes, noting that there is no evolutionary process discussed in the Bible. He then says, "Those were developed in the 19th and 20th centuries. Yes, it's possible that God told them more things than what we know now."
- Hildebrandt also clarifies that the Bible does not state the age of the earth, which is often misunderstood in various debates about the nature of creation. He notes "Does the Bible tell you how old the Earth is? Is there any verse in all of the Bible that tells you that? Zero, it doesn't occur. Do we know on the basis of the Bible how old the earth is? We don't know that."

## 1. Genesis 1:1 and 1:2:

- He sets up that the next time they will discuss the relationship between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2: "In the beginning God created the" what?—"heavens and the earth. And the earth was" what?—"formless and empty and darkness was over the face of the deep." He states, "What is the relationship of Genesis 1:1 with Genesis 1:2? We'll look at three different ways of handling that and then the implications for dinosaurs, Satan, and Big Foot, we'll cover that."

## Key Quotes

- "God inspires the prophets. So God speaks to the prophets and we call it inspiration."
- "Yes, scribes make mistakes, and do they make mistakes because they are evil? No, they make mistakes because they are human."
- "Do different versions and per-versions translate things differently? Do they have different theories of how they do translation?"
- "This word 'silver dross' is only used one time in the Bible. What's the problem with that? Meaning is determined by what? What determines meaning? I've said it about fifty times at least. What determines the meaning of a word? Context."
- "Do any languages matchup word-for-word? No, they don't lineup that way."

- "What dynamic equivalence does is it translates what?--meaning-for-meaning. Is that very different than word-for-word?"
- "Did the scribes make errors? Yes, they did."
- "It's not whether you agree with me or disagree with me. I can give you a Greek Bible and it will list the problems down at the bottom, in the footnotes."
- "Translators make mistakes."
- "Is any major doctrine affected by all the scribal errors? Is any major doctrine really affected? The answer is: "No.""
- "In other words, illumination is different than inspiration."
- "Have you ever had one pastor tell you one thing and the other tell you something else. You get two different messages. So what I'm saying is you've got to be careful with illumination because it comes through a human being."
- "God used flawed processes. His initial process inspiration there's no problem with. Providence did not preserve it perfectly."
- "If God used flawed processes to accomplish his purposes, then can God use me, a flawed person, to accomplish his purposes too. Yes."
- "Plurality I think the point is not to focus on the jots and tittles, but focus on the meaning of Scripture, and I guess that's my point. Don't focus on the jots and tittles so much, the little points, focus on the meaning of Scripture and what it means for your life."
- "Even, by the way, do we even have a debate here at Gordon College in terms of how much and how you scale the evolutionary processes into or out of some these discussions."
- "Those were developed in the 19th and 20th centuries. Yes, it's possible that God told them more things than what we know now."
- "Does the Bible tell you how old the Earth is? Is there any verse in all of the Bible that tells you that? Zero, it doesn't occur. Do we know on the basis of the Bible how old the earth is? We don't know that."
- "What is the relationship of Genesis 1:1 with Genesis 1:2? We'll look at three different ways of handling that and then the implications for dinosaurs, Satan, and Big Foot, we'll cover that."

## **Conclusion**

Dr. Hildebrandt's lecture offers a comprehensive overview of the processes involved in getting the Old Testament to modern readers. He highlights the importance of understanding translation theories and the limitations of human involvement in the transmission process, while emphasizing the reliability of the Bible's message, urging students to focus on meaning rather than just the "jots and tittles". The lecture concludes with an introduction to the historical context and to the next lecture focusing on Genesis 1:1-2.

This briefing document should provide a solid foundation for understanding the key concepts covered in the lecture transcript.

