

Blessed to Build God's Kingdom:  
The Blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) in Light of the Primeval History

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## ABSTRACT

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Through a macro-syntactic analysis and a word study, this thesis has demonstrated that the root בֵּרַךְ (blessing), throughout the Primeval History and the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), is consistently related to the Kingdom of God. The undergirding presence of the Kingdom of God makes the root בֵּרַךְ intelligible. Gen. 1:26-28 demonstrates that the purpose of creating and blessing (בֵּרַךְ) mankind was for mankind to rule as God's representatives on the earth, and that it is the בֵּרַךְ of God that gives mankind the ability/capability to rightly rule on behalf of God. This thesis has defined the root בֵּרַךְ, based upon an analysis of its uses in the Primeval History and the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), in the following way: The בֵּרַךְ of God provides the recipient with life-giving power and potency. As the term applies more specifically to humans, while incorporating life-giving power and potency, the בֵּרַךְ of God provides the recipient (i.e. one who bends the knee in recognition of the Lordship of God) with the ability/capability to rule rightly, as God's representatives – to rule in a non-coercive, non-tyrannical way – for the express purpose of building/extending God's Kingdom – a Kingdom that is meant to encompass all the families of the earth.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of Mark records the first words of Jesus as, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1:15)<sup>1</sup>. As G. Harkness has pointed out, “there has been no shortage of study on *The Kingdom of God*.”<sup>2</sup> J. Bright writes:

“The burden of Jesus’ preaching was to announce the Kingdom of God; that was the central thing with which he was concerned. A reading of the teachings of Jesus as they are found in the Gospels only serves to bear the statement out. Everywhere the Kingdom of God is on his lips, and it is always a matter of desperate importance. [...] So paramount, in fact, was the notion of the Kingdom of God in the mind of Jesus that one can scarcely grasp his meaning at all without some understanding of it.”<sup>3</sup>

The intent of this thesis is not to determine what is meant by the Bible’s use of the phrase *The Kingdom of God*, but rather, to demonstrate that the Kingdom of God was not a concept newly introduced by Jesus. For A. Schweitzer, “the Christian view of the Kingdom of God arises out of the Jewish. [...] The idea of the Kingdom of God is the creation of the Jewish prophets.”<sup>4</sup> For J. Gray, the Kingdom of God, in Christian thought, is derived primarily from the Psalms and the Prophets.<sup>5</sup> Contrary to both of these scholars, this thesis intends to demonstrate that the notion of *The Kingdom of God* is present in the first chapter of Genesis, and remains central to the concept of blessing (ברך), as far as it is presented in the Primeval History<sup>6</sup> and the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). This thesis will corroborate P. Gentry and S. Wellum’s statement, that,

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<sup>1</sup> All Biblical translations are the author’s, unless otherwise specified.

<sup>2</sup> Georgia Harkness, *Understanding the Kingdom of God*. (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1974), 9.

<sup>3</sup> John Bright, *The Kingdom of God*. (New York, New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), 17.

<sup>4</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *The Kingdom of God and Primitive Christianity*. Edited by Ulrich Neuenschwander. Translated by L. A. Garrard. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968), 3.

<sup>5</sup> John Gray, *The Biblical Doctrine of the Reign of God*. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979).

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1-11 is generally referred to as the Primeval History.

“even though the specific *wording*, ‘kingdom of God,’ is not found until much later in Scripture, the *idea* is taught in the opening pages of the Bible.”<sup>7</sup>

The primary intention of this research is to determine what it means for Abraham to, “be a blessing!” (Gen. 12:2) – in light of the Primeval History. Both Judaism and Christianity define themselves not only in relation to Abraham himself, but in relation to the calling/blessing that Abraham received. J. D. G. Dunn writes, “What is Christianity if it is not defined and characterized by the blessing of Abraham?”<sup>8</sup> This thesis intends to demonstrate that the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) is for the express purpose of building the Kingdom of God. That Abraham was invited to receive the blessing of God, so that God could build His Kingdom through Abraham, a Kingdom that would extend to all the families of the earth.

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<sup>7</sup> Peter J. Gentry, and Stephen J. Wellum. *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2012), 592.

<sup>8</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Gospels*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2011), xvi.

## CHAPTER ONE: STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION

### 1.1 Hypothesis

This M.A. thesis will seek to prove that the blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), viewed in light of the Primeval History, is for the express purpose of building the Kingdom of God.

### 1.2 Steps of Inquiry

In order to verify the previously stated hypothesis, this thesis will first examine the use of the root בָּרַךְ (blessing), in the Book of Genesis, prior to its use in the blessing of Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3. The root בָּרַךְ will be analyzed in the following pericopes:

- i. Gen. 1:20-23 – Blessing of the Sea Creatures and Birds
- ii. Gen. 1:24-31 – Blessing of Man and Woman
- iii. Gen. 2:1-3 – Blessing of the Seventh Day
- iv. Gen. 5:1-3 – Reiteration of the Blessing of Man and Woman
- v. Gen. 8:20-9:3 – Blessing of Noah and his Sons
- vi. Gen. 9:18-29 – Noah Blessing YHWH
- vii. Gen. 11:31-12:3 – Blessing of Abraham

The seven pericopes will be examined using, primarily, a macro-syntactic analysis of the text in its final form. This analysis will highlight the volitional mood within these texts, and enable a more accurate understanding of the process, and language, of blessing in the Primeval History and Gen. 12:1-3.

The scope of this thesis is limited to the analysis of the root בָּרַךְ in Gen. 12:1-3 and the Primeval History, for two reasons: 1) The root בָּרַךְ occurs more than seventy times in the Book of Genesis alone. Therefore, endeavoring to analyze all occurrences of the root in Genesis is beyond the scope of this thesis. 2) One of the main foci of this thesis is to demonstrate a strong connection between the Primeval History and Gen. 12:1-3, giving grounds for an inference of



meaning into the root בָּרַךְ in Gen. 12:1-3, based upon the root's meaning within the Primeval History.

It is important to note two things at this point. 1) Though the primary focus of this thesis will be to determine the meaning of the root בָּרַךְ in Gen. 12:1-3, in light of the root's meaning in the Primeval History, it will also be in implicit dialogue with the definitions of בָּרַךְ offered by other scholars. 2) This thesis' analysis of all seven pericopes will be an analysis of the final form of the text.

### 1.3 Status Quaestionis

Studying the book of Genesis, and the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), specifically, is not a novel field of study. E. A. Speiser writes, "As the foundation of a rising biblical structure, Genesis began to be quoted and dissected even before the Old Testament as a whole had been completed; and it remains to this day one of the most intensively cultivated books of the Bible."<sup>9</sup> Beyond that, G. Wenham points out that the calling/blessing of Abraham, in particular, has been one of the most widely dissected sections of the Book of Genesis itself, garnering, "much scholarly attention."<sup>10</sup> The fact that Gen. 12:1-3 is regarded as pivotal for both the Book of Genesis itself, and for the Bible as a whole, explains the scholarly interest.<sup>11</sup> W. Brueggemann, writes, "The call to Sarah and Abraham has to do not simply with the forming of

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<sup>9</sup> E. A. Speiser, *Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. The Anchor Yale Bible. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale, 1964), V.

<sup>10</sup> Gordon Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary Volume I*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 274.

<sup>11</sup> Patrick D. Miller Jr, "Syntax and Theology in Genesis XII 3a." *Vetus Testamentum* XXXIV 4 (1984): 472; Nahum M Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*. (New York: Schocken, 1970), 102. See also Gerhard Von Rad. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Translated by J. H. Marks. (Philadelphia, Penn.: The Westminster, 1956); Gordon Wenham, *Exploring the Old Testament: Volume 1: The Pentateuch*. (London, UK: SPCK, 2003); Wenham, *Word Biblical*; Claus Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible and the Life of the Church*. Translated by K. Crim. (Philadelphia, Penn.: Fortress Press, 1978); Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Continental Commentary*. Translated by John J. Scullion S.J. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994); Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36: A Commentary*. Translated by John J. Scullion S.J. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985).

Israel but with the re-forming of creation, the transforming of the nations.”<sup>12</sup> R. W. L. Moberly states, “It is perhaps unusual for a book within the Old Testament to have one particular text that can be regarded as a possible interpretive key to the book as a whole, and even to the Old Testament as a whole. Yet such a case has been made in relation to God’s call of Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3.”<sup>13</sup> A. Jenkins succinctly writes, “It is this call [Abraham’s] which marks the turning point for mankind.”<sup>14</sup> The fact that the calling/blessing of Abraham has been widely studied does not necessitate that the meaning of the pericope is undisputed. J. Baden writes:

“These verses [Gen. 12:1-3] are indisputably important in the context of the ancestral narratives [Patriarchal Narratives<sup>15</sup>] and Genesis as a whole (if not the entire Bible). Yet their precise meaning remains in dispute. The difficulty of these verses derives from the extended volitive sequence contained therein and the general uncertainty among many biblical scholars regarding the specific nuances that may or may not be expressed by such sequences.”<sup>16</sup>

This thesis will explore some of the *specific nuances* that Baden is referring to, which will ultimately lead to a clearer understanding of the purpose of the calling/blessing of Abraham.

Due to the fact that this thesis is seeking to determine the meaning of the root בִּרְךְ in Gen. 12:1-3, in light of the Primeval History, focus will be placed on two areas of study: 1) How other scholars have defined the root בִּרְךְ. 2) How other scholars have viewed the relationship between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives.

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<sup>12</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (IBCT; Atlanta, Geor.: John Knox, 1982), 105.

<sup>13</sup> R. W. L. Moberly, *The Theology of the Book of Genesis*. (New York: Cambridge, 2009), 141.

<sup>14</sup> Allan K. Jenkins, “The Great Name: Genesis 12:2 and the Editing of the Pentateuch.” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 10 (1978) : 46.

<sup>15</sup> Gen. 12-50 is generally referred to as the Patriarchal Narratives.

<sup>16</sup> Joel S. Baden, “The Morpho-Syntax of Genesis 12:1-3: Translation and Interpretation.” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* no. 72 (2010) : 223.

### 1.3.1 Scholars' Definitions of the Root בִּרַךְ

Scholars have defined the root בִּרַךְ in a variety of ways, using a range of methodological techniques. Generally speaking, scholars define the root בִּרַךְ in light of its use within the Hebrew Bible as a whole, but it is the Books of Genesis and Deuteronomy that dominate the landscape.<sup>17</sup> Though there are various nuances to different scholars' definitions of the root בִּרַךְ, they can all be categorized under three general headings: 1) Fertility, protection, and success; 2) Life and prosperity; 3) Shalom. Each one of these categories will be dealt with in turn.

The meaning of the root בִּרַךְ can, in the Hebrew Bible, be categorized in two general categories: 1) To kneel; 2) Blessed/Praised. A noun with a similar root carries the meaning, “pool.”<sup>18</sup> In the Aramaic portions of the Hebrew Bible, only the two general categories (“kneel” and “blessed”) of the root are to be found.<sup>19</sup> Similar meanings are found in other Semitic languages: “approximately the same three basic meanings, ‘knee,’ ‘blessing,’ and ‘water place,’ [‘pool’] can be ascertained for the consonants *brk*.”<sup>20</sup> In Akkadian, “only the noun *birku* or *burku*, ‘knee,’ occurs.”<sup>21</sup> The Akkadian language does have the term *karābu*, “which lexicons render ‘to pray, bless, greet, consecrate,’”<sup>22</sup> which some scholars equate with the root *brk*, though more recent scholarship proposes a separate root *krb*, “especially since such a root occurs

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<sup>17</sup> The root בִּרַךְ occurs 310 times in the Hebrew Bible; 74 times in Genesis, and 40 times in Deuteronomy. See Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275.

<sup>18</sup> J. Scharbert, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by John T. Willis. Revised Ed. Vol. 2, s.v. “בִּרַךְ *brk*; בִּרְכָה *b<sup>e</sup>rakhah*.” (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 279-280. See also Keith N. Gruneberg, *Abraham, Blessing and the Nations: A Philological and Exegetical Study of Genesis 12:3 in its Narrative Context*. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 93-95; Harry Mowvley, “The Concept and Content of ‘Blessing’ in the Old Testament.” *Bible Translator* 16 no. 2 (1965) : 74; A. Murtonen, “The Use and Meaning of the Words Lebarek and Berakah in the Old Testament.” *Vetus Testamentum* 9 no. 2 (1959) : 176-177; Paul Rotenberry, “Blessing in the Old Testament: A Study of Genesis 12:3.” *Restoration Quarterly* 2 no. 1 (1958) : 34-35.

<sup>19</sup> Scharbert, *Theological*, 280-281.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

in Old South Arabic ('to consecrate, sacrifice')."<sup>23</sup> K. Gruneberg notes that in Ugaritic, Phoenician-Punic, and Aramaic, cognates of the root בִּרַךְ all deal with "blessing," and "all link blessing to deities."<sup>24</sup>

Various scholars gravitate towards the different possible meanings of the Semitic *brk*, and its cognates, for a range of reasons. A. Murtonen and A. R. Johnson focus more specifically on "pool," and regard the Semitic root of *brk* as referring to rain and fertilization.<sup>25</sup> Murtonen writes, "[*brk*] seems to be closely connected with the blessing brought about by rain and springs or wells, i.e., the fertilization of the ground."<sup>26</sup> K. Gruneberg and H. Mowvley believe that the root of the Semitic *brk* is "blessing."<sup>27</sup> Gruneberg cites examples from various Semitic languages, before concluding with an affirmation of Scharbert's definition of *brk*: "the content of the blessing is long life, descendents, prosperity, success, and power."<sup>28</sup> P. Rotenberry concludes that the Semitic root *brk* is in reference to the knee.<sup>29</sup> He writes, "The root idea of the verb *brk* is 'bend the knee,' and the root is found throughout the Semitic family of languages with this meaning."<sup>30</sup>

Though this thesis is focusing primarily on the root בִּרַךְ, as it is presented within the Hebrew Bible, it is important to point out that the Semitic root *brk* cannot be ignored when seeking to produce a comprehensive definition of the root בִּרַךְ.

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<sup>23</sup> Scharbert, *Theological*, 281-282. See also Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 93-94.

<sup>24</sup> Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 94. See also Scharbert, *Theological*, 282-284.

<sup>25</sup> A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955); Murtonen, *The Use*.

<sup>26</sup> Murtonen, *The Use*, 176. Murtonen's conclusion, in part, is reached by an understanding of the root *brk* 'knee,' in Akadian, being a euphemistic reference to 'womb,' 'genitals,' and 'fertility,' which is generally regarded as incorrect. See Scharbert, *Theological*, 281-282; Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 93-94.

<sup>27</sup> Gruneberg, *Abraham*; Mowvley, *The Concept*.

<sup>28</sup> Gruneberg is here citing Scharbert, *Theological*, 283. (Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 94-95).

<sup>29</sup> Rotenberry, "Blessing".

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

### 1.3.1.1 Fertility, Protection, and Success

The majority of scholars define the root בִּרַךְ with some form of one, or more, of the general terms: “Fertility,” “protection,” and “success.”<sup>31</sup> Some scholars regard blessing (בִּרַךְ) solely in relation to fertility, focusing specifically on the command, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill!” (Gen. 1:22 – cf. Gen. 1:28; 9:1).<sup>32</sup> These scholars define the root בִּרַךְ by focusing exclusively on how it is used within the Primeval History. C. Westermann writes, “Interpreters are unanimous about the meaning of the blessing in the primeval story [Primeval History]: blessing is the power of fertility.”<sup>33</sup> For Westermann, the terms רַבָּה (multiply), פָּרָה (fruitful), and מָלֵא (fill), in the Primeval History, explain the blessing (בִּרַךְ).<sup>34</sup> A number of scholars view fertility and success as synonymous,<sup>35</sup> as their concept of fertility is not limited to

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<sup>31</sup> Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*. The New Cambridge Bible Commentary. (New York, New York: Cambridge, 2009); Brueggemann, *Genesis*; U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I: From Adam to Noah Genesis I-VI* 8. Translated by Israel Abrahams. (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1961); U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part II: From Noah to Abraham Genesis VI 9 – XI 32: With and Appendix: A Fragment of Part III*. Translated by Israel Abrahams. (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1964); Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Vol. 15 of *New Studies in Biblical Theology*; ed. D. A. Carson; Downers Grove: Inter Varsity, 2003); Edwin Firmage, “Genesis 1 and the Priestly Agenda” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 82 (1999): 97-114; Gruneberg *Abraham*; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*. 2 vols. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament 1-2. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990-1995); Miller, “Syntax”; Mowvley, *The Concept*; Johs. Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture I-11*. Translated by Aslaug Mikkelsen Moller. (London/Copenhagen: Geoffrey Cumberlege/Branner og Korch, 1926); Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of the Book of Genesis*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1988); John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992); John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis: The International Critical Commentary*; (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1963); Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis: The JPS Torah Commentary*; (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989); Gary V. Smith, “Structure and Purpose in Genesis 1-11.” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 20 no. 4 (1977) : 307-19; Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*; Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001); Wenham, *Exploring*; Wenham, *Word Biblical*; Westermann, *Genesis I-11*; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*; Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*. (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1974).

<sup>32</sup> Cassuto, *Genesis I–VI* 8, 51; Dempster, *Dominion*, 61; Firmage, “Genesis 1”, 102; Hamilton, *The Book*, 131, 139, 372; Skinner, *A Critical*, 28; Smith, “Structure”, 311, 314; Wolff, *Anthropology*, 95.

<sup>33</sup> Westermann, *Genesis I-11*, 140.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 140-141.

<sup>35</sup> Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 137; Pederson, *Israel*, 198; Ross, *Creation*, 263; Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 155; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 205; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 149.

offspring. These scholars define the root בֵּרַךְ in light of its use in Genesis as a whole, as well as other uses outside of the Book of Genesis. G. Wenham is a good example of this group of scholars. He writes, “God’s blessing is most obviously visible in the gift of children, as this is often coupled with ‘being fruitful and multiplying.’ But all aspects of life can express this blessing: crops, family, and nation (Deut. 28: 1-14).”<sup>36</sup> C. Westermann succinctly writes, “Both as a verb and a noun the root בֵּרַךְ means the power of fertility, growth, success (bestowed).”<sup>37</sup> K. Gruneberg, broadening the scope of ‘success’, writes, “God’s blessing makes humans prosperous in any or every aspect of their lives. Material success and having descendents often receive emphasis – since in the ancient Israelite worldview they were perhaps the two most important factors in prosperity – but blessing cannot be reduced to these.”<sup>38</sup>

Along with scholars’ concepts of fertility and success being derived from Genesis and the rest of the Hebrew Bible, the concept of protection is developed as well.<sup>39</sup> The terms used may differ: protection, well-being, preservation, but the idea is the same: as part of בֵּרַךְ, the recipient will experience some form of safeguarding. G. Wenham refers to the blessing as being equivalent to protection and success.<sup>40</sup> In Wenham’s commentary on Genesis he writes, “God’s blessing is manifested most obviously in human prosperity and well-being, long life, wealth, peace, good harvests, and children are the items that figure most frequently in lists of blessing such as [Gen.] 24:35-36; Lev. 26:4-13; Deut. 28:3-15.”<sup>41</sup> U. Cassuto, basing his understanding of the blessing of Abraham in Gen. 12 on Num. 6, writes, “The concept of blessing signifies the bestowal of all good, protection from all evil (Num. 6:24), the granting of grace (Num. 6:25),

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<sup>36</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 24.

<sup>37</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 149.

<sup>38</sup> Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 165.

<sup>39</sup> See Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 37; Cassuto, *Genesis I-VI* 8, 313; Miller, “Syntax”, 473; Wenham, *Exploring*, 40; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275; Westermann, *Genesis I-II*, 161.

<sup>40</sup> Wenham, *Exploring*, 40.

<sup>41</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275.

and enduring happiness and peace (Num. 6:26).”<sup>42</sup> C. Westermann writes, “The continued effectiveness of the blessing is [...] ‘preservation’.”<sup>43</sup>

The three terms: “Fertility,” “protection,” and “success” will continue to function as the baseline by which scholars define the root בָּרַךְ.

### ***1.3.1.2 Life and Prosperity***

This category: Life and prosperity, though very similar to the first category (Fertility, Protection, and Success), is somewhat nuanced. It is the contention of this thesis that what these scholars refer to as “life” and “prosperity,” are basically synonymous with “fertility” and “success,” respectively, but because these scholars do not effectively define the terms (“life” and “prosperity”), it would be presumptuous for this thesis to do so on their behalf. Therefore, these scholars will be categorized separately.<sup>44</sup>

The terms, “life” and “prosperity,” though being somewhat similar to “fertility” and “success,” are generally used in a more abstract way. W. Brueggemann writes, “Blessing theology is creation theology [...] The ‘force of life’ has been implanted by the creator into all of creation. It is this ‘force of life’ that constitutes the substance of blessing.”<sup>45</sup> T. Brodie writes, “Blessing [...] is like a stream of divine energy and life.”<sup>46</sup> P. Rotenberry writes, “Blessing means primarily the active outgoing of the divine goodwill or grace which results in prosperity

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<sup>42</sup> Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI 32*, 313.

<sup>43</sup> Westermann, *Genesis I-II*, 161.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas L. Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue: A Literary, Historical, & Theological Commentary*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Walter Brueggemann, “Ministry Among: The Power of Blessing.” *Journal for Preachers* Easter (1999): 21-29; Murtonen, *The Use*; Horst Dietrich Preuss, *Old Testament Theology* (vol. 1 of *Old Testament Theology*; trans. L. G. Perdue; Louisville, Kent.: Westminster John Knox, 1995); Rotenberry, “Blessing”; Sarna, *Genesis*; Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible*.

<sup>45</sup> Brueggemann, “Ministry Among”, 21.

<sup>46</sup> Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue*, 114.

and happiness amongst men.”<sup>47</sup> C. Westermann states, “Blessing in its original sense meant the power of life.”<sup>48</sup> These abstract terms or phrases: “The force of life,” “divine energy and life,” “the power of life” are never clearly defined, though the contexts in which they are used suggest that fertility and procreation are being implied. H. Mowvley, a scholar found in the first category (Fertility, Protection, and Success), criticizes the abstract nature in which the root בֵּרַךְ is here defined. Mowvley writes, “In the Old Testament [...] the blessing is a solemn, deliberate act through which specific and concrete advantages are conveyed. [...] [Blessing] is much more than a vague wish or hope.”<sup>49</sup> The concept of “prosperity” refers to, “material prosperity,”<sup>50</sup> and “fortune.”<sup>51</sup> But the abstract nature of the use of the term “life” continues to be a hindrance towards a more comprehensive definition of the root בֵּרַךְ.

### 1.3.1.3 *Shalom*

Although J. Hempel’s<sup>52</sup> definition of the root בֵּרַךְ is similar to many of the scholars’ definitions in the previous two categories, he summarizes his definition with the term, “shalom.” Hempel defines the root בֵּרַךְ in the following way: “The word *shalom* is the best illustration of how blessing comes to include everything—freedom from threats and dangers, the possession of quiet security, good fortune and well-being to the greatest extent conceivable.”<sup>53</sup> The concept is similar to those espoused by other scholars who use the terms: “Peace,”<sup>54</sup> “happiness,”<sup>55</sup> and

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<sup>47</sup> Rotenberry, “Blessing”, 35-36. Rotenberry is here agreeing with, and quoting, A. Richardson (*A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, ed. Alan Richardson, p. 33, art. “Bless,” by the editor).

<sup>48</sup> Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible*, 59.

<sup>49</sup> Mowvley, “The Concept”, 75.

<sup>50</sup> See Murtonen, *The Use*, 165; Sarna, *Genesis*, 89.

<sup>51</sup> Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, 180.

<sup>52</sup> J. Hempel (Johannes Hempel, “Die Israelischen Anschauungen von Segen und Fluch im Lichte Altorientaischer Parallelen.” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* N.S. 4) is summarized in Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible*, 21-23.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted from Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible*, 22.

<sup>54</sup> Preuss, *Old Testament*, 180; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275.



“well-being.”<sup>56</sup> At the root of scholars’ use of all of these terms, are the concepts of success, protection, fortune and happiness. G. Wenham sums it up well: “What modern secular man calls ‘luck’ or ‘success’ the OT calls ‘blessing’.”<sup>57</sup>

Since the root בֵּרַךְ appears both in the Primeval history and the Patriarchal Narratives, the relationship between these two parts of Genesis is important to assess.

### 1.3.2 Connection vs. Disconnection between the Primeval History & the Patriarchal Narratives

The conclusions that scholars have drawn, regarding the connection, or the lack thereof, between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives, will be categorized under three generalized headings: 1) Scholars that recognize a strong connection between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives;<sup>58</sup> 2) Scholars that recognize both a connection, and a strong disconnection, between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives;<sup>59</sup> 3) Scholars that view the opening verses of Gen. 12 as the bridge between the two sections of Genesis.<sup>60</sup>

Before moving on, two points need to be made here: 1) All scholars agree that there is a connection between the two sections of Genesis. The means, and the degree of connection, are

<sup>55</sup> Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI 32*, 313; Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 101; Pederson, *Israel*, 182; Rotenberry, “Blessing”, 35-36; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 24.

<sup>56</sup> Mowvley, “The Concept”, 75; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275.

<sup>57</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275

<sup>58</sup> W. Brueggemann, *Genesis*; George W. Coats, *Genesis: With an Introduction to Narrative Literature*. Vol. 1 of *The Forms of the Old Testament Literature*. Edited by G. M. Tucker. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1983); Dempster, *Dominion*; James M. Hamilton, “The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham.” *Tyndale Bulletin* 58 no. 2 (2007): 253-73; Moberly, *The Theology*; Ross, *Creation*.

<sup>59</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*; Gruneberg, *Abraham*; Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005); Speiser, *Genesis: Intro*; Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible*; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*.

<sup>60</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*; Wenham, *Exploring*; Wenham, *Word Biblical*; Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible*; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*.

the points of dispute amongst scholars; 2) Because the generalized categories created in this thesis do not perfectly represent all scholars, some scholars will be found in more than one of the generalized categories.

### ***1.3.2.1 Strong Connection***

Scholars that recognize a strong connection between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives generally do so by identifying literary and thematic associations between the two parts of the Book of Genesis. The methodological techniques that these scholars employ all fall within the generalized category of synchronic methodologies.

R. W. L. Moberly<sup>61</sup> utilizes both synchronic and diachronic methodologies in his development of a theology for the book of Genesis, though his determination of a strong connection between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives is based solely on synchronic techniques. Moberly employs a canonical approach to the text, making associations within the book of Genesis as a whole, as well as the rest of the Pentateuch and the Hebrew Bible, in order to develop a theology that he believes most closely represents the truest meanings within the text. He states that, “any sharp distinction between chapters 1-11 and 12-50 [of Genesis] has no warrant in the biblical text itself.”<sup>62</sup> Moberly recognizes a unifying thematic premise of sin and God’s gracious, salvific action within the book of Genesis. He argues that if the Primeval History and Patriarchal Narratives are separated into two completely isolated units, the theme would come to an abrupt end in chapter eleven. Moberly views the calling/blessing of Abraham as God’s salvific response to the abrupt ending in the story of the Tower of Babel and

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<sup>61</sup> Moberly, *The Theology*.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

the scattering of the nations (Gen. 11:1-9).<sup>63</sup> For this reason, he concludes that the Book of Genesis should not be separated in to two distinct parts.

G. W. Coats<sup>64</sup> also employs both synchronic and diachronic methodologies in his approach to the text of Genesis, though is primarily focused on analyzing the Book of Genesis via synchronic techniques. Coats views the Primeval History, as well as the stories of Abraham [Patriarchal Narratives], as saga, which he defines as, “a long, prose, traditional narrative.”<sup>65</sup> He too recognizes a connection between the Tower of Babel in Gen. 11 and the calling/blessing of Abraham in Gen. 12. For Coats, the connection is brought about by contrasting the disunity created between the people of the earth at Babel, with the unity that the calling/blessing of Abraham seeks to bring about for all the people of the earth.<sup>66</sup> He adds to this that the promise made to Abraham; to be made into a great nation, is a direct response to the crisis created by Sarah’s barrenness in Gen. 11:30, and thus, also connects the two parts of Genesis.<sup>67</sup>

J. Hamilton<sup>68</sup> endeavors to prove that the promises made to Abraham in Gen. 12 were the antidote to the curses handed down by God in what is commonly referred to as the ‘Fall’ (Gen.

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<sup>63</sup> Moberly, *The Theology*, 144. See also Arnold, *Genesis*, 126-127; Dempster, *Dominion*, 77; Louis F. Mauldin, “Singularity and a Pattern of Sin, Punishment, and Forgiveness.” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 10 no. 1 (1983): 41-43; Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 149; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 203; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 245.

<sup>64</sup> Coats, *Genesis: With an Introduction*.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 108. See also Arnold, *Genesis*, 132; Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 106; Hamilton, *The Book*, 372; Hamilton, “The Seed”, 261; Jenkins, “The Great Name”, 45-46; Mauldin, “Singularity”; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 202.

<sup>67</sup> Coats, *Genesis: With an Introduction*, 107. See also Arnold, *Genesis*, 128; Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 116; George Van Pelt Campbell, “Refusing God’s Blessing: An Exposition of Genesis 11:27-32.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 165 (2008): 278; Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI 32*, 313; Hamilton, *The Book*, 372; Ross, *Creation*, 263; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 126-127.

<sup>68</sup> Hamilton, “The Seed”.

3).<sup>69</sup> Hamilton argues that there is a direct connection between the curses handed down by God and the promises made to Abraham.<sup>70</sup>

By means of narrative criticism of the Book of Genesis, focusing primarily of the *toledot* formula found within the structure of the text, A. Ross<sup>71</sup> sees a strong connection between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives. He states:

“A survey of Genesis revealed that, in its present, canonical form, the book is a unified work, for it exhibits a consistent structure, a common theme, and a progressive development of that theme within the structure. The book arranges the traditions from the past in a series of sections, entitled *toledot* (‘generations’ or ‘account’).”<sup>72</sup>

The four aforementioned scholars are not alone in their belief that there is a strong relationship between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives. Other scholars that deserve mention are W. Brueggemann<sup>73</sup> and S. Dempster,<sup>74</sup> both of whom also recognize a strong connection between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives, for all, or some, of the same reasons as the aforementioned scholars.

### ***1.3.2.2 Connect/Disconnect***

Though all scholars recognize some degree of connection between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives, this section is devoted to those scholars that place more emphasis on the disconnection, rather than the unifying factors. Generally, scholars who place more emphasis on the disconnection between the two sections of the Book of Genesis, do so by emphasizing diachronic methodologies in their study of the Book.

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<sup>69</sup> Hamilton, “The Seed”, 253-254.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 272-273.

<sup>71</sup> Ross, *Creation*.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>73</sup> Brueggemann, *Genesis*.

<sup>74</sup> Dempster, *Dominion*.

C. Westermann's seminal three-volume commentary on the Book of Genesis primarily employs diachronic techniques as he explores both the Primeval History (Volume I<sup>75</sup>) and the Patriarchal Narratives (Volumes II<sup>76</sup> & III<sup>77</sup>) in the Book of Genesis. In his first volume Westermann seeks to understand the Primeval History as a whole, but does so by exploring the composition of the text and its various author(s), or sources, as well as its redactor(s); believing that the clearest interpretation of the text is to be found through an understanding the author(s)/redactor(s), and of their historical context(s).<sup>78</sup>

Not only does Westermann believe that the Primeval History should be regarded as separate from the Patriarchal Narratives, but he goes so far as to say, "chs. 1-11 of Genesis must be regarded as a separate element of the Pentateuch, that is, as a relatively self-contained unit, and not primarily as a part of 'Genesis.'"<sup>79</sup>

Westermann's belief in a strong disconnection between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives is twofold: 1) He recognizes that different authors/redactors hands were at work in the two sections of Genesis. According to him, the Priestly school (P) is the primary hand at work in the Primeval History;<sup>80</sup> while he regards the Yahwistic source (J) as the primary authorial hand at work in the Patriarchal Narratives.<sup>81</sup> 2) Because different authors/redactors hands were at work, he considers that varying intentions exist behind the diverse sections of the Book. He writes, "The primeval story [Primeval History] speaks about the basic elements of the

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<sup>75</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*.

<sup>76</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*.

<sup>77</sup> Claus Westermann, *Genesis III, 37-50*. Translated by J. J. Scullion S.J. (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1982).

<sup>78</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 18.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>81</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 24. It is also important to note here, that though Westermann sees P and J as the primary author(s)/redactor(s) within the Book of Genesis, he does not limit Genesis to those two authorial schools, nor does he disallow interplay between the different author(s)/redactor(s) within the different sections of the Book.

world and of humanity, the patriarchal story [Patriarchal Narratives] of the basic elements of human community.”<sup>82</sup> Westermann adds, that these authors, or sources, used material from the oral tradition, stating, “We cannot avoid the fact that both J and P in Gen 1-11 not only adapted and refashioned their material, but also were heirs of an already formed tradition.”<sup>83</sup> Because Westermann recognizes, at least, three different authorial hands/contexts for what is now referred to as the Book of Genesis, he regards, at least, three differing intentions behind the text(s).

E. A. Speiser<sup>84</sup>, another scholar who primarily employs diachronic methodologies in his study of the Book of Genesis, also recognizes a strong disconnection between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives. He writes, “The break between Primeval History and the Story of the Patriarchs [Patriarchal Narratives] is sharper than is immediately apparent.”<sup>85</sup>

Speiser, like Westermann, views different authorial/editorial hands at work within the two sections of the Book of Genesis, yet he also recognizes the disconnection for another reason. For Speiser, the disconnection is, “underscored by the scope of the two subdivisions of Genesis.”<sup>86</sup> He states, “The patriarchal narratives take up four-fifths of the entire book, yet they cover only four generations of a single family. Primeval History, on the other hand, has the whole world as its stage, and its time span reaches back all the way to Creation.”<sup>87</sup> Again, like Westermann, the differences that Speiser points out, force him to recognize that these different author(s)/redactor(s) had very different intentions and purposes in their writings, and this, in itself, would create a strong disconnection between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives.

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<sup>82</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 23.

<sup>83</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 64.

<sup>84</sup> Speiser, *Genesis: Intro*.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, LIII.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, LIII.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, LIII.

Other scholars that are worthy of mention at this point are V. Hamilton,<sup>88</sup> B. Arnold<sup>89</sup> and K. Gruneberg,<sup>90</sup> all of whom emphasize a strong disconnection between the two sections of the Book of Genesis. These scholars draw their conclusions for one, or more, of the same reasons as the aforementioned scholars.

### ***1.3.2.3 Gen. 12 as the Bridge between the PH and the PN***

As a final category in order to classify varying scholars and their beliefs with regard to the connection/disconnection between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives, are those scholars who recognize that the opening verses of Gen. 12 function as a bridge between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives.

G. Wenham,<sup>91</sup> a scholar who utilizes both diachronic and synchronic methodologies in his exploration the Book of Genesis, is one of the scholars who recognizes the pivotal nature of the calling/blessing of Abraham. Wenham sees both the unity and disunity between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives. For Wenham, however, the Yahwist's (J's) use of the root בֵּרַךְ in Gen. 12:1-3 is significant. According to him, "Blessing not only connects the patriarchal narratives with each other, it also links them with the primeval history. The promises of blessing to the patriarchs are thus a reassertion of God's original intentions for man."<sup>92</sup> The pivotal nature of the calling/blessing of Abraham is brought out by the five uses of the root בֵּרַךְ in these three short verses (Gen. 12:1-3). Wenham recognizes the importance of the root בֵּרַךְ in both the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives, and believes that the

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<sup>88</sup> Hamilton, *Handbook*.

<sup>89</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*.

<sup>90</sup> Gruneberg, *Abraham*.

<sup>91</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

author(s)/redactor(s) specifically made use of the root in Gen. 12:1-3, in order to connect both sections of the Book of Genesis.

C. Westermann, though being a scholar who sees a strong disconnection between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives, also recognizes that the author(s)/redactor(s) of Gen. 12:1-3 used this section of the book to connect the two separate sections. Westermann agrees with Wenham that the Yahwist specifically used the root בֵּרַךְ to connect the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives.<sup>93</sup> He writes:

“What is peculiar to the biblical primeval story [Primeval History] is that it links the account of the primeval period with history. Both J and P prefix the primeval story to a history which begins with the call of Abraham. The transition from one to the other is smooth, and herein lies the key to their meaning for Israel. The whole of the primeval story is thereby completely freed from the realm of myth. [...] The genealogies are part of the human condition and remain so in Gen 1-11. P states explicitly that they are the working out of the blessing given at creation and that it is this same blessing which is at work in the succession of generations leading up to Abraham as well as in the line which takes its beginning from him.”<sup>94</sup>

Therefore, Westermann views the calling/blessing of Abraham as a connective unit between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives.

G. Von Rad, another scholar that recognizes a strong disconnection between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives, also recognizes the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) as the linchpin which joins the two sections of Genesis. Similar to both Wenham and Westermann, he recognizes the use of the root בֵּרַךְ in Gen. 12:1-3 as having a connective function for the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives.<sup>95</sup> According to him, the pericope is both an ending to the Primeval History and a beginning to the Patriarchal Narratives. He writes:

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<sup>93</sup> Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible*, 6.

<sup>94</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 66.

<sup>95</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 159-60.



