

# **Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 9, Abraham, Sodom, Akedah, Jacob 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 9, Abraham, Sodom, Akedah, Jacob, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This is a lecture by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt on the book of Genesis, focusing on the stories of Abraham, including his deception about Sarah, the angelic visit and laws of hospitality, his bargaining with God over Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Akedah (binding of Isaac). The lecture also examines the stories of Lot and his hospitality, and the complexities of the relationship between Jacob and Esau, exploring themes of predestination versus free will, sibling rivalry, and deception. Dr. Hildebrandt incorporates personal anecdotes and discusses interpretations of biblical passages regarding homosexuality. Finally, he analyzes different stages of faith development using the Akedah as a case study, highlighting the concept of "spatial doubling."

**2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 9 – 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\_  
Session09.mp3**

### 3. Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 9, Abraham, Sodom, Akedah, Jacob

#### Old Testament Lecture 9 Study Guide: Abraham, Sodom, Isaac, and Jacob

#### Quiz

**Directions:** Answer each question in 2-3 complete sentences.

1. What is the "sister" ruse that Abraham repeatedly uses, and what cultural explanation does Hildebrandt offer for it?
2. Explain the significance of the laws of hospitality in the desert as discussed in relation to Abraham's story.
3. How does Abraham's bartering with God over Sodom demonstrate his relationship with God?
4. What does "anthropomorphic" mean, and how does it relate to descriptions of God in the Old Testament?
5. What does "anthropopathic" mean, and how does it relate to descriptions of God in the Old Testament?
6. What was the sin of Sodom, and how does the speaker interpret the event in the context of hospitality and homosexuality?
7. Describe the test God gives Abraham in the story of the Akedah (the binding of Isaac).
8. What does Hildebrandt mean by "spatial doubling" and how does it relate to the Akedah?
9. Explain the significance of Jacob's name, and how does it relate to the story of his birth?
10. How does the lecture describe Jacob and Esau's relationship, and what is the conflict over the birthright and the blessing?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. Abraham repeatedly claims Sarah is his sister to protect himself, fearing he will be killed for her beauty. Hildebrandt suggests this practice may stem from a cultural custom where men would adopt women as "sisters" to protect them and receive a dowry upon their marriage, and in this case, the kings wanted her for

themselves. The kings interpreted this ruse to mean that Abraham was looking to marry her off, and this is why they desired her for the harem.

2. The laws of hospitality in the desert are very important for survival. They require people to offer food and shelter to travelers, even if they are enemies. This custom demonstrates the importance of community in harsh conditions, and that it is part of the culture to protect those who come into one's space.
3. Abraham's bartering with God reveals an interactive and personal relationship where Abraham feels comfortable questioning God's plans. He displays his concern for Lot, and a belief in God's justice by trying to ensure the innocent are spared, but he also believes that God will still follow through.
4. "Anthropomorphic" means portraying God in human terms, such as describing God's hands or eyes. The Old Testament uses anthropomorphic language to help humans understand God in relatable ways, even if God does not have a physical form.
5. "Anthropopathic" means attributing human emotions to God, such as grief or anger. This literary device is used to convey God's feelings and reactions to human actions.
6. The sin of Sodom is portrayed as an egregious breach of hospitality, exemplified by the townspeople's desire to rape Lot's guests. The speaker does note the homosexual rape in the passage, but then he transitions into how Christians should respond to gay people in general.
7. God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac as a burnt offering. This is a test of Abraham's faith and obedience to God, after God had promised that he would have many descendants through Isaac.
8. "Spatial doubling" is when events happen in the same physical space at different times, creating a sense of connection. In the Akedah, this occurs when Abraham is commanded to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah, which is later the site of Jesus' crucifixion.
9. Jacob's name means "heel-grabber" or "deceiver," reflecting his birth where he grasped Esau's heel and also foretelling his deceptive nature in later events. His name carries both a physical reference and a symbolic prophecy that connects to the stories to come.

10. Jacob and Esau's relationship is marked by conflict from birth, with Jacob being favored and Esau, the elder, losing his birthright and blessing. Jacob tricks Esau out of both in an effort to secure the promised legacy, which causes lasting animosity.

