

## Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, OT History, Lit. and Theology, Lecture 8

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This is Dr. Ted Hildebrandt in the eighth lecture of his Old Testament History, Literature and Theology class. This lecture will begin with the sons of God and the daughters of men in Genesis chapter 6 and proceed to Abraham, God's friend, the geography of Mesopotamia as well as three cuts in Abraham's life and his three alleged "children."

### A. Quiz Preview [0:00-2:00]

All right class, let's get started. We've got a lot to cover today. I have got to catch up a couple slides from the other class. For this week you guys are working on what? Leviticus, select chapters in Leviticus. There are two articles--one that you're responsible just to read, the other one you're responsible for content on the dietary laws. I think there's also some reading in *Our Father Abraham* as well and then a couple memory verses. So I think that's pretty much it. Yes, there will be a content question on the *Our Father Abraham* as well as the article. I think that's about all we have there.

All right, let's open with a word of prayer and then we'll jump into the Genesis 6 passage and try to get through that again.

*Father we thank you for this day. We thank you for the privilege we have in this place of being able to examine your word, to explore ideas that others have thought and to wonder about your greatness and goodness and your great mercy that's been expressed to humankind as well as the great moments of wrath that have come on us. I pray that you will help us to learn to love you in spirit and in truth. Thank you for your Word. I pray that you might help us to reflect it, even this day, in our lives. In Christ's name, Amen.*

### B. Genesis 6: Sons of God and daughters of men [2:01-3:27]

Let's pick up the story. We're working on Genesis; we have finally gotten out of Genesis 1 to 3. So today we're going to move into chapter 6 and we're going to try to

move through things rather quickly to get up into Abraham's life. So we were going to talk about the flood and what's going on there with the sons of God and the daughters of men.

In Genesis chapter 6, let me just read this story there. It says "When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, 'My spirit will not contend with mortals forever, for he is mortal, his days will be 120 years.'" So what you get is a shrinking down of human longevity. Remember they were all living to be 900 and something? Now God says their days are going to be shrunk down to 120 years. "The Nephilim were on the earth in those days--and also afterward--when the sons of God went into the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown." So the question is: the flood comes as a result of the sons of God marrying the daughters of men, why does God get so upset with that? Who were these sons of God? So we want to work through some of the questions. Who were the sons of God and why did God get so angry? Actually, the flood is the result of this.

### **C. Sethite View** [3:28-5:06]

The first his suggestion is that the sons of God were the worshippers of God and the daughters of men were ones that didn't know God. So basically it would be an interfaith marriage. Actually what you have here is what's called "the Sethite view."

The Sethite view is that the sons of Seth were the godly line. The sons of Cain were the ungodly line (daughters of men). There was this inter-marriage between the sons of Seth and the sons of Cain. By the way, in other parts of Scripture does God get upset over intermarriage between believers and nonbelievers? Do you remember in the New Testament it says, "do not be unequally yoked with non-believers"? Jewish people marrying--do you remember Solomon marrying other wives from other cultures and that led his heart astray to worship other gods? So the Sethite view plays off of that and says that basically the line of Seth was Abel's replacement and so Seth becomes the godly line

after Abel was killed. Cain's descendants intermarry and that intermarriage is the problem. So this is called the Sethite view. There's some support for that as seems to fit naturally in the context. My problem is the term "sons of God" is never used to exclusively identify Abel's descendants.

#### **D. Kingship View** [5:07-8:07]

There's a second suggestion that's pretty interesting and it's this: that the sons of God were the kings and nobles. That the kings were called... and by the way in ancient Mesopotamia did the kings call themselves the "sons of the gods"? That title was used because the King was considered a son of the god. So what it would be then is that these kings, these people of acquired power, these "sons of God," the kings, took women which would be basically developing their harem. In other words, they took women into their harem and they multiplied wives. Do harems present a big problem both in the ancient world and in the Bible? So this would be the kings establishing a harem taking women into this harem--multiple wives and that becomes a problem.

Now I skipped something. It's very interesting to me and it's something that I don't think most people pick up that it was not just these sons of God marrying daughters of men but there's another word that is involved here. This is over in verse 11 of chapter 6. It says "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and full of violence (*hamas*)." So apparently there was violence mixed in here too, that was also part of the problem. Now what is the Hebrew word for violence? The Hebrew word for violence is *hamas*. Now some of you may be used to humus. Does anybody like humus? I don't like the American humus. I like the real Arab humus. It's what you get in Jerusalem right across from the fourth station of the cross on the Via Dolorosa. The guy has the best humus in the world. It's like eating a Philadelphia cheese steak outside of Philly. It just doesn't work. Do you know what I'm saying? In Philadelphia you get the best. Humus and *hamas* are not the same thing. *Hamas* means "violence." By the way, have you ever heard of the Palestinian group called *Hamas*? Do you understand? There's a whole group in Israel today named Hamas. Do you understand what the root of this word means? It means "violence." What are these people bent on doing to Israel? Violence. So this *Hamas*

group, even their name means “violence.” So everybody says, “Well, *Hamas* is really a peaceful organization.” They’re really just trying to play the Palestinian rights card. What’s their name? *Hamas* does that tell you anything? I mean it should tell you a lot but most people don’t know that.

So anyway, these kings were involved in this and some people think then that these kings were involved in violence, oppressing the people that were below them and so this *hamas* was happening. That’s the second view. Is the kingship idea is going to be developed in the Bible? Did the kings have multiple wives in a bad way later on with Solomon’s 700 wives, and 300 concubines. So there’s some grounds for that.

#### **E. Angel View** [8:08-19:05]

This last view is called the angel view. I should say actually at various points of my life I’ve held each one of these views so I don’t feel real dogmatic about this. The view that I hold currently is the “angel view” possibility. Largely it’s because in Job chapter 1 verse 6 it talks about the “sons of God” coming before God. God says to Satan “You’ve been out considering the world, have you considered my servant Job? Satan says ‘Oh, yeah, Job is just good to you because you’re good to him. If you take away what he’s got he’ll curse you to your face.’” So that was God in the heavenly council addressing them as “the sons of God.” The sons of God were angels that came before God. Something interesting over in Hebrews chapter 13.2 it also says regarding angels and human beings. Hebrews chapter 13 verse 2, sorry for jumping over to the New Testament, but it says, “Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.” So can angels take on human form? Apparently sometimes people don’t know it and it’s possible they were angels.

Now I’m going to tell a story here so how I’m going to walk over here and this is going to be a story. So once upon a time, I was in Warsaw Indiana and I was driving down Route 15 and there was a guy hitchhiking. Now question: do people hitchhike much today anymore? Not much anymore. Did people in my generation? I hitchhiked home from college and all over. So this guy was hitchhiking and I thought “Man, I

haven't seen a person hitchhiking in a long time." It looked like he was obviously Hispanic and he needed a ride. He was probably in his mid-30's. So I thought I drove my car past him once and I thought you know I should pick him up. Now question do I have a problem here because my wife always freaks out when I do this kind of thing. But I said, "Hey, it's just me and I've got at home my wife and kids but in the car it's just me. So I was coming back the other way and so I thought I'm going to pick him up. So I picked the guy up. As we rode he told me he got drunk or something, he was in his bed, in his house, and the police came in and yanked him out of his bed and hauled him down to jail. He actually got tried for drunkenness. He claimed he wasn't drinking and driving because he didn't have a car, obviously. "They came in my house and got me and pulled me down here." So he tells me his tale of woe. So we drive and I thought you know it would only take me 5 minutes to drive him to the other route, Route 13, and then he'd have a clear shot to Syracuse which was where he was going. So I drove the guy over there and this is no joke and pretty weird. The guy gets out of the car and so we talked and I really enjoyed the conversation. It was great. I got to help the guy out and he gets out of the car. As the guy gets out of the car, this is the honest truth, I still don't know what to make of this. He looks at me and he says "You know some people have entertained angels unaware." He shut the door and walked down the road. I swear I didn't make this up. This actually happened. Now I don't know whether he was just a Spanish guy who had a little too much to drink and it was still in him or something else. As I was sitting there I was like where in the world did that come from—a Spanish guy quoting the Bible to me. It was freaky. But anyways, I'm not saying he was an angel because I couldn't see his halo but all I'm saying is--you never know.