“It is therefore not wholly apt to find in ch. 11 that conclusion to the primeval history, as is usually done; for then the primeval history has a much too independent and isolated importance. Rather, its real conclusion, indeed its key, is ch. 12.1-3, for only from there does the theological significance of this universal preface to saving history become understandable.”<sup>96</sup>

Along with the three aforementioned scholars, W. Brueggemann<sup>97</sup> and N. Sarna<sup>98</sup> are both worthy of mention at this point, as they too identify the pivotal nature of the opening verses of Gen. 12 for both the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives.

## 1.4 Methodology

This thesis, though in dialogue with historical-critical scholars, will not be employing diachronic methods in its study of the root **ברך** within Gen. 12:1-3 and the Primeval History. This thesis will be dealing with the text in its final form, seeking to interpret the text by utilizing clues which lie within the text itself.<sup>99</sup>

### 1.4.1 Textual Criticism

Regardless of the methodology a scholar privileges, the first endeavor in the study of any Biblical text is textual criticism. P. K. McCarter defines textual criticism as:

“An enterprise that has as its objective the enhancement of the integrity of a text. It is based on the study of the extant copies of the text. The critic compares these copies and attempts to draw conclusions about the divergences between them. The goal is the recovery of an earlier more authentic- and therefore- superior- form of the text.”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 154.

<sup>97</sup> Brueggemann, *Genesis*.

<sup>98</sup> Sarna, *Understanding*.

<sup>99</sup> Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 4.

<sup>100</sup> P. K. McCarter, *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible* (Vol. 11 of *Old Testament Series*. Edited by Gene M. Tucker. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 12.

This thesis will, therefore, examine the variants of each of the seven pericopes studied herein, in order to determine which variant most plausibly reflects the more ancient and original text.

#### 1.4.2 Macro-Syntactic Analysis

Once the textual criticism has been completed, this thesis will then be able to proceed by translating all of the passages using a macro-syntactic analysis.<sup>101</sup> Traditional translations rely, primarily, on morphology in order to indicate the tense and mode of a verbal form. In many ways, these traditional translations rely heavily on the translator's instincts, as the "grammatical rule," often does not fit the context.<sup>102</sup> A macro-syntactic analysis of a text goes beyond a traditional translation, in that it takes larger grammatical constructions into account, as well as the way that those grammatical constructions interact with one another. This type of analysis involves three main steps, each with unique sub-steps.

The first step towards a macro-syntactic analysis of a text is to divide the text according to its linguistic attitude; that is, to separate the text into the categories of narrative and discourse. Hebrew verb forms act differently, and have different nuances, according to the linguistic attitude within which the verbal clause is found.<sup>103</sup>

The second step is to analyze each clause for its grammatical construction, in order to determine whether the information provided is anticipated (future), retrospective (past), or presented at the level of the story itself (degree 0). The grammatical construction also provides information as to the intended mode (i.e. volitional mode), along with information regarding the

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<sup>101</sup> Other names used for a macro-syntactic analysis are: "discourse analysis" and "text linguistics".

<sup>102</sup> For a more detailed explanation of the problems related to theories based on tense see B. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 458-462.

<sup>103</sup> See A. Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb in Classical Hebrew Prose* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1990), 29-34.

prominence of the various clauses (i.e. whether the clause provides background or foreground information).<sup>104</sup>

The final step is the macro-syntactic analysis itself. This step assimilates the previous two steps, and analyzes how the individual clauses interact with one another. A. Niccacci<sup>105</sup> has identified numerous ways in which specific grammatical constructions interact with one another based upon the linguistic attitude, linguistic perspective, and prominence of the clause and those surrounding it. This macro-syntactic analysis allows for the most comprehensive translation of a text to be made. P. Miller notes, “The issues in understanding the syntax are not merely superficial, for the meaning of the text is to a large degree uncovered by a careful understanding of the relation of the clauses to each other.”<sup>106</sup>

Due to the fact that traditional Biblical translations have not utilized a macro-syntactic analysis on the text, this thesis is confident that the technique will bring out nuances within the text that have thus far gone unnoticed, and will help in clearly drawing out the stated hypothesis. One of the primary resources that will be utilized for the macro-syntactic analysis of the texts will be A. Niccacci’s *Syntax of the Verb in Classical Hebrew Prose*.<sup>107</sup> This thesis will also make use of B. Waltke and M. O’Connor,<sup>108</sup> as well as W. Gesenius<sup>109</sup> for basic grammatical considerations.

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<sup>104</sup> Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 19-22.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Miller, “Syntax”, 472.

<sup>107</sup> Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*.

<sup>108</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, *Introduction*.

<sup>109</sup> Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar* (ed. E. Kautzsch; trans. A. E. Cowley; Mineola: Dover, 2006).

### 1.4.3 Word Study

Due the fact that the purpose of this thesis is to determine what it means for Abraham to, “be a blessing!” (Gen. 12:2), in light of the Primeval history, a study of the root בֵּרַךְ within the context of Gen. 12:1-3, and its uses in the Primeval History, is essential.

A word study takes three areas of analysis into account: 1) The meaning, or various meanings, of a particular root. This entails that this thesis consider the various meanings of the root בֵּרַךְ within the Hebrew Bible at large, as well as its Semitic cognates within other Ancient Near Eastern languages. 2) The nuances which are associated with the meaning of the root itself, from those that are associated with the root only within certain contexts. Gruneberg here offers a helpful example, “That God’s blessing is often (e.g. Deut 28; Mal 3:10) seen as consequent on human obedience forms no part of the meaning of [the root] בֵּרַךְ.”<sup>110</sup> 3) The fact that meaning can be found within the context of a pericope at large, not simply based on a word itself. Gruneberg writes, “meaning may operate at the level of sentences or discourses as well as that of words: the meaning of the whole may not be merely the sum of the parts, and conversely a word’s meaning may not be separable from its place in the whole.”<sup>111</sup> This thesis will perform macro-syntactic analyses of the root בֵּרַךְ in order to determine the meaning of the root within its contextual framework.

A word study will be undertaken, within the seven pericopes studied in this thesis, for the purpose of gaining a clearer understanding of the meaning of the root בֵּרַךְ within the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). The goal of broadening the word study beyond the single pericope of Gen. 12:1-3, is for the purpose of gaining a more comprehensive definition of the root בֵּרַךְ, as it pertains to the calling/blessing of Abraham.

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<sup>110</sup> Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 91.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

## CHAPTER TWO: BLESSING IN THE PRIMEVAL HISTORY

This chapter focuses on the six passages within the Primeval History where the root בִּרַךְ is found. In order to define the meaning of the root בִּרַךְ, as well as to begin examining the ramifications of that definition, the first step will be to present a translation of each of the six passages based upon a macro-syntactic<sup>112</sup> analysis.<sup>113</sup> Translations that differ notably with other modern English translations,<sup>114</sup> along with any textual critical problems of significance, will be discussed throughout the body of the thesis, while minor differences will be addressed in footnotes.

### 2.1 Gen. 1:20-23: Blessing of the Sea Creatures and Birds

The first occurrence of the root בִּרַךְ is found in Gen. 1:22. Verses 20-23 are included in this translation in order to provide some context for the term:

<sup>1:20</sup>And God said, “May the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and may birds fly above the earth over the face of the expanse of the heavens.”<sup>115</sup>

<sup>1:21</sup>And God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds<sup>116</sup>, and every winged bird according to their kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>1:22</sup>And God blessed

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<sup>112</sup> The macro-syntactic breakdowns of each pericope can be found in the Appendix – see p.160 below.

<sup>113</sup> It is important to reiterate that a macro-syntactic analysis assimilates the work done by a micro-syntactic analysis.

<sup>114</sup> Generally, the English Standard Version (ESV), New International Version (NIV), New King James Version (NKJV), and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), will be used as representatives of a larger whole.

<sup>115</sup> The Septuagint adds και ἐγένετο οὕτως, inserting וַיִּהְיֶה, similar to Gen. 1:7. According to E. Tov, “Scribes adapted many elements in the text to other details in the same verse, in the immediate context or in a similar one, in the same book and in parallel sections elsewhere in the Bible”. This seems to be the case here, where the text is modified to harmonize with Gen 1:7. See E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, (Minneapolis: Minn.: Fortress Press, 1989), 261. Wenham notes that the additional insertion here would ruin, “the sevenfold appearance of the phrase in the MT.” (Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 4). Thus, the reading of the MT is to be preferred.

<sup>116</sup> The Samaritan Pentateuch, along with the codex Vaticanus, have the usual spelling of a plural noun with 3mp suffix (נִידִים), which may be a similar reading to נִידִים in Gen. 4:4. The MT omits the yod of the pronominal suffix of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural. This thesis has chosen to translate the term as it is found in the MT, due to the Samaritan Pentateuch’s harmonizing tendencies, and because the alteration is found in only one codex of the Septuagint. See Tov, *Textual*, 85.

them, saying, “Be<sup>117</sup> fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas! And may the birds multiply on the earth.”<sup>1:23</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

A few words need to be said about this translation. This thesis has purposefully translated this pericope in such a way as to emphasize the volitional nature of God’s creative actions. The verb שָׂרַץ in v. 20b is a Yiqtol verb in the first position of the clause (יִשְׂרָצוּ הַמַּיִם), and should therefore be translated as a jussive.<sup>118</sup> V. 20d contains the verb עוֹף in a Waw-X-Yiqtol construction (וְעוֹף יְעוּפֹף עַל-הָאָרֶץ), which would normally be translated as indicative future.<sup>119</sup> However, because this clause is preceded by a volitional clause,<sup>120</sup> it too must be translated as a jussive.<sup>121</sup> The same phenomenon occurs in v. 22c, where the verb רָבָה is found in a Waw-X-Yiqtol construction (וְהָעוֹף יָרֵב בָּאָרֶץ), preceded by a clause containing three imperatives (פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאֵוּ הַמַּיִם-אֶת בְּיַמֵּי). V. 22c must, therefore, continue the volitional nature of the preceding clause and be translated as a jussive.<sup>122</sup> The text is here intentionally emphasizing the volitional nature of creation.

Most major English versions of the Bible<sup>123</sup> translate the above mentioned clauses using “let” as an auxiliary verb to indicate the jussive mood of the verbs. The auxiliary verb “may,” however, is a more appropriate translation. Jussive, in its truest sense, is used to express desire or will.<sup>124</sup> The verb “to let” implies one of two things; either that permission is being granted, or

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<sup>117</sup> This clause begins with three imperatives, and is followed by a volitional verb. This thesis has used an exclamation point to separate the three imperatives from the following jussive verb. See Waltke and O’Connor, *Introduction*, 571. For a background on the volitional forms (Jussive, Imperative, and Cohortative) see Waltke and O’Connor, *Introduction*, 564.

<sup>118</sup> Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 75 §55.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 77 §55 #1.

<sup>120</sup> In actual fact, this clause is preceded by a Simple Noun Clause (SNC), but for the purposes of macro-syntactic analysis, only the verbal clauses affect one another. Therefore the affective preceding clause is actually v. 20b (a volitional clause).

<sup>121</sup> Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 78 §55 #2.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 78 §55 #2.

<sup>123</sup> See footnote 114 above.

<sup>124</sup> Gesenius, *Gesenius*, 32; Waltke and O’Connor, *Introduction*, 565.

that a command (imperative), masked in politeness, is being made.<sup>125</sup> The verb “may” on the other hand, is used specifically to express a wish or desire.<sup>126</sup> In these verses, God is not granting permission to the waters and birds, respectively, nor is He commanding them. Instead, the text is indicating that these acts of creation stem from the will of God. W. Brueggemann rightly comments, “The creator has a purpose and a will for creation. The creation exists only because of that will.”<sup>127</sup> God is expressing His desire, or will, that, “the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures,” that, “birds fly above the earth over the face of the expanse of the heavens,” and that, “the birds multiply on the earth.” The text purposefully contains grammatical constructions which emphasize the volitional nature of God’s creative work. These findings may be important for the overall understanding of the blessing of Abraham, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Commentators try to hold the tension between Creation stemming from the word of God, and the will of God, in Gen. 1. When commenting on the opening chapter of Genesis, U. Cassuto writes, “The purpose of the Torah in this section is to teach us that the whole world and all that it contains were created by the word of the One God, according to His will, which operates without restraint.”<sup>128</sup>

It is important to point out at this point that most volumes on Hebrew grammar will note that, generally speaking, the jussive form is used to express desire or will.<sup>129</sup> These texts will then go on to point out that translating jussive verbs is not as straight forward as it may have first appeared. B. Waltke and M. O’Connor encourage translators to try to, “distinguish between

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<sup>125</sup> *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. 11th ed., s.v. “let.”

<sup>126</sup> *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. 11th ed., s.v. “may.”

<sup>127</sup> Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 13.

<sup>128</sup> Cassuto, *Genesis I-VI* 8, 7. See also Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 54-55; Waltke ad Fredricks, *Genesis*, 56.

<sup>129</sup> Gesenius, *Gesenius’*, 32; Waltke and O’Connor, *Introduction*, 565.

*jussive form* and *jussive sense*.”<sup>130</sup> They then state, “it is the latter we are chiefly concerned with.”<sup>131</sup> Waltke and O’Connor make these statements after examining the Aaronide blessing found in Num. 6:24-26, saying, “For example, in the Aaronide blessing, only two of the six verbs are formally jussives, yet all have the same volitional sense. In such a situation all the verbs are to be taken as jussives.”<sup>132</sup> These scholars make no claims as to why all of the verbs in the Aaronide blessing are to be taken as jussives, nor do they offer practical ways in which a translator is meant to distinguish between *jussive form* and *jussive sense*. Based upon the examples that are offered, one is led to conclude that they are drawing conclusions between *form* and *sense* based upon preconceived theological understandings. An example would be the creation account in Gen. 1, where W. Gesenius speaks of, “the creative *commands*.”<sup>133</sup> Gesenius, Waltke and O’Connor all cite Gen. 1:3 as an example of a jussive used as a command.<sup>134</sup> Waltke and O’Connor explicitly state that a special case of a jussive directed from a superior to an inferior, “is presented by divine jussives; these have the force of a command.”<sup>135</sup> Yet, Waltke and O’Connor offer no grammatical proof as to why this is the case. And therein lies the circular nature of the logic at hand: jussives are used as an expression of desire or will, but can also be used as a command because they are used in Gen. 1 as a command. In other words, because the jussives of Genesis 1 are *interpreted* as commands, jussives must, at times, be used as commands. The problem is that the inferred meaning is rooted in the belief that the creative acts of God are based upon His command, not an expression of His will. By using terms like, “*divine jussives*,”<sup>136</sup> the implication is that a deity cannot, or would not, use a jussive in the

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<sup>130</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, *Introduction*, 566.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 566.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 566.

<sup>133</sup> Gesenius, *Gesenius*’, 321 (italics added).

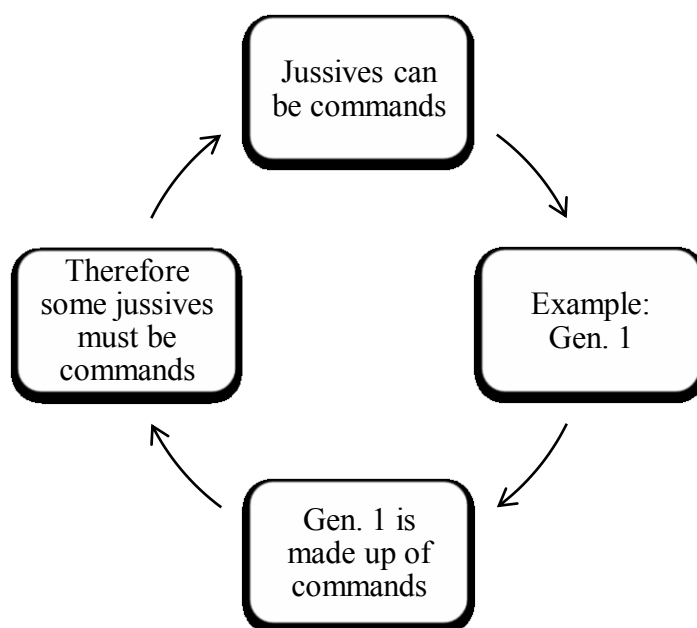
<sup>134</sup> Gesenius, *Gesenius*’, 321; Waltke and O’Connor, *Introduction*, 568.

<sup>135</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, *Introduction*, 568.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 568 (italics added).



same way that a created being would. A deity would not express their desire or will, to their inferiors. Therefore, these jussives must carry the force of a command. It is because these authors see these *divine jussives* as commands, that they are forced to state that jussives can at times be commands. The circular nature of the argument can be seen in the diagram below:



**Figure 1: Circular reasoning**

Because the text deliberately emphasizes God's desire, or will, through its extensive use of volitive forms, it is essential that a translation of the pericope convey the volitive mood.

Furthermore, the theological ramifications of translating and interpreting God's creative actions as an expression of His desire or will, as opposed to His commands, will be significant in a proper understanding of the purpose of divine blessing.

A word here must be said about the root בָּרַךְ in v. 22. Due to the use of the root בָּרַךְ in v. 22, along with its connection to the imperative command – מִלְּאֵתְהֶם בְּיָמִים (Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas!) – many scholars are quick to conclude that

the root means fertility and life-giving potency, or some combination thereof.<sup>137</sup> As stated above, this thesis is strategically withholding from defining the root בִּרַךְ until the root has been analyzed within the six pericopes of the Primeval History where the root occurs. The goal of this strategic withholding is so that the formation of the preliminary conclusions form a more comprehensive definition of the root בִּרַךְ.

## 2.2 Gen. 1:24-31: Blessing of Man and Woman

The second occurrence of the root בִּרַךְ is found in Gen. 1:28. Verses 24-31 are included in this translation in order to provide some context for the term:

<sup>1:24</sup> And God said, “May the earth bring forth creatures according to their kinds, livestock and creeping things and the beasts of the earth according to their kind.” And it was so. <sup>1:25</sup> And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>1:26</sup> And God said, “May we make man in our image, after our likeness<sup>138</sup>, so that they may rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth<sup>139</sup> and over all the creeping things that creep on the earth.

<sup>1:27</sup> So<sup>140</sup> God created man in His image,  
in the image of God<sup>141</sup> He created him,

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<sup>137</sup> See Cassuto, *Genesis I-VI* 8, 51; Hamilton, *The Book*, 131; Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch*, 94; Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 54; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 63; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 24; Westermann, *Genesis I-II*, 140.

<sup>138</sup> The Samaritan Pentateuch, here, prefixes וְכִי to בִּרַךְ. The difference with the MT is insignificant and has no implications for the translation.

<sup>139</sup> The Peshitta (Versio Syriaca Consensu Testium) adds *hjwt*’ inserting הָיָה before הָאָרֶץ. Westermann notes that the addition is an attempt to harmonize the verse with vv. 24 and 25 (Westermann, *Genesis I-II*, 79). This thesis has translated the term as it is found in the MT, due to the fact that the addition is only in this one translation (The Peshitta), not in the Masoretic Text or the Septuagint, both of which are considered to be the basis for the Peshitta itself (See Tov, *Textual*, 152). Furthermore, the more difficult reading is that found in the MT.

<sup>140</sup> “So” is used here to point out that what is to come is background information, meaning that until the end of the verse, the author(s)/redactor(s) use a grammatical construction (X-Qatal) which implies that the prominence and linguistic perspective are background and recovered information, respectively. (See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 48 §27; 168 #7). The addition of “so” is not different from other modern English translations, and for that reason will not be discussed in this thesis.

male and female He created them<sup>142</sup>.

<sup>1:28</sup> And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it; ruling over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens<sup>143</sup> and over every living thing<sup>144</sup> that creeps on the earth!<sup>145</sup>” <sup>1:29</sup> And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with fruit yielding seed. They will be food for you<sup>146</sup>.

<sup>1:30</sup> And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, which has the breath of life, I have [given]<sup>147</sup> every green<sup>148</sup> plant for food.” And it was so. <sup>1:31</sup> And God saw everything which He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Much has been written about this sixth day of Creation. More specifically, much has been written about the role, purpose, and meaning of mankind being created *in the image* and *after the likeness* of God. The two primary questions that scholars have sought to answer for centuries are: Why is God referred to in the plural form in v. 26? And secondly, what does it mean for mankind to be created in the image and after the likeness of God? More attention will

<sup>141</sup> The Textus Graecus Originalis of the Septuagint is lacking the term *רָצַח*, probably because it seems redundant with the following sentence. The redundancy, which will be demonstrated below, is necessary for the appositional and chiasmic structure of the text, and seems intentional (See pp.39-40 below). For this reason the MT is to be preferred.

<sup>142</sup> This thesis has set v. 27 apart from the rest of the passage in such a way as to emphasize the appositional nature, and the chiasmic structure, of the verse. See Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 33; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 188. The change of structure is not different from other modern English translations, and for that reason will not be discussed in this thesis.

<sup>143</sup> The Septuagint adds *καὶ πάντων τῶν κτηνῶν καὶ πάσης τῆς γῆς*. The Peshitta adds *wbb 'jr'*, inserting *ובבהמה*, similar to Gen. 1:26. This thesis has not included the additional phrases in its translation, agreeing with Wenham that they are, “unnecessary harmonistic additions.” (Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 5).

<sup>144</sup> The Samaritan Pentateuch has the term as *הויה* here. Due to the Samaritan Pentateuch's tendency towards harmonization, the MT is to be preferred. See Tov, *Textual*, 85. See also Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 5; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 79.

<sup>145</sup> All of the verbs within this discourse are imperatives, and for that reason, this thesis has punctuated the statement with an exclamation mark.

<sup>146</sup> This sentence has been separated to emphasize the shift in linguistic perspective and prominence. The two previous clauses (X-Qatal and SNC) both carry a prominence that emphasizes background. Here, the grammatical constriction is X-Yiqtol. X-Yiqtol, in discourse, is to be translated as indicative future. See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 77 §55.

<sup>147</sup> The verb “to give” is actually not present in the Hebrew, but because the term *הָאֵכָל* is present, literally translated as “to food”, this thesis is translating the clause as implying that the plants are given as food.

<sup>148</sup> Some Codexes of the Manuscriptus Hebraicus and the Septuagint have *וַיֵּאָרְא*, which the note in the Biblical Hebraica Stuttgartensia says, is probably a similar preface to Gen. 9:3. This thesis has therefore chosen to translate the term as it is presented in the MT, as the note suggests harmonization. See Tov, *Textual*, 261.

given to the latter question, as it is more pertinent to this thesis, but a word must be said about the former as well.

The first two clauses of Gen. 1:26 begin, “And God said, ‘May we make man in our image, after our likeness.’” Table 1 shows the breakdown of the two clauses:

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
26a	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God said,
26b	נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדִמוּתֵנוּ	Yiqtol (Dis.)	“May we make man in our image, after our likeness,

**Table 1: Breakdown of Gen. 1:26**

The plural forms of נַעֲשֶׂה (1<sup>st</sup> person common plural – “May *we* make”), בְּצַלְמֵנוּ (1<sup>st</sup> person common plural suffix – “in *our* image”), and כְּדִמוּתֵנוּ (1<sup>st</sup> person common plural suffix – “after *our* likeness”) have been the focus of much attention for centuries. The various conclusions that have been postulated over the use of these plural forms have been reviewed by G. Wenham.<sup>149</sup>

What follows is a summary of his review:

- 1) Beginning with Philo, most Jewish commentators have generally concluded that the plural is used here because God is addressing his heavenly court, citing Isa. 6:8 as an example.<sup>150</sup>
- 2) Citing the Epistle of Barnabas and Justin Martyr as examples, Wenham points out that from very early on Christians concluded that the plural of Gen. 1:26 was in reference to Christ and the Trinity.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>149</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 27-28.

<sup>150</sup> Wenham notes that Skinner, Von Rad, Zimmerli, Kline, Mettinger, Gispén, and Day are all modern scholars who prefer this explanation.

<sup>151</sup> Wenham does note that modern Christian (and non-Christian) scholars generally do not hold this view today.

- 3) Gunkel suggests that the polytheistic implications of Gen. 1:26 are residual, based upon the P source, who would have taken over a Creation account that had been handed down, while recognizing that the polytheism would not be a view held by the author (P) himself.<sup>152</sup>
- 4) Some scholars conclude that the use of the plural in Gen. 1:26 is an example of the plural of majesty, what is commonly referred to in English as the *royal* 'we'.<sup>153</sup>
- 5) Another view is that the plural of Gen. 1:26 is a plural of self-deliberation, or self-encouragement.<sup>154</sup>
- 6) Finally, some scholars consider that the plural of Gen. 1:26 is a reference to the plurality of the Godhead. This view differs with the view stated above (2), in that this view does not go so far as to suggest Trinitarian theology. Instead, this view holds that the plurality of the Godhead is God (the Creator) and His Spirit, which was present and active in Gen. 1:2.<sup>155</sup>

Of the six views presented, this thesis finds the most compelling arguments in the first (1) view, which places the least amount of strain on the text. Generally, the similarities between the Creation account found in Gen. 1:1-2:3 and those found in other Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) literature are widely recognized.<sup>156</sup> There are references to heavenly courts in other ANE

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<sup>152</sup> Wenham notes that the vast majority of modern scholars disagree with this assessment, stating that, "Gen. 1 is distinctly antimythological in its thrust, explicitly rejecting ancient Near Eastern views of creation. Thus modern commentators are quite agreed that Gen. 1:26 could never have been taken by the author of this chapter in a polytheistic sense." (Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 28)

<sup>153</sup> Wenham points to Keil, Dillmann, and Driver as scholars that hold this view.

<sup>154</sup> Wenham notes that Jouen, Cassuto, Schmidt, Westermann, Steck, Gross, and Dion, are all scholars that hold this view.

<sup>155</sup> Wenham cites Clines and Hasel as two scholars that hold this view.

<sup>156</sup> See Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1991), 7; John H. Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context: A Survey of Parallels Between Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Regency, 1989), 34. Of course, it is important to say that the dissimilarities are just as, if not more, important than the similarities between the creation account in Genesis and the creation accounts in other ANE literature.

literature,<sup>157</sup> as well as within the Hebrew Bible itself,<sup>158</sup> thus, there is no need to suggest that this cannot be implied in the plural forms of Gen. 1:26.<sup>159</sup>

Many scholars have pointed out that regardless of the reason behind the plural forms found in Gen. 1:26, the introduction itself, “And God said, ‘May we make man in our image, after our likeness’” is perhaps even more significant. Von Rad writes, “The creation of man[kind] is introduced more impressively than any preceding work by the announcement of a divine resolution: ‘Let us make man.’ God participates more intimately and intensively in this than in the earlier works of creation.”<sup>160</sup> A brief survey of the Creation account in Gen. 1 will suffice in making the point:

Verse	Day of Creation	Translation
3	1	And God said, “May there be light,”
6	2	And God said, “May there be ...”
9	3	And God said, “May the waters ...”
11	3	And God said, “May the earth ...”
14	4	And God said, “May there be lights ...”
20	5	And God said, “May the waters ...”
24	6	And God said, “May the earth ...”
26	6	And God said, “ <i>May we make ...</i> ”

**Table 2: Breakdown of Creation account**

B. Arnold refers to the change in the introductory pattern, as a rhetorical device that signifies that God is actively stepping in to create mankind.<sup>161</sup> Scholars also suggest that the conspicuous

<sup>157</sup> See Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 203.

<sup>158</sup> See 1 Kings 22:19; Isa. 6:2-8; Job 1-2.

<sup>159</sup> For a more detailed study on the divine council see G. Couturier, “La vision du conseil divin. Étude d’une forme commune au prophétisme et à l’apocalyptique,” *Science et Esprit* 36 no. 1 (1984): 5-43.

<sup>160</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 55.

<sup>161</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*, 44. See also Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue*, 136; Ross, *Creation*, 112.

change in the introductory pattern of Gen. 1:26 functions as a way of specifically emphasizing the uniqueness of mankind compared to the rest of creation, rather than emphasizing the plural forms themselves.<sup>162</sup>

The recognition of the uniqueness of mankind amidst the rest of God's creation, leads to the second question that scholars have been asking for centuries; namely, what does it mean for mankind to be created in the image and after the likeness of God? Again, a brief survey of the various conclusions that scholars have drawn over the centuries will provide a suitable framework from which to explore the implications of mankind being created in the image and likeness of God. C. Westermann reviewed the various conclusions that have been proposed over the centuries.<sup>163</sup> What follows is a summary of his review:<sup>164</sup>

- 1) The terms “image” (צֶלֶם) and “likeness” (דְּמוּת) are distinct aspects of mankind's nature. In this view, “image” denotes the natural qualities of man (personality, reason, etc.) which make mankind resemble God, while “likeness” denotes the supernatural (i.e. ethical) graces which make the redeemed godlike.<sup>165</sup> Westermann, Gentry, Wellum, and Wenham all reject this view based upon the conclusion that it does not accord with the rest of Genesis, or the Hebrew Bible as a whole.
- 2) The terms צֶלֶם and דְּמוּת refer to spiritual qualities or capacities that mankind shares with His Creator.<sup>166</sup> This view has a number of modern proponents,<sup>167</sup> but Gentry, Wellum,

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<sup>162</sup> See Arnold, *Genesis*, 44; Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue*, 136; Ross, *Creation*, 112.

<sup>163</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 148-158.

<sup>164</sup> Similar reviews were conducted by P. Gentry and S. Wellum, and G. Wenham (See Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 185-186; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 29-32.). What follows, includes some of their thoughts as well, though this thesis follows Westermann's general format and structure.

<sup>165</sup> This view originated from Irenaeus, approximately 180 C.E.

<sup>166</sup> This view was first fully developed by Philo.

<sup>167</sup> Westermann references the following modern scholars: Dillmann, König, Procksch, Sellin, Eichrodt, Heinisch, Junker, Cross, Ceuppens, Müller, and Fohrer.

and Wenham all find it wanting due to the lack of clarity on what these *qualities* and *capacities* are, and the basis upon which these *qualities* and *capacities* are determined.

- 3) The terms **צֶלֶם** and **דְמוּת** refer to an external, physical form. In favour of this interpretation, the most frequent meaning of **צֶלֶם** is a physical image or statue.

Westermann, Gentry, Wellum, and Wenham all point out that the Hebrew Bible clearly emphasizes the invisibility and incorporeality of God (cf. Deut. 4:12, 15-16).

Westermann also notes that the separating of the physical from the corporeal is not something that is justified by the Hebrew Bible. These scholars point out that in other ANE cultures when a king is referred to as being the image of God, the language has more to do with the function of a king, rather than the physical appearance of the king.

- 4) The terms **צֶלֶם** and **דְמוּת** refer to both physical and spiritual components of mankind.

Westermann, here, recognizes the importance of not separating the physical and the corporeal, but does not discuss the details of either of these components. He offers no explanation as to what these physical and spiritual components are, and are not, nor does he explain the relationship between the two components themselves.<sup>168</sup>

- 5) The fifth view of the meaning of the terms **צֶלֶם** and **דְמוּת** refers to mankind as God's counterpart, mankind's ability to relate to God. According to this view, being created in the image and likeness of God means that mankind has the capacity to enter into relationship with Him, speak to Him, and make covenants with Him.<sup>169</sup> Westermann is in general agreement with this view, though Gentry and Wellum, as well as Wenham, find it lacking. Gentry, Wellum, and Wenham do not believe that this view adequately explains passages like Gen. 5:3 and Ex. 25:40, where the terms are also employed.

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<sup>168</sup> Gentry, Wellem, and Wenham do not cite this view in their surveys.

<sup>169</sup> Though Karl Barth was not the originator of this view, he is generally regarded as its greatest proponent.



Gentry, Wellum, and Wenham believe that the passages cited refer to the product of being created in the image of, not the process thereof. For this reason, they do not agree with Westermann that this view is the best explanation of what it means for mankind to be created in the image and likeness of God.

- 6) Being created in the image and likeness of God makes mankind God's representatives on earth. This view is derived from the common ANE view that the king was a representative of the divine on earth. Ancient Babylonian texts have images standing in the place of god, while ancient Egyptian and Assyrian texts describe the king as the image of God. Wenham points out that in ANE cultures, "the divine spirit was often thought as indwelling an idol, thereby creating a close unity between the god and his image."<sup>170</sup> Westermann rejects this view, recognizing that in other ANE literature and cultures the king is regarded as god's representative, but never the people as a whole. Gentry, Wellum, and Wenham all accept this view, objecting to Westermann's rejection on the grounds of Biblical symbolism. These scholars point out that in the Hebrew Bible; it is not uncommon for a class of objects to represent an individual. Wenham points to sacrificial animals representing Israel, and the high priest representing Israel to God as examples of similar symbolism within the Hebrew Bible.

Westermann does mention other views, but categorizes them under the generalized heading, "Other Explanations," stating that, "there are some other explanations that should be mentioned even though they have had little impact."<sup>171</sup> Because these other views have had *little impact*, they will not be summarized in this thesis.

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<sup>170</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 31.

<sup>171</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 154.

Along with Gentry, Wellum, and Wenham, this thesis considers the sixth (6) view to be the most convincing.<sup>172</sup> There are two primary reasons for this thesis' assessment of the meaning of mankind being created in the image and likeness of God as mankind being God's representatives on earth: The first has to do with the terms *צֶלֶם* and *דְּמוּת* in the Hebrew Bible, as well as their similarities in other ANE literature and cultures. Second, are the royal implications of *צֶלֶם* and *דְּמוּת*, and how they connect to the term *רֹדֵה* in the following clause (v. 26c).

The term *צֶלֶם* can be found 17 times in the Hebrew Bible. G. Wenham notes that the interpretation of the term is problematic because of its uncertain etymology and its rarity in the Bible.<sup>173</sup> Wenham writes, "Of the 17 occurrences, 10 refer to various types of physical image, e.g., models of tumors (1 Sam. 6:5); pictures of men (Ezek. 16:17); or idols (Num. 33:52); and two passages in the Psalms liken man[kind]'s existence to an image or shadow (Ps. 39:7; 73:20). The other five occurrences are in Gen. 1:26, 27; 5:3; 9:6."<sup>174</sup> The five occurrences in Genesis either deal with mankind being made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27; 9:6), or of offspring being in the image of their progenitor (Gen. 5:3). The other 12 occurrences of the term *צֶלֶם* found in the Hebrew Bible, all refer to one thing/object functioning as a representative of another.

The meaning of the term *דְּמוּת* is more clear cut. G. Wenham states:

"It has an ending typical of an abstract noun and is obviously related to the verb *דָּמָה* 'to be like, resemble.' The noun can be used to denote a model or a plan (1 Kg. 16:10). Most of its 25 occurrences are to be found in Ezekiel's visions, e.g., 1:5, where it could be aptly rendered 'something like'; 'the likeness of'"<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> For other scholars that agree with this view, see Arnold, *Genesis*, 45; Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 32; Dempster, *Dominion*, 59; Hamilton, *The Book*, 135-136; Sarna, *Genesis*, 12; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 65.

<sup>173</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 29.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 29.

C. Westermann, noting the representative nature of דְמוּת writes, “The word [דְמוּת] is used in Hebrew only when something is compared with something else.”<sup>176</sup>

Both C. Westermann and N. Sarna recognize the relative interchangeability of the terms דְמוּת and צֶלֶם.<sup>177</sup> Sarna explains, “This unique combination of expressions, virtually identical in meaning, emphasizes the incomparable nature of human beings and their special relationship to God. The full import of these terms can be grasped only within the broader context of biblical literature and against the background of ancient Near Eastern analogues.”<sup>178</sup> The background of ancient Near Eastern analogues, of which Sarna writes, are found primarily in Egyptian and Mesopotamian culture. He continues:

“The words used here to convey these ideas [that mankind, being created in the image and likeness of God, are meant to be God’s representatives on earth] can be better understood in the light of a phenomenon registered in both Mesopotamia and Egypt, whereby the ruling monarch is described as ‘the image’ or ‘the likeness’ of a god. In Mesopotamia we find the following salutations: ‘The father of my lord the king is the very image of Bel (*salam bel*) and the king, my lord, is the very image of Bel’; ‘The king, lord of the lands, is the image of Shamash’; ‘O King of the inhabited world, you are the image of Marduk.’ In Egypt the same concept is expressed through the name Tutankhamen (*Tut-ankh-amun*), which means ‘the living image of (the god) Amun,’ and in the designation of Thutmose IV as ‘the likeness of Re.’”<sup>179</sup>

As previously noted,<sup>180</sup> some scholars reject these “analogous” examples from other Ancient Near Eastern cultures on the grounds that they clearly portray the king as god’s representative, not the people as a whole. Many scholars have recognized the clear distinction between the Biblical use of דְמוּת and צֶלֶם, and those of other ANE cultures, but these scholars see an

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<sup>176</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 146.

<sup>177</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, 12; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 145-146.

<sup>178</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, 12.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>180</sup> See p.36 above.

intentional “democratization” of the divine representation.<sup>181</sup> They note the dramatic difference between the Hebrew Bible’s use of representative language with that of other ANE literature, and presume that the implications are intended by the Biblical author(s)/redactor(s). V.

Hamilton writes:

“It is well known that in both Egyptian and Mesopotamian society the king, or some high-ranking official, might be called ‘the image of God.’ Such a designation, however, was not applied to the canal digger or to the mason who worked on a ziggurat. Gen. 1 may be using royal language to describe simply ‘man.’ In God’s eyes all of mankind is royal. All of humanity is related to God, not just the king. Specifically, the Bible democratizes the royalistic and exclusivistic concepts of the nations that surrounded Israel.”<sup>182</sup>

The same striking implications can be seen in v. 27. The chiastic structure in Gen. 1:27 was noted above.<sup>183</sup> It is worth noting here that G. Wenham specifically states, “The three clauses [of Gen. 1:27] are in apposition. The first two are arranged chiastically and emphasize the divine image in man, while the third specifies that women also bear the divine image.”<sup>184</sup> The implication being that the image of God is democratized across genders. A macro-syntactic analysis of Gen. 1:27 makes the intended emphasis of the verse even more clear. According to A. Niccacci, the author(s)/redactor(s) will use the shift from the Wayyiqtol verbal construction to the X-Qatal verbal construction, with emphasis on the ‘X’ element of the clause.<sup>185</sup> Table 3 highlights the ‘X’ elements<sup>186</sup> of Gen. 1:27, in order to demonstrate the emphases in these clauses:

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<sup>181</sup> Hamilton, *The Book*, 135; Sarna, *Genesis*, 12; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 66; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 31.