## Essay Questions

**Directions:** Answer each question with a well-organized, multi-paragraph essay.

1. Analyze the ways in which cultural customs, particularly laws of hospitality and familial expectations, shape the events and relationships in the narrative of Abraham and Lot. How do these customs challenge modern understandings of morality and ethics?
2. Explore the concept of faith as it is portrayed through Abraham's interactions with God in the lecture. Discuss the different stages of faith development according to Hildebrandt (easy faith, faith of resignation, and pure faith) and consider their implications for contemporary religious experience.
3. Discuss the use of anthropomorphic and anthropopathic language in the Old Testament, and consider the ways in which it affects interpretations of the nature and actions of God. Can humans have an effect on God? Explain why or why not.
4. Analyze the complex relationship between predestination and free will using the story of Jacob and Esau. How do the speaker's arguments support or challenge traditional understandings of divine sovereignty and human responsibility?
5. Compare and contrast the characters of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as presented in the lecture. What can be gleaned from their stories about relationships and about the nature of their belief in God?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Akedah:** The "binding" of Isaac, referring to the biblical story in which God commands Abraham to sacrifice his son.
- **Anthropomorphic:** Portraying God in human terms, often using physical attributes like hands or eyes.
- **Anthropopathic:** Describing God using human emotions, such as grief or anger.
- **Bartering:** Exchanging goods or services without using money. In the lecture, it is used to describe how the cultures of the time exchanged goods and services, including Abraham's exchange with God over the fate of Sodom and Jacob's exchange with Esau over the birthright.
- **Birthright:** The inheritance rights of the firstborn son in ancient Near Eastern cultures, including family leadership and a double portion of the inheritance.
- **Covenant:** A formal agreement between God and his people, often involving promises and obligations.
- **Euphemism:** A mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt, such as saying "know" in the place of "have sex with."
- **Hospitality:** The practice of welcoming and providing for guests, often with specific cultural rules of conduct and expectations.
- **Predestination:** The doctrine that God has foreordained all that will happen, especially with regard to the salvation of some and not others.
- **Spatial doubling:** When events happen in the same physical space at different times, creating a sense of connection between them.
- **Strife:** A struggle or conflict. In the lecture, the name "Israel" is linked to the concept of struggling with God.

## 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: Dr. Ted Hildebrandt's Lecture 9 on Genesis - Abraham, Sodom, and Jacob**

**Overview:** This lecture, the ninth in a series on Old Testament history, literature, and theology, focuses on key narratives within Genesis, specifically concerning Abraham, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the early life of Jacob. Dr. Hildebrandt explores themes of divine promise, human deception, the nature of God's interaction with humanity, and the complexities of faith. The lecture also includes personal anecdotes from Dr. Hildebrandt to illustrate certain concepts and themes.

#### **I. Abraham and Deception**

- **The "Sister" Deception:** Abraham twice presents his wife, Sarah, as his sister to protect himself from foreign kings who might want to take her (first Pharaoh, then Abimelech). Dr. Hildebrandt argues that these actions were lies, despite some interpretations claiming Sarah was a half-sister and therefore it was not a falsehood. He connects it to Isaac doing the same thing later.
- Quote: "I'm going to say Abraham was lying."
- **Cultural Context:** Hildebrandt suggests the practice might be linked to a Near Eastern custom where men would "adopt" women as "sisters" to become their protectors and collect dowries upon their marriage.
- Quote: "What I think happened was she is a woman by herself. And what happened was that a man would see a woman by herself and come along and adopt her as a 'sister.' That means he would come along and be the protector brother and what would happen was when she gets married, the protector brother gets the dowry."
- **Divine Protection:** God intervenes to protect Sarah, ensuring that Isaac, the child of promise, is born from her union with Abraham.
- Quote: "So in both instances God protects her from that so it would be known that it's Abraham's child."

