

Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 8, Sons of God, Map, Abraham 3 & 3 Kids 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 8, Sons of God, Map, Abraham 3 & 3 Kids, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Ted Hildebrandt's Old Testament lecture discusses interpretations of Genesis 6's "sons of God" and "daughters of men," proposing three views: Sethite, kingship, and angel. The lecture then **focuses on Abraham**, exploring the geography of Mesopotamia relevant to his life, and analyzing **three key events** in Abraham's life: severing family ties, establishing a covenant with God, and undergoing circumcision. Finally, the lecture addresses **critical objections** to the biblical narrative concerning camels, Hittites, and the anachronistic mention of Dan, offering counterarguments based on archaeological discoveries and textual interpretation. **The lecture concludes** with a consideration of Abraham's three "sons," emphasizing cultural context and distinguishing cultural practices from timeless moral principles.

2. 24 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 8 – 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_
Session08.mp3**

3. Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 8, Sons of God, Map, Abraham 3 & 3 Kids

Old Testament History, Literature, and Theology Study Guide

Quiz

1. What are the three views presented regarding the "sons of God" and "daughters of men" in Genesis 6? Briefly explain each view.
2. What is the significance of the Hebrew word *hamas* in Genesis 6, and how is it relevant to the actions of the "sons of God" in that context?
3. Explain the difference between etymology and context when determining the meaning of a word, and how does this relate to the word "Nephilim?"
4. According to the lecture, how can the idea of God experiencing grief and pain be understood, despite the traditional view of God as omnipotent and impassible?
5. Why is Noah's curse specifically directed at Canaan and not Ham, and how has this passage been misinterpreted in the past?
6. What does it mean for an individual to be part of a "corporate personality" in ancient cultures, and how does this differ from a modern Western concept of individualism?
7. What is significant about the title "God's friend" in relation to Abraham, and what implications does this have for understanding Abraham's character and faith?
8. Describe the geography of the ancient Near East, specifically the locations of Ur, Haran, Mari, Nuzu, and the importance of each of these places in relation to Abraham and ancient texts.
9. Explain the significance of the shift from syllabic writing to alphabetic writing in the ancient world, and how did this change learning and literacy in that time?
10. What are the three "cuts" in Abraham's life, and how do these "cuts" reflect Abraham's faithfulness to God in the covenant process?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The three views are: the "kingship view" which suggests the sons of God were powerful kings who took multiple wives; the "angel view", positing that they were fallen angels who intermarried with human women; and the third view describes

the "Sons of God" as descendants of Seth. Each view attempts to explain the origins of the Nephilim and the corruption described in Genesis 6.

2. *Hamas* means "violence" in Hebrew, and its presence in Genesis 6 alongside the "sons of God" taking wives suggests that violence and oppression were part of the problem, alongside intermarriage with the daughters of men, indicating a societal breakdown.
3. Etymology is the study of a word's historical origin, while context refers to how a word is used within its specific text. While etymology can offer clues, context determines a word's meaning. In the case of "Nephilim," its etymology means "fallen ones," but this is not definitive of what the term refers to, in the text, because the context doesn't tell us exactly what group of people are being discussed.
4. The lecture proposes that God, as the creator of a good world, experiences grief and pain when things go wrong because of his deep love for humanity. God is the most grieving being, and he will wipe away all the tears, which implies there were tears. This perspective suggests that God's emotional response makes him vulnerable.
5. Noah curses Canaan, not Ham, as punishment for Ham's actions. This curse has been misinterpreted in the past to justify the enslavement of Africans, but the curse actually relates to the Canaanites and the future conflict between the Canaanites and the Israelites.
6. In ancient cultures, identity was often tied to one's group (family, clan, or tribe) rather than individual autonomy. This means that actions of a group member can affect the whole group, and collective responsibility was a common concept in this ancient Near Eastern context.
7. Abraham is called "God's friend" (James 2:23), which signifies a deep personal relationship with God. This implies that his faith is not only obedient but also intimate, setting a high standard for what it means to follow God.
8. Ur of the Chaldees (likely a northern Ur) was Abraham's origin, and Haran was his intermediate stop. Mari and Nuzu were important cities with ancient tablets that provide insight into the social customs of Abraham's time. These locations help place the stories in a geographical and historical context.
9. Syllabic writing, which assigns a symbol to each syllable, required extensive training to read and write, limiting literacy to a small elite. Alphabetic writing,

which assigns a symbol to each sound, was easier to learn, democratizing learning and allowing common people to read.