<sup>182</sup> Hamilton, *The Book*, 135.

<sup>183</sup> See footnote 142 above.

<sup>184</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 33. It is worth noting that Wenham is here emphasizing the divine image in both man and woman – all three clauses are in apposition.

<sup>185</sup> Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 70.

<sup>186</sup> The ‘X’ elements themselves are underlined.

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
1:27a	וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ	Wayyiqtol	So God created man in His image,
1:27b	בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ	X-Qatal	<u>in the image of God</u> He created him,
1:27c	זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:	X-Qatal	<u>male and female</u> He created them.

**Table 3: Emphatic elements in Gen. 1:27**

The divine image in both male *and* female (i.e. all of humanity), is the expressed emphasis of Gen. 1:27. Thus the same phenomena of the *democratization* of the image of God amongst all of humanity can be seen in v. 27, reinforcing the conclusion that all of mankind are meant to bear the image of God.

Though the emphasis of this pericope is on the *democratization* of the image of God in all mankind, the implications of the language used, as royal/kingdom language, should not be done away with. N. Sarna writes, “Without doubt, the terminology employed in Genesis 1:26<sup>187</sup> is derived from regal vocabulary.”<sup>188</sup> This is especially clear in the term רָדָה ‘to rule’ in v. 26 and v. 28.<sup>189</sup>

Many scholars recognize a clear connection between mankind being created in the image and likeness of God, and their ruling (רָדָה) *over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over all the creeping things that creep*

<sup>187</sup> The commentary actually reads, “Genesis 2:26” here, which is an obvious typographical error, as there is no Gen. 2:26.

<sup>188</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, 12. See also, Arnold, *Genesis*, 45; Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue*, 136; Dempster, *Dominion*, 59; Hamilton, *The Book*, 135; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 66; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 31; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 152.

<sup>189</sup> See Dempster, *Dominion*, 62; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 196; Hamilton, *The Book*, 138; Ross, *Creation*, 113; Sarna, *Genesis*, 13; Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 58; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 66; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 158.

on the earth.<sup>190</sup> Even a cursory examination of Gen. 1:26 makes the connection between mankind being created in the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דְּמוּת) of God, and their ruling (רדה), explicitly clear. What many scholars fail to recognize is how intricately connected these terms are. The WeYiqtol verbal construction, of which רדה is the active verb (v. 26c), is of the utmost importance. The breakdown of v. 26 can be seen in table 4:

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
26a	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God said,
26b	נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדִמוּתֵנוּ	Yiqtol (Jussive) (Dis.)	“May we make man in our image, after our likeness,
26c	וַיְרֹדוּ בְּדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ	WeYiqtol (Dis.)	so that they may rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth
26d	וּבְכָל־הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל־הָאָרֶץ:	SNC (Dis.)	and over all the creeping things that creep on the earth.

**Table 4: Breakdown of Verb Forms in Gen. 1:26**

The author(s)/redactor(s) use of the WeYiqtol verb form is crucial to a proper understanding of verse. Within discourse, in the Hebrew Bible, the WeYiqtol verb form expresses aim or intention.<sup>191</sup> Therefore, the writer(s) are not merely connecting the terms צֶלֶם, דְּמוּת, and רדה,

<sup>190</sup> See Arnold, *Genesis*, 45; Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 32; Cassuto, *Genesis I-VI* 8, 58; Dempster, *Dominion*, 59; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 188; Hamilton, *The Book*, 137; Ross, *Creation*, 112; Sarna, *Genesis*, 12; Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 57; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 66; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 158; Wolff, *Anthropology*, 226-227.

<sup>191</sup> See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 90

they are making a statement that the purpose of being created in the *צֶלֶם* and *דְמוּת* of God is for the expressed aim or intention of *רדה* (ruling).<sup>192</sup>

The unambiguous connection between *צֶלֶם*, *דְמוּת*, and *רדה* reinforces the kingdom/royal language of *צֶלֶם* and *דְמוּת*, based upon the fact that *רדה* is widely accepted as kingdom/royal language.<sup>193</sup> H.-J. Zobel, in the process of defining the root *רדה*, states, “In order to establish as solid a base as possible, our analysis of secular [biblical usage, yet not religious prescriptions] usage will begin where most of the texts using *rdh* appear to be concentrated: statements concerning kings.”<sup>194</sup> V. Hamilton, connecting *צֶלֶם* to *רדה*, concisely states, “Thus, like ‘image,’ [*צֶלֶם*] *exercise dominion* [*רדה*] reflects royal language.”<sup>195</sup>

The blatant kingdom/royal language of v. 26 underpins the royal-representative nature of mankind being created in the image and likeness of God. The text clearly implies that mankind has been created in the image and likeness of God for the purpose of exercising royal dominion as God’s representatives.

Gen. 1:28 is similar to Gen. 1:26 in both structure and purpose. Table 5 contains both verses, demonstrating their similarities:

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
26a	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God said,
26b	נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ	Yiqtol Jussive (Dis.)	“May we make man in our image, after our likeness,

<sup>192</sup> Arnold, Gentry & Wellum, Ross, Von Rad, and Wenham all state that *רדה* clearly expresses the purpose of mankind’s creation, though their determination of “purpose” is not necessarily based on the Hebrew syntax. See Arnold, *Genesis*, 45; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 188; Ross, *Creation*, 112; Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 57; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 33.

<sup>193</sup> See Dempster, *Dominion*, 59; Sarna, *Genesis*, 12; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 66; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 33; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 158.

<sup>194</sup> H.-J. Zobel, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry. Translated by David E. Green. Vol. 13, s.v. “*רדה* *rādâ*; *רדה* *rādâ II*; *רדה* *rādâd*.” (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 332-333.

<sup>195</sup> Hamilton, *The Book*, 138.

26c	וַיְרֹדוּ בְּדָגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ	WeYiqtol (Dis.)	so that they may rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth
26d	וּבְכָל־הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל־הָאָרֶץ:	SNC (Dis.)	and over all the creeping things that creep on the earth.
28a	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God blessed them.
28b	וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God said to them,
28c	פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹּשֶׁהָ	Volitional Imperative (Dis.)	“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it;
28d	וַיִּרְאוּ בְּדָגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם	WeQatal (Dis.)	ruling over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens
28e	וּבְכָל־חַיָּה הָרֹמֶשֶׁת עַל־הָאָרֶץ:	SNC (Dis.)	and over every living thing that creeps on the earth!”

**Table 5: Comparison of Gen. 1:26 and 1:28**

As is evident from the table above, the structure of the two verses is very similar: Wayyiqtol (Narrative introduction), volitional verb clause (WeYiqtol or WeQatal), followed by a SNC. Instead of using the WeYiqtol verb form in the clause containing *וַיְרֹדוּ*, as the writer(s) had done in v. 26c, the WeQatal verb form is used in v. 28d. As previously noted, WeYiqtol is used to express aim or intention. Similarly, WeQatal is used to express result.<sup>196</sup> The conclusions are the same. The aim/purpose of mankind being created in the image and likeness of God, in v. 26, was for them to rule (*וַיְרֹדוּ*). In v. 28, the result/purpose of the blessing bestowed upon mankind is for them to rule (*וַיְרֹדוּ*). In both verses, it is clear that the expressed purpose of the creation of mankind and the blessing of mankind, respectively, are similar:

<sup>196</sup> WeQatal, expressing result, is especially the case when preceded by a volitional form. See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 89-90.



Creation of Mankind—v. 26	Blessing of Mankind—v. 28
so that they may rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over all the creeping things that creep on the earth.	ruling over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that creeps on the earth!”
Expressed aim or intention	Expressed result

**Table 6: Gen. 1:26 & 28—Comparison of Expressed Purpose of the Creation and Blessing of Mankind**

Because the author(s)/redactor(s) used the same verb, *רדה*, in such distinct verbal forms, this pericope will prove to be of great significance throughout this thesis, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the purpose of God’s blessing.

It is important here to note, scholars’ cursory evaluation of the root *ברך* in this pericope. Because most scholars have previously defined of the root *ברך*, based upon v. 22, they simply import that same meaning into v. 28.<sup>197</sup> As previously noted, scholars generally define the root *ברך* as meaning fertility and life-giving power, or some combination thereof.<sup>198</sup> C. Westermann writes, “We can refer back to v. 22 for the explanation of this verse [v. 28]. The only difference is that in v. 22 the blessing is introduced with *לאמר*, and in v. 28 with *ויאמר להם*.”<sup>199</sup> Some scholars do note differences between the blessings that God bestows in v. 22 and v. 28, but the distinctions drastically miss the point that the author(s)/redactor(s) seem intent on making. S. Dempster, B. Waltke and C. Fredricks recognize the blessing that God bestows on mankind as generally the same as that bestowed upon the fish and birds in v. 22; namely, fertility. For these scholars, the subtle difference is the recognition of a connection between the blessing that God bestowed upon mankind, and mankind’s mandate to rule, therefore concluding that the blessing

<sup>197</sup> See Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 37; Cassuto, *Genesis I-VI* 8, 58; Hamilton, *The Book*, 139; Ross, *Creation*, 113; Westermann, *Genesis I-11*, 160.

<sup>198</sup> See p.28-29 above.

<sup>199</sup> Westermann, *Genesis I-11*, 160.

of fertility is the means to accomplish dominion (ruling).<sup>200</sup> N. Sarna and G. Wenham, following Westermann, also recognize a subtle difference between the blessings of v. 22 and v. 28, but for these scholars, the distinction lies within the personal nature in which the blessing is bestowed. In v. 22, the text reads, “and God said,” whereas in v. 28, the text reads, “and God said *to them*.”<sup>201</sup> Neither one of these explanations is sufficient in distinguishing the difference between God’s blessing of the fish and birds in v. 22, and God’s blessing of mankind in v. 28. In order to clearly demonstrate the distinction, both verses have been included in the table 7:

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
22a	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים לְאֹמֶר	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God blessed them, saying,
22b	פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלְאוּ אֶת-הַמַּיִם בַּיָּמִים	Volitional Imperative (Dis.)	“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas!
22c	וְהָעוֹף יִרְבַּ בָּאָרֶץ:	Waw-X-Yiqtol (Dis.)	And may the birds multiply on the earth.”
28a	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God blessed them.
28b	וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God said to them,
28c	פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלְאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹּשׁוּהָ	Volitional Imperative (Dis.)	“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it;
28d	וְרִדּוּ בְדֹגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם	WeQatal (Dis.)	ruling over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens
28e	וּבְכָל-תַּיִה הָרֹמֶשֶׂת עַל-הָאָרֶץ:	SNC (Dis.)	and over every living thing that creeps on the earth!”

**Table 7: Comparison of Gen. 1:22 and 1:28**

The structure of the two verses is clearly similar, but the conspicuous difference is the WeQatal verbal clause in v. 28d. Because the WeQatal verbal construction is used to express result, a

<sup>200</sup> Dempster, *Dominion*, 61; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 67.

<sup>201</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, 13; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 33.

proper understanding of the blessing bestowed upon mankind must take this resultative clause into consideration. Had the WeQatal verbal clause not been part of v. 28, had the author(s)/redactor(s) used a basic Waw-X-Yiqtol construction, it would be appropriate to agree with the aforementioned scholars that the blessings bestowed in the two verses are essentially identical. But due to the fact that the author(s)/redactor(s) intentionally change the verbal construction, one must allow that change to have its intended effect. If the WeQatal verb form is used to express result, then the only appropriate way to understand the blessing bestowed upon mankind in v. 28, is to recognize mankind's ruling as the result of the God's blessing.

The appropriate question then becomes, what does it mean for mankind to rule (רדה) as God's representatives? Though the term רדה can be understood as military language,<sup>202</sup> and can refer, "to the treading of the winepress,"<sup>203</sup> the term is generally not regarded as carrying negative connotations. H.-J. Zobel writes:

"Human dominion, limited to the earth and the animal kingdom, derives from being made in the image of God and is understood as an aspect of God's blessing. It follows necessarily that human dominion is a power bestowed by God and must serve to maintain God's order. Human rule must have positive consequences for the ruled; in ruling, humans must preserve their humanity and remain humane. Therefore human dominion can be understood only as an action for which humans are accountable to God. [...] Human dominion over the earth should therefore contribute to the preservation and benefit of God's creation."<sup>204</sup>

Most scholars agree that the invitation/command<sup>205</sup> given to mankind to rule, is a ruling that is not meant to be exploitative.<sup>206</sup> The view is best summed up by W. Brueggemann:

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<sup>202</sup> See Hamilton, *The Book*, 139; Ross, *Creation*, 113.

<sup>203</sup> Zobel, *Theological*, 334. Though scholars generally regard the "treading of the winepress" as a negative action, Zobel points out that, "Some scholars do, however, point out that the treading of grapes in the winepress is a positive action with respect to the end products, must and wine, or that the treading of grapes is a 're-fashioning activity,' so that ruling must be understood as a beneficial action." (Zobel, *Theological*, 334).

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 335-336.

<sup>205</sup> God both invites (v. 26 - jussive) and commands (v. 28 - imperative) mankind to רדה.

“It is now generally agreed that the image of God reflected in human persons is after the manner of a king who establishes statues of himself to assert his sovereign rule where the king himself cannot be present. (We may draw on this analogy only while recognizing its inadequacy, such plastic or sculpture is ‘fixed.’) The human creature attests to the Godness of God by exercising *freedom with* and *authority over* all the other creatures entrusted to its care. The image of God in the human person is a mandate of power and responsibility. But it is power as God exercises power. The image images the creative use of power which invites, evokes, and permits. There is nothing here of coercive or tyrannical power, either for God or for humankind. The power-laden image is further attested in the words ‘subdue [...] and have dominion’ (v. 28). [...] The ‘dominion’ here mandated is with reference to the animals. The dominance is that of a shepherd who cares for, tends, and feeds the animals. Or, if transferred to the political arena, the image is that of a shepherd king (cf. Ezek. 34). Thus the task of ‘dominion’ does not have to do with exploitation and abuse. It has to do with securing the well-being of every other creature and bringing the promise of each to full fruition. (In contrast, Ezek. 34:1-6 offers a caricature of the human shepherd who has misused the imperative of the creator.)”<sup>207</sup>

A proper understanding of what it means for mankind to be created *in the image* (צֶלֶם) and *after the likeness* (דְּמוּת) of God, with the expressed aim of ruling (רָדָה) on behalf of God, as well as being blessed (בֵּרַךְ) by God for the result of ruling on God’s behalf, has tremendous significance for this thesis. The implications drawn from these terms in Gen. 1 will greatly contribute to a proper understanding of what it means for Abraham *to be a blessing* (Gen. 12).

### 2.2.1 This Thesis’ Translation Compared with Other Modern Translations

Throughout this pericope the author(s)/redactor(s) stress the volitional nature of God’s creative actions by using Yiqtol verbs in the first position of their respective clauses (v. 24b יָצָא, and v. 26b עָשָׂה)<sup>208</sup>, or by the indirect jussive form WeYiqtol (v. 26c רָדָה)<sup>209</sup>. In order to express

<sup>206</sup> See Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue*, 136; Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 32; Hamilton, *The Book*, 138; Sarna, *Genesis*, 12; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 66; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 33; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 159.

<sup>207</sup> Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 32.

<sup>208</sup> See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 81 §56; 181 §153.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 94 §64 #2.

the jussive nature of these verbs, the continued use of the English auxiliary verb “may” has been employed, rather than the common modern English Biblical translation of “let.”

As discussed previously,<sup>210</sup> an important aspect of the WeYiqtol verbal construction is that it is used specifically to express aim or intention. For this reason, the translation proposed by this thesis does not simply emphasize the volitional nature of רדה in v. 26c, but also demarcates the clause as expressing aim and intention. Had the verb form been a Waw-X-Yiqtol construction, preceded by a volitional verbal clause, then the appropriate translation of v. 26 would have been, “And God said, ‘May we make man in our image, after our likeness, *and may they* rule over the fish of the sea ...’”<sup>211</sup> But because the author(s)/redactor(s) specifically used a verbal construction that demarcates the clause as expressing aim and intention, it is important that the translation emphasize this aspect as well. Thus, the English text should read, “*so that they may rule*”, signifying both the jussive nature of the verb form, as well as an expression of aim and intention. Many of the modern English translations<sup>212</sup> highlight the volitional nature of the verb, albeit as an imperative, but they do not demarcate the clause in any way as an expression of aim or intent.<sup>213</sup>

In v. 28d the verb רדה is found in the WeQatal verb form. The verb is preceded by a verbal clause containing four imperative verbs (פָּרוּ וּרְכוּ וּמְלְאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹּשֶׁהָ), therefore רדה should be translated as an imperative also.<sup>214</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to note the similarities between v. 28 and v. 22.<sup>215</sup> These two verses explicitly demonstrate the difference between a Waw-X-Yiqtol verbal construction preceded by a verbal clause containing

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<sup>210</sup> See footnote 191.

<sup>211</sup> If “may” is changed to “let” here, you would have the common modern English translation.

<sup>212</sup> See the ESV, KJV, NKJV, NLT, and NRSV as examples.

<sup>213</sup> The only exception that this thesis has come across is the NIV, which has translated the verb the same way that this thesis has.

<sup>214</sup> See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 82 §57.

<sup>215</sup> See Table 7.

imperatives, and a WeQatal verbal construction preceded by a verbal clause containing imperatives. When the imperative is followed by Waw-X-Yiqtol construction, the verb is to be translated as a jussive, whereas the WeQatal construction continues the imperative mood.

As indicated above,<sup>216</sup> another important aspect of the WeQatal construction is that it is meant to express result, and is used in discourse to provide anticipated information.<sup>217</sup> Hence the translation of the verb רדה in v. 28d as, “ruling”, which is meant to emphasize the imperative nature of the verb, while also highlighting the aspect of result found in the verb form. Most modern versions translate the clause in such a way as to emphasize the imperative nature of the clause, but fail to express the resultative nature of the verb form. They translate v. 28 as: “God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”<sup>218</sup> This thesis’ translation differs, in that it also expresses result. By translating רדה as “ruling”, the clause becomes more closely connected to the previous clauses, expressing the resultative nature of the clause’s verbal construction: “And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it; ruling over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that creeps on the earth!’” The implication of the WeQatal verbal construction in v. 28d signifies that, as a result of God’s blessing on mankind, they will rule, “over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that creeps on the earth!” It is imperative that a translation highlight this aspect of the verse.

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<sup>216</sup> See footnote 196.

<sup>217</sup> See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 168 #8.

<sup>218</sup> This translation is from the NASB, but the ESV, NIV, KJV are all basically the same.

### 2.3 Gen. 2:1-3: Blessing of the Seventh Day

The third occurrence of the root בִּרַךְ is found in Gen. 2:3. Verses 1-3 are included in this translation in order to provide some context for the term:

<sup>2:1</sup>Thus<sup>219</sup> the heavens and the earth were completed, and all the host of them.  
<sup>2:2</sup>And on the seventh<sup>220</sup> day God declared complete his work which he had made, and He rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. <sup>2:3</sup>And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all his work which God had created and made.

There is one minor, yet significant problem in vv.1 and 2, which has to do with the verb כָּלָה “to complete”. Most, if not all, modern English translations state that God completed (or finished) his work on the seventh day (v. 2). The implication being that the act of completing creation took place on the seventh day, yet the next clause of the same verse states that God rested on the seventh day. N. Sarna wrote, “This phrase caused embarrassment to ancient translators and commentators, for it seems to be out of harmony with the context, implying some divine activity also on this day.”<sup>221</sup> Ancient translations, such as the Peshitta, the Septuagint, and the Samaritan Pentateuch were aware of the problem and tried to resolve the issue by changing the day from הַשְּׁבִיעִי (the seventh) to הַשְּׁשִׁי (the sixth) in v. 2a. This difficulty, in and of itself, suggests that the MT is to be preferred, since the ancient translations tried to resolve the issue. The real problem however, is not the seventh or the sixth day, but the translation of the piel verb stem of כָּלָה in v.2. Interestingly, v. 1 also uses the verb כָּלָה, but in v. 1 the verb is found in the pual verb stem, emphasizing the attained condition of the heavens and earth – they are/were

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<sup>219</sup> The verb כָּלָה is found here in the Pual verb stem, which is very often used in the resultative sense (see Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction*, 420). Therefore, this thesis has added the word ‘Thus’ at the beginning of the pericope. This is not different from other modern English translations, and for that reason, will not be discussed in this thesis.

<sup>220</sup> The term הַשְּׁבִיעִי is slightly problematic. The Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint, and the Peshitta all replace it with הַשְּׁשִׁי. The MT is to be preferred in this case, as is explained in this section of the thesis.

<sup>221</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, 15.

completed.<sup>222</sup> V. 2, which uses the piel verb stem, rather than the pual, must then be understood differently from its counterpart in v. 1. Otherwise, the author(s)/redactor(s) would have used the same verb stem in both verses. The piel verb stem in v. 2 should be understood as declarative, emphasizing the fact that on the seventh day, God declared his work complete. B. Waltke and M. O'Connor state that this function of the piel stem is "based on a prior subjective judgement."<sup>223</sup> In this case, the declarative statement of v. 2 refers to the whole account of creation – Gen 1:1ff, and specifically to Gen 2:1, where the pual verb stem of כָּלָה indicates the state of creation as "completed". The piel verb stem (v.2) differs from the pual (v.1) in that the former is underlining the declarative aspect of the verb, drawing attention to God's judgment on the status of creation – God declares it complete, whereas the latter was simply emphasizing the state of creation – the heavens and the earth are/were completed. The nuance is significant, as we shall see below.<sup>224</sup>

Attention also needs to be drawn to the grammatical constructions in the pericope. There are only two verb forms in the nine clauses that form this pericope: Wayyiqtol and X-Qatal. The five Wayyiqtol verb forms simply move the story forward.<sup>225</sup> Table 8 contains the five Wayyiqtol verses, highlighting their function:

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<sup>222</sup> For the meaning of the pual verb stem as emphasizing the attained condition see Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction*, 418-419 §25.1.

<sup>223</sup> Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction*, 403 §24.2g.

<sup>224</sup> I am here, indebted to Dr. M.-F. Dion for drawing my attention to the different verbal stems of כָּלָה in this pericope.

<sup>225</sup> Wayyiqtol is the main verb form in narrative. Its function is to move the story forward. The linguistic perspective is degree zero, which means that the linguistic perspective is at the level of the story itself (See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 20 §3), while the prominence, or emphasis, is foreground (See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 20 §2).



Verse	Hebrew	English Translation
1a	וַיִּכְלֹ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ...	Thus the heavens and the earth were completed ...
2a	וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי	And on the seventh day God declared complete
2c	וַיִּשְׁבַּח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי	and He rested on the seventh day
3a	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי	And God blessed the seventh day
3b	וַיְמַלְא אֹתוֹ	and made it holy

**Table 8: The Function of the Five Wayyiqtol Verses**

Interspersed amongst the Wayyiqtol chains are four X-Qatal constructions that break the narrative Wayyiqtol chains. The functions of these X-Qatal constructions in this pericope are crucial to this thesis. A. Niccacci states, “Narrative develops by means of a chain of WAYYIQTOLs. When this chain is interrupted (that is, when a verb form is used which is not a WAYYIQTOL) it shows that the writer wishes to change the level of information.”<sup>226</sup> The Waw-X-Qatal verb form, in particular, can be used to express one of five things: anteriority, simultaneity, contrast, emphasis, and circumstance of the following Wayyiqtol.<sup>227</sup> Three of the four X-Qatals in this pericope are used to express anteriority, while the fourth is used for emphasis.

The three X-Qatal clauses that are used to express anteriority are a direct response to the Wayyiqtol clauses that precede each of them. Table 9 contains the Wayyiqtol clauses, along with their responsive X-Qatals:<sup>228</sup>

<sup>226</sup> Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 30 §9.

<sup>227</sup> See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 63-71 §40, 41, 42, 45, 48.

<sup>228</sup> Clauses 2 and 3 of v. 3 have been excluded from this table because their function is different from the clauses that have remained in the table. V. 3b and v. 3c form a grammatical construction that highlights the emphatic nature of the X-Qatal in v. 3c. It is important to note at this point that A. Niccacci, when offering an example of an emphatic X-Qatal, preceded by a Wayyiqtol, removes it from the context with which it is found, in order to highlight the connection of the clauses surrounding it, as well as the connection of the emphatic Wayyiqtol → X-Qatal itself (See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 69 §48).

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
2a	וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי	Wayyiqtol	And on the seventh day God declared complete
2b	מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה	X-Qatal	his work which he had made
2c	וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי	Wayyiqtol	and He rested on the seventh day
2d	מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:	X-Qatal	from all his work which he had made
3a	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי	Wayyiqtol	And God blessed the seventh day
3d	אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת	X-Qatal	which God had created and made

**Table 9: The Wayyiqtol Clauses and Responsive (Anteriority) X-Qatals in Gen. 2 and 3**

The Wayyiqtol clauses all focus on God's action on the *seventh day* specifically, while the connecting X-Qatal clauses focus on God's previous creative work. One of the main foci of this pericope, are God's actions (or inactions) on the *seventh day*: declaring the work of creation complete, resting, and blessing. The explicit use of מְלַאכָה (v.2b and v.2d) for work, and בָּרָא (v.3d) for create, in the X-Qatal constructions make it clear that all of the *work of creation* was done in the past. The juxtaposition of the *seventh day* with the previous six days emphasizes the difference between the work of creating that God had done on the previous six days, with His actions/inactions on this *seventh day*. The thrice repetition of the seventh day (הַשְּׁבִיעִי) makes it clear that the author(s)/redactor(s) are trying to emphasize the fact that all of these actions/inactions of God are occurring on this specific day.

The Wayyiqtol and X-Qatal constructions of v. 3, which were excluded above, continue to highlight the fact that one of the main foci of this pericope is the *seventh day* itself.<sup>229</sup> The structure of the second and third clauses of v. 3 can be seen in table 10:<sup>230</sup>

<sup>229</sup> Contra Westermann (*Genesis 1-11*, 172).

<sup>230</sup> The 'X' element has been underlined in both the Hebrew and the English.

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
3b	וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ	Wayyiqtol	and made it holy
3c	כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מְכַל-מְלָאכָתוֹ	X-Qatal	<u>because on it</u> He rested from all his work

**Table 10: Emphatic Clauses Gen. 2:3**

As noted above, the author(s)/redactor(s) will use the shift from Wayyiqtol to X-Qatal with emphasis on the ‘X’ element of the clause.<sup>231</sup> Placing the emphasis, in this particular case, on the *seventh day* itself – “because on *it* [the seventh day] He rested from all his work”. B. Bandstra points out the same thing, stating that the *target* of the first clause of v. 3 is the seventh day, and the *goal* of the second clause of v. 3 is the seventh day itself.<sup>232</sup> The focus of the pericope is then twofold: God’s actions/inactions on the seventh day, as well as a focus on the seventh day itself. Both foci are meant to set the day apart from the other days of creation. The author(s)/redactor(s) are going to great lengths to emphasize the uniqueness of this seventh day.

It is important to see if there is anything unique about the use of the root בָּרַךְ in this pericope, which will aid in shaping the conclusion of this thesis. This thesis has translated v. 3 as follows: “And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all his work which God had created and made.” The verse is explicit that God’s blessing (וַיְבָרֶךְ), and His making holy (וַיְקַדֵּשׁ), of the seventh day, is done because on it He is resting (שָׁבַת) from all His work (מְכַל-מְלָאכָתוֹ). C. Westermann points out that the term מְלָאכָה (work), “is the normal word for ordinary work.”<sup>233</sup> G. Wenham, taking note of the same thing, says, “It [מְלָאכָה] is the ordinary word for human work, and is therefore a little unexpected that the extraordinary divine

<sup>231</sup> See footnote 185.

<sup>232</sup> Barry Bandstra, *Genesis 1-11: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*. Vol. 1 of *Baylor Handbook on the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by W. Denis Tucker Jr. (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2008), 114.

<sup>233</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 170.

activity involved in creating heaven and earth should be so described.”<sup>234</sup> The fact that the word is used three times in this pericope does not seem accidental. The question that must be asked is: What is ordinary human work?<sup>235</sup> Up to this point in Genesis the only thing that we can assume to be ordinary human work is God’s invitation and command to רדה, to, “rule(ing) over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens (and over the livestock and over all the earth) and over all the creeping things (living things) that creep on the earth,”<sup>236</sup> which was the aim, intention, and result of God’s creating and blessing mankind, respectively. Therefore the “work” that man knows, thus far in the text, is to רדה, which is directly connected to the blessing that mankind received from God. When commenting on this pericope, T. Brodie connected the ruling (רדה) that mankind was commanded to have, with the work that they were blessed (ברך) to do.<sup>237</sup> If mankind has been created and blessed to rule, then to cease (rest from) that “work” would remove them from the blessing of their Creator God. The text’s emphasis on connecting God’s blessing (ויברך), and His making holy (ויקדש), of the seventh day, with His resting (שבת) from all His work (מכל־מלאכתו) on the seventh day is not only to create a pattern for mankind to emulate, as C. Westermann points out,<sup>238</sup> but that even in resting from the work that they have been blessed to do, mankind will remain within the divine blessing of their Creator God, as the seventh day itself has been set apart and blessed.

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<sup>234</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 35.

<sup>235</sup> C. Westermann answers this question by looking ahead. He approaches the text from a diachronic perspective, and views P as the author of Gen. 2:1-3, therefore his answer to the question reflects what ‘normal work’ at the time of authorship would entail (See Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 170).

<sup>236</sup> This thesis’ amalgamation of Gen. 1:26b and 1:28b.

<sup>237</sup> Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue*, 137.

<sup>238</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 170. See also Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 209; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 36.

## 2.4 Gen. 5:1-3: Reiteration of the Blessing of Man and Woman

The fourth occurrence of the root בִּרְךְ is found in Gen. 5:2. Verses 1-3 are included in this translation in order to provide some context for the term:

<sup>5:1</sup>This is the book of the generations of Adam. On the day God created man,  
in the likeness of God He made him.  
<sup>5:2</sup>Male and female He created them.<sup>239</sup>

And He blessed them and named them Man, on the day they were created. <sup>5:3</sup>And Adam lived 130 years, and he begat<sup>240</sup>, in his likeness, after his image<sup>241</sup>, and named him Seth.

There are two aspects of this pericope that are important to discuss, both of which connect it to preceding and subsequent sections of the Book of Genesis. Those two aspects are: the similar language and structure of this pericope with Gen. 1:26-28, and the *toledot* formula which begins this pericope. Each of these aspects will be dealt with in turn.

As many scholars have noted, this pericope is clearly meant to recall the original creation and blessing of man and woman.<sup>242</sup> Though this pericope begins by stating, *this is the book of the generations of Adam* (סֵפֶר הַדּוֹרֹתָיו), it is clear from v. 2 that the author(s)/redactor(s) were not only thinking of the creation of man, but of woman also. Table 11 demonstrates the similarities between Gen. 1:27 and Gen. 5:1b-2a:

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<sup>239</sup>These two clauses have been structured in such a way as to emphasize the similarity that they have with Gen. 1:27, as expressed in this section.

<sup>240</sup>The BHS suggests that the term בֶּן has been omitted. E. Speiser writes, "The usage is absolute, since an immediate object would have been stylistically awkward; the implied object is יֶלֶד child." (Speiser, *Genesis: Intro*, 40). Thus the more difficult reading of the MT is to be retained.

<sup>241</sup>Some manuscripts reverse the prepositions ב and כ in order to harmonize the clause with Gen. 1:26. The effort seems to be one of harmonization, thus the MT is to be preferred.

<sup>242</sup>See Arnold, *Genesis*, 85; Cassuto, *Genesis I-VI* 8, 274; Hamilton, *The Book*, 255; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 110; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 122.

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
1:27b	בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ	X-Qatal	in the image of God He created him,
1:27c	זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:	X-Qatal	male and female He created them.
5:1d	בְּדִמּוּת אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אֹתוֹ:	X-Qatal	in the likeness of God He made him.
5:2a	זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָאֵם	X-Qatal	Male and female He created them.

**Table 11: Similarities between Gen. 1:27 and Gen. 5:1b–2a**

The similarities in both pericopes are clear. The author(s)/redactor(s) selected the X-Qatal verb form in order to express recovered and background information, while also emphasizing key elements within the clause. As has already been noted,<sup>243</sup> one of the ways that the X-Qatal verb form can be used is to express emphasis on the ‘X’ element of a clause. This is clear in Gen. 1:27 where the X-Qatal constructions interrupt a Wayyiqtol verbal clause. The same emphasis is also clear in Gen. 5:1b-2a, as these clauses echo Gen. 1:27. Table 12 contains both Gen. 1:27 (27b; 27c) and Gen. 5:1b-2a, highlighting the ‘X’ elements in each, in order to demonstrate the expressed emphasis:

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
1:27b	בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ	X-Qatal	<u>in the image of God</u> He created him,
1:27c	זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:	X-Qatal	<u>male and female</u> He created them.
5:1d	בְּדִמּוּת אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אֹתוֹ:	X-Qatal	<u>in the likeness of God</u> He made him.
5:2a	זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָאֵם	X-Qatal	<u>Male and female</u> He created them.

**Table 12: The Emphatic Elements in Gen. 1:27 (27b; 27c) and Gen. 5:1b–2a**

The emphasis of both Gen. 1:27 and Gen. 5:1b-2a is that both male *and* female have been created in the image or likeness of God.

<sup>243</sup> See footnote 185.

Along with the similar emphasis of Gen. 1:27 and Gen. 5:1b-2a, there is a general similarity between the vocabulary of Gen. 1:26-28 and Gen. 5:1-3. Table 13 compares the two passages, underling some of the similar terms:

Gen. 1:26–28	Gen. 5:1–3
<p><sup>1:26</sup>And God said, “May we <u>make</u> man in our <u>image</u>, after our <u>likeness</u>, so that they may rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over all the creeping things that creep on the earth.<sup>1:27</sup> So God <u>created</u> man in His <u>image</u>, in the <u>image</u> of God He <u>created</u> him, male and female He <u>created</u> them.</p> <p><sup>1:28</sup>And God <u>blessed</u> them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, ruling over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that creeps on the earth!”</p>	<p><sup>5:1</sup>This is the book of the generations of Adam. On the day God <u>created</u> man, in the <u>likeness</u> of God He <u>made</u> him. <sup>5:2</sup>Male and female He <u>created</u> them. And He <u>blessed</u> them and named them Man, on the day they were <u>created</u>.<sup>5:3</sup> And Adam lived 130 years, and he begat, in his <u>likeness</u>, after his <u>image</u>, and named him Seth.</p>

**Table 13: Similarities between terms used in Gen 1:26–28 and Gen. 5:1–3**

Five distinct terms are seen overlapping in these two pericopes: ברא (Create), דְמוּת (Likeness), עשה (Make), ברך (Bless), and צֶלֶם (Image).<sup>244</sup> The use and placement of each one of these terms continues to highlight the clear relationship between the two passages. Three of the terms: ברא, עשה, and ברך, perform the function of linking Gen. 5:1-3 to Gen. 1:26-28, and all of Gen. 1:1-2:3 for that matter. The author(s)/redactor(s) are starting this new section of Genesis (Gen. 5:1ff)<sup>245</sup> by reiterating and connecting it to a previous section of Genesis, where God created,

<sup>244</sup> It is important to note that these five terms are not the only overlapping terms in the two pericopes, but they are five terms that scholars point out as being significant. See Cassuto, *Genesis I-VI* 8, 275-278; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 121-127.

<sup>245</sup> This thesis' statement that this is a, “new section of Genesis” is based upon the *toledot* formula. Meaning that, according to the *toledot* formula, Gen. 5:1-6:8 is a section within the Book of Genesis. See Ross, *Creation*, 70.

made, and blessed mankind. The other two terms: דְמוּת and צֶלֶם function in the same way that the three aforementioned terms do, but they also connect the creating, making, and blessing of the Man and the Woman, to the creating and making<sup>246</sup> of the offspring of that Man and that Woman. The text of Gen. 1:26 has God saying, “וַנַּעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ” (“May we make man in our image [צֶלֶם], after our likeness [דְמוּת]”). In Gen. 5:3 the text says, “וַיֹּולֶד בְּדְמוּתוֹ בְּצַלְמוֹ” (“and he [Adam] begat, in his likeness [דְמוּת], after his image [צֶלֶם]”). G. Wenham writes, “This verse [v. 3] makes the point that the image and likeness of God which was given to Adam at creation was inherited by his sons.”<sup>247</sup> B. Waltke and C. Fredricks point out that:

“The narrator states that Adam ‘had a son in his own likeness, in his own image’ (5:3), not simply, ‘he became the father of,’ as in the rest of the narrative. This unique variation reveals humanity participating in the creative act of God by the seminal transference of the image of God to each successive generation.”<sup>248</sup>

The language of Gen. 5:1-3 clearly connects it to previous sections of the book of Genesis, and some of these same significant terms will also connect this pericope to subsequent sections of Genesis, the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) included.