## II. Angelic Visit and Laws of Hospitality

- **Hospitality:** Abraham's welcoming of three strangers highlights the importance of desert hospitality. Dr. Hildebrandt uses a personal experience with Bedouins to illustrate how this custom, which mandates providing for guests even if they are enemies for three days, was a necessity in such harsh environments.
- Quote: "In the desert, people die from no water, but even if he is your mortal enemy, you have to feed and house your mortal enemy for three days."
- **Hospitality in Afghanistan:** Dr. Hildebrandt connects this ancient custom with modern practices, highlighting the story of the Lone Survivor and how he was protected under similar codes of hospitality. He draws a parallel with ancient customs that are remarkably still in use.
- Quote: "My point is, are the laws in Afghanistan still functioning as in Bible times? I mean it's really kind of amazing because you go back thousands of years and they're still doing things very similar, in terms of these Laws of Hospitality."
- **Announcement of Isaac's Birth:** After showing hospitality, the visitors (who are revealed to be angelic or divine beings) reveal to Abraham that Sarah will bear a son, Isaac.

## III. Sodom and Gomorrah: Bartering with God & Homosexual Rape

- **Intercession:** Abraham intercedes with God for Sodom and Gomorrah, which are destined for destruction due to their wickedness. He questions whether God will destroy the righteous with the wicked.
- **Bartering with God:** Abraham barter with God, negotiating the number of righteous people required to spare the city, demonstrating an interaction with God. Dr. Hildebrandt claims that this is an actual interaction and not just a human portrayal of God.
- Quote: "I think what you have here is a real human being interacting with these divine beings. So I don't think foreknowledge gets you out of this."
- **Anthropomorphic and Anthropopathic Language:** Dr. Hildebrandt explains and gives examples of anthropomorphic language (portraying God in human terms) and anthropopathic language (attributing human emotions to God).
- Quote: "Anthropomorphic means you are portraying God in human terms... Anthropopathic language means to give to God feelings such as anger."

- **Human Impact on God:** Dr. Hildebrandt emphasizes the idea that humans can influence God, citing the violence in Genesis 6 that grieved God. He suggests God allows himself to be impacted by actions on earth.
- Quote: "So what I'm suggesting is that human beings can have an impact on God and that's pretty incredible to me that God allows himself to be influenced by what happens on the earth."
- **The Sin of Sodom:** Hildebrandt delves into the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, analyzing the meaning of the term "know" in Genesis 19:5 in relation to Lot offering his daughters to the crowd to spare his guests. While acknowledging the "gay interpretation" focused on hospitality as the primary sin, Hildebrandt leans towards the idea that the men of Sodom intended to commit homosexual rape and that Lot was obligated to protect his guests, even at the cost of his daughters.
- **Biblical Condemnation of Homosexuality:** Dr. Hildebrandt makes a case for the biblical condemnation of homosexual acts, quoting Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.
- Quote: "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman because that is an abomination."
- **Love vs. Hate:** Dr. Hildebrandt shares personal stories of his friendship with a lesbian, "Susie," and his brother-in-law who struggles with alcoholism, to illustrate his view that it is possible to love individuals while hating sinful behaviors.
- Quote: "Is it possible to love someone who's a gay person and hate the stuff that's in their life?"
- **Importance of Balance:** He urges a balanced approach of loving people while condemning evil, referencing Romans 12:9: "love what is good, hate what is evil."
- Quote: "What I'm saying is: learn how to hate what is evil. But is it possible to hate what is evil and still love the people who are watching their lives get destroyed?"

#### IV. The Akedah (Binding of Isaac)

- **God as Tester:** God shifts his role with Abraham from Promiser to Tester. God asks Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, his only son whom he loves.

- Quote: “Now in chapter 22 God’s changes his role. God is no longer the promiser here. Now God takes a new role: he tests Abraham.”
- **Lack of Explicit Emotion:** The narrative does not explicitly describe Abraham’s emotions, which Hildebrandt sees as an invitation for the reader to supply those emotions and fully engage with the story.
- Quote: “it’s inviting you to ask, “Who is to supply the feelings of Abraham in this narrative?” The reader.”
- **Isaac's Question:** Isaac asks his father where the lamb for the sacrifice is, and Abraham replies that God will provide it, foreshadowing Christ.
- Quote: “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering.”
- **Kierkegaard and Faith:** Dr. Hildebrandt mentions Soren Kierkegaard's book *Fear and Trembling*, which uses the Akedah to explore the nature of faith and suggests that this passage has immense depth.
- **Personal Connection:** Hildebrandt uses a story about his son’s service in Afghanistan to connect with the emotional weight of this story, recognizing a father's willingness to take on the pain that would be inflicted on his son.