10. The three cuts are: leaving his family in Ur, establishing a covenant with God, and circumcision. These cuts reflect Abraham's progressive obedience to God's calling, demonstrating his radical faith and dedication to God's promises.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the three different views on the "sons of God" and "daughters of men" in Genesis 6. Why is this an important passage, and what does it reveal about human corruption and divine judgment?
2. Compare and contrast the concept of "corporate personality" with the Western emphasis on individualism. How does this difference affect the interpretation of Old Testament stories and characters, and what are some modern examples?
3. Analyze the importance of geography in understanding the Old Testament narratives. How do places like Ur, Haran, Mari, Nuzu, Ebla, and Ugarit contribute to our interpretation of the stories, and why are these places and the tablets found in those places important to the text?
4. Explore the significance of the three "cuts" in Abraham's life. How do these cuts demonstrate Abraham's faith, and how do they relate to the broader themes of covenant and God's promises in the Old Testament?
5. Evaluate the importance of the shift from syllabic to alphabetic writing. How did this invention democratize learning, and how has this technology continued to influence history, especially through the printing press and the digital revolution?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Hamas:** Hebrew word meaning "violence," used in Genesis 6 to describe the state of the world before the flood.
- **Nephilim:** A group of people mentioned in Genesis 6 and are described in the text as "fallen ones."
- **Etymology:** The study of the origin of words and the way in which their meanings have changed throughout history.
- **Context:** The circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of language, how a word or phrase is used within its specific text.

- **Angel of the Lord:** A term used in the Old Testament that often refers to God himself, or a divine messenger representing God.
- **Corporate Personality:** The idea that in some ancient cultures, identity and responsibility were often tied to one's group or family rather than an individual.
- **Ur of the Chaldees:** A city in ancient Mesopotamia from which Abraham and his family originated; there is a debate whether this is a northern or a southern Ur.
- **Haran:** An important city where Abraham and his family resided before their journey to Canaan.
- **Mari:** An ancient city on the Euphrates River known for its archaeological discoveries, including thousands of tablets that give insight into the ancient Near Eastern world.
- **Nuzu:** An ancient city that has provided many tablets that give insight to customs and culture of the ancient Near East.
- **Ugarit:** An ancient city known for its tablets written in the Ugaritic language which sheds light on the Canaanite religion of the Old Testament era.
- **Ebla:** An ancient city that has provided thousands of tablets written in the Sumerian language.
- **Syllabic Language:** A language in which each symbol represents a syllable.
- **Alphabetic Language:** A language in which each symbol represents a sound.
- **Lex Talionis:** The law of retaliation, often expressed as "an eye for an eye," which is present in the Old Testament.
- **Covenant:** A solemn agreement, often between God and his people, involving promises and obligations.
- **Circumcision:** A ritual practice involving the cutting of the foreskin, used as a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham and his descendants.
- **Anachronism:** Something that is placed in the wrong time period. For example, calling Dan "Dan," before that name existed in the text.
- **Boghazkoy:** The capital of the Hittite empire where many tablets were found revealing the language and the empire to historians.

4. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided lecture transcript by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt:

Briefing Document: Analysis of Dr. Hildebrandt's Lecture on Genesis

I. Introduction

- This lecture covers Genesis chapters 6 through 17, focusing on the events leading up to Abraham's calling. It includes discussions on the "sons of God," the flood, the curse on Ham, the importance of geographical context, and the life of Abraham.
- Dr. Hildebrandt emphasizes the importance of context when interpreting scripture, stating "What determines meaning? Context determines meaning."

II. Genesis 6: Sons of God and Daughters of Men

- **Three interpretations of the "sons of God": Kings/Nobles View:** The "sons of God" were powerful rulers who took multiple wives, creating harems. These kings were considered "sons of the gods," a common title in ancient Mesopotamia, and their actions led to violence.
- **Angel View:** This is Dr. Hildebrandt's current view. The "sons of God" were fallen angels who married human women. This view is supported by Job 1:6, where the "sons of God" appear before God, and the idea that angels can appear in human form (e.g., Abraham's visitors). He acknowledges Matthew 22:30's teaching that angels do not marry, but suggests these were fallen angels, not the heavenly ones.
- **Line of Seth View:** Not discussed at length, though the idea is mentioned.
- **Violence (Hamas):** Alongside intermarriage, the text mentions violence, "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and full of violence (hamas)." The Hebrew word *hamas* means "violence," connecting to the name of the Palestinian group Hamas which, according to Dr. Hildebrandt, is a violent group based on the root of the word.

- **Nephilim:** Dr. Hildebrandt acknowledges their presence but states, “Nobody knows who these Nephilim are.” He emphasizes that when meaning is unclear, one should first look to context and then to etymology. He defines their root as *naphal* meaning "to fall" but cautions against relying too heavily on etymology, as meaning changes over time.