Significantly, at this point in the Book of Genesis, no one other than the original man and woman have been blessed. When the root בֵּרַךְ is used in Gen. 5:2, it is in relation to the original blessing of man and woman (וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-אָדָם וְאֶת-חַוָּה) – “And He blessed them and named them Man”). The text is clear that Seth was born in the likeness and image of his father Adam,

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<sup>246</sup> You’ll notice here that the term ‘blessing’ has been removed. The removal is strategic, as there is no evidence that the blessing of the original man and woman is transferred genealogically. The other two terms ‘creating’ and ‘making’ are implied in the term יָלַד, as well as in the terms דְמוּת and צֶלֶם, as they are the same adjectives used to describe the making and creating of the original man and woman, but בֵּרַךְ is not necessarily implied.

<sup>247</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 127.

<sup>248</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 110.



which many scholars equate to being created in the image and likeness of God,<sup>249</sup> but that does not necessarily mean that he was blessed as well. Gen. 5:1-3 expresses the fact that the ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ of God is passed along hereditarily, but this pericope does not imply that ‘blessing’ is passed along to the successive generations as well.

This thesis intends to demonstrate a clear and vital connection between being created in the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דְּמוּת) of God, being blessed (בֵּרַךְ), and ruling (רָדָה). Gen. 5 is a chapter that leads from Adam to Noah. Noah will be the subject and recipient of the next blessing that God bestows in the Book of Genesis.<sup>250</sup> At the time of Noah, the Book of Genesis says,

“The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.’” (Gen. 6:5-7 – ESV)

God’s response, in the Book of Genesis, to the problem of man’s *wickedness*, was to flood the earth. The text says, “but Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord.” (Gen. 6:8). Due to the favour that Noah found, God spared Noah and his family, and had him build an ark that would save him, his family, and a pair (male and female) of each type of animal and bird. Noah builds the ark; the flood comes, destroying everyone but Noah, his family, and the animals that were aboard.<sup>251</sup> The point being, that at the time of Noah, the people whom God refers to as *wicked*, were all descendants from the genealogy of Gen. 5, a genealogy that scholars regard as the genealogy that conferred the likeness and image of God from one generation to the next.

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<sup>249</sup> See Cassuto, *Genesis I-VI* 8, 275; Hamilton, *The Book*, 255; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 110; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 127.

<sup>250</sup> This blessing will be dealt with in the following section (2.5).

<sup>251</sup> The story of the flood can be found in Gen. 6:5-8:19

Therefore, merely inheriting the likeness and image of God, which B. Arnold relates to carrying on the rule and dominion of Adam,<sup>252</sup> does not mean that that rule and dominion is carried out in a way that is pleasing to God. It is possible that two of the three aforementioned elements were inherited by successive generations of Adam: being created in the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דְּמוּת) of God and ruling (רָדָה). The third element: blessing (בֵּרַךְ), is conspicuously absent until Noah.<sup>253</sup> This could play an important role throughout this thesis, as this thesis seeks to determine *what it means for Abraham to be a blessing*, and how that blessing is meant to function in relation to being created in the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דְּמוּת) of God, and ruling (רָדָה) as God's representative.

The *toledot* formula (תּוֹלְדוֹת - "generations") is the other aspect of this pericope that connects it to both the preceding and subsequent sections of Genesis. Numerous scholars have pointed out the significant role that genealogies play throughout the book of Genesis.<sup>254</sup> B. Childs writes, "It has long been recognized that the present form of the book of Genesis has been structured into a whole by means of a repeated genealogical formula, 'these are the generations (*toledot*) of. . .'"<sup>255</sup> This *toledot* formula can be traced from Gen. 2 to Gen. 37, which carries forward until the end of the Book. Whether or not scholars agree on the exact structure of the genealogical framework of the Book of Genesis,<sup>256</sup> they all recognize that the framework exists,

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<sup>252</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*, 86.

<sup>253</sup> It is important to mention that Noah was not blessed until after the flood (Gen. 9:1). The story of the flood is clearly told in such a way as to emphasize Noah as being unique in relation to the rest of the world's population, and the story of Noah is always leading towards the blessing of God, but Noah was not blessed prior to the flood. G. Wenham, when commenting on Gen 9:1, wrote, "God's blessing is now verbalized." (*Word Biblical*, 192.) The clear implication being that Noah has been expressly favoured since his introduction in Gen. 5:32.

<sup>254</sup> See Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary*. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 22-23; Arnold, *Genesis*, 4; Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. (Philadelphia, PA.: Fortress Press, 1979), 145; Dempster, *Dominion*, 48; Ross, *Creation*, 69-71; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 46; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 88.

<sup>255</sup> Childs, *Introduction*, 145.

<sup>256</sup> An example of a point of contention is the unity of Gen. 2:4. Many scholars view Gen. 2:4 as one united verse, which begins the *toledot* formula for Gen. 2:4-4:26. See Bandstra, *Genesis 1-11*; Cassuto, *Genesis I-VI*

and that it plays a significant role throughout the Book of Genesis as a whole. The purpose of mentioning the *toledot* formula here is due to the fact that this is the first time that the term appears in this thesis' translation, and it is the contention of this thesis, that the term itself plays a significant role in connecting the Primeval History with the Patriarchal Narratives. More importantly for this thesis, the *toledot* formula plays an essential role in connecting the Primeval History with the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), in particular.

## 2.5 Gen. 8:20-9:3: Blessing of Noah and His Sons

The fifth occurrence of the root בִּרַךְ is found in Gen. 9:1. Gen. 8:20-9:3 are included in this translation in order to provide some context for the term:

<sup>8:20</sup>And Noah built an altar to YHWH and took some of every clean beast and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. <sup>8:21</sup>And YHWH smelled the soothing aroma, and YHWH said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth. And I will never again smite every living creature which I have made. <sup>8:22</sup>While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, will not cease." <sup>9:1</sup>And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth! <sup>9:2</sup>And may the fear and the dread of you be on all the beasts of the earth<sup>257</sup> and on all the birds of the heavens, on everything<sup>258</sup> that creeps on the ground, and on every fish of the sea;

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8; C. John Collins, *Genesis 1-4 : A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary*. (Phillipsburg, NJ : P & R Publishing, 2006); Dempster, *Dominion*; Thomas Gudbergson, "The Unity of Gen 2,4." *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 24 no. 2 (2010) : 235-252; Hamilton, *The Book*; Ross, *Creation*; Sarna, *Genesis*; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*. Whereas, other scholars see a division in Gen. 2:4, connecting Gen. 2:4a to the preceding section, beginning in Gen. 1:1 (Gen. 1:1-2:4a), and connecting Gen. 2:4b to what follows (Gen. 2:4b-4:26). See Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue*; Brueggemann, *Genesis*; Speiser, *Genesis: Intro*; Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*. Because of the general disagreement between scholars, and because it is not essential to this thesis, Gen. 2:4 was not included as part of the translation of this pericope. The important factor is that the *toledot* formula exists and connects the Primeval History to the Patriarchal Narratives, not whether the first *toledot* is connected to Gen. 1:1-2:4a or Gen. 2:4b-4:26.

<sup>257</sup> The Septuagint's G MSS adds καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τοῖς κτήνεσι inserting "and over all domesticated animals." This thesis has chosen not to include the additional phrase, as it is only found in the one manuscript, and because of the Septuagint's tendency towards harmonization (especially in Gen. 1-11). See Tov, *Textual*, 261.

<sup>258</sup> One manuscript of the Samaritan Pentateuch has the term as רִבְכָּל. This thesis has chosen to translate the term as it is found in the MT due to the fact that the Samaritan Pentateuch has harmonizing tendencies, and because the alteration is found in only one codex. See Tov, *Textual*, 85.

into your hand they have been given. <sup>9:3</sup>Every creeping thing that is alive will be food for you, even green plants; I have given everything to you.”

This thesis disagrees with B. Waltke, C. Fredricks, and G. Wenham, when they state that the blessing of Noah and his sons is the third time that God blesses mankind in the Book of Genesis, referencing Gen. 1:28 and Gen. 5:2 as the two previous occasions.<sup>259</sup> In actual fact, the blessing of Noah and his sons in Gen. 9:1 is the second time that mankind is blessed. As is now evident, the blessing of Gen. 5:2 is a reiteration of the original blessing of mankind.<sup>260</sup> Gen. 5:2b states that man and woman were, “blessed ... and named ... Man, on the day they were created.” The text is not a second pronouncement of blessing, but rather a reiteration of the original blessing, as is clear by the author(s)/redactor(s) unambiguous statement that the blessing occurred (בְּיוֹם הַבְּרָאָה) *on the day they were created*. B. Waltke, C. Fredricks, and G. Wenham, along with other scholars, are right though when they point out that the blessing of Noah and his sons in Gen. 9:1 does echo the original blessing of mankind in Gen. 1:28.<sup>261</sup> Table 14 demonstrates the similarities:

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
1:28a	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God blessed them.
1:28b	וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God said to them,
1:28c	פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹּשׁוּהָ	Volitional Imperative (Dis.)	“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it,
9:1a	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God blessed
9:1b	אֶת-נֹחַ וְאֶת-בָּנָיו	SNC (Nar.)	Noah and his sons,

<sup>259</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 144; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 192.

<sup>260</sup> See section 2.4 above.

<sup>261</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*, 108; Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 82; Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI 32*, 124; Hamilton, *The Book*, 313; Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 127; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 142; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 192.

9:1c	וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	and said to them,
9:1d	פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ:	Volitional Imperative (Dis.)	“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”

**Table 14: A Comparison of Gen. 1:28 to Gen. 9:1**

When commenting on Gen. 9:1 E. A. Speiser writes, “the statement begins with one of [the author(s)/redactor(s)]’s favorite phrases,”<sup>262</sup> referring to the clauses, *and God blessed ... and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”* Along with the similarity of Gen. 9:1 and Gen. 1:28, there are distinct differences as well. Rather than continuing Gen. 9 with the same language as Gen. 1:28 (cf. Gen. 1:26), there is a marked change. Gen. 1:28 continues:

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
1:28d	וַיֹּדֹוּ בְדִגַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם	WeQatal (Dis.)	“ruling over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens
1:28e	וּבְכָל-חַיָּה הָרֹמֶשֶׁת עַל-הָאָרֶץ:	SNC (Dis.)	and over every living thing that creeps on the earth!”

**Table 15: Gen. 1:28 continued**

Whereas Gen. 9 continues:

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
9:2a	וּמִוְרָאֲכָם וּחִתְכָּם יִהְיֶה	X-Yiqtol – Jussive (Dis.)	“And may the fear and the dread of you be
9:2b	עַל כָּל-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ	SNC (Dis.)	on all the beasts of the earth
9:2c	וְעַל כָּל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם	SNC (Dis.)	and on all the birds of the heavens,
9:2d	בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר תֵּרְמֹשׁ הָאֲדָמָה	X-Yiqtol – Jussive (Dis.)	on everything that creeps on the ground,
			and on every fish of the sea;

<sup>262</sup> Speiser, *Genesis: Intro*, 58.

9:2e	וּבְכָל־דָּגֵי הַיָּם	SNC (Dis.)	into your hand they have been given.”
9:2f	בְּיָדְכֶם נָתַנּוּ:	X-Qatal (Dis.)	

**Table 16: Gen. 9:2 continued**

The marked change being that God does not command Noah and his sons to *rule* (רדה) over the non-human world, as He did in Gen. 1:28. Instead, God expresses His desire that the fear and dread of Noah and his sons might fall on all non-human life. It is significant that Gen. 9:2 begins with an X-Yiqtol verbal construction, which is preceded by a Volitional – Imperative verbal clause (Gen. 9:1d), indicating that the first clause of Gen. 9:2 is to be translated as a jussive.<sup>263</sup> The jussive nature of Gen. 9:2 continues until the final clause of the verse, which means that God’s expressed desire, is for the fear and dread of Noah and his sons to fall upon all non-human life. Whereas Gen. 1:28d is a WeQatal verbal construction, preceded by a Volitional – Imperative clause (v. 28c), meaning that the WeQatal verbal clause continues the imperative nature of the preceding clause.<sup>264</sup> The verbal construction is not the only difference between the verses; the main difference is the terms themselves. In Gen. 1:28 mankind are blessed for the expressed result of their *ruling* (רדה) over all non-human life. In Gen. 9:1-2 Noah and his sons are blessed, and God expresses a desire that the *fear* (מוֹרָא) and *dread* (חֶת) of them fall on all non-human life.<sup>265</sup>

<sup>263</sup> See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 78 §55 #2.

<sup>264</sup> See footnote 214.

<sup>265</sup> Though Gen. 9:2 includes the term חַיָּה (beasts), which is not found in Gen. 1:28, all of the non-human life mentioned in Gen. 9:2 (חַיָּה [beasts], עוֹף [birds], תְּרַמֵּשׁ הָאֲדָמָה [everything that creeps on the ground], דָּג [fish]) can also be found in Gen. 1:24-31. U. Cassuto discusses the possible reasons for the change in order of the animal life in Gen. 9:2 (See Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI 32*, 125), but as most scholars agree, there is a clear connection between Gen. 9:1-3 with Gen. 1 (see footnote 261). Therefore, the emphasis seems to be that all non-human life are mentioned in both sections. The order is less important than the fact that the results of God’s blessing have a desired effect on all non-human life.

The question becomes, why does God desire the *fear* and *dread* of Noah and his sons to fall on all non-human life, as opposed to their ruling all non-human life? Three potential answers will be postulated.<sup>266</sup>

In possibly the most straightforward approach, V. Hamilton regards the change of terms from רדה (rule) to מורא (fear) and חת (dread) as being related to the fact that man is now given permission to eat meat (v. 3). V. Hamilton writes, “The opening chapter of Genesis was quite explicit that in the beginning man and the animals were vegetarian. Man’s authority over the animals did not include exploitation or using those animals for food. Here, the exercise of man’s authority provides terrifying consequences for the animal world.”<sup>267</sup> For Hamilton, the change is clear, non-human life is to live in fear and dread of mankind because mankind has now been given permission to use the animal world as a source of sustenance.

Other scholars point out that at this stage in the Book of Genesis enmity between mankind and the animal world now exists.<sup>268</sup> These scholars suggest that the animosity between human and non-human life has been carried forward from the fall (Gen. 3). Gen. 8:21 is clear that God is not revoking the curse of Gen. 3, but promises that He will never again add to it, never flooding the earth again: “and YHWH said in his heart, ‘I will never again curse the ground on account of man [...] And I will never again smite every living creature which I have made.’” There is no implication that the curse of Gen. 3 has been eradicated. The enmity itself has remained through the flood. G. Wenham writes:

“God is not lifting the curse on the ground pronounced in Gen. 3:17 for man’s disobedience, but promising not to add to it. The flood was a punishment over and above that decreed in 3:17. [...] It is also quite apparent that the curses pronounced in Gen 3—weeds, toil, pain, death, enmity with serpents—are part of

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<sup>266</sup> Of course, there are more than three potential reasons why the terms have changed, but this thesis will deal with the three that are either relevant to this thesis, or unavoidable.

<sup>267</sup> Hamilton, *The Book*, 313.

<sup>268</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 144; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 192.

man's present experience, so that 8:21 cannot be stating that they are lifted after the flood.<sup>269</sup>

One need not focus on the fact that *weeds, toil, pain, etc.* remain part of mankind's present experience, the text itself (Gen. 8:21) is clear:<sup>270</sup>

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	LP: Pr.:	English Translation
8:21a	וַיִּרַח יְהוָה אֶת־רִיחַ הַנִּיחֹחַ	Wayyitol (Nar.)	0 fg	And YHWH smelled the soothing aroma,
8:21b	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־לְבֹ	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	0 fg	and YHWH said in his heart,
8:21c	לֹא־אֶסָּף לְקַלֵּל עוֹד אֶת־הָאָדָמָה בְּעִבּוֹר הָאָדָם	X-Yiqtol (Dis.)	↓ Fg	"I will never again curse the ground on account of man,
8:21d	כִּי יֵצֵר לֵב הָאָדָם רָע מִנְעֻרָיו	SNC (Dis.)	fg	for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth.
8:21e	וְלֹא־אֶסָּף עוֹד לְהַכּוֹת	Waw-X-Yiqtol (Dis.)	↓ fg	And I will never again smite
8:21f	אֶת־כָּל־חַי בָּאָשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי:	X-Qatal (Dis.)	↑ bg	every living creature which I have made.

**Table 17: Breakdown of Gen. 8:21**

Since the grammatical construction (Waw-X-Yiqtol) indicates an indicative future, it is clear that God is explicitly stating that He will (future) never again curse the ground, or smite every living creature (8:21c and e, respectively). But the fact that 8:21d – *כִּי יֵצֵר לֵב הָאָדָם רָע מִנְעֻרָיו* (*the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth*) – is expressed using a Simple Noun Clause (SNC), which does not carry with it a Linguistic Perspective, but is rather meant to continue the foreground Prominence, clearly conveys the fact that the state of man's heart has not changed. The same language was used as the reason for sending the flood in the first place (cf. Gen. 6:5). The text is clear that God will never again send another flood to curse the ground or smite every living

<sup>269</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 190.

<sup>270</sup> In table 17: LP stands for Linguistic Perspective, and Pr stands for Prominence. Within this pericope the LP is either (0) degree zero, (↓) anticipated information, or (↑) recovered information, while the Pr is either (fg) foreground or (bg) background (See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 168).



creature, but the original curse (Gen. 3), which brought enmity, still remains. For these scholars, the enmity and animosity that is present between human and non-human life, ever since the fall in Gen. 3, is evidenced in the change of terminology from *רדה* to *מורא* and *חת*.

A final potential explanation for the change in terminology is that the animal world has now clearly experienced the curse of God through the flood, and are now to live in *מורא* and *חת*. H. Fuhs notes that, the root *ירא*, in the term *מורא*, “and its derivatives have an impressive total of 435 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible.”<sup>271</sup> In, “almost 80 percent of the passages, however, the object of fear is God.”<sup>272</sup> The point being, that now that the non-human world has experienced the wrath of God in the flood, it is appropriate that they now experience fear and dread when seeing God’s image bearers before them. U. Cassuto makes a similar point, though in more positive language, when he writes, “This attitude of fear and dread may be due to the fact that the creatures were saved from the Flood on account of man and through his action; from now on they would realize more clearly the superiority of the human species.”<sup>273</sup>

Regardless of the various reasons in explaining the change from *רדה* to *מורא* and *חת* most scholars agree that the terms themselves are generally synonymous.<sup>274</sup> Their view is that the *fear* and *dread* that God desires to be on all non-human life is a basic extension of the rule that mankind was already invited to have, though it has been somewhat nuanced since the original blessing of man and woman. B. Waltke, C. Fredricks, and G. Wenham point out that the terms *מורא* (fear) and *חת* (dread) are military terminology,<sup>275</sup> and fall under the same domain of

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<sup>271</sup> Hans F. Fuhs, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by David E. Green. Vol. 6, s.v. “*ירדה yārē*”; *ירא yārē*; *יראה yir’ā*; *מורא mōrā*” (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 292.

<sup>272</sup> Fuhs, *Theological*, 296.

<sup>273</sup> Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI 32*, 125.

<sup>274</sup> See Arnold, *Genesis*, 109; Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI 32*, 125; Hamilton, *The Book*, 313; Mowvley, “The Concept”, 78-79; Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 127-128; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 144.

<sup>275</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 144; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 192.

kingdom/royal language as בָּרַךְ (barak), רָדָה (rule), and צִלָּם (image).<sup>276</sup> With regard to this thesis, the reason behind the change from רָדָה to מוֹרָא and חַת matters less than the fact that they all fall within the same domain of kingdom/royal language, as evidenced by the synonymous nature of the terms themselves.

A final important facet of this pericope, and its connection to Gen. 1, is the expressed similarity between Adam and Noah. The entire flood narrative contains imagery of Gen. 1, with the world returning to a state of formlessness and void, as the waters once again cover the earth (cf. Gen. 1:2). Once again God brings order to chaos, and regenerates creation with one family, and a pair (male and female) of each of the animals. G. Wenham points this out when he writes:

“The flood destroyed the old world, God’s original creation, and out of it was born a new world. Genesis brings out fully the correspondences and contrasts between creation and the flood. [...] just as obvious is the parallel between the original process of creation and the world’s re-creation described in Gen. 8-9. The turning point of the story is the text ‘God remembered Noah’ [...] God’s first words of blessing to Noah after he left the ark repeat almost exactly his original commission to Adam, ‘Be fruitful and multiply’ (1:28; 9:1). Noah is obviously seen to be father of the new humanity just as Adam was head of the old order.”<sup>277</sup>

In other words, Noah is the new Adam.<sup>278</sup> Or, as V. Hamilton so succinctly states it, “Noah is a second Adam.”<sup>279</sup> The reason why this is so important is because it emphasizes the uniqueness of the blessing of Abraham. The third time that God will bless mankind is through Abraham. The previous two blessings, Adam (man and woman – Gen. 1:28) and Noah (and his sons – Gen. 9:1) are presented as both taking place when they were the only ones on the earth. The original blessing of man and woman took place prior to their having any offspring, while the blessing of Noah occurred prior to Noah and his sons repopulating the earth. Both contexts amplify the

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<sup>276</sup> See section 2.2 above.

<sup>277</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 206-207.

<sup>278</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 176.

<sup>279</sup> Hamilton, *The Book*, 313.

distinctiveness of the blessing of Abraham, as Abraham was selected amidst a populated world. The uniqueness of Abraham and his blessing, though still very much connected to the previous two blessings of man and woman, and Noah and his sons, respectively, will prove to be significant for this thesis.

### 2.5.1 This Thesis' Translation Compared with Other Modern Translations

A few words need to be said about this translation, and how it differs from other translations. There are three distinct ways in which this translation differs from other modern English translations. First, the final clause of Gen. 8:21 has been translated as, “every living creature which I have made.” (אַת־כָּל־חַי פֶּאֱמָר עָשִׂיתִי:). Most modern English translations render the verb עָשָׂה as “done,” as opposed to “made.” Because the verbal construction of the clause is X-Qatal, it is appropriate to translate the verb as expressing recovered information.<sup>280</sup> The difference in the translation, though seemingly minor, does change the past action that is being referred to. If עָשָׂה is translated as “done,” the verse would read, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth. And I will never again smite every living creature *as* I have *done*.” The action in this translation is the act of smiting which God did by sending the flood. This thesis’ translation reads, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth. And I will never again smite every living creature *which* I have *made*.” In this translation, the action is God’s act of creating the living creatures, which He did in Gen. 1. The choice to translate עָשָׂה in this way was made for two reasons. First, every time that this thesis has translated עָשָׂה, thus far, it has been rendered as a variation of “to make” (cf. Gen. 1:25, 26, 31; 2:2, 3; 5:1). Second, as

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<sup>280</sup> See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 117 §87; 73 §51.

was made clear throughout the above section, there is a strong correlation between this pericope and Gen. 1. The proposed translation, therefore, continues to highlight the correlational nature of the two passages.

The second significant difference between this thesis' translation and other modern English translations is the final clause of v. 22. This thesis' translation reads, "seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, will not cease." (וְיָמִים לְהַגְלִי לֹא יִשְׁבְּתוּ:). (זֶרַע וְקָצִיר וְקֹר וְחֹם וְחֹמֶץ וְתֹרַר). The difference with other modern English renderings is the translation of the verb שבת "to cease". The grammatical construction (X-Yiqtol), is meant to be understood as an indicative future.<sup>281</sup> "will not cease." Many of the modern English Bibles translate the verb as, "shall not cease." By using the English term "shall," the translators, whether intentionally or unintentionally, add volitional sense to the clause. In modern English, "will" is used to express indicative future for both 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person verbs, while "shall" is used in the 1<sup>st</sup> person form. The opposite would actually be the case with regards to volitional statements. Therefore, if one wanted to express volition, they would use the term "shall" in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person, and the term "will" in the 1<sup>st</sup> person.<sup>282</sup> Because שבת is found here in the third masculine plural form, and the verbal construction is meant to express indicative future, as opposed to volition, the correct translation is, "will not cease."

The third difference between this thesis' translation and other modern English Bibles is found in the final clause of Gen. 9:2. This thesis has translated the clause as, "into your hand they have been given." (בְּיַדְכֶם נָתַנִּי:), whereas most modern English translations have, "Into your

<sup>281</sup> Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 75 §55.

<sup>282</sup> "'Shall' or 'will'?" Oxford Dictionaries, accessed December 10, 2013, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/words/shall-or-will>.

hand they are delivered.”<sup>283</sup> The verb נתן “to give,” in this clause is a X-Qatal construction, which, in discourse, communicates recovered and background information.<sup>284</sup> By translating the clause as, “Into your hand they are delivered,” as the modern English translations do, the impression is that the action is present to the narrative. This thesis’ proposed translation seeks to emphasize the background nature of the clause by recognizing that the act of *giving* took place in the past.<sup>285</sup>

## 2.6 Gen. 9:18-29: Noah Blessing YHWH

The sixth occurrence of the root בָּרַךְ is found in Gen. 9:26. Gen. 9:18-29 are included in this translation in order to provide some context for the term:

<sup>9:18</sup> And the sons of Noah who came out from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. <sup>9:19</sup> These three were the sons of Noah, and from them, all the earth was dispersed. <sup>9:20</sup> And Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. <sup>9:21</sup> And he drank from the wine and became drunk and he uncovered himself in his tent. <sup>9:22</sup> And Ham, the father of Canaan, looked at the nakedness of his father<sup>286</sup> and told his two brothers outside. <sup>9:23</sup> And Shem and Japheth took the garment, and laid it on their shoulders, and walked backwards and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away. And the nakedness of their father, they did not look at. <sup>9:24</sup> And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his youngest son had done to him. <sup>9:25</sup> And he said, “Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves he will be to his brothers.” <sup>9:26</sup> And he said, “Blessed be YHWH, the God of Shem; that Canaan may be his slave. <sup>9:27</sup> May God enlarge Japheth, that he may dwell in the tents of Shem, and that Canaan may be his slave.” <sup>9:28</sup> And after the flood Noah lived 350 years. <sup>9:29</sup> And all the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

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<sup>283</sup> This translation is from the ESV, but most of the modern English translations have something similar, emphasizing the then present nature of the giving.

<sup>284</sup> See footnote 280.

<sup>285</sup> In this particular case, the act of giving that is being referred to took place in Gen. 1, when God first gave mankind sustenance.

<sup>286</sup> The Septuagint here adds καὶ ἐξελάθων, seemingly to imply that the other brothers, Shem and Japheth, were not with Ham when he looked at his father’s nakedness. The addition seems to be a theological clarification that was added at a later date. For this reason, the MT is to be preferred.

Of all the pericopes that are being dealt with in this thesis, none have caused commentators to branch off on such a wide variety of interpretations as this one. These interpretive topics range from incest, to homosexuality, to castration, and beyond, and have been the subject of discussion for centuries.<sup>287</sup> Thankfully, a macro-syntactical analysis of the Hebrew clears up a number of the areas that commentators have speculated on, allowing for a clearer interpretation of the text, eliminating the need to participate in the sorted interpretations that have been offered. The two questions that have dominated the landscape of discussion surrounding this pericope are: What exactly was Ham's sin? And second, if Ham sinned, why does Canaan become the recipient of the punishment? A macro-syntactical analysis of the pericope answers the former question, while providing some insight into the latter.

The final clause of v. 23 answers the question of the nature of Ham's sin. V. 23f breaks an extended Wayyiqtol narrative chain that begins in the first clause of v. 20. Table 18 contains v. 23 in order to demonstrate the point:

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
9:23a	וַיִּקְחוּ שֵׁם וַיָּפֶת אֶת־הַשָּׂמָלָה	Wayyiqtol	And Shem and Japheth took the garment,
9:23b	וַיִּשְׂמוּ עַל־שִׁכְמָם שְׁנֵיהֶם	Wayyiqtol	and laid it on their shoulders,
9:23c	וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרָנִית	Wayyiqtol	and walked backwards
9:23d	וַיִּכְסּוּ אֶת עֲרֹת אֲבִיהֶם	Wayyiqtol	and covered the nakedness of their father;
9:23e	וּפְנֵיהֶם אַחֲרָנִית	SNC	their faces were turned away.
9:23f	עֲרֹתוֹ אֲבִיהֶם לֹא רָאוּ:	Waw-X-Qatal	And the nakedness of their father, they did not look at.

**Table 18: Breakdown of Gen. 9:23**

<sup>287</sup> See John Sietze Bergsma and Scott Walker Hahn, "Noah's Nakedness and the Curse of Canaan (Genesis 9:20-27)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124 no. 1 (2005) : 25-40.

The Wayyiqtol narrative chain that began in v. 20 is interrupted by a Waw-X-Qatal verbal construction, which can be used in order to express five possibilities.<sup>288</sup> In this case, the purpose of the change seems to be to express emphasis. The writer(s) painstakingly describe the actions of Shem and Japheth: they take a garment, place it over their shoulders, walk backwards, cover the nakedness of their father, all the while keeping their faces turned away, never looking at the nakedness of their father. The point is to contrast Shem and Japheth's actions with those of Ham.<sup>289</sup> The final clause of v. 23 makes clear that the emphasis is on the fact that Shem and Japheth *did not look at the nakedness of their father*. Table 19 underlines the 'X' element of v. 23f, in both the Hebrew and the English:

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
9:23f	וְעָרְוּ אֲבֵיהֶם לֹא רָאוּ:	Waw-x-Qatal	<u>And the nakedness of their father, they</u> <u>did not</u> look at.

**Table 19: Emphatic Element of Gen. 9:23**

The use of the Waw-X-Qatal verbal construction for emphatic purposes, along with the extended narrative of v. 23, makes the actions of Shem and Japheth antithetically clear; they willfully did *not* look upon their father's nakedness, while Ham *did*. Therefore, Ham's sin wasn't a passive "seeing" as some scholars suggest,<sup>290</sup> but rather, that he was an active participant in his *looking* at his father's nakedness. B. Waltke and C. Fredricks, when commenting on v. 22, write, "[רָאָה] here means 'to look at (searchingly)' (Song 1:6; 6:11b), not a harmless or accidental seeing."<sup>291</sup> Ham's sin was that he actively *looked* at his father's nakedness.

<sup>288</sup> See footnote 227.

<sup>289</sup> See Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI 32*, 163.

<sup>290</sup> V. Hamilton goes so far as to write, "Ham was in the wrong place at the wrong time." (Hamilton, *The Book*, 322)

<sup>291</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 149.

What remains of greater significance for this thesis, however, is how the term בָּרַךְ is used within this pericope. The prophetic-prayer<sup>292</sup> offered by Noah in vv. 25-27 is primarily made up of volitional expressions. The section begins in v. 25, which is made up of two clauses. The first – אָרִיר כְּנָעַן (*Cursed be Canaan*) – comes in the form of a Simple Noun Clause (SNC), while the second – עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים יִהְיֶה לְאֶחָיו: (*a slave of slaves he will be to his brothers*) – is an X-Yiqtol grammatical construction. In this case, the X-Yiqtol is basic indicative future, with the emphasis being on the ‘X’ element.<sup>293</sup> Table 20 shows both clauses, with the ‘X’ element underlined in both the Hebrew and the English:

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
9:25b	אָרִיר כְּנָעַן	SNC (Participle)	Cursed [be] Canaan;
9:25c	עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים יִהְיֶה לְאֶחָיו:	X-Yiqtol	<u>a slave of slaves</u> he will be to his brothers.

**Table 20: Emphatic Element of Gen. 9:25**

Of Noah’s prophetic-prayer (vv. 25-27), these are the only direct statements that Noah makes about any of his sons. There is no volitional aspect to v. 25, Noah is cursing Canaan, and stating that he will be a *slave of slaves* to his brothers. The rest of the prophetic-prayer, at least as far as it is directed towards the sons on Noah, takes on a volitional nature.

In order to demonstrate the volitional nature of vv. 26-27, table 21 presents both verses:

Verse	Hebrew	Verb Form	English Translation
9:26a	וַיֹּאמֶר	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And he said,
9:26b	בָּרַךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שָׁם	SNC (Participle – Dis.)	“Blessed [be] YHWH, the God of Shem;

<sup>292</sup> I have labeled Noah’s discourse in vv. 25-27 as “prophetic-prayer”, as it expresses indicative statements about the future (v. 25 – “prophetic”), as well as expressed desires (vv. 26-27 – “prayer”).

<sup>293</sup> See Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 81 §56.



9:26c	וַיְהִי כְנָעַן עֶבֶד לְמוֹ:	WeYiqtol (Dis.)	that Canaan may be his slave.
9:27a	יִפְתָּ אֱלֹהִים לְיָפֶת	Yiqtol (Dis.)	May God enlarge Japheth,
9:27b	וַיֵּשְׁבֶן בְּאֶהֱלֵי־שֵׁם	WeYiqtol (Dis.)	that he may dwell in the tents of Shem,
9:27c	וַיְהִי כְנָעַן עֶבֶד לְמוֹ:	WeYiqtol (Dis.)	and that Canaan may be his slave.”

**Table 21: The Volitional Aspects of Gen. 9:26-27**

The final clause of v. 26, along with the three clauses of v. 27, are all volitional. V. 26b is a statement by Noah, *Blessed be YHWH, the God of Shem*. The statement is followed by a WeYiqtol verbal clause used to express aim or intention;<sup>294</sup> which is for Canaan to be a slave of Shem. The first clause of v. 27 is a Yiqtol verb in first position of the clause, and thus, translated as a jussive.<sup>295</sup> This volitional clause is followed by two WeYiqtol clauses, expressing aim or intention. Thus, the aim of these two verses is for Canaan to be a slave of both Shem and Japheth, and for Japheth to dwell within the tents of Shem. Noah’s full prophetic-prayer then includes the following elements:

- Noah curses Canaan, and states that he (Canaan) will be a slave of slaves to his brothers (v. 25)
- Noah declares a blessing over YHWH (יְהוָה), and ascribes YHWH as the God (אֱלֹהֵי) of Shem (v. 26)<sup>296</sup>
- Noah expresses a desire for God (אֱלֹהִים) to enlarge Japheth (v. 27)
- Finally, the desired aim of Noah’s prophetic-prayer is for Canaan to be a slave of his brothers (v. 26 and 27), and for Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem (v. 27).

<sup>294</sup> See footnote 191.

<sup>295</sup> See footnote 121.

<sup>296</sup> It is important here to note that the use of YHWH (יְהוָה) is characteristic of J. The use of יְהוָה in both Gen. 9:26 and Gen. 12:1-3 can simply be explained by stating that the same author(s)/redactor(s) wrote both texts. No argument will be made in this thesis otherwise, since the texts are not being analyzed in a diachronic fashion. Also, no argument will be made because this thesis agrees that the use of יְהוָה in both of these texts is a clear indication of similar author(s)/redactor(s).

Many scholars note that nothing in vv. 26-27 is addressed to Shem directly, and explain this fact in a variety of ways. G. Von Rad believes that YHWH Himself is Shem's portion, and therefore nothing specific is said to, or of, Shem himself.<sup>297</sup> V. Hamilton sees a grammatical pattern of substitution in the Blessing of YHWH instead of Shem, stating that the pattern is one of repeated substitution: "the curse is directed not against Ham but against Canaan, and the blessing is directed not towards Shem but toward his Lord. The blessing directed to Yahweh matches the curse directed to Canaan."<sup>298</sup> And finally, some scholars view v. 26b as the election of Shem, electing Shem to carry the blessing of YHWH forward to successive generations.<sup>299</sup>

Two things must be said about the lack of direct address to Shem, and the implications for Shem, of what is said to, and of, his brothers directly. First, contra B. Waltke, C. Fredricks, and G. Wenham, there is no reason to assume that v. 26b is somehow an election of Shem to carry the blessing of YHWH forward to successive generations. The point needs to be made since it reveals certain assumptions that some scholars have regarding the blessings of God; namely, that these blessings can somehow be passed on automatically through descendents.<sup>300</sup> Thus far, in the Book of Genesis, six people have been blessed: The original man and woman (Gen. 1:28), and Noah and his three sons (Gen. 9:1). As noted earlier,<sup>301</sup> the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דְּמוּת) of God, and the status of ruling (רָדָה) have been passed down through successive generations, but there is no reason to assume that the blessing (בֵּרַךְ) of God has been passed down as well. If the בֵּרַךְ of God had been passed along through the generations, there would have been no need for Noah and his sons to be blessed (Gen. 9:1) by God. The blessing would

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<sup>297</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 133.

<sup>298</sup> Hamilton, *The Book*, 325.

<sup>299</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 151; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 202.

<sup>300</sup> See Pederson (Pedersen, *Isreal*, 190) and Westerman (Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 66) as examples of scholars that regard 'blessing' as passing from one generation to the next successively.

<sup>301</sup> See section 2.4 above.

have been entirely redundant, as they were the offspring of the original man and woman (Gen. 5:1-32). The same point can be made for the blessing of Abraham in Gen. 12. Abraham is a descendent of Shem (Gen. 11:10-26), and thus, according to B. Waltke, C. Fredricks, and G. Wenham, Abraham would already be the recipient of God's blessing due to his heredity. If this is the case than the blessing of Abraham in Gen. 12 would be wholly superfluous. The text itself gives no reason to suppose that any form of hereditary blessing is taking place.