## 5. FAQs on Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 4, Transmission and Translation, Genesis 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Okay, here's an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source material:

### FAQ

1. **What are the key stages in the transmission of the biblical text from God to us, and what are the implications of each stage?**
2. The key stages are inspiration, canonization, transmission, and translation. *Inspiration* refers to God speaking to the prophets, and is considered 100% accurate and flawless. *Canonization* is the process of collecting and sanctioning authoritative books, which took over a thousand years for the Old Testament. *Transmission* involves the copying of texts from one generation to the next, during which scribes made errors due to human fallibility, not malice. Finally, *Translation* involves moving the text from one language to another and is also subject to error and interpretation based on different theories of translation. The important implication is that while the original inspiration is perfect, subsequent stages are affected by human limitations, leading to variations in the texts we have today. However, no major doctrine is affected by these human errors.
3. **What are some of the challenges in translating the Bible from its original languages, and how do different theories of translation address these?**
4. Challenges include finding equivalent words across different languages, especially when a word has multiple meanings or is used only once (making context difficult). Additionally, language evolves over time, rendering older translations archaic. There are several theories of translation: *Word-for-word literal translation* attempts to find direct equivalents for each word, but it doesn't always work because languages don't map perfectly. *Modified literal translation* tries to be as literal as possible but deviates when necessary. *Dynamic equivalence* focuses on translating meaning rather than individual words, but this may lead to a loss of specific nuances and original sounds. Each approach has its strengths and weaknesses, and translators often need to balance them.

5. **How do scribal errors affect the reliability of the biblical text, and why did God allow such errors to occur?**
6. Scribes made mistakes when copying manuscripts due to human fallibility and were not inherently malicious. These errors resulted in variations among different manuscripts. God allowed these errors to occur because he didn't want people to worship a book but rather God himself. Additionally, these variants highlight the process of transmission and help us understand how we got the Bible. However, no major doctrine is impacted by these errors, and we have better manuscript evidence today than ever before.
7. **What is the significance of the discovery of the Ugaritic language for understanding the Old Testament?**
8. Ugaritic is a sister language to Hebrew, and its discovery has been very helpful in understanding some Hebrew words whose meanings were unclear. For instance, the word for "dross" in Proverbs 26:23 is a unique word and didn't make sense in the King James translation. The word is found in Ugaritic, and it means "glaze". Thus the Proverb actually is comparing a wicked heart with a glazed clay pot. Ugaritic gives us more linguistic context.
9. **How does the concept of "illumination of the Holy Spirit" differ from "inspiration," and how might this affect interpretation?**
10. Inspiration refers to the process of God speaking to the prophets, resulting in the original, perfect Word of God. Illumination refers to the Holy Spirit helping believers understand the meaning of the Bible today. Illumination is imperfect since it is mediated through humans and affected by our biases and contexts, so different interpretations of scripture can result. Thus, while inspiration is flawless, illumination is flawed. We still need to seek the illumination of the Holy Spirit, but should be aware of human fallibility.

**11. What are the key periods and turning points in Old Testament history as presented in the lecture, and why are these important?**

12. The lecture outlines nine major turning points: Primeval history (before Abraham), the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), the Exodus from Egypt, the settlement of Canaan under Joshua and Judges, the United Monarchy (Saul, David, Solomon), the Divided Monarchy (Israel and Judah), exile to Assyria and Babylon, the rebuilding of the Second Temple, and the prophets (who consistently called the kings to repentance). These periods highlight God's redemptive plan, the establishment of Israel, the rise and fall of the kingdoms, the exile, and the return to the land.

**13. What does the lecture teach about the age of the Earth, and how does it relate to the creation account in Genesis?**

14. The Bible does not explicitly state the age of the earth. There is no verse that says how old the earth is. Genesis does present a creation account, but the lecture mentions there is debate within the Christian Church about how to understand the account. The lecture notes that different viewpoints can affect one's worldview and beliefs about humanity's purpose.

**15. Why should we have confidence in God's word given the human errors involved in transmission and translation?**

16. Despite the flawed processes of scribal transmission and human translation, believers can have confidence in God's word because the original inspiration of scripture is considered perfect and without error. God uses flawed processes to accomplish His purposes and, as a result, did not preserve the original manuscripts. Despite the human errors and differences in manuscripts, God's truth is still conveyed, and these differences don't affect any major doctrines. We also have the benefit of various translations, better manuscript evidence, and better translation theories than previous generations had. Rather than focus on the "jots and tittles", we should be focusing on the meaning of scripture.