Now let me go back and take this in a different direction. Is it possible then you're down in Boston and there's a homeless person sitting on the side of the street. Is it possible? Hebrews 13 is about showing hospitality. You never know. So what I'm saying is Christian people should we feel compassion, give hospitality and those types of things toward homeless people. You never know that might be an angel sitting there and you just never know (Mat. 25.35ff.). So all I'm saying is be hospitable and generous.

Hebrews seems to indicate that there are angels who take on human form. By the way, you guys already know this. Remember when Abraham and those three guys came up and Sarah made dinner for them? Were those angels who came up and apparently you have got to figure that out. But wait a minute Matthew 23 it says that angels neither marry nor are given in marriage. Well, what I'm suggesting is that these are fallen angels. These are not angels in heaven, but these are fallen angels and that this is a possibility.

Now that's a different question. He's talking about the Yahweh (Malach) the Angel of the Lord in the burning bush (Exod. 3). It calls him the "Angel of the Lord." Now let me just work with the angel concept a little bit. The word "angel" simply means "messenger." So sometimes in the book of Revelation it talks about "the angel" of the church at Colossae or Laodicea and that simply means "the messenger" that went to that church. So it doesn't necessarily mean an angel flying with wings kind of thing. It may simply mean "messenger." The term "angel" can mean "messenger."

Now it's also the Angel of the Lord. So it could be the Lord's representative was in the bush. But the problem is that title "the Angel of the Lord" is used and when you're in the bush, when the bush goes to speak, what does he say? The bush is asked "What is your name?" Let me just do the bush thing. So Moses goes up to the burning bush and he asks "what is your name?" and do you remember just before that the bush said, "takeoff your shoes because you're standing on holy ground." Now does a normal angel come up and say "Hey, take off your shoes. You're on holy ground." Do you worship an angel? By the way in Daniel and the book of Revelation a guy drops down and starts worshipping this awesome angel. The guy's bowing down and the first thing the angel says is: "Get up. "Don't do it. I'm not God." The burning bush--take off your shoes. Is this a regular run-of-the-mill angel? And then when he asks him his name he says, "I am that I am." An angel doesn't respond like that. That's God's name. So in the burning bush we have Jehovah/Yahweh, God in the bush. It's the angel of the Lord. A lot of people would suggest that it was Jesus Christ, the supreme incarnate Christ in the bush. He is God and he speaks and he is Yahweh. So he says my name is Jehovah and my name is "I am that I am." The Angel of the Lord title seems to be a title that designates also God

himself and when the Angel of the Lord speaks, a lot of times, it's God. So you have got to work with that. Sorry for going off on that tangent.

Where are we here? Angels don't marry. So what we're saying is these angels are fallen angels. There's also a passage in Corinthians that talks about angels looking down on women. It gets pretty weird. So, I'm just saying it may have been angels. There may have been angels intermarrying with women. By the way, would that explain then the fact that they were having children that were giants and strong. So that's a possibility.

Now, which one of these answers is right. Like I said, I've held, at various points in my life, each of these positions. So I don't know which one's exactly right. I'm with this angel view now. But there are certain things you just can't know.

Now people say what about the Nephilim? Nobody knows who these Nephilim are. That's back before the flood. So we don't know who these Nephilim are. When you don't know something, by the way, this is an important hermeneutical principle: when you don't know something in Scripture, how do you tell the meaning of a word? Context. I'm going to say this a hundred times in this course. What determines meaning? Context determines meaning. But you look at the "Nephilim" term and you say. We know that the Nephilim are a group of people so we know that from context. Do we know what group of people it is? The answer is, "No." So when you don't know from context where do you go next? A lot of times you go to the etymology or the history or root of the word. So what's the etymology? What is the root, the historical meaning of that? To *naphal* means "to fall." So these are "the fallen ones." The Nephilim are the fallen ones. Can you see how that ties in to the fallen angel view?

What's the problem with depending on etymology for meaning? This is a classic example. So I go home to my wife and I say, I never call her honey but anyway, "Honey, you are 'cute' in the original sense of that word." Well, what's the problem with the word "cute"? The word "cute" in the original sense of the word meant "bow-legged." And so that's probably not a good thing to say to your wife because she'll probably think... anyway, you don't want to go there. When you say the word "cute," did you ever use it in the original sense? Do meanings change over time? Can you go back to the history of the

word and claim that its original meaning is what it means now? No, it doesn't, so you have got to be careful. By the way, if you're in English and you want to find the history of a word where do you go? For you guys the first place you go is the Internet. But after the Internet if you go to a real book, they have real books with real pages in them. There are two volumes about this thick it's called the OED, the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In the *Oxford English Dictionary* [OED] will it go on the word "cute" for two pages of cute until it gets back to the root meaning of the word in Anglo-Saxon or Latin or something like that. Then it will give you the original root. Does the history of a word, its etymology, determine its meaning? No, it doesn't. So you have got to be real careful about this. Be careful of those kinds of etymological arguments. Meaning in context is what determines meaning not the history of the word. So I don't put much stock in the Nephilim are "fallen ones" approach. I put a big question mark by that. I think it's just the only straw we've got so we just grab it.

#### **F. God's Grief and Tears in Heaven** [19:06-24:49]

Now this is interesting, in Genesis chapter 6 verse 6 it says this concerning God: "And the LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become and that every inclination of the thoughts in his heart was evil all the time. And the LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth and his heart was filled with pain." My question comes up: Is there grief or are there tears in heaven? I just like Eric Clapton so it's one of my favorites. Are there tears in heaven? The answer is: I think Clapton was right. Would you say God is pretty much in heaven? Yes. We're not there, he's there. Does he feel grief in heaven? The Bible states explicitly that God feels grief. What I want to suggest to you is there is grief in heaven. God himself, as it says in Scripture, feels grief and that he feels pain in heaven. So what I want to suggest to you is there is grief; there is pain in heaven.

Can God be broken hearted? What I would like to suggest to you, and I'm staying over here for this one, is who is the being in the universe that suffers the most? What I'm suggesting to you is that God is the most grieving being in the universe because he made things right and it got all messed up. He loves us and when pain and weird stuff happens



he grieves over that. So God's the most grieving being but you say, "but wait a minute but doesn't the book of Revelation at the end of the book of Revelation 22 state that God's going to wipe away all tears. At the end of the Bible when God wipes away all tears, what does that assume? That there were tears to be wiped away. So what I'm saying is God wipes away all tears assumes that there are tears in heaven. So Clapton is right. There are tears in heaven.

Now question: is there coming a day when those tears will be wiped away? Is that now? It's not now. As long as there's sin and corruption does God feel pain? Someday the world's going to be made new and those tears will be wiped away. What an interesting way to look at God here. Is God sorry over something he did? Does God have regrets? Do parents ever have regrets over their kids? I love my kids but there have been moments where I had regret. Can my kids make choices and I feel the pain as a parent of their choices? Can they make choices that hurt really badly? You better believe it. As a matter of fact, the more I love them the worse it gets. If I didn't give a rip about my kids, would I care? But the fact that I love my kids, does that make me vulnerable? You see what I'm saying? It is the fact that I love my kids that makes me vulnerable. Well, we better get out of there. One of my children made choices that really has been devastating. What I'm saying is if I didn't care, it wouldn't hurt.

God made man. So he's gone back and saying he's thinking back on the whole thing and he's feeling grieved with the whole situation. Let me back it out a little bit. He was grieved that he had made man. If they were still in the garden would he be grieving? No. So he is grieved why? There is this intermarriage, there's this violence, there's this stuff he describes in the chapter. So that's why he's grieving. It's over their wickedness, their evil. So then he takes a step back from that. He's thinking about why did I ever make man since all they're doing is corrupt. They're all totally corrupt and that's when he focuses on Noah.