The second thing that needs to be discussed regarding the lack of direct address to Shem, are the implications for Shem, of what is said to, and of, his brothers directly. Though nothing is addressed to Shem specifically, much can be inferred from what is directly said to, and of, Shem's brothers. Noah states in v. 25 that Canaan will be a slave to Shem (and Japheth), he conveys the same sentiment in the form of an expressed desire in vv. 26 and 27, and finally, communicates his wish that Japheth may be enlarged and dwell within the tents of Shem (v. 27). The prophetic-prayer of vv. 25-27 provides a clear picture of a hierarchical relationship between Noah's three sons. Canaan, as the slave of both Shem and Japheth, claims the lowest strata of this hierarchy. Japheth takes the middle position within the hierarchy, since he will dwell within the tents of Shem, which places him, and his descendents<sup>302</sup>, below Shem within the brotherly hierarchy. It is v. 27b ("and may he dwell in the tents of Shem"), addressed to Japheth, that places Shem at the top of the hierarchy. Of interest in this text is the kingdom/royal language used; namely, the term slave (עֶבֶד), which is so prevalent in these three verses (vv. 25-27), and the subordinate language of *dwelling in the tents*. The terminology and idiom is related to the language of ruling (רָדָה).

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<sup>302</sup> Scholars recognize that this passage is not merely dealing with Noah's three sons, but with the subsequent branches of mankind that stem from them. An example is seen in v. 27b, "and may he [Japheth] dwell in the tents of Shem". The important term here being אֹהֶל (tent), coming in plural form, implying that multiple people are involved in Japheth's dwelling within the *tents* of Shem.

Though the terms image (צֶלֶם), likeness (דְּמוּת), and ruling (רָדָה) do not appear in this pericope, the kingdom/royal language present in the text could provide the interpretive key to v. 26b. Though Shem is not blessed directly in v. 26,<sup>303</sup> the second clause of that verse is, in some way, connecting בָּרַךְ with the expressed aim of ruling. In a similar way to which the writer(s) used the WeYiqtol verbal construction in Gen. 1:26 to express that the aim of creating mankind in the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דְּמוּת) of God was to rule (רָדָה), here too, the author(s)/redactor(s) use the same verbal construction to emphasize one son's (along with his descendents) special mandate: to rule over his brothers (and their descendents). All three of Noah's sons have been blessed (Gen. 9:1); they all continued to take on the image (צֶלֶם) of their father, similar to Seth (Gen. 5:3), subsequently continuing to take on the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דְּמוּת) of God; and all three brothers continue to rule (רָדָה) as God's representative on the earth. However, something is being uniquely said about Shem and his descendents. Noah is here connecting Shem to the blessed (בָּרַךְ) YHWH (יְהוָה), and Shem's task of ruling (רָדָה) takes on a different dimension, as he, and his descendents, will also rule over other peoples. The task of ruling (רָדָה) is here evolving; it no longer entails ruling over the earth and the animals alone, now ruling also entails ruling other peoples. And YHWH (יְהוָה), the God (אֱלֹהֵי) of Shem – the one (or the family) who will rule – is blessed (בָּרַךְ). One cannot assume, as B. Waltke, C. Fredricks, and G. Wenham do, that the blessing of God is here being passed along to Shem's future descendents. Instead, the blessing is being ascribed to Shem's God, YHWH (יְהוָה). All three elements remain: The image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דְּמוּת) of God, ruling (רָדָה), and blessing (בָּרַךְ). And all three elements are continuing along one of the hereditary lines of Noah, only they are not all maintained and passed on through mankind. The blessing (בָּרַךְ) remains part of the

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<sup>303</sup> Shem has, of course, already been blessed by God in Gen. 9:1.

realm of God. The difference being, that the blessing will now be bestowed by YHWH (יְהוָה), the God (אֱלֹהִי) of Shem. The text gives a hint of the hereditary line for the next blessing God bestows, and makes it clear who the bestower of the blessing will be: YHWH (יְהוָה). Abraham, one of Shem's descendants, is the recipient of the next blessing in the Book of Genesis (Gen. 12:2), and in that case, it is YHWH (יְהוָה) who imparts the blessing.

This thesis' focus, as it pertains to this pericope, is not primarily that יְהוָה becomes the bestower of blessings, but that ruling (רדה) and blessing (ברך) are clearly taking a similar path through the descendants of Shem, and through YHWH (יְהוָה), who is described as the God (אֱלֹהִי) of Shem. Image (צֶלֶם), likeness (דְּמוּת), and ruling (רדה)<sup>304</sup> all continue to follow the branches of humanity that stem from Japheth and Ham. But it is only in the lineage of Shem that we see image (צֶלֶם), likeness (דְּמוּת), ruling (רדה), and blessing (ברך)<sup>305</sup> all taking a similar path.

### 2.6.1 This Thesis' Translation Compared with Other Modern Translations

A few words need to be said regarding the way this translation differs from other modern English translations. Three main distinctions need to be made:

First, this translation continues to employ the auxiliary verb “may” when translating jussives and non-imperative volitional terms, in order to emphasize the jussive mood in its most comprehensive form.<sup>306</sup>

Second, the proposed translation explicitly emphasizes the aspects of aim and intention conveyed by means of the WeYiqtol verb form (v. 26c; v. 27b, 27c). The term, “that,” is used

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<sup>304</sup> It is important to note that “ruling” here is seen in a somewhat lesser degree than the “ruling” associated with the descendants of Shem, as the descendants of Shem are pictured as “ruling” over the descendants of the other brothers.

<sup>305</sup> Though, as noted, the blessing does not remain with the descendants themselves.

<sup>306</sup> See vv. 26-27.

here in its conjunctive sense; meaning that it is, “used as a function word to introduce a subordinate clause expressing consequence, result, or effect.”<sup>307</sup> Most modern English renditions of Gen. 9 translate vv. 26c; 27b, 27c in such a way that expresses their jussive nature, albeit with the auxiliary verb “let.”<sup>308</sup> None of these translations, however, capture the elements of aim and intention found in the WeYiqtol verb form. This thesis’ translation uses the term “that” or “so that” in its conjunctive sense, as a way to connect the clause containing the WeYqitol verb to its preceding clause. This allows the subordinate clauses to clearly express aim and intention.

Finally, most modern English translations translate the verb ראה, in vv. 22 and 23, as “to see”. The translation that this thesis is putting forth translates ראה with the intransitive verb *looked* or *look*, thus emphasizing that both the *looking*, on behalf of Ham, and the *not looking*, on behalf of the other two brothers, is active in both cases. As noted above, the simple change from passive seeing, to active looking, allows for the sin of Ham to become clear to the reader.<sup>309</sup>

## 2.7 Preliminary Conclusions

Based upon the use of the root ברך, within the six pericopes from the Primeval History that have been studied thus far, preliminary conclusions can begin to be formed. Those conclusions will come under four different headings, all working towards the development of a comprehensive definition of ברך.

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<sup>307</sup> *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. 11th ed., s.v. “that.”

<sup>308</sup> The NIV and NKJV both use the auxiliary verb ‘may’, but neither translation makes an effort to capture the elements of aim and intention inherent in the WeYiqtol verb form.

<sup>309</sup> It is important to note that The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon uses Gen. 9:22 and 23 as an example of ראה being appropriately translated as, “*look at, see, but direct volition.*” See *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*. s.v. “ראה.”

### 2.7.1 Volitive Forms

Volitive forms are used in four of the six pericopes studied thus far within the Primeval History (Gen. 1:20-23; 1:24-31; 8:20-9:3; 9:18-29). Within these four pericopes volitive forms are expressed as jussive, cohortative and imperative. The volitive form is determined based upon morphology, and macro-syntactic analysis. The ways in which this thesis has translated imperatives, is generally the same as all other modern English translations, and will not be discussed in these preliminary conclusions.<sup>310</sup> The translations of the jussives and cohortative, however, are considerably different from most English translations, and these differences play a significant role in a proper understanding of בָּרַךְ within the Primeval History, and beyond.

The author(s)/redactor(s) use of the volitive mood within the pericopes studied in the Primeval History can be seen in two distinct ways: 1) They have been used purely as an expression of will and desire; 2) They have been used as an expression of will and desire, with the added nuance of expressing aim and intention. Each one of the distinct ways in which the writer(s) have used the volitive mood will be addressed in turn.

The use of the volitive mood, purely as an expression of will and desire, has occurred in four of the six pericopes studied thus far in the Primeval History (Gen. 1:20-23; 1:24-31; 8:20-9:3; 9:18-29). The creation account in Gen. 1 will function as a case study on the importance of the use of volitives as an expression of will and desire. In this text, the volitive mood suggests that Creation itself is an act, first and foremost, of God's will and desire. For this is where the emphasis of the text lies. Scholars are quick to conclude that Creation occurs through the word of God.<sup>311</sup> Although not entirely wrong, these scholars fail to recognize that the text's emphasis

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<sup>310</sup> The only exception is the WeQatal verb form of Gen. 1:28d, which will be dealt with below.

<sup>311</sup> See section 2.1 above.

is on the will of God in the act of creation, and that the word of God simply expresses His desired will.

In Gen. 1:1-2:3, the phrase, “וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים – And God said” occurs nine times. Eight of those nine occurrences deal specifically with God’s creative actions. Table 22 contains those eight occurrences, along with the verb form of the following clause:

Verse	Hebrew and English Translation	Verb Form	Verse	Hebrew and English Translation	Verb Form
1:3a	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים And God said	Wayyiqtol	1:3b	יְהִי אוֹר May there be light	Yiqtol (Jussive)
1:6a	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים And God said	Wayyiqtol	1:6b	יְהִי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם May there be an expanse in the midst of the waters	Yiqtol (Jussive)
1:9a	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים And God said	Wayyiqtol	1:9b	יִקּוּי הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מָקוֹם אֶחָד May the waters from under the heavens be gathered into one place	Yiqtol (Jussive)
1:11a	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים And God said	Wayyiqtol	1:11b	תִּצְמַח הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׁא May the earth sprout vegetation	Yiqtol (Jussive)
1:14a	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים And God said	Wayyiqtol	1:14b	יְהִי מְאֹרֹת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם May there be lights in the expanse of the heavens	Yiqtol (Jussive)
1:20a	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים And God said	Wayyiqtol	1:20b	יִשְׂרָצוּ הַמַּיִם May the waters swarm	Yiqtol (Jussive)
1:24a	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים And God said	Wayyiqtol	1:24b	תוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה לְמִינָהּ May the earth bring forth creatures according to their kinds	Yiqtol (Jussive)
1:26a	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים And God said	Wayyiqtol	1:26b	נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדִמוּתֵנוּ May we make man in our image, after our likeness	Yiqtol (Cohortative)

**Table 22: Occurrences of “וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים—And God said” and its following clauses in Gen. 1**



As the table above demonstrates, God's word, in Gen. 1, is always expressed in the volitive mood, underlining the fact that the word of God is an expression of His will or desire. When scholars discuss Creation as an expression of the word of God, they are generally referring to God's word as a command.<sup>312</sup> This thesis is not trying to argue whether or not God's "word" is involved in Creation. What this thesis is arguing, is how that "word" *effects* Creation. Does the "word" of God command "light; expanse in the midst of the waters; waters; vegetation; etc." into existence? Or does the "word" of God express a will for these things to exist? By allowing the volitives of Gen. 1 to have their intended effect, scholars will no longer need to develop creative terms like, "divine jussives,"<sup>313</sup> in order to explain-away the writer(s) clear use of the volitive mood in the Creation account of Gen. 1.

Gen. 1:26-28 becomes a clear example of why a proper translation of the volitives in Gen. 1, is fundamentally important to a proper understanding of various aspects of the Creation narrative. As this thesis has demonstrated, the aim and intention of mankind being created in the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דְּמוּת) of God, is for mankind to rule (רדה) as God's representatives on earth. Along with this, mankind is blessed (בֵּרַךְ) for the purpose of ruling (רדה).<sup>314</sup> Obviously, what it means to rule (רדה), as God's representatives on earth, becomes vitally important. As noted above, H.-J. Zobel defines רדה as:

"Human dominion, limited to the earth and the animal kingdom, derives from being made in the image of God and is understood as an aspect of God's blessing. It follows necessarily that human dominion is a power bestowed by God and must serve to maintain God's order. *Human rule must have positive consequences for the ruled*; in ruling, humans must preserve their humanity and remain humane. Therefore human dominion can be understood only as an action for which humans are accountable to God. [...] Human dominion over the earth should therefore contribute to the preservation and benefit of God's creation."<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> See section 2.1 above.

<sup>313</sup> See footnote 136.

<sup>314</sup> See p.43 above.

<sup>315</sup> Zobel, *Theological*, 335-336 (italics added).

And W. Brueggemann writes:

“It is now generally agreed that the image of God reflected in human persons is after the manner of a king who establishes statues of himself to assert his sovereign rule where the king himself cannot be present. (We may draw on this analogy only while recognizing its inadequacy, such plastic or sculpture is ‘fixed.’) The human creature attests to the Godness of God by exercising freedom with and authority over all the other creatures entrusted to its care. The image of God in the human person is a mandate of power and responsibility. But it is power as God exercises power. The image images the creative use of power which invites, evokes, and permits. *There is nothing here of coercive or tyrannical power*, either for God or for humankind.”<sup>316</sup>

But why must human dominion (ruling), “have positive consequences for the ruled?”<sup>317</sup> And why is there, “nothing here of coercive or tyrannical power,”<sup>318</sup> in human ruling? Both of these scholars take examples from outside of the Book of Genesis in order to prove their point. W. Brueggemann is dealing specifically with רדה in Gen. 1:26-28, yet he looks to Ezk. 34, Lev. 25, and Ps. 72 as texts that allow him to define רדה the way that he does. This thesis does not disagree with the definitions presented above, but is suggesting that the proof of their arguments can be found in Gen. 1, and should be reflected in the translation of the text. The blatant use of the volitive mood in Gen. 1 provides evidence for recognizing that there is nothing *coercive or tyrannical* in mankind’s intended rule, as it reflects God’s rule. Understanding, and translating, the volitives of Gen. 1 as truly volitional, that is, as expressions of will and desire, would allow many scholars’ theology about the character of God to become more apparent, rather than labelling the volitives of Gen. 1 as, “divine jussives”, and translating them as commands. The use of the volitive mood throughout Gen. 1 has been downplayed, and the non-coercive, non-tyrannical nature of God has been veiled. Gen. 1 presents a God who creates through His word,

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<sup>316</sup> Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 32 (italics added).

<sup>317</sup> Zobel, *Theological*, 335-336.

<sup>318</sup> Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 32.

but that word is an expression of His will and desire. The volitional nature of God's creative word demonstrates His non-coercive and non-tyrannical character.

Along with the use of the volitive mood, purely as an expression of will and desire, there is the added nuance of expressing aim and intention, through the use of the WeYiqtol verb form. This verb form, which has been used four times in two of the pericopes studied thus far (Gen. 1:26; 9:26, 27<sup>319</sup>), is important to this thesis not only for the ways that it has been used within the Primeval History thus far, but also because it is used four times in Gen. 12:1-3. Because the WeYiqtol is a volitive form which is used specifically to express aim and intention, it becomes vitally important that this nuance be emphasized in the translation. A proper understanding of the WeYiqtol verb form is important in order to properly understand the close connection between the blessing (ברך) of mankind (Gen. 1:28) and the task of ruling (רדה) given to mankind (Gen. 1:26, 28),<sup>320</sup> as well as the close connection between the WeYiqtol verb form and the kingdom/royal language that is used throughout these pericopes.<sup>321</sup>

### 2.7.2 The Purpose of ברך: The Relationship between צֶלֶם, דְּמוּת, רדה, and ברך

The four terms: image (צֶלֶם), likeness (דְּמוּת), ruling (רדה), and blessing (ברך), are all closely related. The presence of all four terms<sup>322</sup>, or the conspicuous absence of some of the terms, plays a significant role in comprehensively understanding each of the terms, and more importantly, in properly interpreting the meaning of the root ברך. All, or some, of the four terms

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<sup>319</sup> The WeYiqtol verb form occurs twice in Gen. 9:27.

<sup>320</sup> See section 2.7.2 below. That section will also discuss the pertinent WeQatal verb form of Gen. 1:28.

<sup>321</sup> See section 2.7.3 below.

<sup>322</sup> Or synonymous terms in the case of רדה.

occur in four<sup>323</sup> of the six pericopes that have been studied thus far within the Primeval History.<sup>324</sup>

### **2.7.2.1 Gen. 1:24-31**

The use of image (צֶלֶם), likeness (דְּמוּת), ruling (רָדָה), and blessing (בֵּרַךְ) within Gen. 1:24-31, more specifically Gen. 1:26-28, function as a baseline test. These verses will be used as a baseline for two reasons: 1) This pericope is the first occurrence of all four of these terms.<sup>325</sup> 2) Gen. 1:24-31 is the only pericope, studied within this thesis, where all four terms occur together.

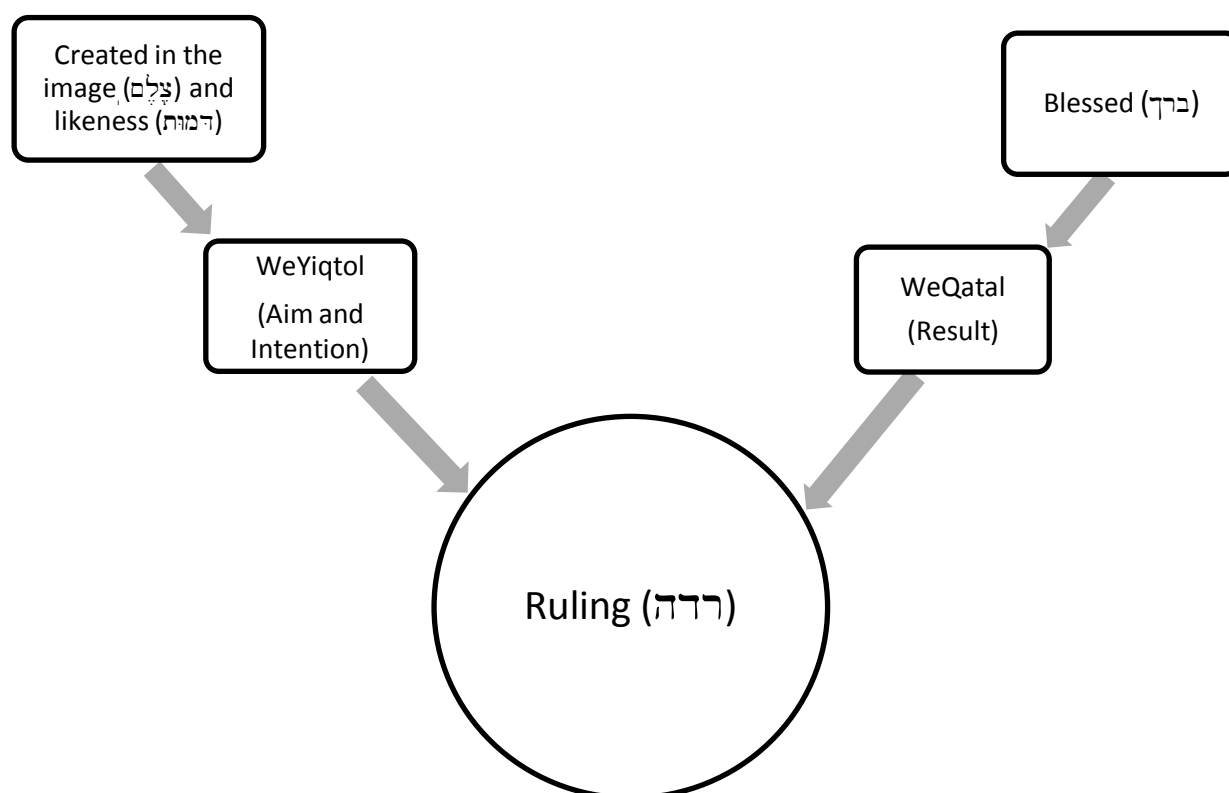
More important than functioning as a strong baseline for study, Gen. 1:26-28 demonstrates a clear interconnectedness between the four terms; so much so that the verses and terms cannot be properly understood without comprehending the connection between them. The two predominant verb forms, WeYiqtol and WeQatal in vv. 26 and 28, respectively, are extremely important in correctly interpreting the interconnectedness of the terms within this passage. As noted above, the WeYiqtol verb form is used in Gen. 1:26 to express that the aim and intention of mankind being created in the image (צֶלֶם) and after the likeness (דְּמוּת) of God, is their ruling (רָדָה). Gen. 1:27 then continues, emphatically stressing the point that mankind, both male *and* female, are created in the image (צֶלֶם) of God. And then Gen. 1:28, in language very similar to v. 26, expresses that the result of the blessing (בֵּרַךְ) that God bestows on mankind, is for them to rule (רָדָה). Figure 2 demonstrates the interconnectedness of the terms:

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<sup>323</sup> Gen. 1:24-31; 5:1-3; 8:20-9:3; 9:18-29.

<sup>324</sup> Even though all of the terms might not appear together in each one of the aforementioned pericopes, all of the pericopes are important in understanding the inter-connectedness of the terms.

<sup>325</sup> Because this thesis is approaching the text utilizing synchronic methodologies specifically, by stating that this pericope is the “first occurrence of all four of these terms,” this thesis is referring to their current placement within the Book of Genesis.



**Figure 2: Interconnectedness of the Terms Created in the Likeness and Blessing**

Not only is the aim and intention (WeYiqtol) of being created in the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דְמוּת) of God, and the result (WeQatal) of the blessing (בֵּרַךְ) that God bestows on mankind, the same, but the specifics of what are to be ruled (רדה) are strikingly similar – mankind are to rule (רדה), as God’s representatives, over the earth and all of the other non-human creatures.<sup>326</sup>

The interconnectedness of all of the four terms: image (צֶלֶם), likeness (דְמוּת), ruling (רדה), and blessing (בֵּרַךְ) is significant here, as it demonstrates interdependency amongst the terms. Mankind is created in the image (צֶלֶם) and after the likeness (דְמוּת) of God for the purpose of ruling (רדה), and they are blessed (בֵּרַךְ) for that same purpose as well. Said slightly differently, mankind has been blessed (בֵּרַךְ) for the purpose of ruling (רדה) as God’s

<sup>326</sup> See Table 6 above.

representatives, God's image bearers. The ability to rule (רדה) as God's representatives is derived specifically from the blessing (ברך) that mankind receives from God. The blessing that God bestows upon mankind provides them with the ability/capability to perform the task that God has given them.<sup>327</sup> Not only does the blessing (ברך) that God bestows upon mankind provide them with the ability/capability to perform the task of ruling (רדה), but it provides them with the ability/capability to rule rightly.<sup>328</sup> The difference is explained in Gen. 5:1-3,<sup>329</sup> and demonstrated in Gen. 6ff. It is the contention of this thesis that mankind's ruling (רדה), in the way that it was intended by God according to Gen. 1 (ruling rightly), is only made possible by the blessing (ברך) of God.

#### 2.7.2.2 Gen. 5:1-3

Three of the four terms discussed above are used in Gen. 5:1-3 (בְּרָךְ, דְּמוּת, and צֶלֶם), while the other term (רדה) is implied. In this pericope בְּרָךְ is used in reference to the original blessing of man and woman (Gen. 1:28), but is not applied to Adam's son, Seth, or to subsequent generations. The two preceding verses (Gen. 5:1-2) deliberately echo Gen. 1:26, and speak of mankind (male and female) being created in the likeness (דְּמוּת) of God, and of their being blessed (בְּרָךְ) on that day.<sup>330</sup> Though the term רדה is absent from this pericope, it is implied in the verse's clear affinity to Gen. 1:26. If the aim (WeYiqtol) of being created in the image (צֶלֶם)

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<sup>327</sup> H. Mowvley refers to what this thesis has termed, "ability/capability," as "potentiality," writing, "It is clear that when a blessing is given it is the potentiality that is passed on. [...] the power to be fruitful [...] not the fruit itself." Mowvley, "The Concept", 75. See also David Tobin Asselin S.J., "The Notion of Dominion in Genesis 1-3." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 16 (1954): 286.

<sup>328</sup> It is important here to point out that to suggest that the blessing (בְּרָךְ) of God provides mankind with the "ability/capability to rule rightly", does not mean that they (the recipient of the blessing) will necessarily rule rightly. The implication is that the blessing provides the ability/capability of ruling rightly, but it does not necessitate that outcome.

<sup>329</sup> See section 2.7.2.2 below.

<sup>330</sup> See section 2.4 above.

and likeness (דמויות) of God is ruling (רדה), than ruling must also be implied in Gen. 5:1-3, which reiterates Gen. 1:26. Therefore, it is fair to conclude, as many scholars do,<sup>331</sup> that Seth's being created in the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דמויות) of his father, continues to bear the image and likeness of God. If that is the case, than the task associated with this image and likeness bearing – that is, “to rule” (רדה) – is being passed along as well. Thus, each successive generation's commission to rule, as God's representatives, is inherent in their being created in the image (צֶלֶם) and after the likeness (דמויות) of God.

Blessing (ברך), however, though being connected to the role/task of ruling (רדה), is not necessarily passed along through the generations. In Gen. 5:1-3 the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דמויות) are passed along to Seth, along with, inherently, the role/task of ruling (רדה). The blessing (ברך) of God, that is, the source of the ability/capability to rule rightly is not passed along.

Gen. 6ff. then becomes a case study of what it means to rule without the ability/capability to rule rightly. According to Gen. 6:5-7:

“The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.’” (ESV)

If the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דמויות) of God are being passed down hereditarily from one generation to the next for the task of ruling (רדה), and the blessing (ברך) of God were being passed along as well, what then went so horribly wrong? This thesis' response to how this could occur, is to point out that the blessing (ברך) of God is not being passed along hereditarily. There

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<sup>331</sup> See footnote 242 above.

is nothing in the Primeval History to suggest that the blessing (ברך) of God is something that is passed along from one generation to the next. Though the term ברך is used in Gen. 5:1-3, it is clearly in reference to the original man and woman.<sup>332</sup> Nowhere in Gen. 5:1-3 is Seth bestowed with the blessing (ברך) of God. The conspicuous absence of God's blessing (ברך) in Gen. 5:3 not only illuminates the fact that the blessing (ברך) of God is not something that is passed on hereditarily, but it also suggests that God is selective about who He blesses (ברך). Both of these facts will shed light on what it means for Abraham to be blessed, and *to be a blessing* (Gen. 12:1-3).

### 2.7.2.3 Gen. 8:20-9:3

Gen. 8:20-9:3, more specifically, the blessing in Gen. 9:1-3 is very similar to the blessing that God bestowed on the original man and woman in Gen. 1:28-29.<sup>333</sup> Gen. 1:28-29 and Gen. 9:1-3 have been placed next to each other in table 23, in order to demonstrate the similarities:

Gen. 1:28–29	Gen. 9:1–3
<p><sup>1:28</sup>And God <i>blessed</i> them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, <i>ruling</i> over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that creeps on the earth!”</p> <p><sup>1:29</sup>And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with fruit yielding seed. They will be food for you.</p>	<p><sup>9:1</sup>And God <i>blessed</i> Noah and his sons, and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. <sup>9:2</sup>And may the <i>fear</i> and the <i>dread</i> of you be on all the beasts of the earth and on all the birds of the heavens, on everything that creeps on the ground, and on every fish of the sea; into your hand they have been given. <sup>9:3</sup>Every creeping thing that is alive will be food for you, even green plants; I have given everything to you.”</p>

**Table 23: Similarities between Gen. 1:28-29 and 9:1-3**

<sup>332</sup> See p.58-59 above.

<sup>333</sup> See section 2.5 above.



The similar language between the two pericopes is apparent. In Gen. 1:28-29 the original man and woman are blessed (ברך), commanded to rule (רדה) over the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens and over every living thing creeps on the earth, and then they are told that the plants and the fruit of the trees will be food for them. In Gen. 9:1-3 Noah and his sons are blessed (ברך), God expresses a desire that the fear (מוֹרָא) and dread (חת) of them will be on all fish of the sea, on the birds of the heavens, on the beasts of the earth and on every living thing that creeps on the ground, and then they are told that every creeping thing and every green plant will be food for them. Amidst the vast similarities between these two passages, two distinctions are clear: 1) The term ruling (רדה) is substituted with fear (מוֹרָא) and dread (חת). 2) Creeping things are now included in the list of suitable food for Noah and his sons.

As noted above, the dietary changes are of little significance to this thesis. The substitution of ruling (רדה) with fear (מוֹרָא) and dread (חת), on the other hand, is significant. Scholars will point out that the terms fear (מוֹרָא) and dread (חת) are synonymous with ruling (רדה).<sup>334</sup> It is the contention of this thesis, however, that though these three terms are similar, and are used in an obviously analogous fashion in Gen. 1:28-29 and Gen. 9:1-3, they are distinct, and add something new to one's understanding of the term רדה. If מוֹרָא and חת mean the exact same thing as רדה, why not use רדה? Why make the change at all? It is the contention of this thesis that the use of מוֹרָא and חת is directly related to the role of ruling (רדה) which mankind has been given. Mankind has *not* been created to rule (רדה) for themselves. They have been created in the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דְּמוּת) of God, to rule (רדה) as *His* representatives. As noted above, the root, “יִרָא” [from which מוֹרָא is derived] and its derivatives have an impressive total of

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<sup>334</sup> See footnote 274.

435 occurrences,<sup>335</sup> in the Hebrew Bible. Of those 435 occurrences, “almost 80 percent of the passages, however, the object of fear is God.”<sup>336</sup> The term חת is similar. The term means, “terror, fear,”<sup>337</sup> and according to E. Maass, has two primary uses, “on the one hand, the word is used to depict the terror evoked when Yahweh comes to punish. On the other, the root has a firm place in the Deuteronomistic exhortation, ‘Fear not.’”<sup>338</sup> The term is clearly used in relation to fearing (being filled with terror by) God, and is in direct contrast with not fearing (being filled with terror by) anyone, or anything, else. The use of מורא and חת connects the rule that Noah and his sons (mankind) are to exercise, with the Creator, God. The use of מורא and חת reinforce the vassal nature of mankind’s relationship to their creator God. The specific use of these terms reinforces the subservient nature of mankind, and the birds, fish, animals, etc. are to be in מורא and חת of mankind not because of who mankind is, but because of who mankind represents, the One whose image they bear. In ruling (רדה), mankind is bearing the image of God, and the response to God’s representatives, as God’s representatives, is appropriately, חת and מורא. Scholars have sought to explain the change from רדה to מורא and חת based upon the context of Gen. 9 (post-flood), or the new dietary changes in Gen. 9:3,<sup>339</sup> but this thesis is suggesting that neither one of those matter. The change of terms from רדה to מורא and חת is done in order to reveal another layer of what it means for mankind to rule as God’s representatives on the earth; namely, that the subjects of God’s rule will מורא and חת those whom God has created in His image (צֶלֶם).

<sup>335</sup> Fuhs, *Theological*, 292.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid., 296.

<sup>337</sup> *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*. s.v. “חת.”

<sup>338</sup> E. Maass, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by David E. Green. Vol. 5, s.v. “חת” *hātāt*; חת *hat*; חתה *hattā*; חתית *hattīt*; חתה *h’at I and II*; חתחתים *hathattīm*; מוחתה *m’hattā*.” (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 279.

<sup>339</sup> See p.66-68 above.

The use of מִזְרָא and חַת does two things: 1) It reinforces the vassal nature of the relationship that mankind has with their creator God. Bolstering the subordinate relationship between mankind and God, which helps to clearly underline the meaning of the term בָּרַךְ.<sup>340</sup> 2) The two terms continue to build upon the kingdom/royal language that is used in direct relation to the term בָּרַךְ throughout the Primeval History.

#### 2.7.2.4 Gen. 9:18-29

Of the four terms being discussed in this section, בָּרַךְ is the only one found within Gen. 9:18-29. That being said, it is the contention of this thesis that the term רָדָה is implied through the use of עֶבֶד (slave). עֶבֶד is used four times in Gen. 9:25-27, all in relation to a hierarchical relationship between the sons of Noah. In v. 25 Noah curses Canaan, saying, “a slave of slaves he will be to his brothers.” And then in vv. 26-27 Noah expresses a desire (WeYiqtol) that Canaan will be a slave to each one of his brothers. In fact, in v. 26 he declares, “blessed be YHWH, the God of Shem,” and then, as an expression of aim and intention (WeYiqtol) says, “that Canaan may be his [Shem’s] slave.” The aim/intention of declaring a blessing over YHWH, the God of Shem, was so that Canaan may be Shem’s slave. In v. 27 Noah expresses a desire (Yiqtol – Jussive) that God would, “enlarge Japheth,” and then, as an expression of aim and intention (WeYiqtol) says, “that he [Japheth] may dwell in the tents of Shem, and that Canaan may be his [Japheth’s] slave.” The volitional mood in this pericope is used to create a hierarchical relationship between Noah’s sons, and their descendents, in which some of Noah’s offspring will rule (רָדָה) over others.

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<sup>340</sup> See section 4.1.1 below for more details.

Thus, the role/task of ruling (רדה) is once again nuanced. In Gen. 1:24-31 mankind is created in the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דְּמוּת) of God for the purpose of ruling (רדה), as God's representatives, over the earth and the other non-human creatures. In Gen. 8:20-9:3 Noah and his sons are blessed (ברך), and God expresses a desire that the fear (מוֹרָא) and dread (חַת) of them (Noah and his sons) will fall on all the non-human creatures. Here, in Gen. 9:18-29, Noah is expressing a desire that some of his descendents will rule (רדה) over other descendents. Ruling (רדה) begins with the earth and the other non-human creatures (Gen. 1:24-31), is nuanced to include fear (מוֹרָא) and dread (חַת) for the non-human creatures (Gen. 8:20-9:3), and finally, evolves to the point in which certain descendents are ruling (רדה) over others descendents (Gen. 9:18-29).

The evolution isn't one in which the role/task of ruling (רדה) is changing; rather, it is the realm of the role/task that is expanding, and this expansion is clearly linked with the blessing (ברך) of God, and with YHWH (יְהוָה) who blesses (ברך). In the first two instances in which people are blessed (Gen. 1:28 and Gen. 9:1), the blessings take place while the blessees are the only people on the earth. In Gen. 1:28 man and woman are blessed prior to having any offspring. In Gen. 9:1 Noah and his sons are blessed after the flood waters have receded, and they are the only ones left on the earth. The evolution/expansion of the blessing (ברך) is taking place in light of the fact that God, "will never again curse the ground on account of man ... and [God] will never again smite every living creature which [He] ha[s] made (Gen. 8:21)." God will continue to be selective about whom He chooses to bless (cf. Gen. 5:1-3), but now the sphere of rule, for which that person has been blessed, will expand. After having seen and experienced the flawed ruling of those who were not blessed by God (Gen. 6ff.), knowing that still, even after the flood, "the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth (Gen. 8:21)." God will

include humans within the sphere of those that need to be ‘rightly ruled’. Therefore, God will select a recipient of blessing from the lineage of Shem (Gen. 9:26), whom YHWH (יְהוָה) will bless, and as God’s representative on earth, he will rule the earth, the other non-human creatures, and the other descendents of Noah.

The expansion of the realm of ruling (רדה) is significant. The realm of the role/task of ruling (רדה) has steadily grown throughout the Primeval History, and the next occurrence of the blessing (ברך) of God will encompass all of these aspects of ruling (רדה). The role/task of ruling (רדה) has grown to include the earth, non-human creatures, and other humans. All of these areas to be ruled (רדה), are to be ruled rightly, which is only possible through the blessing (ברך) of YHWH (יְהוָה).

A proper understanding of the areas to be ruled (רדה) – the earth, non-human life, and human life – is extremely important in order to properly comprehend the role that Abraham will play in Gen. 12:1-3. Abraham is the next recipient of the blessing (ברך) of YHWH (יְהוָה), and an understanding of the realm of the rule that Abraham is to occupy, based upon his selection as the recipient of YHWH’s (יְהוָה) blessing (ברך) is extremely important, and will aid in drawing a clear understanding of what it means for Abraham *to be a blessing*.

#### **2.7.2.5 The Purpose of ברך with רדה, צֶלֶם and דְמוּת**

Drawing a connection between image (צֶלֶם), likeness (דְמוּת), and ruling (רדה) is not unique. As noted above, numerous scholars have demonstrated the clear connection between these three terms.<sup>341</sup> What is lacking in these scholars’ interpretations of the inter-relatedness of

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<sup>341</sup> See footnote 190 above.

the three terms is the fact that the term בֵּרַךְ is excluded. Because so much scholarship and emphasis has been placed on what it means to be created in the צֶלֶם and דְּמוּת of God, in Gen. 1:26-28, and how that צֶלֶם and דְּמוּת is connected to the role/task of ruling (רָדָה), בֵּרַךְ has been set aside. בֵּרַךְ has also, in part, been ignored because these scholars have already determined a definition for blessing that excludes רָדָה, based upon Gen. 1:22. The result is the loss of a proper understanding of the term בֵּרַךְ itself. When discussing the terms צֶלֶם and דְּמוּת in Gen. 1:26-28, P. Gentry and S. Wellum write:

“Particularly instructive for Genesis 1:26-28 is the usage of the words ‘likeness’ and ‘image’ in the Tell Fakhariyeh Inscription. Inscribed on a large statue of King Hadduyith‘î of Gozan, a city in what is now eastern Syria, is an Akkadian-Aramaic bilingual text from the tenth or ninth century B.C. The text is divided thematically into two sections. The first half focuses on the role of the king as a supplicant and worshipper of his god and is headed in the Aramaic text by דְּמוּת, equivalent of the Hebrew דְּמוּת. The second half focuses on the majesty and power of the king in his role in relation to the subjects. This is headed in the Aramaic text by the word צֶלֶם, equivalent of the Hebrew צֶלֶם. While both terms can and do refer to the statue of the king, each has a different nuance.”<sup>342</sup>

For this reason, Gentry and Wellum conclude:

“Given the normal meanings of ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ in the cultural and linguistic setting of the Old Testament and the ancient Near East, ‘likeness’ specifies a relationship between God and humans such that *’ādām* can be described as the son of God, and ‘image’ describes a relationship between God and humans such that *’ādām* can be described as a servant king. Although both terms specify the divine-human relationship, the first focuses on the human in relation to God and the second focuses on the human in relation to the world. These would be understood to be relationships characterized by faithfulness and loyal love, obedience and trust. [...] In describing a divine-human relationship, the terms in Genesis 1:26-28 correspond precisely to the usage of the same words in the Tell Fakhariyah Inscription.”<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 193.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, 194-195.

