



Rembrandt (6' tall!); Caravaggio

Session 3: Feb 25: Monotheism; Patriarchs

Assignment:

Some terminology concerning gods [[link](#)]

Hayes on Monotheism and Kaufmann [[link](#)]

Berlinerblau on Smith and Kaufmann [[link](#)]

Kugel, p. 108-118 (Two Models of God)

Genesis chapter 12 (the call of Abram)

Kuigel, p. 90-103 (The Call of Abraham)

Genesis chapters 15-17 (the covenant; circumcision; names changed)

Kugel, p. 103-106 (Covenants)

Hayes on covenants [[link](#)]

Genesis chapters 18-19 (the visit; annunciation; Sodom)

Genesis 21:1-21 (Isaac; Hagar and Ishmael)

Exodus 22:28-29; 34:19-20; 13:2 (what is due YHWH)

Genesis 22:1-19 (the Akedah)

Hayes on the Akedah [[link](#)]

Jeremiah 19:5-6 (child sacrifice to Baal)

Kugel, p. 120-132 (The Trials of Abraham)
Genesis 25:19-34 (Esau sells the birthright)
Genesis 27:1-45 (Isaac blesses Jacob)
Kugel, p. 134-148 (Jacob and Esau)
Kugel, p. 159-162 (Names; Angel)
Questions for discussion [[link](#)]

Optional reading:

Genesis 24 (Isaac's wife Rebekah)
Genesis 29:1-24 (Leah and Rachel); Kugel p. 153-157 (Tricky Laban)
Genesis 34 (rape of Dinah); Kugel, p. 169-175 (A Puzzling Tale)
Genesis 37, 39-50 (Joseph and his brothers); Kugel, p. 177-197

Monotheism

Monotheism is the elephant in the room for the Hebrew Bible. Kaufmann's ideas are critical to an understanding of the post-exilic view.

Akedah (Wikipedia)

Modern biblical critics have ascribed the binding's narrative to the biblical source E, on the grounds that it generally uses the specific term Elohim (אלוהים) and parallels characteristic E compositions. On that view, the second angelic appearance to Abraham (v. 15–18), praising his obedience and blessing his offspring, is in fact a later Jahwist interpolation to E's original account (v. 1–13, 19). This is supported by the style and composition of these verses, as well as by the use of the name Yahweh for the deity.

More recently it has been suggested that these traces of J include the first angelic appearance (v. 11–12), in which the Angel of YHWH stops Abraham before he kills Isaac. The style and composition of these verses resemble that of the second angelic speech, and YHWH is used for the deity rather than God. On that reading, in the original E version of the binding Abraham disobeys God's command, sacrificing the ram "instead of his son" (v. 13) on his own responsibility and without being stopped by an angel: "And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son; but Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked and beheld, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went, and took the ram, and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son" (v. 10, 13).

By interpolating the first appearance of the angel, a later redactor shifted responsibility for halting the test from Abraham to the angel (v. 11–12). The second angelic appearance, in which Abraham is rewarded for his obedience (v. 14–18), became necessary due to that shift of responsibility. This analysis of the story sheds light on the connection between the binding and the story of Sodom (Genesis 18), in which Abraham protests against God's unethical plan to destroy the city, without distinguishing between the righteous and the wicked: "*Far be it from you to do such a thing: Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is just?*" Abraham's ethical rebellion against God in the destruction of Sodom culminates in his disobedience to God, refusing to sacrifice Isaac.



Caravaggio