What I'm saying is take it with what it says and you have to put that in context right. The context in Genesis 6 is this intermarriage and the violence that's happening. So I'm saying you can't take this verse out of context and just say it says, "God regrets

that he ever made mankind and so he's just bailing out on them totally." No, there was a reason why he felt that way and you need to explore the reason why? It's a really important point. You've got a verse and you can't yank it out of context. You have got to look at it in context. Why did God feel that way? It tells you in the context why he feels that way. So you have got to relate it to other verses. You just can't pull it out of context like that. So we're back to the main thesis: context determines meaning. You can't take things out of Scripture sometimes and then universalize them, you have got to understand the context in which they're given.

### **G. Can God change his mind?** [24:50-25:43]

Can God change his mind? Going back to what she was just raising. Can God change his mind? He makes man, can he change his mind? Are we going to see God change his mind? Actually you guys have read Exodus, did God change his mind in Exodus? Yes. Remember when they make the golden calf and he comes down to wipe them out. Moses prays and God changes his mind. He almost killed Moses and backs off on that in Numbers. So we ask what does it mean for God to change his mind? I don't want to develop the whole thing here but God made man and he has apparently regrets over that. What does that mean for God to have regrets? Again we're going to see this in later texts so I just want to drop it in at this point and say we're going to get to other texts that are much more explicit where we'll have more context and we can actually sort out what that means. But all I want you to do is just have you think about can God change his mind. What does that mean?

### **H. The Curse of Noah on Ham** [25:44-36:50]

In chapter 9, Noah comes out of the ark with all the animals two by two and seven of the clean ones. Why seven clean ones? Because he needs to sacrifice the clean ones afterwards. By the way did Genesis ever tell us about clean and unclean animals? No, when did we learn about clean and unclean animals? It's way over in Leviticus. Leviticus, which you guys are going over this week, tells us about clean and unclean. But did Noah know which were clean and unclean? So it is possible God created a whole bunch of guidelines that had not been recorded for us but Noah knew which was clean

and unclean.

So Noah comes out of the ark and what's the first thing he does? "Noah was a man of the soil and he proceeded to plant a vineyard and he drank some of its..." What? Wine. What's the problem when you've got a vineyard when you have no refrigeration? You better drink it quickly or is it going to turn. You take it, and you turn your grape juice into what? It's going to turn that way anyway. It's going to turn sour or you turn it into wine. So he plants a vineyard, and now he's been on a boat for about a year or something like that? He comes out, plants his vineyard, he drank some of its wine and he became drunk and lays uncovered inside of his tent. "And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside, but Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it across their shoulders. Then they walked backwards and covered their father's nakedness." Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father's nakedness. Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him and said "cursed be ..." and then "the lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers" and Noah goes off and curses.

What did Ham fail to do? Cover his dad. Now, by the way, is it a problem that a child sees his father. My son and I used to do Tae Kwon Do together. So now we'd go over there, did I hide from my son and say "Son, you have to leave here because I don't want you to see your father's nakedness"? So your father will never shower in front of you. Is that what this is talking about? No. So there seems to be something more than just that. So rather than covering his father like he should have, does he expose his father? Yes. He goes off to get his brothers. Now do his brothers do the right thing and walk backwards to cover their father's nakedness? This is a really hard thing in our culture, is pride and shame really big in certain cultures? And in certain cultures you've got this taboo that it is really wrong to shame your parents. Do some cultures feel that very very strongly, the notion of shame and honor?

By the way, do some cultures feel that very strongly? Now I'm talking about Detroit. Do you remember that? These two girls in the car in Detroit and their father was shamed by these two girls dating non-Muslims? The girls are in the car and the girl in the

backseat is on her cellphone and her father pulls out a gun and shoots his own daughter in the car. That was in Detroit, in America, and the girl in the backseat, she's screaming on the phone "Dad, dad" and she's screaming on a 911 call that her father just shot her sister. The father then turns the gun in the back, and you hear the gun go off then the cellphone drops silent. Did that happen in America, in Detroit? Now by the way, you guys are giving me a lot of blank stares. Do you guys not know about that? Now let me just say this. Did the media put that out there or did the media cover that up? It was covered up. Why? Because it was politically incorrect to say anything about the background; the obvious background of the Muslim father. This guy was so offended as a father that his girls had shamed him that he killed them. By the way, are there honor killings quite frequent in America? Will you ever hear about them in the media and the answer is: no. Now you guys must ask yourselves "I wonder why we never hear about this." Now there's some political agenda stuff there. This is political correctness gone amuck. Now question: in that culture that that father was in, is shame and honor a really important idea?

Do you guys remember that tsunami that had hit Japan? And do you remember some of the leaders they were worried that the leaders there were going to commit suicide because they were shamed because they didn't know that the tsunami was going to come in there and destroy that nuclear reactor? They were worried that some of the leaders in Japan were going to commit suicide. In that culture if you are shamed by not doing something like that the people can react strangely.

So what I'm saying is, in America, do we care about shame and honor? In our culture. Are we a no shame culture? In other cultures shame and honor are really really important. So what you have here is the shaming of the father, the exposing of the father.

Several years ago, I read Ugaritic literature. In Ugaritic literature, this is just north of Israel, in some of the Ugaritic tablets, it says that one of the duties, and it's listed out explicitly, that one of the duties of sons is to cover their father's nakedness. That was the duty of a son. The duty of the son is to cover their father's nakedness. So it would be like... your father gets drunk. Should the son drive the father home and take care of the

father, instead of exposing him? So I think that's what you've got here-- the shaming and dishonoring of the father.

So Noah then wakes up, finds out what his sons did, finds out what his other son had done, and so he then he curses his son and he says, "the lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers." Now Ham's descendants go where? If you follow the family tree do we have the genealogies of these kids? Ham's descendants become Cush. Cush's goes down into Ethiopia and so basically Ham's descendants go down into Africa. When Noah curses them he says, "The lowest of saves will he be to his brothers." Some people have argued that this is the curse on Africa and that this curse "the lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers" that Ham is cursed and that his descendants will be slaves. This is a curse on Africa and the African slaves. The Bible tells us that this is the curse of Noah. Therefore it legitimizes that in some sense. Have people used that argument? Yes, that argument has been used.

I misread the text but she caught me. Well, let me read what it actually says. "Noah gets up and says cursed be Ham?" He doesn't say that. He says "Cursed be Canaan." Canaan's descendants--this is real hard. Canaan's descendants settle where? In the land of Canaan. Where's the land of Canaan? That's the Promised Land, that's the land of Israel. Now Canaan's descendants become who? That's really tough again. When you don't know who they are just put a "ite" or "tite" on the end. Jebusite, Hittite, Gergashite. So it's what? So here it's Canaanite. The Canaanites settle in the promised land which would eventually be the land promised to Israel.

Do you see the point here? 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. Now, by the way, will the Canaanites and the Israelites butt heads? There's going to be battles later on between the Canaanites and the Israelites. So this foreshadows those battles with the Canaanites, not the enslavement of Africans.

Have you still got this thing? Ham is the son of Noah and exposes Noah's nakedness and defiled or shames his father. I think what you have here is *lex talionis*, the

law of retaliation. You'll see this later and we'll develop it more. This is the eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as you have done to me, so it will be done to you. So I think what Noah does here is he says, "As you, Ham, have shamed me and you are my son, so your son will shame you." So I think that's what he's doing by saying "Canaan" here. Now by the way is this conjecture? Yes. This is conjecture on my part. I'm trying to put it together why the Canaanites are cursed. But it seems to be this reciprocal thing as you have done to me, your son will do to you. Canaan is picked out I think because that's a foreshadowing of what Israel will do and so you get that foreshadowing already set up in the scriptures.

This gets pretty complicated so where did Ham's descendants settle? We said some of them went down to Africa but some of them were the Canaanites. Was the curse to enslave the Africans? No. This has nothing to do with that. Canaan is the one who's cursed here not Cush and Ham's other descendants. So who was actually cursed? Canaan.

### **I. Individual and corporate personality** [36:51-41:10]

Now this is the broader question and this one gets difficult as well. We're dealing with lots of cultural issues here and some these cultural issues get really hard. Especially when we live in America. Do we deal with lots of shame and honor in our culture? No. But in other cultures it's life and death as we've experienced in America even lately with some of the stuff that's gone on then hushed up. Is it right that the children suffer from the sins of the parents? I also want to think about it in terms of how does punishment happen? We are Americans, do we see ourselves as individuals? We see ourselves as individuals. Do you realize that in other cultures, they don't see themselves as individuals but they see themselves as part of a group? Their identity is wrapped up in their family group. By the way, will the Bible have certain family groups be judged as whole families? So you get this idea that this judgment falls on a whole group of people.