Gentry and Wellum aren't wrong in their conclusion. There seems to be two dimensions in which the terms of Gen. 1:26-28 function, namely: the relationship directed between mankind and God, and the relationship between mankind and the rest of creation. This thesis' suggestion is that this conclusion shouldn't be limited to *דְמוּת* and *צֶלֶם*. The author(s)/redactor(s) of Gen. 1:26-28 wanted to clearly and explicitly emphasize the *suppliant and worshipper of God* status that mankind is meant to have, and the author(s)/redactor(s) did so through the use of the term *ברך*. The writer(s) weren't satisfied with the implication in *דְמוּת*, but wanted to explicitly demonstrate that the ability/capability to rule (*רדה*), as God's representatives on the earth, is directly related to their suppliant/worshipper status, demonstrated through the bent knee of being blessed (*ברך*).<sup>344</sup> The term *ברך* gives the fullest expression of the suppliant/worshipper status of mankind, as the root of the word is based on bending the knee. It is in bending the knee to the one true God, that mankind is given the ability/capability of ruling rightly, as God's representatives on the earth.

By recognizing the inter-relatedness of image (*צֶלֶם*), likeness (*דְמוּת*), ruling (*רדה*), and blessing (*ברך*), one is most clearly and comprehensively able to understand the meaning of these terms as separate entities. Ruling (*רדה*) as God's representatives on the earth is at the heart of what it means to be created in the *צֶלֶם* and *דְמוּת* of God. Within the terms *צֶלֶם* and *דְמוּת* is mankind's suppliant/worshipper status, which is most clear expressed through the term *ברך*. The *ברך* that God bestows upon mankind is for the expressed result of their ruling (*רדה*). One cannot properly comprehend one without the others. At the nucleus of the root *ברך* is the meaning of bending the knee, to supplicate oneself in a worshipful fashion. Gen. 1:28 demonstrates that it is from this posture of supplication and worship that mankind receives the

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<sup>344</sup> See section 4.1.1 below.

ability/capability of ruling (רדה) rightly as God's representatives over the earth, properly bearing the  $\text{שָׁלוֹם}$  and  $\text{דְּמוּת}$  of God.

### 2.7.3 Kingdom/Royal Language

The use of kingdom/royal language is significant within the pericopes studied thus far. P. Gentry and S. Wellum point out that, "Scripture begins with the declaration that God, as Creator and triune Lord, is the sovereign ruler and King of the universe. In this important sense, the entire universe is God's kingdom since he is presently Lord and King."<sup>345</sup> J. Walton makes the case that the creation account presented in Gen. 1:1-2:3 is one of temple inauguration. That the author(s)/redactor(s) were using terms and imagery that were similar to other ANE literature regarding the inauguration of temples, in order to present the God of Israel as the Lord of all. By using the terms and imagery of temple inauguration within the context of Creation, the author(s)/redactor(s), according to Walton, were presenting the entire cosmos as the temple of God, therefore presenting the God of Israel as the ruler of all.<sup>346</sup> Gentry and Wellum write, "he [God] is the King, and the entire universe is his kingdom."<sup>347</sup> G. Goldsworthy writes, "the idea of the rule of God over creation, over all creatures, over the kingdoms of the world, and in a unique and special way, over his chosen and redeemed people, is the very heart of the message of Hebrew scriptures."<sup>348</sup> And Gentry and Wellum write, "even though the specific *wording*, 'kingdom of God,' is not found until much later in Scripture, the *idea* is taught in the opening pages of the Bible."<sup>349</sup> The concept, "idea" – to use Gentry and Wellum's term – of the kingdom

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<sup>345</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 592.

<sup>346</sup> John Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009).

<sup>347</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 592.

<sup>348</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, qtd. in Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 592.

<sup>349</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 592.



of God being present from the opening pages of the Bible is one that seems to be clearly connected to the term בֶּרֶךְ, which is being studied within this thesis.

The kingdom/royal language, connected to בֶּרֶךְ, is present, primarily, in the following terms: image (צִלָּם), likeness (דְּמוּת), ruling (רָדָה), and slave (עֶבֶד). The inter-relatedness of the terms has already been explored,<sup>350</sup> but it is worth examining the terms in order to reiterate their basis as kingdom/royal language. The term “kingdom” can be generically defined as, “a country whose ruler is a king or queen.”<sup>351</sup> Or more broadly defined as, “a realm or region in which something is dominant; an area or sphere in which one holds a preeminent position.”<sup>352</sup> The broader definition will be more useful to this thesis, as there is no nation state in which a monarchy could exist at this point within the text of Genesis. The terms צִלָּם and דְּמוּת are used in regards to a king or a ruler, and are terms that are clearly associated with kingdom/royal language.<sup>353</sup> רָדָה is most simply defined as, “having dominion.”<sup>354</sup> Dominion, as defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary is, “the power to rule.”<sup>355</sup> The term can only be properly understood within the broad definition of kingdom, where kingdom is defined as, “a realm or region in which something is dominant.” The one who rules (רָדָה) is the ‘something’ that is ‘dominant’. Plainly put, ruling (רָדָה) needs a context and framework from which authority is recognized. רָדָה needs a kingdom. The same can be said for עֶבֶד. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a slave as, “one that is completely subservient to a dominating influence.”<sup>356</sup> In order for one to be under a “dominating influence,” that dominion holder, or ruler, must have

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<sup>350</sup> See section 2.7.2 above.

<sup>351</sup> *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 11th ed., s.v. “kingdom.”

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>353</sup> See footnote 190.

<sup>354</sup> See p.42 above.

<sup>355</sup> *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 11th ed., s.v. “dominion.”

<sup>356</sup> *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 11th ed., s.v. “slave.”

a context in which their rule has authority. Again, **עָבַד** implies kingdom in the broad sense of the term.

The fact that kingdom/royal language is so prevalent in connection with the term **בָּרַךְ** throughout the Primeval History is of great significance to this thesis. And the fact that further kingdom/royal language is used within the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), emphasizes the importance of the connection of kingdom/royal language with the term **בָּרַךְ**.

#### 2.7.4 Preliminary Definition of **בָּרַךְ**

In accordance with the majority of scholars, this thesis agrees that the root **בָּרַךְ** is related to fertility and life giving-power.<sup>357</sup> Three of the six times that the root **בָּרַךְ** is used (Gen. 1:22; 28; 9:1), we see the phrase: **וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלְאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ** (And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”).<sup>358</sup> In contrast to the majority of scholars, this thesis’ definition of **בָּרַךְ** does not end with the concept of fertility and life-giving power, which is derived from the above verses. The context and use of **בָּרַךְ** in all six of the pericopes studied thus far, allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the term.

The first nuance to add to the previously attested definition of **בָּרַךְ** has to do with its inter-relatedness to the task/role of ruling (**רָדָה**). Ruling (**רָדָה**), as God’s representatives, is the aim/intention of being created in the image (**צֶלֶם**) and likeness (**דְּמוּת**) of God. Ruling (**רָדָה**) is the task/role given to mankind, inherent within mankind’s image (**צֶלֶם**) bearing status. This task/role is passed along hereditarily. **בָּרַךְ**, though being closely related to the task/role of ruling (**רָדָה**), is

<sup>357</sup> See p.28-29 above.

<sup>358</sup> Gen. 1:28 (cf. Gen. 1:26; 9:1).

not passed down hereditarily. Therefore, the בִּרְךְ of God is selectively bestowed by God for the express purpose of ruling rightly. The בִּרְךְ of God confers the recipient with the ability/capability of ruling rightly.

The second nuance that this thesis is adding to the definition of בִּרְךְ has to do with the realm in which this “ruling rightly” extends. The ruling (רִידָה) that mankind is to exercise, the right ruling for which certain people have been selectively blessed with the ability/capability to accomplish, evolves, or expands, to include the earth, non-human creatures, and other humans. This expansion of right ruling is expressed through the use of terms that are clearly associated with rule and dominion, terms that this thesis has labeled as, “kingdom/royal language.” Therefore, the בִּרְךְ that God selectively bestows is for the purpose of expanding His Kingdom.

Taking the original definition, and incorporating the additional nuances, this thesis offers the following as a preliminary definition of the root בִּרְךְ: *The בִּרְךְ of God provides the recipient with life-giving power and potency. As the term applies more specifically to humans, while incorporating life-giving power and potency, the בִּרְךְ of God provides the recipient with the ability/capability of ruling rightly, as God’s representative, for the express purpose of extending the Kingdom of God.*

### CHAPTER THREE: THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM (GEN. 12:1-3)

Gen. 12:1-3 contains the first occurrence of the root בֵּרַךְ in the Patriarchal Narratives, and the root itself occurs five times within these three verses. In order to continue to form a comprehensive definition of the root בֵּרַךְ, for the purpose of understanding what it means for Abraham *to be a blessing*, the first step will be to present a macro-syntactical analysis of the verses. A translation will then be proposed based upon the analysis. Finally, preliminary conclusions will be drawn based upon the analysis and translation. Notable differences between the proposed translation and other modern English translations will be discussed throughout the chapter. Textual critical problems of significance will be discussed throughout the body of the thesis, while minor differences will be addressed in footnotes.

#### 3.1 Gen. 11:31-12:3: Macro-Syntactic Analysis

The first occurrences of the root בֵּרַךְ, within the Patriarchal Narratives, are found in Gen.

12:2, 3. Table 24 outlines the macro-syntactic analysis of Gen. 11:31-12:3:

Discourse	Grammatical Construction	LP Pr.	Narrative	Translation
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	וַיִּקַּח תֶּרַח אֶת־אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט בֶּן־הָרָן בְּנוֹ 11:31	And Terah took Abram, his son, and Lot, the son of Haran, his grandson,
	SNC		וְאֶת שָׂרִי כְלָתּוֹ	and Sarai, his daughter-in-law,
	SNC		אִשְׁתִּי אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ	his son Abram's wife,
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	וַיֵּצְאוּ אֹתָם מֵאֹר כַּשְׂדִּים לָלֶכֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן	and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans, going to the land of Canaan.
			וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־חָרָן וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם:	And they went as far as Haran, and settled there.
	Chain		וַיְהִיו יְמֵי־תֶרַח 11:32	And the days of Terah were,
	SNC		חֲמִשָּׁה שָׁנִים וּמֵאֹתַיִם שָׁנָה	205 years,

Discourse	Grammatical Construction	LP Pr.	Narrative	Translation
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	וַיָּמָת תֶּרַח בְּחָרָן:	And Terah died in Haran.
	Wayyiqtol		וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם <sup>12:1</sup>	And YHWH said to Abram,
לֵךְ־לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמְּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ	Volitional – Imperative			“Go, from your country, from your kindred, and from your father’s house,
אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֹרָאָה:	X-Yiqtol (jussive)	↓ Fg		to the land that I want to show you.
וְאֶעֱשֶׂה לְךָ גְּדוֹלָה <sup>12:2</sup>	WeYiqtol			So that I may make you into a great nation,
וְאֶבְרַכְךָ	WeYiqtol			that I may bless you,
וְאִנְיָלָה שְׁמִי	WeYiqtol			and that your name may be great.
וְהָיָה בְרַכָּה:	Volitional – Imperative			Be a blessing!
וְאֶבְרַכְּהָ מִבְּרַכֶּיךָ <sup>12:3</sup>	WeYiqtol			So that I may bless those that bless you,
וּמִקְלָלָהּ אָאֵר	X-Yiqtol			and the one [who] curses you, I will curse.
וְנִבְרַכְוּ בְּךָ	WeQatal			And they shall be blessed in you,
כָּל מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאָדָמָה:	SNC			all the families of the earth.”

**Table 24: An Outline of the Macro-Syntactical Analysis of Gen. 11:31–12:3**

### 3.2 Gen. 11:31-12:3: The Blessing of Abraham

Gen. 11:31-12:3 are included in this translation in order to provide some context for the root בֵּרַךְ:

<sup>11:31</sup> And Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and Abram’s <sup>359</sup> wife Sarai, his daughter-in-law <sup>360</sup>. And they went forth <sup>361</sup> together

<sup>359</sup> The Samaritan Pentateuch here adds וְנָחֹר בָּנָיו “and Nahor his sons”, seeking to harmonize with a chronological reading of Gen. 12:1. This thesis has maintained the reading of the MT because of the Samaritan Pentateuch’s harmonizing tendencies. See Tov, Textual, 85.

<sup>360</sup> The Samaritan Pentateuch here adds וְאֵת מִלְכָּה כְּלוּתוֹ “and Micah, his daughter-in-law.” The addition is meant to correspond with the addition from the above footnote, continuing the intended harmonization.

<sup>361</sup> The term וַיֵּצֵא is slightly problematic. The term is found in the MT as the 3<sup>rd</sup> masc. pl. impf. Qal of the term יָצָא with a waw consec, “and they went forth”. The Samaritan Pentateuch has וַיֵּצֵא (3<sup>rd</sup> masc. sg. impf. Hiph. of the same term with a waw consec.), “he brought forth”. This reading is followed by the Septuagint and the

from Ur<sup>362</sup> of the Chaldeans towards the land of Canaan. They went as far as Haran, and settled there. <sup>11:32</sup> The days of Terah were, 205 years,<sup>363</sup> and Terah died in Haran.

<sup>12:1</sup> And YHWH said to Abram, “Go, from your country, your kindred, and your father’s house! To the land that I want to show you. <sup>12:2</sup> So that I may make you into a great nation, that I may bless you, and that your name may be great. Be<sup>364</sup> a blessing! <sup>12:3</sup> So that I may bless those that bless you, and that I may curse the one who scorns you<sup>365</sup>. And through<sup>366</sup> you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Beginning this section with Gen. 11:31 situates Gen. 12:1-3 within its larger narrative framework. G. Wenham, along with C. Westermann, B. Arnold, A. Ross, B. Waltke, and F. Fredricks view Gen. 11:27-12:9 as the opening section to the Abraham cycle.<sup>367</sup> G. Wenham writes:

“12:1, with its brusque mention of Abram, presupposes some knowledge of his identity, and the command ‘Go by yourself from your country’ implies some understanding of the location of his original homeland. This information is supplied in 11:27-32. It therefore seems unlikely that 12:1-3 was ever an independent, self-standing introduction to the Abraham stories.”<sup>368</sup>

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Vulgate. This thesis has maintained the reading as it is found in the MT, agreeing with G. Wenham that the more difficult reading of the MT is to be preferred. See Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 266.

<sup>362</sup> The Septuagint here adds ἐκ τῆς χώρας “from the land”, which is a similar addition to that which was inserted into Gen. 11:28. The MT will here be followed, due to the harmonization with Gen. 11:28.

<sup>363</sup> The Samaritan Pentateuch reads 145 for 205; cf. Acts 7:4. The Samaritan Pentateuch bases 145 on Terah’s age of 70 in Gen. 11:26, and Abraham’s age of 75 in Gen. 12:4. The age of 205, as it is found in the MT, is to be preferred because it is the more difficult reading. See p.108-109 below for further details.

<sup>364</sup> The Samaritan Pentateuch, here, as it does in Gen. 17:1, has the term as וְהָיָה. I have maintained the reading of the MT because of the Samaritan Pentateuch’s harmonizing tendencies. See Tov, *Textual*, 85.

<sup>365</sup> Some manuscripts of the Samaritan Pentateuch, Septugint, Peshitta, and Vulgate have the term in its plural form וְהָיָה לְכָל. Because the change only occurs in some manuscripts, the reading in the MT is preferred. See M.-F. Dion, “Du projet à la promesse. Analyse syntaxique et critique de la forme de Genèse.” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 34 no. 1 (2005) : 102.

<sup>366</sup> The term translated here as “through” is the preposition בְּ which is usually translated as “in”, but is here used in its instrumental meaning and can be translated as “through, by means of”. See *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*. s.v. “בְּ.”

<sup>367</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*; Ross, *Creation*; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*; Wenham, *Word Biblical*; Westermann *Genesis 12-36*.

<sup>368</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 267.

For Wenham, “the section is essentially an itinerary (11:31; 12:4-6, 8a, 9), expanded with genealogical details (11:27-30, 32), divine promises (12:1-3, 7), and notes about Abram’s responses (12:4, 7-8).”<sup>369</sup> The point being, of course, the clear connection between Gen. 12:1-3 and Gen. 11, which supports the basis of this thesis’ endeavor to understand the blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) in light of the Primeval History. For Wenham, Gen. 12:1-3 is unintelligible without a connection to Gen. 11. Because the connection between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives, especially the blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), is so foundational for this thesis, it is worth quoting Wenham at length, as he demonstrates the fundamental thematic connections between Gen. 11 and the rest of the Book of Genesis, as well as the Pentateuch as a whole:

“[Gen. 11:27-12:9] include indispensable background information for understanding subsequent stories. They introduce Lot (11:27, 31; 12:4-5), the subject of chaps. 13-14, 18-19; Sarai and her barrenness (11:29-31; 12:4-5), the theme of 12:10-20 and chaps. 15-18, 20, 21, 23; and Milcah (11:29), grandmother of Rebekah, Isaac’s future bride (chap. 24). 11:28, 31-32; 12:4-9 set the scene geographically and chronologically for the following story, while the promises enunciated here for the first time serve to explain the significance of Abraham’s whole career as well as that of his successors. The fourfold promise of land, descendants, covenant, and blessing to the nations is gradually fulfilled in Genesis and the succeeding books of the Pentateuch. Very properly, Gen. 12:1-3 has been the subject of close scrutiny because these verses are so central to the understanding of the whole of Genesis. The genealogy and the promises link the primeval history with the patriarchal stories [Patriarchal Narratives]. Verbal and ideological connections with the primeval history are numerous. Land (אֶרֶץ and אֶרֶמֶה), descendants, nation, name, greatness, curse and blessing, Canaan and the Canaanites have all already been broached in chaps. 1-11 and are here reintroduced with pregnant brevity.”<sup>370</sup>

C. Westermann agrees with G. Wenham, stating that, “the intention of this first introduction [Gen. 11:27-32] to the patriarchal story [Patriarchal Narratives] is to link it in retrospect with the

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<sup>369</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 267.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 267-268.

primeval story [Primeval History] and at the same time to sketch in anticipation the frame in which the story of Abraham is to play itself out.”<sup>371</sup> For Westermann, Gen. 11:27-32 functions as an introduction to both Gen. 12:1-3,<sup>372</sup> and the Patriarchal Narratives as a whole. While Gen. 12:1-3 operates as a link between both the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives.<sup>373</sup>

As further points of connection between the Primeval History and the Patriarchal Narratives, scholars will point to the blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) as a direct response to both the Tower of Babel narrative (Gen. 11:1-9),<sup>374</sup> and the barrenness of Sarah (Gen. 11:30).<sup>375</sup> When God blesses Abraham, He promises him land, a great name, and a great nation; all things that the people of Babel sought when they built their tower. Inherent in the promise of making Abraham into a “great nation” (Gen. 12:2) is the promise of offspring, therefore counteracting the barrenness of Sarah. Descendents are an intrinsic necessity to a nation emerging from one’s progeny, thus making the blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) a direct response to Sarah’s barrenness (Gen. 11:30).

As has already been noted, Gen. 11:27-32 comes in the form of an itinerary with genealogical details.<sup>376</sup> From this itinerary comes the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). This “calling” begins with an imperative command, “go!” (Gen. 12:1). The command outlines that from which Abraham is being called, “Go, from your country, your kindred, and your father’s house!” (Gen. 12:1) Two initial points need to be made about this call: 1) Abraham was

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<sup>371</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 140. See also Campbell, “Refusing”.

<sup>372</sup> In actual fact, Westermann regards the calling/blessing of Abraham as Gen. 12:1-4a.

<sup>373</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 134; 136; 146.

<sup>374</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*, 132; Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 106; Coats, *Genesis: With An Introduction*, 108; Hamilton, “The Seed”, 261; Hamilton, *The Book*, 372; Jenkins, “The Great Name”, 45-46; Mauldin, “Singularity”; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 202. See section 3.3.3 below for more details.

<sup>375</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*, 128; Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 116; Campbell, “Refusing”, 278; Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI 32*, 313; Coats, *Genesis: With An Introduction*, 107; Hamilton, *The Book*, 372; Ross, *Creation*, 263; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 126-127.

<sup>376</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 267; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 134; 135; 139.



called while his father, Terah, was still alive. 2) The calling that Abraham receives is drastic and significant. Each one of these points will be dealt with in turn.

To take note of the fact that Abraham was called while his father was alive is important because a cursory reading of the text might allow the point to be missed. Gen. 11:31-12:1 says:

“And Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and Abram’s wife Sarai, his daughter-in-law. And they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans towards the land of Canaan. They went as far as Haran, and settled there. The days of Terah were, 205 years, and Terah died in Haran. And YHWH said to Abram, ‘Go, from your country, your kindred, and your father’s house! To the land that I want to show you.’”

If the text is being read in a chronological, or sequential, fashion, one would assume that Abraham’s departure took place after the death of Terah. For this reason, the Samaritan Pentateuch changed Terah’s age at the time of his death from 205 to 145 in Gen. 11:32. The age of 145 is based upon Gen. 11:26 and Gen. 12:4. Gen. 11:26 says, “Terah had lived 70 years, and he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.” And Gen. 12:4 says, “And Abram went, as YHWH had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.” The ages described in these two verses would make Terah 145 at the time of Abraham’s departure. Because the scribe(s)/redactor(s) associated with the Samaritan Pentateuch read Gen. 11:31-12:1 sequentially, in a chronological fashion, they seem to have felt the need to make the emendation. The non-chronological sequence is address by B. Arnold when he writes:

“The chronological features here (11:26, 32, and 12:4) suggest that the genealogical data are being presented first in order to place Terah aside and focus the reader’s attention solely on Abram in the ensuing narrative. [...] The formulaic death announcement for Terah (11:32) is therefore tying off the

genealogical material rhetorically in preparation for the narrative to follow. The sequence is for rhetorical effect, not chronological.”<sup>377</sup>

The magnitude of Abraham’s leaving, in response to the call from YHWH, prior to the death of his father, directly affects the second point: the significant and drastic nature of Abraham’s calling.

Abraham was commanded to, “Go, from your country, your kindred, and your father’s house! To the land that I want to show you.” (Gen. 12:1) For C. Westermann, the calling, and the subsequent leaving, that Abraham received/obeyed is not as significant as some scholars make it. For Westermann, “the purpose of v. 1b [the calling of Abraham] [...] was the instruction of the God of the fathers in a crisis situation, ordering the group to set out for another territory. It was aimed solely at rescuing the group from or preserving it in crisis.”<sup>378</sup> Contra Westermann, numerous scholars view the calling of Abraham as more than merely a move caused by a *crisis situation*. Instead, these scholars view Abraham’s obedience to the call as a, “paradigmatic test of faith,”<sup>379</sup> or, “a life-changing act of faith.”<sup>380</sup> G. Wenham writes:

“The climactic development—‘country ... clan [kindred] ... father’s house’—add punch to the command and emphasize the uncompromising nature of God’s words. Abram must leave ‘his country’; in context (cf. 11:31) this must mean Haran [...] his ‘clan’ [kindred] מוֹלֶדֶת, a grouping intermediate in size between the tribe and extended family, here and elsewhere in the OT called his ‘father’s house’ בֵּית אָב, his closest relations. The quick progression from ‘land’ to ‘father’s house’ draws attention to the costliness of obedience.”<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*, 129. See also Sarna, *Genesis*, 88; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 201; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 273-274.

<sup>378</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 148.

<sup>379</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 161. See also Skinner, *ACritical*, 243.

<sup>380</sup> Ross, *Creation*, 260.

<sup>381</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 274. See also Arnold, *Genesis*, 130-131; Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI 32*, 311-312; James Muilenburg, “Abraham and the Nations: Blessing and World History.” *Interpretation* 19 no. 4 (1965): 391. V. Hamilton notes that, “the objects in 12:1 are arranged in a sequence of less intimate to more intimate.” (Hamilton, *The Book*, 370), making the same point of *the costliness of obedience*.

B. Arnold notes the *costliness of obedience* inherent in the development of country ... kindred ... father's house, and also takes note of the fact that:

“the chronology of the context means Terah was still alive when Abram departed (11:26, 32; 12:4), which adds another dimension to the call to abandon the ‘father’s house.’ Abram must launch out as a new *paterfamilias*, even while still childless, and indeed, without any assurance that he himself would in fact become a father, thereby establishing a new ‘house’. Yahweh required Abram to give up the security of his social sanctuary and familial support – so central to ancient tribal sensibilities – in order to depend on Yahweh alone while following his directive.”<sup>382</sup>

*The costliness of obedience*, and the act of *faith*, is further amplified by the fact that Abraham is commanded to go, “to the land that I want to show you.” The command to leave, “all he holds dearest for an unknown land promised by God,”<sup>383</sup> intensifies the act as one that is based upon faith.

The grammatical structure of the command to, “go!” (הֵלֵךְ) is further evidence of the drastic and significant nature of the calling/blessing of Abraham. Added to the imperative command of “go!” is the ethical dative הָלְךָ “to you”.<sup>384</sup> B. Waltke and C. Fredricks write that, “The Hebrew expression is that of ‘determinedly dissociating oneself,’<sup>385</sup> literally ‘leave by yourself.’”<sup>386</sup> For this reason, G. Wenham translates Gen. 12:1 as, “YHWH said to Abram, ‘Go by yourself [...]’”<sup>387</sup> Wenham’s point is to call attention to the drastic nature of the call, and to point out that the text is here emphasizing the start of something entirely new. W. Brueggemann refers to it as, “radical newness,”<sup>388</sup> in relation to leaving that which Abraham and Sarah knew,

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<sup>382</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*, 131.

<sup>383</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 274. See also Moberly, *The Theology*, 149-150.

<sup>384</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 266; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 144.

<sup>385</sup> Waltke and Fredricks are here quoting T. Muraoka, “On the So-Called *Dativus Ethicus* in Hebrew,” *JTS* 29 (1978): 495, cited in *IBHS* §11.2.10d.

<sup>386</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 205.

<sup>387</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 265 (italics added).

<sup>388</sup> Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 109.

and obediently following the call from YHWH to set off, “to the land that I [YWHH] want to show you.”

The original command (לֵךְ-לְךָ) of Gen. 12:1 helps provide structure to the calling/blessing of Abraham. The two imperatives (12:1b; 12:2d) provide a framework from which to understand the corresponding “promises”. A. Ross writes, “The expositor must display the pattern of the passage: the initial imperative is followed by three promises, and those promises lead into and enable the second imperative (to be a blessing), obedience to which in turn leads to three more promises.”<sup>389</sup> V. Hamilton and U. Cassuto recognize the basic structure of Gen. 12:1-3 as being made up of seven promises.<sup>390</sup> Gen. 12:1-3 can be broken down in the following way:<sup>391</sup>

Verse	Translation	Verb Form
1b	“Go, from your country, your kindred, and your father’s house	Imperative
2a	So that I may make you into a great nation,	WeYiqtol
2b	that I may bless you,	WeYiqtol
2c	and that your name may be great.	WeYiqtol
2d	Be a blessing!	Imperative
3a	So that I may bless those that bless you,	WeYiqtol
3b	and that I may curse the one who scorns you.	X-Yiqtol
3c	And through you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”	WeQatal

**Table 25: Structure of Gen. 12:1–3**

Many scholars note the connection between the two imperatives. In fact, the second imperative (וְהָיָה בְּרַכָּה) is often translated with the conjunctive, “so that,” in order to express this

<sup>389</sup> Ross, *Creation*, 263.

<sup>390</sup> Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI* 32, 312; Hamilton, *The Book*, 373.

<sup>391</sup> Gentry and Wellum break Gen. 12:1-3 down in a very similar way. See Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 230.

connection.<sup>392</sup> These authors recognize the second imperative, which contains a *waw copulative*, as consequentially connected to the original imperative (לֵךְ-לְךָ). V. Hamilton writes:

“Hebrew grammar provides numerous instances of an imperative (with *waw-copulative*) depending on an earlier imperative. Here the first imperative states the exhortation, and the second imperative touches on the results which are brought about by the implementation of the first imperative. ... This construction means that the first imperative, *go*, is related as effect to cause to this second imperative, *be*. Abram cannot be a blessing if he stays in Haran. But if he leaves, then a blessing he will be.”<sup>393</sup>

The logic is sound; if Abraham stays in Haran (i.e. is not obedient to YHWH’s command to “go!”), then he will not “be a blessing!” One is a consequence of the other. It makes sense that grammarians would observe consequential imperatives (*waw copulatives*) within small literary units. This thesis agrees with the interconnected nature of the two imperatives in Gen. 12:1-3. On the other hand, this thesis does not agree with the use of the conjunctive ‘so that’ in connecting these two imperatives. This pericope is constructed in such a way as to very clearly connect various clauses one to another based upon specifically employed verbal forms (i.e. WeYiqtol and WeQatal). By using the conjunctive “so that” in v. 2d, the other consequential verbal forms are muted. The two imperatives are logically connected one to the other. A proper translation of this pericope does not need the conjunctive “so that” to emphasize the point. This text does utilize specific verbal forms that are consequentially related to one another; therefore a proper translation of this pericope will accentuate those verbal forms, and allow the logical connections to stand on their own. Instead of translating this pericope in such a way as to highlight the inter-relatedness of the two imperatives, this thesis is proposing a structure and translation that allows the two imperatives to head distinctive sections of the pericope. By

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<sup>392</sup> See Arnold, *Genesis*, 131; Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI 32*, 312; Hamilton, *The Book*, 373; Miller, “Syntax”, 472; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 266; 275; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 144. Numerous modern English biblical translations use the same conjunctive: see the ESV; NASB; NRSV; RSV as examples.

<sup>393</sup> Hamilton, *The Book*, 373.

placing these two imperatives in similar positions, performing similar functions, the inter-relatedness of the two imperatives is intentionally expressed, while also allowing the explicitly consequential verbal forms to be emphasized as well.

The above table is meant to highlight the verbal forms that are specifically employed for consequential purposes; namely, the WeYiqtol and WeQatal verb forms. As noted above, the WeYiqtol verb form is used to express aim and intention, while the WeQatal verb form is used to express result. Therefore, table 25, along with this thesis' proposed translation, has sought to connect the specific consequential verb forms used, with their section-heading imperative. The indented clauses in the table (table 25) represent the dependent clauses, while the two un-indented, imperative clauses are independent.

The first section of “promises” (dependent clauses) is focused directly on Abraham. The section begins with the imperative, “Go, from your country, your kindred, and your father’s house,” with the consequential clauses following. The consequential clauses are all expressed using the WeYiqtol verb form, which clearly expresses aim and intention. Therefore, it can be said that the aims/intentions of YHWH’s command for Abraham to, “go!” are the following:

- So that YHWH may make Abraham into a great nation
- So that YHWH may bless Abraham
- So that YHWH may make Abraham’s name great

Interestingly, even the grammatical structure of the verse makes the three “promises” offered to Abraham contingent upon Abraham’s obedient action. Between the command to “go!” and the consequential promises made, is the clause, “To the land that I want to show you.” (אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶה) (אֶל-הָאָרֶץ) The verbal construction of this clause is X-Yiqtol, and due to the fact that it is

preceded by an imperative clause, must be translated in the jussive mood.<sup>394</sup> Therefore, the three “promises”, the three WeYiqtol clauses, continue the jussive mood of the preceding X-Yiqtol clause, and imply that these “promises” are YHWH’s expressed desires, which are entirely contingent upon Abraham’s faithful obedience to the original command to, “go!”

The following section shifts from an inward focus on Abraham, to an outward focus. V. Hamilton, B. Waltke and C. Fredricks all recognize the imperative of v. 2, “Be a blessing!”<sup>395</sup> (וְהָיָה בְּרָכָה) as pivotal.<sup>396</sup> V. Hamilton writes:

“If we are correct in seeing here seven phrases in God’s initial speech to Abram, then this one is the middle one, and perhaps for that reason a more crucial statement, or at least a pivotal one. The blessings of God are not all to be turned in on Abram. A great nation, blessed, a great name—yes. But Abram must be more than a recipient. He is both a receptacle for the divine blessing and a transmitter of that blessing.”<sup>397</sup>

The emphasis on the change of blessing recipient is not the only difference between these two sections of the blessing of Abraham; the grammatical construction of this section is different as well. While the three “promises” in the first section are all found in the WeYiqtol verb form, the three “promises” of the second section come in three different verb forms: WeYiqtol, X-Yiqtol, and WeQatal. Similar to the first section though, all three of these verb forms, within this context, carry the jussive mood, along with the sense of consequence (aim/intention and result). WeYiqtol preceded by an imperative, along with X-Yiqtol preceded by a WeYiqtol, are both properly translated as jussives, and express aim and intention.<sup>398</sup> Usually, an X-Yiqtol, preceded by a volitional verb form would be translated as a simple jussive. But in this case, v. 3b (וְיִקְלֶלְךָ - “and that I may curse the one who scorns you.”), the X-Yiqtol expresses aim/intention.

<sup>394</sup> See footnote 121. See also Dion, “Du projet”, 101-107.

<sup>395</sup> For a translation of this clause see also Dion, “Du projet”, 101-107.

<sup>396</sup> Hamilton, *The Book*, 373; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 203.

<sup>397</sup> Hamilton, *The Book*, 373.

<sup>398</sup> Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 80 §55.

The reason that this X-Yiqtol is somewhat unique is due to the fact that it is part of a chiasmus. G. Wenham and C. Westermann both recognize this chiasmus as, “verb-object // object-verb.”<sup>399</sup> Wenham states that a chiasmus is, “frequently used in Heb. for two sides of a single action.”<sup>400</sup> Wenham later writes, “The chiasmus and parallelism make this a poetic couplet,”<sup>401</sup> noting its similarities with Gen. 27:29 and Num. 24:9. Because vv. 3a and 3b are to be viewed as *two sides of a single action*, this thesis has translated v. 3b as expressing the same aim/intention as its related WeYiqtol verb (v. 3a). WeQatal is, “always a continuation form.”<sup>402</sup> As a *continuation form*, the WeQatal is here continuing the jussive mood established by the preceding WeYiqtol and X-Yiqtol verbs. Similar to the sense of aim/intention that is expressed by the WeYiqtol, and here also by the X-Yiqtol, the WeQatal expresses result. In regards to this final WeQatal clause of v. 3, Westermann writes, “One can say that ‘the syntactical progression hastens on to the final sentence.’”<sup>403</sup> B. Waltke and C. Fredricks regard the “promises” of Gen. 12:1-3 as progressively building to the climax of v. 3c<sup>404</sup> - “And through you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Therefore, this second section functions much like the first; it begins with a command, and is then followed by three consequential “promises”, expressed as desires from YHWH, which are entirely contingent upon Abraham’s faithful obedience to *both* commands. Thus, it can be said that the aims/intentions of YHWH’s command for Abraham to, “be a blessing!” are the following:

- So that YHWH may bless those that bless Abraham
- So that YHWH may curse the one who scorns Abraham

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<sup>399</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 266; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 144.

<sup>400</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 266. Wenham here references (Andersen, F. I., *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*, 119-37).

<sup>401</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 276.

<sup>402</sup> Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 82 §57.

<sup>403</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 149.

<sup>404</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 203.