#### V. Stages of Faith Development:

- **Easy Faith:** Accepting Jesus for personal gain (forgiveness, eternal life, etc.).
- Quote: “In other words, you accept Jesus for what you’re going to get and you’re going to get all of these wonderful things. I want to call that ‘easy faith.’”
- **Faith of Resignation:** Giving up something for God, devaluing the thing given up.
- Quote: “The “faith of resignation” allows me to deprecate or to diminish, to downplay, and to think of that thing that I could have had and diminish it and say, “I didn’t want it anyway, it was no good.”
- **Pure Faith:** Giving up “the precious” (the most important thing) without diminishing its value, trusting God completely.
- Quote: “This is ‘pure faith’ where God asks you for what I want to call “the precious.” Sorry for the overtones with this but God says, “I want ‘the precious.’”
- **God as Friend:** Through the Akedah, Abraham enters into a deeper understanding of God's love and sacrifice, becoming a “friend of God” and better understanding his heart.

- Quote: "Abraham then is God's friend. Abraham knows how God feels. Therefore he's his friend because God allowed him into this sacred space."
- **Spatial Doubling:** Dr. Hildebrandt introduces the idea of 'spatial doubling', as a kind of déjà-vu, suggesting a meaningful coincidence in the placement of events, particularly when Abraham goes to Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem where Jesus is later sacrificed.
- Quote: "God takes him up to Mount Moriah in Jerusalem and that is absolutely incredible. So I think he sets the place and says, "Abraham I want you to be in the very place my son would be sacrificed 2000 years later. So go where it's going to happen in this place."

## VI. Jacob: Strife and Deception

- **Strife and Deception:** Jacob's life is marked by strife and deception, which reflect the meaning of his two names: "Jacob" (deceiver) and "Israel" (he who struggles with God).
- Quote: "Strife and deceptions are major themes in Jacob's life."
- **Predestination vs. Free Will:** God chooses Jacob before birth, which raises questions about predestination versus free will. While God chose Jacob, both Jacob and Esau had choices of their own and were responsible for their actions.
- **Covenantal Terminology:** The "love/hate" language used in reference to God choosing Jacob is interpreted as covenantal terminology. "To love" means "to choose" and "to hate" means "not to choose".
- Quote: "'To love' someone meant 'to choose' them; 'to hate' meant 'not to choose them.'"
- **Names and Their Meanings:** Jacob's name (sounds like "heel-grabber" and "deceiver") and Esau's name ("Big Red") are explored in relation to their births and later lives. Esau's descendants are known as Edomites who often conflict with Jews.
- Quote: "Jacob's name has the sound of, it's not etymologically connected necessarily, but the sound is that his name means 'heel.' "Jacob" also sounds like "deceiver."

- **Bartering the Birthright:** Jacob tricks his brother, Esau, out of his birthright in exchange for stew. While the exchange was legal according to the Nuzu laws, it does not excuse Jacob's deceit.
- Quote: "So basically Jacob barter for the birthright...By the way, was that legitimate to barter for the birthright? And the answer is: yes...Just because it was legal, does that mean it was nice?"
- **Jacob Deceives Isaac:** Jacob, encouraged by Rebekah, deceives his blind father, Isaac, to receive the blessing intended for Esau, using goat skin to trick him into believing he is Esau.

### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Hildebrandt's lecture provides a detailed exploration of these key Genesis narratives. He invites the audience to wrestle with difficult theological concepts, to recognize the complexity of human choices and how they intersect with God's plans, and to grapple with how these ancient stories continue to speak to us today. The lecture provides valuable insights into the nature of faith, the importance of hospitality and the impact of human actions on our relationship with God and others. He uses personal stories and anecdotes to illustrate his teachings, adding to the relatability of his lesson.