Now, even as Americans does this group thing happen even in America? For example, my son and I were discussing something like this and he came up with this. He said, suppose you guys were born in Afghanistan. Now question, you're not Taliban, you're just farming your little plot. You've got 2 acres of ground and you got a few sheep

and goats, mostly goats. You're poverty stricken, you've got a wife and couple of kids and all of a sudden you didn't do anything and all of a sudden there's this 6 foot 2, 200 pound marine guy busting in the door of your house and he goes through everything in your house. Did you do anything to deserve that? You didn't do anything to deserve that. What did you do? The only thing you did to deserve that was that you were an Afghani. You were an Afghan person. Does the Taliban do bad stuff and does that affect other people? Yes.

Let me put it in an American context. Don't do this. You're out driving in a car and it's one o' clock in the morning and one of your friends has had too much to drink and is driving. You're in the car and there are four kids in the car, and he's been drinking too much. When he gets in a wreck, who walks away? He does. Is it possible other people in the car get killed and he walks away? Does that bother me? You better believe it bothers me because in one case I knew the kid's name. He was a friend of mine. What I'm trying to say to you. Is it possible to be in a car and why is this person killed? Is it just the fact that he's in the car with somebody else who crashes the car. It wasn't any of their faults at all. They're the ones killed and he walks away. Do you see what I'm saying? So is it possible for somebody to make a decision and it affects other people in the group? Yes. That's just the way it is.

So what I'm saying is the group thing affects others and actually the apple falls close to the tree too. Are there things that go down in families from parents to children? There's a family I know about, there's been a marriage in the family and the guy who married into the family is always saying of the daughter "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree" as he looks at the mother of the family. Now question: Is there a connection between mother and daughter? Is this guy who married into this crazy family, is he seeing there's a connection between the mother and the daughter? Yes. He says that it's a family I'm sure you're vaguely aware of. But you know what I'm saying there are family traits. We better get out of there. Let's get over to Abraham.

### **J. Abraham: God's friend** [41:11-42:58]

We're going to jump into the Abraham narratives now. We're out of the garden of Eden, were out of Noah and the flood, and let's jump over and look at Abraham. We're finally making it to Genesis 12. We're going to start moving faster too. I can't answer all the questions in Scripture that you guys have but I will try to hit on the ones that I think are big questions and handle those. Abraham's going to be one of the most incredible individuals in the Old Testament. Dr. Wilson, some people say he's met him, he says that Abraham's a good guy. So anyway, I shouldn't say things but Dr. Wilson's book *Our Father Abraham* is excellent. Dr. Wilson is up there with Father Abraham in my opinion. I can't tell you how much I respect Dr. Wilson. He's done a study on Abraham and I think for good reason.

I'm going to give each of these patriarchs a title from Abraham, to Isaac and Jacob. The title for Abraham is "Abraham is God's friend." Now did I just make that up? No. Here's James chapter 2 verse 23 "And the Scripture was fulfilled that says 'Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.'" Does that sound familiar? "And Abraham was called God's friend." Is that a pretty big title, for somebody to be called "God's friend"? What does it mean to be God's friend? I'm going to try to show you through our study of Abraham what it means to be God's friend.

By the way am I saying Abraham's perfect? No. Abraham's going to have his problems like all human beings have their problems but Abraham's called God's friend. I'll come back to this. This is the last slide. We'll come back to this on Abraham being God's friend.

### **K. Geography of the ancient Near East** [42:59-46:26]

Now before we do that we have got to do a little bit of geography. Have you guys downloaded the PowerPoints? These maps are in the PowerPoints. You don't have to try to draw these maps. I could never draw these maps very well. But anyways. I just want to run through this map. This becomes important for all the rest of the Bible. This is the playing field. This is the chess board. We're going to start over here on the Persian Gulf.



This is the Persian Gulf. We've got the Persian Gulf here. Now we want to come up here--the Euphrates River and the Tigris River. How do you tell which one's which? Does anybody know E.T? E.T is Euphrates/Tigris. You can always tell which order they come in. E.T. is the Euphrates and Tigris. Ur of the Chaldees, we've got the Persian Gulf down here. What country is this? Iran. What country is this? Iraq. So we're familiar with these two countries. These are mountain folk, these are the plains folk. Do the mountain folk and the plains folk always fight? Yes. So these people (Iran) are always going to be trying to push down, these people (Iraq) are always going to be trying to do what? Push back. By the way is that true today? Has that been true for 2000, 3000, yeah, 4000 years? Here's the Persian Gulf, we come in here and here's Kuwait. Over here we have the Tigris and Euphrates running.

Does everybody see Ur here? That's Ur. Now Abraham was from Ur of the Chaldees. If I say to you Warsaw, what comes to your mind immediately? Warsaw, Poland. You guys say Warsaw, Poland. If I just say Warsaw, you guys think of Poland, but I'm thinking about Warsaw, Indiana where I used to live. So because Warsaw Indiana is on a lower level than Poland do I have to qualify that by saying Warsaw, Indiana? I think what you have is when it says Abraham is from Ur of the Chaldees, it's exactly that. This is the big Ur in Sumer and in most of your Bibles they will put that Abraham is from here and he goes all the way up north. He's going to go up to Haran here. What I would suggest to you and I'm feeling more strongly about this but I still don't know for sure because we don't know. What's been suggested now is that there is a northern Ur from up here and that Abraham came down to Haran as he makes his way down into Israel. By the way, does that make a lot more sense than going from here and instead of going over to Palestine this way, going way up to Haran? So the suggestion is that there's a northern Ur up here. That's an Ur of the Chaldees. So he's specifying it's where the Chaldeans came from, and that he then comes from this northern Ur. We don't know where that place is. There's literally hundreds and hundreds of tels up there that we don't know where the place is. So what I'm just trying to say is there's a northern Ur and there's a southern Ur. I'm going with the north now myself but I taught the southern Ur for

decades, but I think I've seen some good argumentation now that there's a northern Ur.

**L. Mari** [46:27-47:38]

Now what other places are really important? There's another place called Mari here. This place called Mari is right where the Euphrates comes up and from here if you've got to good double humped camel with a four on the floor, you can make it all the way across. So this is the first place when you come here you can grab water, but what's the problem? Why didn't Abraham just go across like this, go across the desert? Have you ever been in a place where you're caught in a desert and you're on foot. There's no cars, you can't just jump in the car with every direction as far as your eye can see it is absolute desert. Does that scare the daylights out of you? The answer is, I was 25 when that happened and it was as far as your eye can see and there was no way out and you've got your feet, no cars, no nothing. Question. Is that spooky? I just want to tell you. You come out into the desert here. Now does anybody go out there? Yeah, well today, you see people drive cars out there. But when you've got just a camel, even the camels don't make it across here very well. But they can make it from here, so Mari is going to be an important place. They found a bunch of tablets at Mari. So we're going to have tablets from Mari from the time of Zimri Lin and Hammurabi (ca. 1750 BC).

**M. Nuzu** [47:39-48:31]

The other place we're going to get tablets from is Nuzu. They found several thousand tablets at Nuzu. Nuzu is where a lot of the customs come from. We're going to see a lot of ancient customs. I'm going to tell you this or that is a custom of that day. How do we know that? They are found in these tablets at Nuzu. So Nuzu will tell us a lot of the customs coming from the background of 17, 18 hundred BC within a couple, 300 years of Abraham. So these two places Mari and Nuzu are going to give us a lot of information about the time just after Abraham. It's going to be really helpful to us when we interpret the Bible.

No. no. She's referencing down here at a place Sinai possibly here, it was called Mara that meant bitter; the water was bitter. It's down here in Sinai. This is the Sinai Peninsula. Mari is totally different, it's on the Euphrates River.