And then as a result of Abraham's faithful obedience:

- Through Abraham, all the families of the earth shall be blessed

The pattern of the blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) is clear: two imperative commands, each one followed by three consequential "promises", which are all completely dependent upon Abraham's faithful obedience. Table 26 places both sections together:

Verse	Translation	Verb Form	Purpose
1b	"Go, from your country, your kindred, and your father's house	Imperative	<b>Initial Command</b>
1c	To the land that I want to show you.	X-Yiqtol	Jussive
2a	So that I may make you into a great nation,	WeYiqtol	<i>Aim/Intention</i>
2b	that I may bless you,	WeYiqtol	<i>Aim/Intention</i>
2c	and that your name may be great.	WeYiqtol	<i>Aim/Intention</i>
2d	Be a blessing!	Imperative	<b>Dependent Command</b>
3a	So that I may bless those that bless you,	WeYiqtol	<i>Aim/Intention</i>
3b	and that I may curse the one who scorns you.	X-Yiqtol	<i>Aim/Intention</i>
3c	And through you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."	WeQatal	<b>Result</b>

**Table 26: The Structure of Gen. 12:1-3 with Purpose**

A final word needs to be said about this pericope before this thesis' translation is compared to other modern English translations. This final word pertains to the final use of the root בֵּרַךְ in Gen. 12:3. The verb, here, is found in the niphal verb stem (וַיִּבְרַךְ), but its translation is greatly debated. Some scholars believe that it should be translated as reflexive,<sup>405</sup>

<sup>405</sup> Mowvley, "The Concept", 76-77; Muilenburg, "Abraham", 392; Sarna, *Genesis*, 89; Speiser, *Genesis: Intro*, 86; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 152.

while others believe that it should be translated as passive.<sup>406</sup> V. Hamilton summarizes the debate well:

“Scholars have debated a great deal whether the verb here should be translated *shall be blessed* or ‘shall bless themselves.’ Is the verb passive or reflexive? The stem used here is the Niphal, which is primarily reflexive<sup>407</sup> but often passive. The problem is compounded by comparing 12:3 with 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; and 28:14, all of which deal with the nations being blessed or blessing themselves in Abram (and in his seed). Three of these passages use the Niphal (12:3; 18:18; 28:14); the remaining two (22:18; 26:4) use the Hithpael, the thrust of which is reflexive or reciprocal. Because the Hithpael does not connote a passive sense (except in rare instances), and because the Niphal may express both the passive and the reflexive, most modern versions of the Bible opt for ‘shall bless themselves.’”<sup>408</sup>

On the surface, the subtle difference between a reflexive or passive translation of a verb might seem minor, but E.A. Speiser points out that a, “proper translation has significant theological implications.”<sup>409</sup> C. Westermann, in disagreement with Speiser, writes, “In fact, the reflexive translation is saying no less than the passive or receptive [middle]. [...] There is no opposition in content between the passive and reflexive translation.”<sup>410</sup> Westermann then defends his view of the reflexive translation:

“When ‘the families of the earth bless’ themselves ‘in Abraham,’ i.e., call a blessing on themselves under the invocation of his name (as in Ps. 72:17, and even more clearly in Gen. 48:20), then the obvious presupposition is that they receive the blessing. Where one blesses oneself with the name of Abraham, blessing is actually bestowed and received. Where the name of Abraham is spoken in a prayer of blessing, the blessing of Abraham streams forth; it knows no bounds and reaches all the families of the earth. ... The reflexive translation is to

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<sup>406</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*, 132; Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI 32*, 309; Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 246; Hamilton, *The Book*, 375; Murtonen, “The Use”, 159; Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 153; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 206; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 276. Westermann also notes that most Bibles, and translations, translate the term as passive. See Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 151.

<sup>407</sup> K. Gruneberg disagrees, he states, “the niphal in Hebrew functions to express passive and also a wide range of ‘middle’ senses: at least almost all of its usage can be explained thus; in particular it is very rarely reflexive.” (Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 242)

<sup>408</sup> Hamilton, *The Book*, 374.

<sup>409</sup> Speiser, *Genesis: Intro*, 86. See also Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 34-35.

<sup>410</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 152.

be preferred because it is philologically more probable (cf. Ps. 72:17) and more concrete (Gen. 48:20).”<sup>411</sup>

Contra Westermann, K. Gruneberg, after a book-length study on Gen. 12:3 which examines the parallels to Gen. 12:3a (Gen. 27:29b; Num. 24:9), the niphāl stem (passive, middle, and reflexive), parallels to Gen. 12:3b (Gen. 18:18; 28:14), the root בִּרַךְ in the Hebrew Bible, Gen. 12:3 in relation to the Primeval History, Gen. 12:1-3 in context, the hithpael of the root בִּרַךְ, and parallels to Gen. 12:3b with the hithpael, concludes that Gen. 12:3b is to be translated as passive. Gruneberg prefaces his conclusion by stating:

“Firstly, we have suggested that the niphāl in Hebrew functions to express passive and also a wide range of ‘middle’ senses: at least almost all of its usage can be explained thus; in particular it is very rarely reflexive. [...] Secondly, we have argued that blessing in Hebrew is intrinsically god-related, referring to divine bestowal of prosperity.”<sup>412</sup>

Finally concluding:

“Our conclusions concerning Gen 12:3 are that in v3a Yhwh offers Abraham – and implicitly his descendents – an assurance of security: others will find that seeking to further his good benefits them, while any attempt to lessen his prosperity will lead to Yhwh’s disfavour. In v3b Yhwh promises that the families of the earth will be blessed because of Abraham: while this promise does result from Yhwh’s concern for all humanity, in context its primary force is to stress Abraham’s greatness as the one through whom this momentous divine purpose will be achieved. His role is more probably that of modelling or pioneering the way of Yhwh’s blessing than that of more directly effecting it for others.”<sup>413</sup>

While this thesis disagrees with Gruneberg’s definition of the root בִּרַךְ – which is based on concepts of prosperity and protection, as is evident in the above quotes – this thesis does agree with his general conclusion. Analyzing the texts outside of the Primeval History and Gen. 12:1-

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<sup>411</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 152.

<sup>412</sup> Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 242.

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*, 242-243.

3, which contain the root בִּרַךְ in either the niphal or hithpael verbal stems, is beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, this thesis' conclusions will be limited to that which has already been taken into account regarding the Primeval History, and this pericope (Gen. 12:1-3) specifically. This thesis has translated וַיְבָרֶכְךָ as passive for two reasons: 1) Throughout the Primeval History, God (YHWH) is the only blessing bestower. God selectively bestows blessings throughout the Primeval History. Blessings are not hereditarily conveyed, nor are they bestowed by anyone other than God (YHWH). Gen. 9:26 has Noah declare, “בִּרְיֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שָׁם – Blessed be YHWH, the God of Shem.” As noted above, the purpose of the declaration is primarily to align the lineage of Shem with YHWH, the bestower of blessing. There is no reason to suggest that Noah's statement had any effect on YHWH. 2) That based upon the structure and context of Gen. 12:1-3, YHWH is clearly the bestower of blessings, and the primary actor in the text.<sup>414</sup> Abraham is to act as well; he is to obediently follow the command to “go!” But beyond that act of faithful obedience, the actions are primarily YHWH's:

- So that I (YHWH) may make you into a great nation
- that I (YHWH) may bless you
- So that I (YHWH) may bless those that bless you
- That I (YHWH) may curse the one who scorns you

Abraham has been commanded to, “go!” If he is obedient he will, “be a blessing!” But Abraham will be a blessing by *YHWH* blessing those that bless Abraham (v. 3a). The aim/intention (WeYiqtol) of Abraham leaving his country, his kindred, and his father's house, is so that he will be made into a great nation, that he will be blessed, that his name will be great, that YHWH may bless those that bless Abraham, that YHWH may curse those who scorn

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<sup>414</sup> See Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 118-119; Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 34-35.

Abraham, with the result (WeQatal) being that all the families of the earth will be blessed. The families of the earth will be blessed *by* YHWH, “I will bless those that bless you,” and it will occur *through* Abraham because Abraham was obedient to YHWH’s command to, “go!”

### 3.2.1 This Thesis’ Translation Compared with Other Modern Translations

The translation of jussive verbs distinguishes this translation from other modern English translations. Of the ten clauses that fall within the discourse of Gen. 12:1-3, this thesis has translated seven of them as jussives. The three exceptional clauses are the two imperatives (vv. 1b; 2d) and the Simple Noun Clause at the end (v. 3d). In order to examine the seven clauses that this thesis has translated as jussives, each verse will be examined in turn.

V.1c is the first clause that this thesis has translated as a jussive, and is the first significant difference between this thesis’ translation and other modern English translations. The clause אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶה (“To the land that I want to show you”) is found in the X-Yiqtol verb form. Because this X-Yiqtol clause is preceded by an imperative clause (וּמְלוֹלְדֹתֶיךָ וּמִבֵּית אֲבִיךָ), it must be translated as a jussive.<sup>415</sup> Normally, an X-Yiqtol clause, without being preceded by an imperative clause, would be translated as indicative future, which is how this clause is translated in most modern English Bibles (“to the land that I will show you”<sup>416</sup>). This clause, however, is preceded by an imperative clause, and must be translated as a jussive: expressing wish or desire. Throughout this thesis, jussives are consistently translated with the auxiliary verb “may.” In this instance, however, the auxiliary verb “want” is preferred. The change has been made solely for the purpose of coherence. To translate the clause as, “To the land that I *may* show you,” would not be appropriate for the context of the clause. YHWH is

<sup>415</sup> See footnote 121.

<sup>416</sup> Gen. 12:1b as it is found in the ESV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, RSV, etc.

commanding Abraham to leave all that he holds closest to him, and if Abraham is obedient, God will bring him to the land He desires to show Abraham. The expressed desire is for Abraham to obediently trust YHWH and leave (“go!”), not that YHWH is hopeful that He will be able to show Abraham the land, or that after being obedient, YHWH will then, arbitrarily (may), decide whether or not to show Abraham the land. Instead, YHWH desires to bring Abraham to a land that He wants to show him, but Abraham must make the first responsive step. For those reasons, the auxiliary verb “want,” in this particular context, is more appropriate.<sup>417</sup>

The first three clauses of v. 2, all found in the WeYiqtol verb form, differ from other modern English translations in two ways: First, these clauses all continue the jussive mood of v. 1c. For this reason, the auxiliary verb “may” has continued to be employed. Most modern English Bibles translate these clauses as basic indicative future clauses, “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great,”<sup>418</sup> all neglecting the jussive nature of the clauses. The second difference is the way in which the WeYiqtol verb form is translated. This verb form has been translated in such a way as to express aim and intention by using the conjunctive “so that,” or “that,” in each one of the three clauses, thus maintaining the connection between the command, “Go, from your country, your kindred, and your father’s house! To the land that I want to show you,” with the aim/intention of said command: “*So that I may* make you into a great nation, *that I may* bless you, and *that* your name *may* be great.” This translation captures both the jussive mood of the clauses, as well as the sense of aim/intention implied with the use of the WeYiqtol verb form.

Verse 2d (“Be a blessing!”) is also different from most modern translations. This thesis contends that the imperative of v. 2d should be translated as a basic imperative, rather than

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<sup>417</sup> See also Dion, “Du projet”, 101-107.

<sup>418</sup> Gen. 12:2a as it is found in the ESV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, RSV, etc.

expressing aim or result.<sup>419</sup> There is an obvious connection between the two imperatives in Gen. 12:1-3, but there is no need to insert a conjunctive “so that” before the second imperative. By doing so, the translation mutes the conjunctive nature of the previous WeYiqtol, as well as the following WeYiqol, X-Yiqtol, and WeQatal verb forms.

Finally, the grammatical constructions of v. 3 (WeYiqtol, X-Yiqtol, and WeQatal) are all to be translated as jussives. The first two clauses (WeYiqtol - וְאַתָּה בְּרַכְתָּ מְבָרְכֶיךָ; X-Yiqtol - אֲנִי וְמִקְלָלֶיךָ) are both to be translated as jussives because they are preceded by an imperative clause (וְהָיָה בְּרַכָּה).<sup>420</sup> While the third clause (WeQatal - וְנִבְרַכְתָּ בָּךְ) continues the jussive mood of the preceding two clauses. The first two clauses (WeYiqtol; X-Yiqtol), however, also express the aim/intention implied in the use of the WeYiqtol verb. And, as noted above, the X-Yiqtol here expresses the same aim/intention of the WeYiqtol because the two clauses are linked as a chiasmus/poetic couplet.<sup>421</sup> Finally, the third clause which employs the WeQatal verb form, expresses result. A. Niccacci writes, “It [WeQatal] always comes first in the sentence but never occurs at the beginning of an independent narrative unit.”<sup>422</sup> Therefore, this new sentence is meant to be the result of that which it is preceded by. Thus, this thesis has translated v. 3c as the start of a new sentence, which is meant to summarize (result) that which precedes it.

Gen. 12:3 from the ESV can be taken as an example of most modern English translations: “I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” With the exception of “shall” in v.3c, the jussive mood is entirely ignored, there is no sense of aim/intention conveyed in v.3a and v.3b, and v.3c is not beginning a new sentence, therefore, not conveying any sense of result. This thesis’ proposed

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<sup>419</sup> See also Dion, “Du projet”, 102.

<sup>420</sup> See p.25 above.

<sup>421</sup> See p.115 above.

<sup>422</sup> Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 82 §57.

translation, “*So that I may* bless those that bless you, and *that I may* curse the one who scorns you. And through you all the families of the earth *shall* be blessed,” captures the jussive mood of the three clauses, the aim/intention expressed in the WeYiqtol, and here, the X-Yiqtol verb forms, and the resultative nature of the WeQatal.

### 3.3 Preliminary Conclusions

Based upon the five uses of the root בִּרַךְ in the passage studied within this chapter (Gen. 11:31-12:3), preliminary conclusions can begin to be formed. These preliminary conclusions will come under four different headings, all working towards the development of the most comprehensive definition of the root בִּרַךְ as possible. The subject headings found within this section follow the applicable subject headings found in chapter two, for the purpose of continuity, though one distinct change has been made.

#### 3.3.1 Volitive Forms

Of the ten clauses that constitute Gen. 12:1-3, nine contain volitive forms expressed as either jussive or imperative. As was the case in chapter two of this thesis, volitive forms are determined based upon morphology, and a macro-syntactic analysis.

The two distinct volitive forms (imperative and jussive) create an obvious structure and form to Gen. 12:1-3. The three verses can be broken down into two clear sections, with the two imperatives beginning each section. In each section an imperative is given by YHWH, and is followed by three jussive desires/aims of YHWH. In the first section, Abraham is commanded to, “Go, from your country, your kindred, and your father’s house! To the land that I want to show you.” With the aims/desires being that YHWH will then be able to, “make [Abraham] into



a great nation [...] bless [Abraham] [...] and that [Abraham's] name may be great.” The focus of this first section is more specifically on Abraham himself. If Abraham is obedient to YHWH's command, YHWH will then bring about those things which He desires to accomplish. By utilizing the jussive mood the text clearly emphasizes the fact that YHWH's desired results are entirely contingent upon Abraham's obedience to the command. The text does not use indicative future verbal forms, forms that would suggest that Abraham's own volition is not involved in the process. The text utilizes forms that highlight God's expressed desires, and those desires are wholly contingent upon Abraham's choice to be obedient, or not.

The second section of Gen. 12:1-3 is focused more explicitly on the world outside of, and beyond, Abraham. The command given to Abraham in this section is, “Be a blessing!” With the aims/desires being that YHWH will then be able to, “bless those that bless [Abraham] [...] and curse the one who scorns [Abraham],” with the result being that, “through [Abraham] all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Once again the desired aims/results are entirely contingent upon Abraham's obedience to the commands. The use of the jussive mood makes the volitional nature of the section abundantly clear, YHWH desires to bless those that bless Abraham, YHWH desires to curse those who scorn Abraham, and YHWH desires that through Abraham all the families of the earth be blessed, but none of those desires can be realized unless Abraham is obedient to the commands. Unless Abraham, “goes!” he will not, “be a blessing!” And unless Abraham goes, none of YHWH's expressed desires will come to fruition.

This pericope continues to clearly highlight YHWH's non-coercive, non-tyrannical nature. YHWH is not forcing His blessing upon Abraham. YHWH is inviting Abraham to partner with Him in accomplishing His purposes.<sup>423</sup> YHWH is interested in finding a willing

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<sup>423</sup> See J. Baden, regarding YHWH and Abraham as here being, “partners in a joint undertaking.” (Baden, *The Morpho-Syntax*”, 236-237).

participant, a willing partner, someone who will take the step of *faith* that YHWH is requiring, after having weighed the *costliness of obedience*.<sup>424</sup>

### 3.3.2 The Purpose of בָּרַךְ

Scholars have noted that the central theme in Gen. 12:1-3 is blessing, that the five uses of the term dominate the landscape of the pericope.<sup>425</sup> In order to properly understand the purpose of the root בָּרַךְ within this pericope, each of the two distinct sections<sup>426</sup> will be analyzed.

The first section, which begins with the command, “Go, from your country, your kindred, and your father’s house! To the land that I want to show you,” (v. 1) is followed by three “promises” (v. 2a, 2b, and 2c). Even though the root בָּרַךְ, found here in the term וַאֲבִרְכְּךָ in v. 2b, is one of the desired aims/results (“promises”) of YHWH’s command to Abraham, it encapsulates the desired effects as a whole. C. Westermann, commenting on Gen. 12:2, writes, “V. 2 consists of four sentences. They are arranged on the base of the actual promise of blessing, וַאֲבִרְכְּךָ, ‘I will bless you’ (the second sentence); everything else is included in it. The immediate effect of the blessing promised to Abraham is that he will become a great people and his name will be great (the first and third sentences of v. 2).”<sup>427</sup> In other words, the great nation and name that will be given to Abraham, or made out of Abraham, are part of the blessing that YHWH is bestowing upon Abraham.<sup>428</sup> Therefore, it can be said that the purpose of בָּרַךְ, in this first section, is for YHWH to make Abraham’s name great, and to make him into a great nation. YHWH’s making Abraham into a great nation, and making his name great is clearly

<sup>424</sup> To further understand what is meant by “faith” and the “costliness of obedience” see p.109-111 above.

<sup>425</sup> Ross, *Creation*, 263; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 203; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 149.

<sup>426</sup> See tables 25 and 26 for the breakdown of the sections.

<sup>427</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 149.

<sup>428</sup> See Hans Walter Wollf, “The Kerygma of the Yahwist.” Translated by Wilbur A. Benware. *Interpretation* 20 no. 2 (1966): 139; 141-142.

kingdom/royal language, which will be dealt with in more detail in the following section of this thesis, but it is important to note two things at this point: 1) That making Abraham into a great גוי (nation) and making his אברהם (name) great, are jointly kingdom/royal language.<sup>429</sup> 2) That both, making Abraham into a great גוי (nation), and making his אברהם (name) great, point beyond Abraham himself, which means YHWH's blessing on Abraham will have an effect on other people.

The second section of Gen, 12:1-3 explicitly outlines how Abraham's blessing will be effectual for others. This section begins with the command, "Be a blessing!" (v. 2d), and is followed, once again, by three "promises" (v. 3a, 3b, and 3c). These "promises" correspond directly to the command given, and either expresses the desired aim/intention of YHWH's command, or the desired result of the command. The desired aims/intentions are:

- So that YHWH may bless those that bless Abraham
- So that YHWH may curse the one who scorns Abraham

With the desired result being:

- That through Abraham, all the families of the earth shall be blessed

The aims/intentions (v. 3a, 3b) express the ways in which the purpose of Abraham's blessing (section 1 – a great nation, and name) will take effect. Abraham's name will be made great, and he will be made into a great nation, by, "be[ing] a blessing!" (v. 2d). This name and nation (v. 2a, 2c) will be made great by YHWH, "bless[ing] those that bless [Abraham]," and by, "curs[ing] the one who scorns [Abraham]", with the result being that, "through [Abraham] all the families of the earth shall be blessed." As noted above, the resultative clause (WeQatal – v. 3c)

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<sup>429</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275-276; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 149-150.

is meant to be the cumulative result of Gen. 12:1-3 as a whole.<sup>430</sup> Therefore, putting the two sections together, the purpose of the blessing which Abraham receives is to make a great nation and name out of Abraham. This great nation and name will ultimately manifest itself in all the families of the earth being blessed; all the families of the earth will be part of the great nation, the kingdom, which YHWH desires to build through Abraham.

### 3.3.3 Kingdom/Royal Language

The kingdom/royal language used in this pericope is most evident in v. 2, where YHWH expresses His desire to make Abraham into a great nation, to bless him, and to make his name great; should Abraham be obedient to the command to “go!” (v. 1). V. Hamilton succinctly writes, “This is clearly royal language, and Abraham is to be viewed as a regal figure.”<sup>431</sup> Before the kingdom/royal language of Gen. 12:2 is explored in more detail, it is important to briefly analyze the Tower of Babel narrative (Gen. 11:1-9), as numerous scholars recognize a connection between the two passages, and believe that the Tower of Babel narrative functions, in part, as a backdrop to the calling/blessing of Abraham.<sup>432</sup>

G. Von Rad points to a pattern throughout the Primeval History that is worth referencing in detail. Von Rad writes:

“The [text] has told the story of God and man from the time mankind began, and this story is characterized on the human side by an increase in sin to avalanche proportions. The sins of Adam and Eve, Cain, Lamech, the angel marriages, the Tower of Babel—these are stages along that way which has separated man farther and farther from God. [...] But God reacts to these outbreaks of human sin with severe judgements. [...] The [text] shows something else along with the consequences of divine judgment. [...] In all the hardship of punishment, God’s activity of succor and preservation was revealed. [...] We see, therefore (already

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<sup>430</sup> See p.115 above.

<sup>431</sup> Hamilton, *The Book*, 372.

<sup>432</sup> See footnote 63 above for a list of scholars that recognize a clear connection between the Tower of Babel narrative and the calling/blessing of Abraham.

in the primeval history!), that each time, in and after the judgement, God's preserving, forgiving will to save is revealed [...] What is described, therefore, is a story of God with man, the story of continuously new punishment and at the same time gracious preservation, the story, to be sure, of a way that is distinguished by progressive divine judgment, but that nevertheless, man could never have traveled without continued divine preservation. This consoling preservation, that revelation of God's hidden gracious will, is missing, however, at one place, namely, at the end of the primeval history. The story about the Tower of Babel concludes with God's judgement on mankind; there is no word of grace. The whole primeval history, therefore, seems to break off in shrill dissonance."<sup>433</sup>

G. Wenham makes a similar point, writing, "The Tower of Babel is not followed immediately by a hopeful sequel."<sup>434</sup> For both Von Rad and Wenham, the act of gracious preservation/hopeful sequel is to be found in the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).<sup>435</sup> If part of the purpose of the calling/blessing of Abraham is that it functions as a response to the Tower of Babel, it is important to identify the sin of the people of Babel; what was the act that prompted the divine judgment? Gen. 11:1-9 states:

<sup>11:1</sup>Now all the earth was of one language; one speech. <sup>2</sup>As people migrated from the east; they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. <sup>3</sup>They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and let us burn them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and bitumen is what they used for mortar. <sup>4</sup>And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its head in the heavens, so that we will make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered over the face of the earth. <sup>5</sup>And YHWH came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. <sup>6</sup>And YHWH said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have one language, and this is just the beginning of what they will do. Nothing they think to do will be impossible for them. <sup>7</sup>Come, let us go down and confuse their language, that they won't be able to understand one another." <sup>8</sup>So YHWH scattered them from there, over the face of all the earth, and they stopped building the city. <sup>9</sup>That is why its name is Babel, because there, YHWH confused the

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<sup>433</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 148-149.

<sup>434</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 245.

<sup>435</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 149; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 245. See also Arnold, *Genesis*, 126-127; Dempster, *Dominion*, 77; Mauldin, "Singularity", 41-43; Moberly, *The Theology*, 144; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 203.

language of all the earth. And from there, YHWH caused them to be scattered over the face of all the earth.

Some scholars will point to v. 6 as evidence that the sin at the root of the Tower of Babel narrative was a sin of hubris.<sup>436</sup> That this “one language” was causing them to begin to think that they were not in need of God.

Other scholars look to v. 4 as the source of the sin of the people of Babel. That building a city and tower with its head in heavens, was a direct affront to the dominion and authority of God. S. Dempster writes, “The longing for status, dominion, and authority as seen in the desire for a name is a rebellion *en masse*, storming as it were heaven’s gates.”<sup>437</sup> Dempster uses the term *heaven’s gates*, because, as G. Wenham points out, “the Babylonians understood Babel to mean ‘the gate of the god.’”<sup>438</sup> Other scholars refer to the people of Babel’s tower building as, “rebellion against the Most High,”<sup>439</sup> that they were, “vying with God Himself,”<sup>440</sup> and that it was, “an attempt to scale the heights of heaven.”<sup>441</sup> The scene is one in which these scholars suggest that the people were trying to build a tower in order to, “usurp the rule of the divine counsel itself.”<sup>442</sup> Some of these scholars will point out that the scene is analogous to that which is pictured in Is. 14:13-14<sup>443</sup>: “You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’” (ESV) The point being, that the people who were building the Tower of Babel, were doing so,

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<sup>436</sup> Alter, *Genesis*, 46-47; Arnold, *Genesis*, 118-119; Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 128.

<sup>437</sup> Dempster, *Dominion*, 75.

<sup>438</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 241. See also, Arnold, *Genesis*, 121; Cassuto, *Genesis*, 229; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 178.

<sup>439</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 147.

<sup>440</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 179.

<sup>441</sup> Alter, *Genesis*, 46.

<sup>442</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 182.

<sup>443</sup> See Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 145; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 245.

so that they could rule heaven. That, making a name for themselves (11:4) was intricately connected to kingdom/royal language; it was taking over the kingdom of heaven.

The people in the Tower of Babel narrative were *rebell*ing against God, trying to take territory (here, heaven), in order to make a name for themselves.<sup>444</sup> In Gen. 11, God comes down to see the city and the tower (v. 5), and then scatters them over the face of the earth (v. 8). As noted above, Gen. 12:1-3 functions as a response to the Tower of Babel, and as said response, God is declaring that He desires to bring Abraham to the land that He (YHWH) will show him (Gen. 12:1), to make Abraham into a great nation, and to make his (Abraham's) name great (Gen. 12:2). If the language associated with the people of the Tower of Babel reflects kingdom/royal language, and the calling/blessing of Abraham is intended, in part, as a response to the Tower of Babel, then the analogous language in Gen. 12:1-3 is reinforced as kingdom/royal language.

Numerous scholars point out the connection between Gen. 12:1-3 and the Tower of Babel, as well as the kingdom/royal language employed in the two passages. W. Brueggemann writes, "The context of royal success is one possible location of the promises [Gen. 12:1-3]. The promise provides exactly what the people of Babel (11:4) tried to form for themselves and could not."<sup>445</sup> B. Arnold writes, "Yahweh will make Abram's name 'great,' which is more than a promise of renown or acclaim. Rather, in contrast to the tower-builders at Babel [...] to have a great name given to one by God in the Hebrew Scriptures is to be viewed as a royal figure."<sup>446</sup> S. Dempster states:

"[Abram] and his barren wife, Sarai, hold the key to the promise, as they will be shown that land and, what is more, they will become a great nation through which all the families of the 'ādāmā will be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3). This indicates not

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<sup>444</sup> See Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 245.

<sup>445</sup> Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 119.

<sup>446</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*, 132.

only the genealogical dimension to the promise but also a royal one, as the promise to become a great nation assumes a political and regal dynasty.”<sup>447</sup>

G. Wenham recognizes that even outside of the Hebrew Bible there are, “several royal inscriptions from early second-millennium Mesopotamia promising a great name to kings.”<sup>448</sup>

The terms גוי (nation) and שם (name), in Gen. 12:2, both reinforce the use of kingdom/royal language. C. Westermann writes, “The word גוי is a political concept [...] [and] the phrase ‘great name’ is attributed only to the king elsewhere in the Old Testament.”<sup>449</sup> G. Wenham writes, “A ‘nation’ (גוי) is a political unit with a common land, language, and government.”<sup>450</sup> Wenham then goes on to recognize a royal link to the term שם (name).<sup>451</sup> The offer of ארץ (land), a great שם (name), and a great גוי (nation) all clearly draw together kingdom/royal ideology in such a deliberate way, that Wenham is able to summarily state, “What Abram is here promised was the hope of many an oriental monarch.”<sup>452</sup>

The kingdom/royal language found in Gen. 12:1-3 is readily recognizable. Numerous scholars see a clear connection between this pericope, and the monarchical, dynastic, promise made to David in 2 Sam. 7.<sup>453</sup> In summary, the “promises” being made to Abraham, which are entirely contingent upon Abraham’s faithful obedience to YHWH’s command to, “go!” are “promises” that entail the building of a kingdom through Abraham.

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<sup>447</sup> Dempster, *Dominion*, 76.

<sup>448</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275.

<sup>449</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 149-150.

<sup>450</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>453</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*, 132; Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 119; Hamilton, *Handbook*, 372; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 150.



### 3.3.4 Preliminary Definition of בֵּרַךְ

The definition of the root בֵּרַךְ, within the context of Gen. 12:1-3, varies amongst scholars. Some scholars define בֵּרַךְ, chiefly, in light of the root's first use in Gen. 1:22. Of this group of scholars, G. Von Rad is a good example. In his commentary, Von Rad defines בֵּרַךְ, in Gen. 12:1-3, as the following, "Material increase in life, especially in the sense of physical fruitfulness (cf. Gen. 1:22)."<sup>454</sup> Other scholars define the root בֵּרַךְ in light of Genesis as a whole. Of this group of scholars, B. Waltke and C. Fredricks provide a suitable example, defining בֵּרַךְ in Gen. 12:1-3 as, "Prosperity (13:2, 5; 14:22-23; 24:35; 26:12-13; 30:43; 32:3-21), potency/fertility (1:28; 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; 28:3, 14; 35:11), and victory (cf. 1:22)."<sup>455</sup> Other scholars define בֵּרַךְ, in Gen. 12:1-3, by surveying the root's use in the Pentateuch as a whole. Of said group, G. Wenham offers a useful example, stating:

"God's blessing is manifested most obviously in human prosperity and well-being; long-life, wealth, peace, good-harvests, and children are the items that figure most frequently in lists of blessing such as [Gen] 24:35-36; Lev 26:4-13; Deut 28:3-15. What modern secular man calls 'luck' or 'success' the OT calls 'blessing,' for it insists that God alone is the source of all good fortune."<sup>456</sup>

The common themes continue to be the same as those discussed in the Primeval History: Fertility and life-giving power.<sup>457</sup> C. Westermann summarizes the various definitions well, "Both as a verb and a noun the root בֵּרַךְ means the power of fertility, growth, success (bestowed)."<sup>458</sup>

A. Ross offers a somewhat nuanced definition of the root בֵּרַךְ in Gen. 12:1-3, stating:

"If the word 'bless' (בֵּרַךְ) essentially conveys spiritual and physical enrichment and, within the narratives of Genesis, the gift of fertility in accord with God's program ... Here [Gen. 12:2] the promise of blessing counteracts the crisis of

<sup>454</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 155. See also Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 149.

<sup>455</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 205. See also Sarna, *Genesis*, 89.

<sup>456</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275. See also Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI 32*, 313.

<sup>457</sup> See pp.28-29 above.

<sup>458</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 149.

Sarai's barrenness (11:30) [...] It appears that at this point [Gen. 12:3] a more spiritual significance of 'blessing' is in mind. Abram would be responsible for opening the blessing of the Lord to the families of the earth. This Word probably meant that, along with the promises of God that granted enrichment, Abram would share the knowledge of God. The blessings given to Abram could never be disassociated from the relationship with the Lord through faith and obedience. It thus becomes Abram's responsibility to transmit this message wherever he went.<sup>459</sup>

This thesis both agrees and disagrees, to varying degrees, with the definitions stated above. Those scholars, that were summarized by stating that the root בֵּרַךְ is to be defined as *fertility and life-giving power*, are seeking to define בֵּרַךְ solely within its immediate context. The assumption is that if Abraham is blessed by YHWH, Abraham must somehow experience this "blessing" instantaneously; the "blessing" must somehow be immediately effectual for Abraham and his family. This thesis agrees that the blessing bestowed upon Abraham is effectual for Abraham within his context, but disagrees with ending the effectiveness of the blessing there. Because the blessing bestowed upon Abraham points ahead to new political realities (a great גוֹי and שָׁמָר), one's definition of blessing must take these future realities into account. A. Ross, on the other hand, seems to place more emphasis on the *spiritual* nature of Abraham's blessing, looking into the future for the significant effects of YHWH's blessing, but offering no clear indication as to how this bestowed blessing will be effectual long-term. Ross considers the long-term effects of the blessing of Abraham to be that he will, "transmit this message [the knowledge of God?] wherever he [goes]."<sup>460</sup> What is the *message* that Abraham is to share? What exactly is Abraham's knowledge of God? The vagueness of this *message* is the primary short-coming of Ross' hypothesis. Especially considering the fact that the text provides a firmer foundation from

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<sup>459</sup> Ross, *Creation*, 263.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid., 263.

which to think ahead regarding how the blessing of Abraham is to be effectual long-term (i.e. A great גוי and שם).

This thesis agrees with both Ross, and the other scholars, that the blessing bestowed upon Abraham will be immediately effectual for Abraham and his family. The immediate effects of the blessing of Abraham will most certainly be fertility, potency and life-giving power. The long-term effects of the blessing build off of this fertility. As previously outlined, the primary purpose of the blessing of Abraham is to make Abraham's שם (name) great, and to make him into a great גוי (nation). The immediate efficaciousness of the blessing of Abraham (i.e. fertility) is ancillary to the purpose of building a kingdom. For this reason, this thesis offers the following as a preliminary definition of the root ברך, based upon Gen. 12:1-3: *The ברך of YHWH provides the recipient with life-giving power and potency. This life-giving power and potency is for the express purpose of building a kingdom; a kingdom that will eventually encompass all of the families of the earth.*

## CHAPTER FOUR: SYNTHESIS AND INTERPRETATION

Now that the root בֵּרַךְ has been analyzed in both the Primeval History and the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), a comprehensive definition of the root can be formed. This comprehensive definition is for the explicit purpose of being able to properly understand what it means for Abraham to “be a blessing!” (Gen. 12:2). This chapter will first offer a definition of the root בֵּרַךְ based upon the previous chapters, followed by a comparison of this thesis’ comprehensive definition of the root, with definitions offered by other scholars.

### 4.1 Synthesis: בֵּרַךְ Defined in Light of the PH and the Blessing of Abraham

This thesis has defined the root בֵּרַךְ, specifically in light of its uses in the Primeval History, as the following: The בֵּרַךְ of God provides the recipient with life-giving power and potency. As the term applies more specifically to humans, while incorporating life-giving power and potency, the בֵּרַךְ of God provides the recipient with the ability/capability of ruling rightly, as God’s representative, for the express purpose of extending the Kingdom of God.

This thesis then defined the root בֵּרַךְ, in light of the five uses of the root in Gen. 12:1-3, as the following: The בֵּרַךְ of YHWH provides the recipient with life-giving power and potency. This life-giving power and potency is for the express purpose of building a kingdom; a kingdom that will eventually encompass all of the families of the earth.

Based upon these two definitions, this thesis will now provide a definition of the root בֵּרַךְ that synthesizes the two definitions in a comprehensive and coherent way, for the purposes of understanding what it means for Abraham to, “be a blessing!” This comprehensive and coherent definition is based upon four aspects of the root בֵּרַךְ that have been derived from this thesis’

analysis of the root in the Primeval History and in the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).

Each one of these aspects will be dealt with in turn.

#### 4.1.1 Supplication

At the heart of this thesis' definition of the root בִּרַךְ is the concept of bending the knee, derived from Hebrew and other ancient Semitic languages. All of the scholars that deal with the root בִּרַךְ, and its Semitic cognates, recognize 'knee' as a potential root meaning.<sup>461</sup> The emphasis of the scholarship tends towards the two concepts of 'knee' and 'blessing', as stated by H. Mowvley:

“The Hebrew root *brk* possesses two spheres of meaning ... It refers to the knee (*berekh*), and is used as much the same way as its English equivalent. It indicates the knee joint upon which weight is placed when we kneel down (Judges 7:5, etc.). It is located between the ankles and the loins (Ezek. 47:4). [...] The second area of meaning is that of blessing. In this sense the verb *barakh* and the noun *berakhah* are found frequently. It is by no means easy [...] to know which is primary.”<sup>462</sup>

Mowvley continues, “Gesenius thought the root was connected with the similar root *prq* meaning ‘to break’. The primary meaning would then be ‘to bend the knee’, the knee being the point where the leg ‘breaks’.”<sup>463</sup> Whether the root *prq* has anything to do with it or not, this thesis is in agreement with P. Rotenberry that, “the root meaning of [בִּרַךְ] [...] is ‘bend the knee.’”<sup>464</sup> The root *prq* is superfluous. Mowvley notes that the knee joint is the place upon which weight is placed when we kneel down. For this reason, Mowvley continues, “Since thanks were given and homage rendered on bended knee, the root came to have the secondary significance of ‘to give

<sup>461</sup> See the scholars listed in section 1.3.1 above.

<sup>462</sup> Mowvley, “The Concept”, 74.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid., 74. Mowvley here references Gesenius, *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, 142.

<sup>464</sup> Rotenberry, “Blessing”, 35.

thanks', i.e. to bless."<sup>465</sup> This thesis is in agreement with the primacy of "knee," over "blessing," regarding the root בִּרַךְ and its Semitic cognates. Mowvley begins his article with the statement, "The Hebrew root *brk* possesses two spheres of meaning [...] which, on the face of it, seem to have little or no connection." Indeed this would be true if "blessing" is considered the primary meaning. One would be hardpressed to find a way to navigate from a root with an original meaning of "blessing" to "knee." Mowvley makes a very logical argument, "Since thanks were given and homage rendered on bended knee, the root came to have the secondary significance of 'to give thanks', i.e. to bless." Because this thesis is in agreement with Mowvley's assessment of the primacy of "knee," which depicts a bending of the knee, this thesis takes, as its fundamental concept for the root בִּרַךְ, the supplicational act of bending the knee before God, in order to receive His blessing.

This thesis believes that at the very nucleus of blessing, is the act of supplication; a recognition of the authority of the blesser over the blessed. K. Gruneberg, G. Wenham and C. Westermann all recognize that in the Old Testament, God is always the bestower of blessing.<sup>466</sup> Because this thesis agrees with the aforementioned scholars, the recognition of authority involved in the act of supplication, is that much more intensified. The vassal nature of the relationship is not merely one between two humans, two creatures; this vassal relationship is between Creator and created. Therefore, the supplicant nature of receiving the blessing of God (YHWH) is amplified to an incomparable degree. Whatever the purposes of the root בִּרַךְ are, they are derived from the fact that בִּרַךְ is bestowed by God, and that the act of receiving the בִּרַךְ of God is an act of supplication. A bending of the knee in humility and submission to one who is in authority over the supplicant: the blessed.

<sup>465</sup> Mowvley, "The Concept", 74. Contra Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 93.