## 5. FAQs on Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 9, Abraham, Sodom, Akedah, Jacob, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Why does Abraham repeatedly claim Sarah is his sister in different encounters with foreign rulers?** Abraham's claim that Sarah was his sister was likely a deceptive tactic to protect himself. In that culture, a woman without a male protector was vulnerable. By presenting Sarah as his sister, Abraham was potentially trying to invoke a "brother-sister" adoption custom, where the "brother" would receive a dowry when she married. The king would take her into his harem, thinking he could pay off the "brother," thereby shielding Abraham from potential harm. Despite the deception, God intervened to protect Sarah, as she was essential to the lineage of Isaac, the child of promise.
2. **What are the "Laws of Hospitality" and why were they so important in ancient desert cultures?** The "Laws of Hospitality" in the desert cultures demanded that travelers, even enemies, be provided with shelter, food, and water for three days. This practice was essential for survival in the harsh desert environment. Hardship creates community, and in a place where people could easily die from exposure, it was paramount to care for all who came to your door. This code provided a sense of order and safety in the unforgiving landscape. After three days, however, normal rules of engagement could resume.
3. **How did Abraham interact with God regarding the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah?** Abraham engaged in a form of bartering with God, seeking to reduce the number of righteous individuals needed to save the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah from destruction. Abraham, concerned for his nephew Lot, negotiated with God from 50 righteous people down to 10, highlighting the idea that even a small number of righteous people can affect God's decision. This exchange demonstrated an interactive relationship between God and a human, where human concerns have a real impact, and the possibility of influencing God's actions.

4. **What do the terms "anthropomorphic" and "anthropopathic" mean in the context of describing God?**

- **Anthropomorphic** refers to describing God in human terms, such as the 'eyes of the Lord' or 'the hand of the Lord'. This usage does not imply that God literally has human body parts.
- **Anthropopathic** refers to describing God as having human emotions such as grief and anger. These terms suggest that God allows himself to be impacted by human behavior and choices, both positively and negatively.

1. **In the Akedah (the binding of Isaac), what roles do God and Abraham assume, and what is its significance?** In the Akedah, God shifts from the role of the "Promiser" to the role of the "Tester." Abraham, on the other hand, goes from receiving the blessings of God to being asked to give back his greatest blessing, his son Isaac. This is not a story about whether God is cruel but about a display of the depth of Abraham's faith, which is about pure faith beyond mere resignation and what the sacrifice of his only son meant to him. It explores what God was asking of Abraham and, by the same token, how God would sacrifice his own son, and what that means about God's love.

2. **What are the three stages of faith development as outlined by the lecturer?** The lecturer outlines three stages of faith:

- **Easy faith:** Accepting Jesus for personal benefit like eternal life and other blessings.
- **Faith of resignation:** Downplaying or devaluing what God requires or takes away, saying, "I didn't want that anyway."
- **Pure faith:** When God asks for something precious that cannot be devalued, like Abraham's son Isaac, where trust is paramount, and one must have faith that extends beyond resignation to what must be given up, because we can't get over the precious loss.

1. **How do the lives of Jacob and Esau represent themes of strife and deception, and what does this illustrate about God's plan?** Jacob's name is linked to "deceiver" and "heel-grabber" reflecting his character, as he deceives his brother out of his birthright. Esau, called "Big Red" (Edom) based on his appearance at birth, and is more concerned with the needs of the present, such as his immediate hunger. These characters' lives reflect a larger theme of strife and deception in the lineage of Abraham. God works through this flawed human behavior and it is all a part of his plan, but ultimately it was up to each man how he would respond to these events and circumstances.
2. **How does the lecture address the issue of homosexuality in the Bible, specifically in the context of Sodom and Gomorrah?** The lecturer acknowledges that some interpret the story of Sodom and Gomorrah as primarily about inhospitality, rather than a condemnation of homosexuality, and gives a basic overview of that take. However, the lecturer argues that it's hard to not view it as homosexual rape and that the Bible consistently presents homosexual acts as sinful (citing Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:26-27, and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10) and as comparable to other sins like adultery, and male prostitution, and idolatry. However, this does not mean that Christians should hate homosexuals, but instead they should hate the sin. Love the people, hate the sin, and treat gay individuals with love and compassion, just like any other struggling individual.