III. God's Grief and Tears in Heaven

- Genesis 6:6 describes God's grief over the wickedness of humanity: “And the LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth and his heart was filled with pain.”
- Dr. Hildebrandt posits that God is the most grieving being because he created things right and they went wrong. He uses the analogy of a parent's grief over their children's choices.
- He argues that God's eventual wiping away of tears (Revelation 21:4) assumes there were tears in heaven.
- He emphasizes that God's grief should not be taken out of context as God simply regretting creating man; there were specific reasons behind God's grief (i.e. intermarriage and violence).

IV. The Curse of Noah on Ham

- Noah gets drunk after leaving the ark, and Ham sees his nakedness and tells his brothers. Shem and Japheth cover their father.
- Noah curses Canaan, Ham's son, “Cursed be Canaan; the lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers.”
- Dr. Hildebrandt debunks the idea that this curse is a justification for the enslavement of Africans. He clarifies, "So Canaan is being cursed here, it's not the descendants of Ham in Africa. This has nothing to do with the Cushites and the Africans and the slavery there. It has everything to do with the Canaanites."
- The curse is related to the concept of *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation. It will play out in the future conflict between the Israelites and the Canaanites, who inhabited the promised land.
- Dr. Hildebrandt asks, “do some cultures feel that very very strongly, the notion of shame and honor?” He gives examples of a father in Detroit who murdered his daughter and the leaders of Japan who were considering suicide due to shame.

V. Individual and Corporate Personality

- This section explores the concept of collective identity, where an individual's actions can affect their group. Dr. Hildebrandt states, "Their identity is wrapped up in their family group."
- He uses examples of innocent Afghan villagers being impacted by Taliban actions, and car accidents where a drunk driver walks away but the innocent passengers are killed.
- He notes how families pass down traits and tendencies, referencing the saying "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree."

VI. Abraham: God's Friend

- Abraham is called "God's friend" based on James 2:23 "And Abraham was called God's friend."
- Abraham is not presented as perfect, but is chosen by God for his faith and obedience.

VII. Geography of the Ancient Near East

- **Importance:** The geography is crucial for understanding the historical context of the Bible.
- **Key Locations:****Mesopotamia:** The land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.
- **Ur:** Abraham's birthplace. Dr. Hildebrandt suggests there may have been two places called Ur, a northern and a southern one.
- **Haran:** A city in Mesopotamia that Abraham traveled to.
- **Mari:** A key city located where it was possible to cross the desert. The location of many important tablets from the time of Zimri Lin and Hammurabi.
- **Nuzu:** The location of many tablets that clarify customs of the time.
- **Ebla:** A city from which tablets have been discovered.
- **Ugarit:** An important city that provided knowledge about Baal and Asherah from many tablets.
- **Egypt:** Described as "the gift of the Nile."
- **Dan:** The northernmost part of Israel.

- **Tablets:** Dr. Hildebrandt discusses tablets from various locations, showcasing Cuneiform and Ugaritic. These tablets are helpful in understanding the time period of the Old Testament.
- **Writing:** He emphasizes the importance of the alphabet, which democratized reading. He also discusses how the printing press and the digital age have further democratized learning.

VIII. Abraham's Three Cuts

- **Cut 1: Family Ties:** God calls Abraham to leave his family and go to a new land (Genesis 12:1). This was a significant sacrifice for him. "Leave your country, your people, and your father's household and go to a land that I will show you."
- **Cut 2: Cutting a Covenant:** In Genesis 15, God and Abraham make a covenant through the cutting of animals. God makes a promise to Abraham (land, seed and blessing), and binds himself to this covenant. Dr. Hildebrandt explains the practice of blood covenants.
- **Cut 3: Circumcision:** In Genesis 17, circumcision becomes a sign of the covenant with Abraham and his descendants. It seals God's covenant in his flesh. He connects circumcision with infant baptism in the Presbyterian tradition, "our babies are part of the covenant community of believers in Christ."

IX. Other points

- **Melchizedek:** A mysterious king and priest who appears in Genesis 14, some interpret him as a pre-incarnate Christ, but Dr. Hildebrandt believes he is a type of Christ.
- **Hittites:** An empire that was discovered in modern-day Turkey. This discovery helped prove another historical detail in the bible.
- **Anachronism in Genesis 14:14:** Dr. Hildebrandt identifies a potential issue that the city of Dan was not named Dan at the time of Abraham, but was updated in the text to reflect common knowledge, comparing the change to "Liberty Tree Mall" being updated in a modern text to be called "Danvers" instead of "Salem Village."
- **Abraham's "Three" Children:** He explains that in that culture, when Sarah was barren, it was acceptable to take a maid to have children for her. However, this caused jealousy between Hagar and Sarah. Dr. Hildebrandt asks the listener, "Is Abraham cheating on Sarah?" and answers, "No. They're thinking about it like

this. My wife and I can't have kids." Ishmael was born in this practice, but Isaac is the son of the covenant.