### **O. Haran and Ebla** [48:32-50:45]

So as you come up here, Mari and Nuzu, here's Haran. Who's famous from Haran that you know? Rachel and Leah were from there, and who got them hooked up--Laban? Does anyone remember Laban? Do you remember Rebekah? She was also from Haran, remember she did the watering with the camels thing up here in Haran. So Abraham's home, after he leaves Ur he sets up camp in Haran. That's where Terah, his father, dies. That's where Laban is, that's where Rachel and Leah are from, that's where Rebekah is from. So Haran's their home. Abraham then leaves and comes down this way. Now two sites over toward the Mediterranean, one is called Ebla. The Ebla site, comes from about 2400 BC. It was discovered, I believe, in the 1980s or 70s. Now by the way, why is 2400 BC important for us? Abraham was what? 2000 BC. Is Ebla 400 years before Abraham? So that's going to put Abraham in a framework. You know what I'm saying? It's going to give us what it was like 400 years before Abraham.

This place called Ugarit was another significant place. By the way, this place, Ebla. There are real problems there. Ebla is in what country? Syria. Does Syria like having people find Bible fulfilled stories in Ebla. So what's happened is they first came out and said Sodom and Gomorrah were found in the Ebla tablets and then the Syrians got a hold of the stuff with some of the Italians and now basically to be honest, we don't know that much about Ebla. It seems like the site has been shut down. There's a ton of stuff there and it's a shame the world hasn't been able to get at it because it's so political. By the way, is there really some tough conflict going on in Syria right now? Do you realize the Syrian President Assad is killing his own people? His father killed 10,000 in one village. So Syria's going through some really bad times right now. Now what's the capital of Syria? Damascus. Damascus is one of the oldest cities in the world and so it's really quite a city. This is Damascus and Syria.

### **P. Ugarit & Egypt** [50:46-53:23]

Now up here, Ebla, 2400 BC, a bunch of tablets we don't know what's in them because the Italians got a hold of it and the Syrians. Ugarit dates from about 1400 to 1200 BC. In Ugarit they've found thousands of tablets and there's actually a language called

Ugaritic which I've had the unfortunate privilege to be able to learn to read in transcription. Guess what they've found there? In the Bible have you ever heard of Baal? In the Bible we're told that there's this god Baal and we don't know much about him. We realize that there are whole Baal myths now. We've got tablet after tablet telling us myths about Baal and Asherah, his consort. So we have tons of stories, we know who Baal is now, largely out of Ugarit. So Ugarit's going to give us things around the time of the judges.

Finally, then we come down into Israel we've got the Sea of Galilee, Jordan River, Dead Sea. We come over here and this is Sinai, you can see the Sinai peninsula here where they crossed over into Sinai. Here this is what country? Egypt. That city is Alexandria and it's named after...? Alexander the Great. What was Alexandria famous for? A library. It was like an early Library of Congress. This library tried to get every book in the world that was scroll. It was an incredible collection. It was burned, torched so we don't have any of their records but we have records that this place was the center of learning. Alexandria was the Boston of the ancient world. In other words, it was the center of education and learning--huge libraries and education. As soon as you come down to Cairo and Memphis. When I say Memphis, what's the first thing that comes to you mind? Memphis, Tennessee? Does anybody do Memphis Tennessee? And the reason why I always bring that up is because of the king. The king is buried in Memphis. I said the king in the last class period and they didn't know what I was talking about but for my generation there was only one king and that was Elvis. Memphis Tennessee. If you ever go there wear your blue suede shoes and hit the streets of Memphis.

There's another place down here called *Tel Amarna* and this is where they have the *Amarna* letters. This is not important for us right now but it will be later on. So Egypt is here. Egypt is the gift of the Nile. If you take the Nile out, what is left of Egypt? Desert, thousands of miles in each direction. Egypt is the gift of the Nile. Actually get on your Google Earth satellite imagery. Can you actually go down and see the Nile River? It's really kind of cool from a Google satellite image.

### **Q. Map Schematic** [53:24-58:45]

Now let me show you another map that kind of schematizes this whole thing and I forgot one city as I did. Here's southern Ur, here's Babylon, Mari, Nuzu, and Nineveh.

As soon as I say Nineveh, who comes to mind? Jonah. When I was younger I thought Jonah rides this whale, the whale spits him up, and then he goes to Nineveh. What's the problem with this picture? The whale's out here. Did the whale swim all the way around Africa, then swim up the Tigris River? What's the problem? Tigris River is 3 or 4 feet deep in places so it was a real skinny whale. So the whale spits him out up here on the shore of the Mediterranean. Did the whale spit Jonah out here? No chance. He would have had to swim all the way around Africa. The Suez canal had been built yet. So what happened is, the whale spits him out here. Does Jonah have to walk a long way over there? It just puts Jonah in a different context getting out of the whale and going and preaching the next day. He had a long way to think about it before he got over to Nineveh. So Nineveh was the capital of Assyria with really nasty people there. I'm just making generalizations now, but they were the Hitlers of the ancient world. They were an incredibly cruel people. Jonah preaches repent, what did the people do? They repent and it was incredible. Their repentance shocked and saddened the uncompassionate Jonah.

Now Mari, Mari has over 25,000 tablets. There were 5000 found at Nuzu. Nuzu's the place where we get a lot of our customs from. Ebla there was about 18,000 tablets, many of those we're still waiting to be translated, Ugarit, I think, in my mind, I remember was about 12,000 tablets found there. It was a whole new alphabetic language called Ugaritic. This was a whole new language for us too. So these are the places I want you to know. Is that ok? So work on learning these places. E.T. right? Euphrates, Tigris. And then by the way, just for the nuts of it, what's this? Sea of Galilee, Jordan River, Dead Sea? That's an artist conception or a misconception probably.

### **R. Reading and writing** [55:37-58:46]

Now, I actually found some of these cuneiform tablets online. I just wanted you to see them. Remember I told you they stick in the mud when they write with a stylus? This

is actually a Mari tablet from about 1750 B.C. There's this guy called Zimri Lin, he was king of Mari, and guess who Zimri Lin butted heads with? You know this guy. Hammurabi. Hammurabi and Zimri Lin duke it out. We've actually got tablets now from Zimri Lin saying, "Hammurabi is beating up on me." So do you see the way these tablets are stuck with the stylus? You can actually see the end of the stylus and the front of the stylus? It's like a bull rush kind of thing and you stick it in the mud and can you see that they stick it this way then they stick it this way. They stick it different ways. This is a syllabic language. A syllabic language means that each syllable gets a symbol. How many different syllables are there? If I gave you the two consonants r and d how many syllables can you make out of "r" and "d"? You can make "rad", you can make "rude", you can make "rid", do you see what I'm saying? So just out of r and d you can make 15 or 20 different syllables. Now if each one of these syllables had a different symbol and you had 800 syllables, and you had to learn the 800 symbols before you could read or write, who could read or write in this culture? Only the very wealthy. You would have to be a scribe, to learn to read. So that meant only the elite could read. Could the common person read this stuff? Probably not. So basically, these are written by scribes, professional scribes, high class people, and very few people could read it. This is from one of the Mari tablets, you can see how it is. By the way, these mud tablets, what happens when they burn the temple down? It fires it; it gets harder and so that's why they were preserved.

Now here's one and this is really cool. This is from Ebla. By the way, can you see the columns and how they write in columns? Do you see that? This doesn't show it, but on the side- sometimes they'll stick in the side. The tablets are about as wide as your iPad. They'll stick them in the side and they'll write down the side of these things as well. It's pretty weird isn't it? But this is what a tablet looks like. This is an amazing tablet. Are a lot of these tablets busted? This is a full tablet. This is kind of an amazing one. By the way, this is an Ebla tablet. Is it possible that a doctoral student at University of Pennsylvania would spend 5 to 7 years working on a doctorate reading this one tablet and then when he gets it done he will get a PhD? Yes. This is what happens in the

basement of the University of Pennsylvania. They've got all these tablets that nobody's ever read before. They're kind of like dungeon dwellers. They'll put them down there, the guy stays down there for 5 years, he comes out, he reads the tablet, he gains a tablet and they give him a Ph. D. That was a joke. But there's some truth to that. But anyway, so this is a tablet, showing what they look like.