X. Conclusion

- The lecture provides a deep dive into the early chapters of Genesis, focusing on historical and cultural context, as well as important theological concepts.
- Dr. Hildebrandt encourages critical thinking and careful interpretation of scripture, warning against taking things out of context.
- He also emphasizes the importance of using modern technology to further the glory of God.

This document captures the main points from Dr. Hildebrandt's lecture. It's clear he aims to provide both historical understanding and theological reflection, encouraging a nuanced and thoughtful approach to the Bible.

5. FAQs on Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 8, Sons of God, Map, Abraham 3 & 3 Kids, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Who are the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men" in Genesis 6, and what is the significance of their interactions?** The identity of the "sons of God" is debated. One view suggests they were powerful kings or nobles who took multiple wives, establishing harems, which was considered problematic. Another view posits that these were fallen angels who intermarried with human women. The intermarriage was linked with violence ("hamas"), indicating a corruption of the created order. This section of Genesis serves as a backdrop to God's grief and the eventual flood.
2. **What is the meaning of the word "hamas" and how is it used in Genesis 6?** "Hamas" is the Hebrew word for violence. In Genesis 6, it describes the pervasive corruption and violence that was occurring alongside the intermarriage of the sons of God and the daughters of men. It's also noteworthy that the modern political group Hamas shares the same root word emphasizing a group focused on violence.
3. **What is the "angel view" interpretation of Genesis 6, and how does it relate to other passages in the Bible?** The "angel view" suggests that the "sons of God" were fallen angels who engaged in relationships with human women. This interpretation is supported by references like Job 1:6 where the "sons of God" appear before God, and the idea that angels neither marry nor are given in marriage in Matthew 23. Some consider these to be fallen angels and not the heavenly host. Additionally, this relates to the idea of the "Angel of the Lord" in the Old Testament, where an angelic being is actually God acting as his own messenger as in the case of the burning bush.

4. **Why does the text in Genesis 6 say that God was grieved that he had made man, and how does this relate to the concept of God's emotions?** The text indicates that God was deeply grieved by the wickedness and corruption of mankind. This points towards God's emotional capacity and the pain he experiences when his creation goes astray. It also highlights God's vulnerability through his love, similar to the way a parent might feel grief when their child makes bad choices. This grief is contrasted with the idea that, in Revelation, God will eventually wipe away all tears, implying that there are indeed tears, even in heaven, due to sin and suffering.
5. **What is the significance of Noah's curse on Canaan, and how has it been misinterpreted?** After Noah becomes drunk, Ham sees his nakedness and tells his brothers. Upon waking, Noah curses Canaan (Ham's son), not Ham directly, declaring that Canaan would be a "servant of servants" to his brothers. This curse is not meant to be a blanket curse on all of Ham's descendants, who settle in Africa. It has been misinterpreted historically to justify the enslavement of Africans. The curse is a prophetic statement concerning the Canaanites, who settled in the land of Canaan and were later in conflict with the Israelites. This act is viewed as a *lex talionis*, or a retaliation, based upon how Ham shamed Noah.
6. **What does it mean that Abraham was called "God's friend", and what are the three "cuts" in Abraham's life that are highlighted in the lecture?** Abraham being called "God's friend" signifies a unique relationship and favor from God. The three "cuts" in Abraham's life that were made were: 1) Leaving his family and home in Ur to follow God's call, a significant act of separation from his culture and origins. 2) The covenant ratification in Genesis 15 involving cut animals, which symbolized both the seriousness of the agreement and God's commitment to the promises made to Abraham. 3) The act of circumcision in Genesis 17, which served as a physical sign of this covenant relationship, to be repeated by future generations.
7. **Why are the ancient cities of Mari, Nuzu, and Ugarit important for understanding the Old Testament?** These ancient cities are archaeologically significant because of the tablets that were discovered there which greatly increased our understanding of the ancient Near East. Mari and Nuzu give historical context to Abraham's time period, providing insights into ancient customs, practices, and laws (such as the Hammurabi code) that were present. Ugarit revealed ancient religious practices and myths, including the cult of Baal, that were present in the time period of the Judges.

8. **What is an anachronism and how does the mention of Dan in Genesis 14:14 present an anachronism?** An anachronism is something that is out of its proper historical time, such as something from a later period appearing in an earlier one. In Genesis 14:14, the text refers to Abraham chasing enemies as far as Dan, but the city of Dan was not named Dan until the time of Joshua and Judges, 800 years later. This suggests that the name of the city was updated by a later editor (perhaps Joshua or someone after him) to make the location understandable to a later audience, similar to changing "Salem Village" to "Danvers" for a modern audience.