### **S. Importance of the Alphabet** [58:47-60:12]

Now, here's one and this one is really neat because, what is this? This is an Ugaritic tablet you'll see how it's small and it's different but what's different about this one is this one's from about 1400-1200 B.C. This is the time of the Judges. This one's alphabetic. What is the advantage of the alphabet? Syllabic languages, you have learn 800 symbols before you can read and write. With the alphabet it goes by phonemes not syllables. It goes by how they're said and there's only about 22 to 30 different sounds. Therefore the alphabet is only 22 or 30 symbols. How smart do you have to be to learn 22 symbols? Can a kindergartener learn 22 symbols? So with the alphabet is this an amazing new technology? Can a common person read after about 1800 BC? Is the alphabet an incredible invention? I guess this is what I'm trying to say. Is the alphabet an incredible invention that allowed the common person to be able to read? In the book of Judges they catch a kid running out of this town. The guy catches this kid, grabs him and says, "Hey, write down all the names from the elders of the town." And the kid writes them down. He was just a kid, a common kid. Caught randomly. He writes it down.

### **T. Printing Press and the Digital** [60:13-62:48]

Now, let me just push one or two more things. Does the alphabet democratize learning? Does the structure of the alphabet, 1800 BC, does it democratize learning? Yes, it does. Push it one more. About 1450's AD you have got a guy that developed a thing called the printing press. Now, instead of one person copying one manuscript with a printing press you have got one person able to produce a thousand manuscripts. Question does that again democratize learning? The printing press. You see what an incredible invention the printing press was in the 1450s. Gutenberg changed the whole map.

Now, what's happened? Now, how big is your alphabet? Two, the digital "Alphabet" 0/1. We've gone from 22 down to two. Your alphabet is 0 and 1. With your alphabet, with 0 and 1, can I write your alphabet in ASCII code? Yes. With a 0 and 1 can I put this in a jpeg image and turn that 0 and 1 into a picture with 16 million colors? Yes. Can I take that same 0 and 1 alphabet and can I turn it into sound and put it in a mp3 audio that you can play and you can hear? Can I take that same 1 and 0 and put it into a video and play those images at 30 frames a second? The 1 and 0, in your generation, do you see what's happening? This is your generation. This is tremendous what has happened in the last 30 years? And question can I take that 1 and 0 and can I put it on my computer and communicate to a guy who's studying Greek and watching my avatar in India? Then just before school starts a guy in South Africa using that 1 and 0--can it go all over the world? Is learning getting democratized? Then my question to you is as Christians, do we use that 1 and 0 now, the power of the 1 and 0 for the glory of God and the good of others or do we abandon it so evil uses it? Will evil use it? Yes. So what I'm suggesting is you guys live in a digital age that to be honest, I'm jealous in a certain sense. I'm an old man. I'm kicking off here in just a little while probably. That's the honest truth. I'm getting to be an old man, but there's so much just right in your face. What I'm saying is grab it, go for it. It's tremendously powerful and it's happening in your generation. It's really cool. So anyway, the alphabet's really important.

#### **U. Abraham's Three Cuts: Cut family ties [leave Ur] [62:49-64:27]**

We're going to talk about Abraham, and Abraham's got his three cuts. Abraham is Genesis chapters 12 to 25. The first cut that Abraham has to make is with his own family. The Lord told Abraham "Leave..." This is the call of Abraham. "Leave your country, your people, and your father's household and go to a land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you. I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you." First cut, he has to leave his family. By the way, is it hard to leave one's family? Now you guys are from America we move all over the place. You say, "no, it wasn't hard at all I came to Gordon College and it's all good." When you're raised in those cultures;



you were reared in an extended family. All your brothers and sisters, your cousins, your nephews, your father and mother not only live there but your grandfather, your grandmother and all their siblings live in the same town. When you left that kind of a village was it a big deal to leave? That is a big deal to leave. The first thing God says to Abraham, "Leave." Who's going to be your family now? Basically, God's going to lead him to a land and show him a new land so the cutting of family ties is a big deal. Why is it that when God calls people so often there is this leaving behind of something? Moses has to leave the Sinai desert and go back to Egypt. So a common thread that happens quite frequently in Scripture is the cutting of family ties.

#### **V. Melchizedek and the rescue of Lot** [64:28-67:48]

Now, in chapter 14, Abraham is out chasing down... do you remember, Lot? Lot was Abraham's nephew. Lot and Abraham split and then there was this king, Kedorlaomer who comes down and kidnaps Lot. He hauls Lot and his family off as plunder. Abraham gets his 318 guys and they go out to capture this king. They recapture Lot, and he's coming back. Abraham is victorious. He comes back and as he's coming back, Abraham runs into this guy just out of the clear blue. He runs into Melchizedek. *Melchi* means king, *zedek* means righteousness--king of righteousness. So he runs into Melchizedek, the king of righteousness. By the way, Melchizedek is the king of what city? Is this important too? Yes. He's the king of Salem. But when in Hebrew you say "city of," you say Jeru-salem. And if you say *Jeru* "city of Salem," and you say "*Jeru* Salem" very fast, you get what? Jerusalem. This king is king of Jerusalem a thousand years before Jerusalem was the city of David. Melchizedek was king of the city of Jerusalem [city of peace].

Melchizedek shows up, what does Abraham do to this guy? Abraham gives him a tenth of everything he has. This guy is not only a king but he's also a priest. So he's a priest and he's a king. Furthermore, he's a priest of the Most High. Abraham pays him a tenth of everything he has. Does Abraham honor this guy? Yes.

Now somebody in the last class asked me this. In the book of Hebrews is Melchizedek, Jesus? Is Melchizedek pre-incarnate Christ? Some people think that

Melchizedek was the pre-incarnate Christ. I kind of back off from that myself. I think that this guy is a king and a priest and so he typifies Christ; he's like Christ in the Old Testament, but he's not really Jesus. He appears out of nowhere and then actually after chapter 14 we never hear about him again. He's gone. So he just kind of appears, Abraham pays him a tenth, and then he's gone again. So some people think it's Christ, I think he probably just typifies Christ as a person who is a priest and a king like Jesus would be. So that's why he does similar things to Jesus. There are different approaches and Hebrews picks that up. So that's Genesis' Melchizedek, who is an enigmatic person. The honest truth is we don't really know. He just appears, then vanishes from the text.

The point of why I raise this is in the Old Testament is it only the Jews that know God? Did Melchizedek? Was he Jewish? No. Abraham didn't have any kids yet so he can't be Jewish. The guy's not Jewish and does he know God? Does Abraham honor him with a tithe for knowing the most high God? Yes. So what I'm suggesting is that in the Old Testament don't think that it's just the Jews. There are other people that are going to pop up in the text that you're going to read about that came out of nowhere and they know Jehovah God. So that's interesting to me. Here's a guy who's non-Jewish. He knows God; he's a priest of the most high and he's a king of Jerusalem.

### **W. Second Abrahamic Cut: Cutting a Covenant** [67:49-72:47]

Now another cut here is in chapter 15, and this is a tough one. In chapter 15 down about verse 10 or so, as the sun was setting, verse 12: "Abraham fell into a deep sleep and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. Then the Lord said 'Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and they will be enslaved and mistreated for 400 years.'" What would that be? "They will be enslaved and mistreated for 400 years." Did God tell Abraham beforehand that his descendants are going to go into Egypt for 400 years and that they would be mistreated and enslaved? God tells him that ahead of time. Then God comes and tells him some other things and then God says basically, "I can't give you the land yet because the sin of the Amorites is not yet full. So Abraham, I'm going to give you this land, but I can't give it to you yet

because of the sin of the Amorites is not yet full.” What is the implication? Is God saying that the sin of the Amorites is getting fuller and fuller and when it reaches a certain level then he’s going to bring in the Jews to destroy them? But it’s not yet full so they can’t have the land.

Then verse 17 of chapter 15: “When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces.” Abraham had to cut this animal in two. Then this blazing firepot goes between the two parts of the animal. Now is it obviously something symbolic is going on here? It turns out that we’ve got a good guess at what this scene means. There’s two things that it could be. First, this animal used to be one, and is now cut in two as this animal used to be one, now God and Abraham are made one in the covenant. By the way do we have covenants even to this day where two are made one in a covenant? Just think about that. Yes, marriage. And so what you have here is this covenant where God and Abraham being bonded together with the union symbolized as this animal was one, now we’re becoming one and that’s possible.

Has anybody ever done this? You guys probably don’t do this in your generation but in my generation we had this thing called blood brothers. So Dave Remes and I, when we were younger, we cut ourselves, don’t do this. Well, actually you do this slashing stuff. Sorry, that was a sick joke. All right. But Remes and I wanted to be blood brothers. We were really good friends, he was my best friend, we wanted to be blood brothers, and so he cut himself, I cut myself, and we swapped blood. Don’t do that today. But anyway we didn’t know any better back then so we swapped blood. So this idea of blood bonding things together is what I guess I’m trying to say.

Now there’s another approach to this and I think the second one is probably more accurate. What this is jumps out of Jeremiah chapter 34 verse 18. The symbol that’s used in Jeremiah is that this animal’s cut in two that is if you violate the covenant, you will be cut in two like this animal. So this is called the ratifying of the covenant. How do we ratify covenants today? Have you guys ever been to the bank and you get a notary and the notary embosses that paper? That’s like ratifying the covenant. It’s approving it; you

know when they stamp an emboss it, and it's good. So this is the ratification or solemnizing of the covenant. As this animal was one, and was cut in two, if you violate the covenant, you will be cut in two. Now what happens with that? Who passes between the two parts? God does. So what God is doing here is binding himself to Abraham, the smoking fire pot represents God, possibly, and what it's saying here is that God is binding himself to Abraham in this covenant. God is solemnizing that he will keep his covenant.

Now, by the way, what is the covenant of God? God promised Abraham three things. They are: the land [the promised land, the land of Canaan]; the seed, that his seed will be multiplied as the what? Stars of the heaven. His seed will be multiplied as the sand of the seashore and that he would be what? He would be a blessing to all nations. So Abraham was promised the land, the seed and that he will be a blessing to all nations. God promised that to Abraham and in this process of the cutting of the animal and the firepot going in between, God is saying "I will keep my covenant. I will make this covenant with you. I am bound by this covenant. You will get the land, the seed and the blessing." So this is the ratifying of the covenant where God participates in this Abrahamic Covenant.

#### **X. Abraham's Third Cut: Circumcision** [72:48-78:36]

Now there's one more cut and this is the cut of his flesh in Genesis chapter 17. I need to tell you a little story when I'm bringing this up. Once upon a time I taught at another school for 22 years. It was a place called Grace College. It's a very conservative school, a very God-centered Bible-centered school. I had down front this girl who sat there. Have you ever seen students and they take every word down that you say and they are, "Oh, I just believe everything professor Hildebrandt..." It was when I was younger. So she was really into it and she would write everything down, so we were going over this text about Genesis chapter 17. This girl raises her hand and she asks, "Professor Hildebrandt, it says in this chapter that Abraham was circumcised and he circumcises his son, what is that anyway?" Now the first thing I thought was, do students set professors up? So I look her straight in the face and I'm expecting this little smirk on her face like

“I got you now, what are you going to do.” So I look at her and she gives me this blank look as if she’s so innocent. She’s just ready to write down the answer. I’m saying “Holy cow, she’s really asking me,” I mean in truth she’s asking me. I’m thinking: I can just see it now: Hildebrandt gets fired for drawing pictures on the board. So I go home that night and I tell my wife, I said, “you can’t believe it, this girl *bemet* [in truth] in front of the whole class, this girl asked me what circumcision is. Can you believe that?” My wife turns to me and she says, you know, when I was in about 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade I didn’t know what it was either. I went and asked the pastor what it was. I thought “Holy cow this is pretty weird” and then I realized, most males now are circumcised at birth. What I’m saying is a lot of guys don’t even know. So let me just say: what it is, is, at the end of the male’s penis there’s skin that hangs out about a half inch or so what happens is the doctor cuts it off. It’s called the foreskin. He cuts that foreskin off. Now by the way that happens when you’re a baby. I know this because I had two boys. When they do it to a baby, they barely whimper. I’m not kidding, I had more of a problem with it than my sons did. It was over and the babies barely whimpered. Try that on an 18 year old. Is that a problem? By the way, in the Bible, is that going to be a problem later on? Abraham was circumcised at 75, is that a problem? That’s a problem. So anyway, just some things to think about.

By the way, is this circumcision, is this a big deal? Is circumcision how the Jews identify themselves? Are the Jews “of the circumcision” and if you’re a Gentile you’re what? Uncircumcised. Have you ever heard that terminology, “uncircumcised Gentiles”? So that’s how the Jews used it as an ethnic marker demonstrating you’re in Judaism. Now did other cultures circumcise besides the Jews? Yes, other cultures did. But is God saying here, “while other cultures also circumcised, circumcision for you means a sign of the covenant.” This is how it is sealed. The covenant is sealed in your flesh. Now let me just go over here for a second and are any of you from a Presbyterian background? Presbyterians baptize children and let me get some of these points up here on circumcision. This becomes an unconditional covenant the land, seed, and the blessing. Are some of you Presbyterian background? In the Presbyterian background do they

baptize babies? Yes, they do. Do you realize it's on the basis of circumcision. The Jews were supposed to be circumcised in the eighth day. Now that circumcision shows that they were part of the covenant community. The Presbyterians, when they baptize babies, they are saying that our babies, like circumcision, and in baptism, our babies are part of the covenant community of believers in Christ. Is that why they baptize babies/infants? It's to basically welcome those infants into the covenant community.

Now, by the way, are some of you Baptist? You don't baptize babies. But can you see why the Presbyterians would do that? Like circumcision in the Old Testament and baptism in the new, you're including those infants into the covenant community. So that's kind of where that comes from. Abraham's covenant is the land, the seed, and the blessing.

Once Abraham has circumcised himself and his child, the covenant is unconditional. That is, Abraham has fulfilled the conditions of the covenant which means then that God is now obligated for the land, the seed, and the blessing. It is an unconditional covenant now. The Abrahamic covenant is unconditional. Now when you get into the Mosaic Covenant, did they have to obey it in order to get blessings and cursing? Did they have to obey it and then if they disobeyed they got the cursing? With Abraham, the covenant is unconditional. So God will work with Abraham's descendants guaranteed. They will get the land, the seed, and be a blessing to the nations. What happens now there's going to be other covenants that are conditional. They will be conditioned based on their obedience. The Mosaic covenant is conditional so I just want to say once he's circumcised, that's it. The covenant's ratified in that sense.

#### **Y. Critics problems: Camels** [78:37-80:18]

Now there are some problems. These are general problems that critics actually find with text. In Genesis chapter 12 it says that Abraham has camels. Now what's the problem with that? Years ago, they said that the Bible had an error here because they said camels were not domesticated until about 1200 BC. What? Abraham's date? 2000 BC. So they say Abraham is 800 years before camels were domesticated, therefore the Bible's got an error here. Abraham could not have had camels that were domesticated. Therefore

the Bible's got an error. Lo and behold, guess what happens? They find in Ebla, 2400 BC that's 400 years before Abraham, and guess what the guys in Ebla have? Domesticated camels. So critics criticize the Bible on the basis of camels and frankly they have found out now that even 400 years before Abraham, camels were domesticated.

Have you ever been around camels? The other question I have is: are camels ever domesticated? These animals have personality and some of the camels are really really ornery. I'll tell you some day when we have some stuff although this is on tape now, I'll tell you some camel stories. We stayed in the Bedouin tent for several nights. The Bedouin raise camels... and the guy went off one night and told us three hours of camel jokes. This is the honest truth. Their whole culture is built around the camel. Camels are amazing creatures. Camels are phenomenal animals.

### **Z. Critics and the Hittites** [80:19-81:28]

The Bible says that Abraham ran into some Hittites in Genesis 15:20 but critics said "Hey, there's no record of any Hittites and we know a lot about the ancient world and there's no mention of the Hittites." And so because the Bible mentions Hittites and Philistines back with Abraham, this can't be right. So the Bible must have errors in it. Well, once again, guess what happens. Some guy's up digging around in upper Turkey and all of a sudden he comes on Boghazkoy. It's the capital of the Hittite empire. Not only is there a Hittite capital but we now know it was a whole empire. There's a whole Hittite language. You can go and again get a PhD learning to read these Hittite texts which some of them I assume have not been translated yet. There's a whole culture of Hittites. Now we know about them. They were from up in northern central Turkey. We know there were Hittites. By the way does anybody remember Uriah the Hittite was Bathsheba's husband with David. So he was another Hittite, but Abraham ran into Hittites too and we know now that there was a whole Hittite empire up in Turkey. So again critics again were wrong.

### **AA. Dan in Genesis 14:14: Anachronism** [81:29-85:24]

Now this third one is a real problem. If you have got your Bibles, let me just read it to you. In Genesis chapter 14 verse 14, this is a serious problem. I need to try to

explain this one. It says, “When Abraham heard his relative Lot had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born of his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan.” Now where is Dan? The city of Dan, if I’m Jerusalem here, then Kyle, way in the back of the room there is Dan. Dan is the northern-most part of Israel. Now you say, “Hold on Hildebrandt, what’s the problem with that? He chased him up from the south where he was in Jerusalem, all the way up to the back room there. There’s no problem with that.” The problem was that Dan was not named Dan until the time of Joshua and Judges.

Basically, the tribe of Dan, if this is Israel here, the tribe of Dan settled out by the Coastal plain with the Philistines. Dan didn’t like being around the Philistines because what happened when they were around the Philistines? The Philistines did what to people? They killed them. Dan says, “We don’t like these Philistines. They beat up on us so we’re going to take our tribe from where the Philistines are on the coastal plain here, and we don’t want to fight with the Philistines all the time, so we’re going to move our whole tribe back up to where Kyle is. We’re going to take the whole tribe and shrink it down to one city.” That city was called “Dan.” It’s a famous city in Israel, but it was named “Dan” only later. It originally was Laish.

So what you have here is what’s called an **anachronism**. Now what does “chronism” mean? Do you see the word “chronism” there? Chronology, *chronos* means “time.” Anachronism means “out of time.” In other words, the city of Dan, Abraham couldn’t have known the city of Dan. I guess that’s what I’m trying to say. Dan would not be named that for another 800 years. You say, “Well then how come it’s in the Bible in Genesis?” I think it’s the same thing if I said to you “We’re going to go to Liberty Tree Mall.” Where is Liberty Tree Mall? In what town is it? Does anybody know Danvers? I said we’re going to go to Liberty Tree mall in Danvers, everybody would know where that is. But if I said to you “We’re going to go to Liberty Tree mall in Salem Village,” would you know where that is? Danvers many many years ago used to be called Salem Village. Nobody remembers that now. So the problem is if I’m writing a modern book and I put “Salem Village” will anybody know where that is? No. But if I said “Danvers” would everybody know? Yes. So what I’m saying is the text seems to have been updated



here. The text seems to have been updated and so the original name which was “Laish” is updated to Dan. Now is it possible that Joshua did it. Who finished the Pentateuch? Did Moses finish writing the book of Deuteronomy? No. Moses is what at the end of Deuteronomy? He’s dead. It’s pretty hard, at least from what I’m told, it’s pretty hard to write when you’re dead. So the book of Deuteronomy was probably finished by Joshua. Is it possible that Joshua could have inserted this name later or somebody even later than Joshua inserted it because he thought, “Hey, you guys don’t know where this town is. If I say, Dan, everybody knows where Dan is.” So the text was updated. This is a serious issue for some people but I think to be realistic we got to say Abraham didn’t know the name Dan because it was only much later that Dan was up there.

[Student comment] She said does that make it wrong? What I’m saying is no it’s not wrong, it’s just that the name was updated. The language was updated because nobody knows where Salem village is and everybody knows where Danvers is. All right, so this is this is a big one here.

### **AB. Abraham’s “Three” Kids**

#### **Son number one: Eleazar of Damascus [85:25-86:29]**

Abraham’s got “three kids.” We’ll just do these quickly. First of the three was Eleazar of Damascus. What’s Abraham’s problem? Sarah is barren and can’t have kids so let me just kind of narrate this story. So Abraham comes to God and says, “God, you said you’re going to bless me with this land, seed, and blessing but I haven’t gotten any kids. This is doing me no good.” And he says “Moreover, I don’t have any kids and Eleazar of Damascus, my servant, is going to get it all. All the inheritance is going to go to Eleazar of Damascus.” So this is the first one of Abraham’s “kids.” Eleazar of Damascus, his servant, was going to receive the inheritance. By the way, is that legitimate? The answer is, yes. We know that from Hammurabi’s code and some of these ancient law codes that if a person died and had no children who got their goods? The servant got the goods. So this is following the ancient laws that Eleazar of Damascus would get Abraham’s inheritance. God comes to him and says “No, it won’t be Eleazar, it will be somebody from your own flesh.” So it’s not Eleazar but this is the first one Abraham thought that he

would have, his servant.

**AC. Ishmael and Hagar: son number two** [86:30-89:51]

So then what happens with Hagar? This is actually a really important text in Genesis chapter 16. Let me just narrate this story. Hagar is Abraham's handmaiden, his servant. Who sets Abraham up with Hagar? Sarah. Sarah says to Abraham "I can't have kids. Go into Hagar and conceive with her and the child then will be my child and therefore he will get the inheritance and he'll be our child." Now, that is exactly like the laws of Hammurabi. They're following the laws and the customs of their day. Now this is a big issue. We have to get out of our culture. Did the code of Hammurabi say that it was all right for a master to go into his maid and that whatever child was had would be his adopted child? Yes. It was allowed in the laws of Hammurabi.

Now you say "Wow, this is Abraham's cheating on Sarah." Is Abraham cheating on Sarah? Did Sarah see it that way? Did Abraham see it that way? No. I think what you have got to do is take this out of... as one fellow in the last class says "Abraham is having sex with this other woman." Is that the American way of thinking about it. Did Abraham think about it like that? "Abraham's having sex and cheating on his wife." No. They're thinking about it like this. My wife and I can't have kids. But if we couldn't have kids, is it possible they can take part of me, part of my wife, and find a woman who we pay 10 to 20 thousand dollars and they put it in this other woman and she, this surrogate mother, has the child? That's what's going on here. Can Abraham go to his doctor and put the parts in a test tube and put it in the other woman? Abraham can't do it; so he has to do it the natural way. So basically what you have got is you have to put it in the context of the surrogate wife. This is not cheating on his wife; his wife set this up. Hagar's the surrogate wife.

Now, by the way, even in modern times when a test tube baby is put in another woman and she bears that child, do you remember that case in New Jersey? The woman bears the child, does the woman who bears the child want to keep the child? Do you remember that? The woman who bore the child was attached to the child and she didn't want to give it back to the husband and wife.

Does this cause problems even in the modern America with test tubes and babies? This still causes a problem. Was there a problem then after Sarah gave Hagar in to her husband's lap? Is there jealousy between Hagar and Sarah? Yes. Did it work back then or were there problems associated with this?

Does this mean that God approves of this? Or was this what they did in their culture? Are there things recorded in the Bible that are not necessarily saying this is true for all time? If it was part of their culture it was not meant to be universalized. So you have got to separate cultural norms from moral universals. You have got to separate those two. By the way, does God cover for Ishmael and Hagar? Does God protect them? Yes. God takes care of them even after Sarah kicks them out and they go out into the desert. So this is a pretty big deal here.

**AD. Third son: Isaac, son of the covenant** [89:52-91:03]

Finally, you get this Isaac, he's the son of promise born of Sarah and Abraham when they are very old. What does Isaac's name mean? Isaac means "laughter." Sarah laughed, did Abraham also laugh? He also laughed. So his name is Isaac, laughter. This is the son of the promise then, the greatly desired and anticipated son of the promise. We'll call it quits there and we'll see you on Thursday.

This is Dr. Ted Hildebrandt in the eighth lecture of his Old Testament History, Literature and Theology class. This lecture began with the sons of God and the daughters of men in Genesis chapter 6 and proceeded to Abraham, God's friend, the geography of Mesopotamia as well as three cuts in Abraham's life and his three alleged children.

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