<sup>466</sup> Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 242; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275; Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible*, 27. See also Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*.

### 4.1.2 Ruling Rightly

The primary purpose of the root בָּרַךְ, as it pertains to mankind, is to rule rightly. As evidenced above,<sup>467</sup> the purpose of creating and blessing mankind (Gen. 1:26-28) was for mankind to rule (רָדָה), to have dominion. The ruling (רָדָה) that mankind is to exercise, is a ruling on behalf of God, a ruling as God's representative. Therefore, the rule (רָדָה) that mankind is to exercise is not their own, they are to rule as God's agents. The way in which mankind rules rightly, is specifically derived from the בָּרַךְ of God. Inherent in the creation of mankind as being made in the image (צֶלֶם) and likeness (דְּמוּת) of God, is mankind's role as God's representative rulers. This ruling role is not dependent on the בָּרַךְ of God. The בָּרַךְ of God provides mankind with the ability/capability to rule rightly; to have dominion in a way that properly represents the Ruler (God).<sup>468</sup> W. Brueggemann has stated that, "The image of God in the human person is a mandate of power and responsibility. But it is power as God exercises power. The image images the creative use of power which invites, evokes, and permits. There is nothing here of coercive or tyrannical power, either for God or for humankind."<sup>469</sup> This thesis agrees with Brueggemann that in God's rule *there is nothing of coercive or tyrannical power*. It is the contention of this thesis that the בָּרַךְ of God provides mankind with the ability/capability to rule rightly: to rule in this non-coercive, non-tyrannical way. And that this non-coercive, non-tyrannical nature to the rule of God is evidenced in the volitional nature of creation and blessing. Throughout the Primeval History, and the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), as far as the root בָּרַךְ is concerned, the volitional mood has been amply present. Throughout the creation

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<sup>467</sup> See section 2.7.2.5 above.

<sup>468</sup> See the analysis of Gen. 5:1-3 in section 2.7.2.2 above.

<sup>469</sup> Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 32. See also, V. Hamilton, who writes, "Man is created to rule. But this rule is to be compassionate and not exploitative." (Hamilton, *The Book*, 138).

account of Gen. 1:1-2:4, the pericopes containing the root בֵּרַךְ in the Primeval History, and the calling/blessing of Abraham, the volitional mood has been continuously utilized. The presence of the volitional mood reinforces the volitional nature of God, or at least, God's chosen form of interaction with His creation, along with the volitional nature of Creation and blessing themselves. God's creation and blessing are expressions of God's will. God desires to bless people, so that they can accomplish the purposes which God desires to accomplish through His בֵּרַךְ. Abraham, in Gen. 12:1-3, provides the clearest example. God desires to bless Abraham (12:2), the purpose of this blessing is to build/make a kingdom out of Abraham (12:2), with the result being that all the families of the earth shall be blessed (12:3). But none of this will come to fruition, unless Abraham, of his own volition, is obedient to God's original command to, "Go, from your country, your kindred, and your father's house! To the land that I want to show you." (12:1).

It is important to note that the blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) *provides the clearest example* of the volitional nature of God, as it pertains to blessing mankind, because the blessing of Abraham is the only text, of the pericopes studied within this thesis, where the בֵּרַךְ of God is part of a discourse. The first two instances in which humans are blessed (Gen. 1:28; 9:1), the blessing occurs in the narrative portion of the text. The author(s)/redactor(s) are merely stating that God "blessed" mankind (1:28) or Noah and his sons (9:1). God's volitional nature is still clearly evident in the use of the volitional mood throughout these pericopes, but the root בֵּרַךְ itself is not directly part of the volitional clauses. Here, the uniqueness of the blessing of Abraham is once again amplified.<sup>470</sup> God's strategy has changed, the volitional nature which is

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<sup>470</sup> It has been noted above that the blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) is unique in comparison with the other two instances of God blessing humans, prior to Abraham's blessing, in that in both of those cases the humans who were blessed were the only humans on the earth. In comparison, Abraham was blessed amongst a populated world.



evident in the pericopes involving blessing, becomes explicitly utilized in the blessing of Abraham itself (Gen. 12:2, 3). No longer is the statement (narrative) made, that God blessed them, instead, the blessing itself becomes an invitation to the blessee. God expresses His desire, “that I may bless you ... that I may bless those that bless you” (Gen. 12:2, 3). This desire is contingent upon the blessee’s response. The blessee will either choose to receive the blessing of God, or will not. And it is through this dual-volitive reality that God’s Kingdom will be built. The Kingdom of God is meant to be ruled in such a way that reflects God’s volitive nature. The בִּרְךְ of God, selectively bestowed, provides the recipient with the ability/capability to rule rightly: to rule in God’s non-coercive, non-tyrannical way.

#### 4.1.3 God’s Kingdom

Kingdom/Royal language is present in the majority of the pericopes studied in this thesis, and is closely linked to the root בִּרְךְ. Though the term מְמִלְכָּה (kingdom) is not used in any of the pericopes studied herein, this thesis has argued that there are numerous terms that are to be regarded as *kingdom/royal language*. These terms provide a framework from which to understand the sphere and trajectory of the *right rule* that mankind is blessed to exercise on behalf of God.

Throughout this thesis, “kingdom,” has not been used as an expression of a formal political reality, but has been more broadly defined as, “a realm or region in which something is dominant; an area or sphere in which one holds a preeminent position.”<sup>471</sup> This *realm*, *region*, *area* or *sphere* in which humans are to rule, as God’s representatives, includes the earth (Gen. 1:26-28), the non-human world (Gen. 1:26-28; 9:1-3), and other humans (Gen. 9:25-27).

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<sup>471</sup> Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary. 11th ed., s.v. “kingdom.”

Because this thesis recognizes the supplicant nature of blessing, and because the main purpose of being blessed is to rightly rule on behalf of God, then the “kingdom” that is being referred to – the *realm, region, area* or *sphere* – has to be God’s Kingdom. Mankind exercises rule on behalf of God. Thus the kingdom is not mankind’s kingdom, it is God’s Kingdom. Mankind has been blessed with the ability/capability to rule rightly, but they are ruling merely as representatives of the Ruler.

The Primeval History depicts the enlargement of mankind’s ruling task. From Gen. 1:26-28 to Gen. 9:25-27 the *spheres* that are included within the rule of mankind, as God’s representatives, grows. Mankind’s rule first includes the earth and the non-human world (Gen. 1:26-28; 9:1-3), and then enlarges to include humans as well (Gen. 9:25-27). The mechanics of the growth of God’s Kingdom are seen in Gen. 12:1-3. God expresses His desire that He wants to bless (ברך) Abraham, to make his name (שם) great, and to make him into a great nation (גוי) (12:2). The purpose of the blessing in this case is the building of a great nation and name out of Abraham: to build God’s Kingdom through Abraham. The result being, that through Abraham all the families of the earth shall be blessed (12:3). The mechanism by which God’s Kingdom will be extended is through God blessing those that bless Abraham, and cursing the one that scorns Abraham (12:3). The important thing to recognize is that God’s blessing provides the recipient with the ability/capability to rule rightly. Each person God blesses becomes a ruling representative on His behalf, an agent of God’s Kingdom. The growth and extension of God’s Kingdom, which is meant to reach all the families of the earth, grows as each blessee becomes a vice-regent of the Kingdom, and they themselves continue to extend the Kingdom of God as they rule rightly on His behalf.

#### 4.1.4 Fertility & Life-Giving Power

Since, in the Primeval History, the בֵּרַךְ of God is closely linked with the command וּמִלְאֻם (פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאֻם) (“Be fruitful and multiply and fill” – Gen. 1:22, 28; 9:1), the concepts of fertility and life-giving power are to be retained. Because the command וּמִלְאֻם (פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאֻם) is linked to the first use of the root בֵּרַךְ in the Book of Genesis (Gen. 1:22), the concepts of fertility and life-giving power become scholar’s foundational concepts for the root בֵּרַךְ in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>472</sup> As this command (פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאֻם) is first used in relation to birds and sea creatures (Gen. 1:22), scholar’s, seemingly, feel the need to force their definition of בֵּרַךְ to remain generic enough so that it remains comprehensible in relation to non-humans and humans alike. For those same reasons, this thesis contends that fertility and life-giving power are connected to the בֵּרַךְ of God, but, contra the vast majority of scholars, this thesis does not feel the need to force the command (פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאֻם) to be *the* foundational concept of the בֵּרַךְ of God. Instead, this thesis contends that the בֵּרַךְ of God, particularly as it relates to mankind, has other primary purposes, namely: To be an enabling force in order to extend/build the Kingdom of God, and to rightly rule said Kingdom, on behalf of God. The concepts of fertility and life-giving power are subordinate to these primary purposes.

#### 4.1.5 Synthesized Definition

Based upon the use of the root בֵּרַךְ in the Primeval History, the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), and the factors discussed above, the root בֵּרַךְ can be defined as the following: *The בֵּרַךְ of God provides the recipient with life-giving power and potency. As the term applies more specifically to humans, while incorporating life-giving power and potency, the*

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<sup>472</sup> See pp.28-29 above.

*ברך of God provides the recipient (i.e. one who bends the knee in recognition of the Lordship of God) with the ability/capability to rule rightly, as God's representatives – to rule in a non-coercive, non-tyrannical way – for the express purpose of building/extending God's Kingdom – a Kingdom that is meant to encompass all the families of the earth.*

#### 4.2 This Thesis' Definition Compared with Other Scholars' Definitions of ברך

As noted above,<sup>473</sup> scholar's definitions of the root ברך can be categorized under three general headings: 1) Fertility, Protection, and Success; 2) Life and Prosperity; 3) Shalom. This thesis has generalized scholar's definitions under the heading, "fertility and life-giving power," as a way to harmonize all three of these categories, with an emphasis on the first two categories, since those categories contain the vast majority of scholars. Although this thesis is not in complete disagreement with the definition of the root ברך presented by these scholars, this thesis contends that the concepts of, "fertility and life-giving power," are subordinate to the primary notion of the root ברך: To be an enabling force in order to extend/build the Kingdom of God, and to rightly rule said Kingdom on behalf of God. This primary notion of the root ברך has been achieved, principally, through a syntactical analysis of the various pericopes containing the root ברך, recognizing a prescriptive pattern based upon the verb forms WeYiqtol and WeQatal, which have continually demonstrated purpose within these pericopes. It is the contention of this thesis that the comprehensive definition presented herein, renders all the uses of the root ברך within the pericopes studied, intelligible. Scholars' definition of, "fertility and life-giving power," ignores the aim/intention and resultative nature of the WeYiqtol and WeQatal verbal constructions,

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<sup>473</sup> See p.6 above.

respectively, neither does it provide a suitable explanation for the blessing of the seventh day in Gen. 2:3.

A question that begs to be asked, based upon scholars' definition of the root בֵּרַךְ as, "fertility and life-giving power," is: How does this definition apply to the blessing of the seventh day in Gen. 2:3? For B. Arnold, the root בֵּרַךְ is expanded and clarified by the term קֹדֶשׁ (holy) in Gen. 2:3.<sup>474</sup> Unfortunately, this 'expansion' does not correspond with Arnold's previous definition of 'blessing':

"In both cases [Gen. 1:22, 28] the divine blessing is articulated as a command to 'be fruitful and multiply,' [...] Indeed, the blessing to procreate distinguishes 'living creatures,' animals and humans alike, from sun, moon, stars and other parts of the universe. The capacity to reproduce is the fundamental definition of what it means to be a 'living creature.'"<sup>475</sup>

If blessing is at the root of procreation, and procreation is at the root of being a 'living creature', how is the definition of בֵּרַךְ expanded by referring to a frame of time (the seventh day) as 'holy'?

B. Waltke and C. Fredricks write that, "It [the seventh day] is infused with procreative power."<sup>476</sup> But G. Wenham points out the paradoxical nature of referring to a day that is set aside for rest, as having procreative power. Wenham writes:

"God 'blessed' it [the seventh day] and 'hallowed' it. These are striking terms to apply to a day. Biblical usage generally restricts blessing to animate beings—God, men, animals and so on—and it is not immediately obvious in what sense a day can be blessed (cf. 1:22, 28). Divine blessing on men and animals leads to fruitfulness and success, and it is paradoxical that the day on which God refrains from creative activity is pronounced blessed."<sup>477</sup>

C. Westermann offers a more 'abstract' understanding of the meaning of the blessing of the seventh day:

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<sup>474</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*, 48.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>476</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 68.

<sup>477</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 36.

“There can be no doubt that this third blessing in the course of the creation event is of the same kind as the blessing given to living creatures and to humans, 1:22, 28, where it meant the power of fertility. The meaning is essentially the same here though much more abstract. God’s blessing bestows on this special, holy, solemn day a power which makes it fruitful for human existence. The blessing gives the day, which is a day of rest, the power to stimulate, animate, enrich, and give fullness to life. It is not the day itself that is blessed, but rather the day in its significance for the community.”<sup>478</sup>

Due to the fact that Westermann is analyzing the text based upon diachronic methodologies, he assumes that, ‘It is not the day itself that is blessed, but rather the day in its significance for the community.’ The ‘community’ that Westermann is here referring to is the Post-Exilic Jewish community. For Westermann, ‘P,’ the ‘Priestly School’ of writers, is the author(s) of Gen. 2:3. He writes, “When P says that God blesses and sanctifies the seventh day, then first that must have something to do with humankind; only then can 2:3 really be the goal of the creation account of P.”<sup>479</sup> Westermann is explicitly drawing conclusions based upon whom he believes the author(s)/redactor(s) of the text to be. In doing so, Westermann negates the syntactical structure of the pericope itself. Contra Westermann, this thesis has demonstrated that one of the main foci of the pericope is the seventh day itself, not “its significance for the community.”<sup>480</sup>

None of the scholars referenced throughout this thesis offer a suitable explanation for the blessing of the seventh day, based upon a definition of *ברך* as, “fertility and life-giving power.” G. Wenham most aptly recognizes the paradoxical nature of maintaining a definition based on procreative power, regarding a day that is set aside for rest (the other main foci of the pericope<sup>481</sup>).<sup>482</sup> A comprehensive definition of the root *ברך* must, as far as it pertains to the root’s use in the Primeval History and Gen. 12, be intelligible within each one of its specific uses.

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<sup>478</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 172.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>480</sup> See section 2.3.

<sup>481</sup> See section 2.3.

<sup>482</sup> Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 36.

This thesis' definition of the root בִּרַךְ is comprehensive, and is based upon all seven uses of the root, including Gen. 2:3. The two foci of Gen. 2:1-3 are God's activity/inactivity on the seventh day, which mankind is meant to mimic, and the blessing of that day itself. According to this thesis, mankind has been blessed for the purpose of building God's Kingdom. Gen. 2:1-3 suggests that even if mankind ceases from the task of Kingdom building (mimicking God in ceasing from work) – the task that they have been blessed to accomplish – mankind remains under the blessing of God via the blessing of the seventh day itself.

It is important to note that the blessing of the seventh day, and the making of it holy, is not an institution of the *Sabbath* (Ex. 31:12-17). Nowhere in Gen. 2:1-3 does the noun שַׁבָּת (shabbat) appear.<sup>483</sup> Because this thesis, in similar fashion to N. Sarna, analyzes the text from a primarily synchronic perspective, it agrees with Sarna's statement that:

“the term *shabbat* connotes a fixed institution recurring with cyclic regularity. This would be inappropriate to the present context [Gen. 2:1-3] [...] the Sabbath is a distinctively Israelite ordinance, a token of the eternal covenant between God and Israel. Its enactment would be out of place before the arrival of Israel on the scene of history.”<sup>484</sup>

Sarna goes on:

“Nevertheless, there cannot be any doubt that the text provides the unspoken foundation for the future institution of the Sabbath. Not only is the vocabulary of the present passage interwoven with other Pentateuchal references to the Sabbath, but the connection with Creation is made explicit in the first version of the Ten Commandments, given in Exodus 20:8-11. ‘Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God. ... For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day ... and hallowed it.’”<sup>485</sup>

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<sup>483</sup> Though, of course, the root is present in the verb שָׁבַת (to cease).

<sup>484</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, 14.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid., 14.

The point being, that though the noun שְׁבֵת is not present in Gen. 2:1-3, the concept is not absent. Therefore, a further point of connection between this thesis' definition of בֵּרַךְ and Gen. 2:1-3 can be drawn. At the heart of this thesis' definition of the root בֵּרַךְ is the act of supplication: an act that recognizes the authoritative state of the blesser (God), over the blessed; such as that of a vassal covenant relationship. The analogous positions would be those of Israel (vassal) and God (sovereign) within their covenants, which are most clearly seen in Exodus and Deuteronomy.<sup>486</sup> Part of Israel's responsibility in upholding the covenant is to keep the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15). It has long been understood that the act of ceasing one's work on the Sabbath, mimicking God, is a way to honor God.<sup>487</sup> The act of ceasing from one's work is an act of trust.<sup>488</sup> Trust that God will still provide for His people's needs.<sup>489</sup> This thesis' definition of the root בֵּרַךְ dovetails perfectly with this concept of trust. Mankind has been tasked to extend (or build) the Kingdom of God, and they have been blessed with the ability/capability to accomplish this task. The act of ceasing from said task (mankind's work), creates space for mankind to be regularly reminded that they are building God's Kingdom, not their own. Though God uses mankind to accomplish His goal of Kingdom building, God is not dependent upon mankind. If mankind were to worry about losing the בֵּרַךְ of God, which is directly related to their task as God's Kingdom builders, God has most assuredly blessed the seventh day also, allowing for mankind to remain under the בֵּרַךְ of God, as they faithfully cease from the task that He has given them.

Due to scholars' propensity towards grounding their definitions of the root בֵּרַךְ around fertility and procreation, their definitions will either subtly or obviously change, depending on

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<sup>486</sup> See Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through*, 301-388.

<sup>487</sup> Lev. 19:30; 26:2.

<sup>488</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath*. (New York: New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1951).

<sup>489</sup> Ex. 16:29; Lev. 25:1-7.



the context of the root. N. Sarna is a good example of a scholar whose definition of *ברך* changes according to the context of the root. Sarna defines the root *ברך* in Gen. 1:22 in the following way, “Animate creation receives the gift of fertility. [...] The capacity for sexual reproduction is regarded as a blessing.”<sup>490</sup> With regards to the root *ברך* in Gen. 1:28, Sarna writes:

“The difference between the formulation here and God’s blessing to the fish and fowl in verse 22 is subtle and meaningful. Here God directly addresses man and woman. The transcendent God of Creation transforms Himself into the immanent God, the personal God, who enters into unmediated communion with human beings.”<sup>491</sup>

Regarding the root *ברך* in Gen. 2:3, Sarna writes, “Unlike the blessings of verses 22 and 28, which are verbal, specific, material, and relate to living creatures, this blessing is undefined and pertains to time itself. The day becomes imbued with an extraordinary vital power that communicates itself in a beneficial way.”<sup>492</sup> Finally, defining the root *ברך* in Gen. 12:2 with the statement, “you will enjoy material prosperity.”<sup>493</sup> The definition changes, subtly or drastically, within each context.

Sarna is not alone in having a continually-changing definition of the root *ברך*. Because most scholars begin with a definition of the root *ברך* defined as, “fertility and life-giving power,” the definition eventually has to evolve to include terms like, “peace,”<sup>494</sup> “happiness,”<sup>495</sup> “shalom,”<sup>496</sup> and “well-being,”<sup>497</sup> when passages like Gen. 12:1-3 are incorporated into the definition. The fundamental flaw is that these scholars feel the need to maintain the crude

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<sup>490</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, 10-11.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>494</sup> Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, 180; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275.

<sup>495</sup> Cassuto, *Genesis VI 9-XI 32*, 313; Gruneberg, *Abraham*, 101; Pedersen, *Israel*, 182; Rotenberry, “Blessing”, 35-36; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 24.

<sup>496</sup> Hempel, summarized in Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible*, 21-23.

<sup>497</sup> Mowvley, “The Concept”, 75; Wenham, *Word Biblical*, 275.

definition, “fertility and life-giving power,” as the foundational concept of the root בִּרְךְ due to the command, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill! - פְּרֹו וּרְבֹו וּמִלְאֹו” (Gen. 1:22 – cf. Gen. 1:28; 9:1). Though this command is repeated three times, all in close connection to the root בִּרְךְ, this thesis has demonstrated that it is not *the* fundamental concept of blessing. Based upon a macro-syntactic analysis of the various pericopes studied within this thesis, it can be said that the purpose of blessing, the fundamental concept of the root בִּרְךְ within the Hebrew Bible, as it pertains to mankind, is to build and rightly rule God’s Kingdom. “Fertility and life-giving power,” have their place within this over-arching purpose, but they are subordinate to that purpose. By inverting these elements of blessing, by following the text’s lead; making the building and right ruling of God’s Kingdom superior to, “fertility and life-giving power,” this thesis has developed a definition of the root בִּרְךְ that is not only more intelligible within all the pericopes studied, it is truer to the syntactical basis of the texts themselves.

## CONCLUSION

Through a macro-syntactic analysis and a word study, this thesis has demonstrated that the root בֵּרַךְ, throughout the Primeval History and the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), is consistently related to the Kingdom of God. The undergirding presence of the Kingdom of God makes the root בֵּרַךְ intelligible. Gen. 1:26-28 demonstrates that the purpose of creating and blessing (בֵּרַךְ) mankind was for mankind to rule as God's representatives on the earth; that it is the בֵּרַךְ of God that gives mankind the ability/capability to rightly rule on behalf of God. Mankind was given the task (work) of functioning as God's vice-regents within the Kingdom of God, and it is the בֵּרַךְ of God that enables mankind to rule in a way that appropriately represents the King.

The realm in which mankind exercises rule, on behalf of God, evolves throughout the Primeval History, into the calling/blessing of Abraham. Mankind's rule first encompasses the earth and the non-human creatures (Gen. 1:24-31; 9:1-3), it expands to include humans (Gen. 9:25-27), culminating in nationhood, with the Kingdom of God extending to all the families of the earth (12:1-3).

The Kingdom of God grows through the בֵּרַךְ of God. The בֵּרַךְ of God is offered, not forced. It was offered to Abraham (Gen. 12:2), and God expresses a desire that He may bless all the families of the earth through Abraham (Gen. 12:3). The volitive nature through which the Kingdom of God expands, allows one to conclude that the Kingdom of God is not forceful or coercive; it does not force itself on people or over-ride their free will, instead, it invites and evokes. The Kingdom of God expands; it is not greedy and selfish, it is broad and generous. Though the בֵּרַךְ of God, which brings about the Kingdom of God, is not accepted by some, it is offered to all (Gen. 12:2-3).

C. Westermann equates the בָּרַךְ of God with the salvific acts of God. He writes, “In the Old Testament the concept ‘salvation’ includes both blessing and deliverance.”<sup>498</sup> For Westermann, these two separate activities of God – deliverance and blessing – depict the way in which God acts throughout the biblical story. Westermann writes:

“From the beginning to the end of the biblical story, God’s two ways of dealing with mankind – deliverance and blessing – are found together. They cannot be reduced to a single concept because, for one reason, they are experienced differently. Deliverance is experienced in events that represent God’s intervention. Blessing is a continuing activity of God that is either present or not present.”<sup>499</sup>

For Westermann, these two activities of God, say something about God: “The distinction between God’s saving activity and his bestowal of blessing has significance for the concept of God. The God who saves is the one who comes; the one who blesses is the one who is present (or dwelling or enthroned).”<sup>500</sup> Though this thesis does not agree entirely with Westermann’s conclusions, it agrees with the fact that בָּרַךְ is here regarded as active and connected to the ongoing activity of God throughout the Bible. It is the contention of this thesis that the ongoing activity of God in the world – Creation, the formation of a people, acts of deliverance, etc. – are all part of the building of the Kingdom of God. The concept of the Kingdom of God stretches the entirety of the Bible. The primary mechanism by which the Kingdom of God is built, beginning in Gen. 1, is through the בָּרַךְ of God. Therefore, this thesis can conclude that the root בָּרַךְ, based upon an analysis of its uses in the Primeval History and the calling/blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), provides the recipient with life-giving power and potency. As the term applies more specifically to humans, while incorporating life-giving power and potency, the בָּרַךְ

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<sup>498</sup> Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible*, xv.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid., 8. It is significant that Westermann here equates blessing with enthronement.

of God provides the recipient (i.e. one who bends the knee in recognition of the Lordship of God) with the ability/capability to rule rightly, as God's representatives – to rule in a non-coercive, non-tyrannical way – for the express purpose of building/extending God's Kingdom – a Kingdom that is meant to encompass all the families of the earth.

An underlying question, stretching the entirety of this thesis, has been, what does it mean for Abraham to be a blessing (Gen. 12:2)? This thesis can conclude that in light of the Primeval History, the command for Abraham to, “be a blessing!” was a command<sup>501</sup> for Abraham to partner with God, in building God's Kingdom. The mechanism by which God builds his Kingdom, is through blessing (ברך). God works through people that ‘bend the knee’ to Him; people that recognize the Lordship of God. God blesses these people with the ability/capability to rule rightly, to rule as God's representatives on the earth in a non-coercive, non-tyrannical way, a way that extends the Kingdom of God. What does it mean for Abraham to be a blessing (Gen. 12:2)? It means that Abraham has submitted himself to the true King (bent his knee), and has accepted the commission to extend God's Kingdom rule (Gen. 12:1). Whoever willingly accepts the caring rule of God will themselves become an agent of expansion for the Kingdom of God. Whoever actively works against the extension of the caring Kingdom of God will be cursed (Gen. 12:2). Abraham was invited to receive the blessing of God so that he could be a catalytic agent of the expansion of the non-coercive, non-tyrannical Kingdom of God, a Kingdom that will be extended to all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:3). What does it mean for Abraham to be a blessing (Gen. 12:2), in light of the Primeval History? Succintly stated, it means that God will build His Kingdom through Abraham.

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<sup>501</sup> Of course, this ‘command’ is entirely contingent upon Abraham, of his own volition, accepting God's invitation to partnership. See section 3.2 above for details.

Based upon the conclusions of this thesis, two primary areas for potential further study arise: 1) Would the proposed definition of the root בֵּרַךְ remain intelligible if the scope of study were enlarged? Would the proposed definition of the root בֵּרַךְ still function if all of the uses of the root, within the Book of Genesis, were taken into account? Would the proposed definition still function if all the uses of the root בֵּרַךְ within the Pentateuch, or the Hebrew Bible as a whole, were taken into account? 2) If the study of the Kingdom of God is expanded, would the root בֵּרַךְ continue to play a significant role? What other methods of study can be employed, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the Kingdom of God in the Bible? Would a Thematic Study of the 'Kingdom of God' yield fruit? What other terms might be associated with the Kingdom of God, from which one could perform further Word Studies utilizing a macro-syntactical analysis?

This thesis, of course, is the beginning of a study that connects the בֵּרַךְ of God with the Kingdom of God. Hopefully further studies that take macro-syntactic analysis into account will yield much fruit.

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# APPENDIX: MACRO-SYNTACTIC BREAKDOWNS<sup>502</sup>

## 1. Gen. 1:20-23:

Discourse:	Grammatical Construction:	LP: Pr.:	Narrative:	Translation
<p>יִשְׂרְצוּ הַמַּיִם</p> <p>שָׂרֵץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה</p> <p>וְעוֹף יְעוֹפֵף עַל-הָאָרֶץ</p> <p>עַל-פְּנֵי רִקְיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם:</p> <p>וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים</p> <p>אֶת-הַתַּיִתִּים הַגְּדֹלִים</p> <p>וְאֵת כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה וְהָרֹמֶשֶׂת</p> <p>אֲשֶׁר שָׂרְצוּ הַמַּיִם</p> <p>לְמִינֵהֶם וְאֵת כָּל-עוֹף כָּנָף לְמִינָהּ</p> <p>וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב:</p> <p>וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר</p> <p>פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הַמַּיִם בַּיָּמִים</p> <p>וְהָעוֹף יִרְבַּ בָּאָרֶץ:</p> <p>וַיְהי-עֶרֶב וַיְהי-בֹקֶר יוֹם חַמִּישִׁי:</p>	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	1:20 וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים	And God said,
	Yiqtol – Jussive			“May the waters swarm
	SNC			with swarms of living
	X-Yiqtol (jussive)			creatures,
	SNC			and may birds fly above the
				earth
				over the face of the expanse
				of the heavens.”
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	1:21 וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים	And God created
	SNC			the great sea creatures
	SNC			and every living creature
	X-Qatal	↑ bg		that moves,
	SNC			with which the waters
				swarm,
				according to their kinds,
				and every winged bird
				according to their kind.
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg		And God saw that it was
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg		good.
	Volitional – Imperative			And God blessed them,
	Waw-X-Yiqtol			saying,
	Wayyiqtol - Wayyiqtol	0 fg		“Be fruitful and multiply
				and fill the waters in the
				seas!
				And may the birds multiply
				of the earth.”
				And there was evening and
				there was morning, a fifth
				day.

**Table A1: The Blessing of the Sea Creatures and Birds**

<sup>502</sup> The translations included in these macro-syntactic breakdowns have already incorporated the macro-syntactic analysis into the translation.

## 2. Gen. 1:24-31:

Discourse:	Grammatical Construction:	LP: Pr.:	Narrative:	Translation
<p>תוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ גִּפְשׁ חַיָּה לְמִינָהּ</p> <p>בְּהֵמָה גֵּרָמֶשׂ וְחַיֵּיתוֹ-אָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ</p> <p>וְהָיָה כֵן</p> <p>וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-חַיֵּית הָאָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת-הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ</p> <p>וְאֵת כָּל-גֵּרָמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינָהּ</p> <p>וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב:</p> <p>וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים</p> <p>הַנַּעֲשֵׂא אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדִמוּתֵנוּ</p> <p>וְיִרְדּוּ בְדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ</p> <p>וּבְכָל-הַגֵּרָמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ:</p> <p>וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ</p> <p>בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ</p> <p>זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:</p> <p>וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים</p> <p>וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים</p> <p>פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹּשׁוּהָ</p>	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	<sup>1.24</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים	And God said,
	Yiqtol (Jussive)	fg		“May the earth bring forth creatures according to their kinds,
	SNC			livestock and creeping things and the beasts of the earth according to their kind.”
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	וַיְהִי־כֵן:	And it was so.
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	<sup>1.25</sup> וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-חַיֵּית הָאָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת-הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ	And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds,
	SNC	bg	וְאֵת כָּל-גֵּרָמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינָהּ	and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind.
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב:	And God saw that it was good.
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	<sup>1.26</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים	And God said,
	Yiqtol (Jussive)			“May we make mankind in our image, after our likeness,
	Weyiqtol	↓		so that they may rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth
	SNC			and over all the creeping things that creep on the earth.”
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	<sup>1.27</sup> וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ	So God created man in His image,
	X-Qatal	↑ bg	בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ	in the image of God he created him,
	X-Qatal		זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:	male and female He created them.
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	<sup>1.28</sup> וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים	And God blessed them.
	Wayyiqtol		וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים	And God said to them,
	Volitional (Imperative)			“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it;

וּרְדּוּ בַּדְּגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם	WeQatal (Imperative)	↓	fg	<div>וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים<sup>1:29</sup></div> <div>ruling over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens</div> <div>and over every living thing that creeps on the earth!”</div> <div>And God said,</div> <div>“Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth,</div> <div>and every tree with fruit yielding seed.</div> <div>They will be food for you.</div> <div>And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, which has the breath of life,</div> <div>I have given every green plant for food.”</div> <div>וַיְהיֶי-כֵן:</div> <div>And it was so.</div> <div>וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה<sup>1:31</sup></div> <div>And God saw everything which He had made,</div> <div>וְהִנֵּה-טוֹב מְאֹד</div> <div>and behold, it was very good.</div> <div>וַיְהיֶי-בֹעֶר וַיְהיֶי-בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי:</div> <div>And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.</div>
וּבְכָל-חַיָּה הָרֹמֶשֶׁת עַל-הָאָרֶץ:	SNC			
	Wayyiqtol	0	fg	
הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת-כָּל-עֵשֶׂב וְזֶרַע זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ	X-Qatal	↑	bg	
וְאֶת-כָּל-הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ פְּרִי-עֵץ זֶרַע זֶרַע	SNC		bg	
יִכְם יְהוָה לְאָכְלָה:	X-Yiqtol	↓	fg	
וְלִכְל-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ <sup>1:30</sup> וְלִכְל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלִכְל וְרֹמֵשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה	SNC	↑	bg	
אֶת-כָּל-יֶרֶק עֹשֶׂב לְאָכְלָה	SNC			
	Wayyiqtol	0	fg	
	Wayyiqtol X-Qatal	0 ↑	fg bg	
	M-S Marker			
	Wayiyqtol – Wayiqtol	0	fg	

Table A2: Blessing of Man and Woman

## 3. Gen. 2:1-3:

Discourse:	Grammatical Construction:	LP: Pr.:	Narrative:	Translation
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	<sup>2:1</sup> וַיֵּכֶלֶּה הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל־צָבָאָם:	Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all the host of them.
	Wayyiqtol		<sup>2:2</sup> וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי	And on the seventh day God declared complete
	X-Qatal	↑ bg	מֵלֵאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה	his work which he had made,
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי	and he rested on the seventh day
	X-Qatal	↑ bg	מִכָּל־מְלָאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:	from all his work which he had made.
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	<sup>2:3</sup> וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים מְאֹד־לְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי	And God blessed the seventh day
	Wayyiqtol		וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ	and made it holy,
	X-Qatal	↑ bg	כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מְכֹל־מְלָאכְתּוֹ	because on it He rested from all his work
	X-Qatal		אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:	which God had created and made.

Table A3: Blessing of the Seventh Day




## 4. Gen. 5:1-3:

Discourse:	Grammatical Construction:	LP: Pr.:	Narrative:	Translation
	SNC	bg	<sup>5:1</sup> זֶה סֵפֶר	This is the book
	SNC		תּוֹלְדֵי אָדָם	of the generations Adam.
	Infinitive		בְּיוֹם בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אָדָם	On the day God created man,
	X-Qatal	↑ bg	בְּדְמוּת אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אֹתוֹ:	in the likeness of God he made him.
	X-Qatal		<sup>5:2</sup> זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָאָם	Male and female he created them.
	Wayyiqtol – Wayyiqtol	0 fg	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שֵׁמָם אָדָם	And He blessed them and named them Man,
	Infinitive		בְּיוֹם הַבְּרָאָה:	on the day they were created.
	Wayyiqtol		<sup>5:3</sup> וַיַּחֲיֵי אָדָם שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאָה שָׁנָה	And Adam lived 130 years,
	↓		וַיֹּלֶד בְּדְמוּתוֹ כְּצַלְמוֹ	and he begat, in his likeness , after his image,
	Chain		וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שֵׁת:	and named him Seth.

Table A4: Reiteration of the Blessing of Man and Woman

## 5. Gen. 8:20-9:3:

Discourse:	Grammatical Construction:	LP: Pr.:	Narrative:	Translation
	Wayyiqtol 	0 fg	וַיִּבְנוּ נֹחַ מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה <sup>8:20</sup> וַיִּקַּח מִכָּל הַבְּהֵמָה הַטְּהוֹרָה וּמִכָּל הָעוֹף הַטָּהוֹר וַיַּעַל עֹלֹת בַּמִּזְבֵּחַ: וַיִּרַח יְהוָה <sup>8:21</sup> אֶת־רִיחַ הַנִּיחֹחַ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־לְבָבוֹ	And Noah built an altar to YHWH  and took some of every clean beast and some of every clean bird  and offered burnt offerings on the altar.  And YHWH smelled the soothing aroma,  and YHWH said in his heart,
לֹא־אֶסֶף לְקַלֵּל עוֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה בַּעֲבוּר הָאָדָם	X-Yiqtol	↓ fg		“I will never again curse the ground on account of man,
כִּי יֵצֵא לֵב הָאָדָם רָע מִנַּעֲרֻיּוֹ	SNC	fg		for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth.
וְלֹא־אֶסֶף עוֹד לְהַכּוֹת	Waw-X-Yiqtol	↓ fg		And I will never again smite
אֶת־כָּל־חַי פֶּאֶשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי:	X-Qatal	↑ bg		every living creature which I have made.
עַד <sup>8:22</sup> כָּל־יְמֵי הָאָרֶץ	SNC	fg		While the earth remains,
זֶרַע וְקָצִיר וְקֹר וְחֹם וְקִיץ וְחֹרֶף וְיוֹם וְלַיְלָה לֹא יִשָּׁבְתוּ:	X-Yiqtol	↓ fg		seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, will not cease.”
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים <sup>9:1</sup>	And God blessed
	SNC (Comment)	bg	אֶת־נֹחַ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו	Noah and his sons,
	Wayyitol	0 fg	וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם	and said to them,
פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ:	Volitional – Imperative			“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth!
וּמוֹרָאֲכֶם וַחֲתָכֶם יִהְיֶה <sup>9:2</sup>	X-Yiqtol (jussive)			And may the fear and dread of you be
עַל כָּל־חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ	SNC			on all beasts of the earth
וְעַל כָּל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם	SNC			and on all the birds of the heavens,
בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר תִּרְמָשׁ הָאֲדָמָה	X-Yiqtol (jussive)			and on everything that creeps on the ground,

וּבְכָל־דָּגֵי הַיָּם	SNC				and on every fish of the sea;
בְּיָדְכֶם נָתַנּוּ:	X-Qatal	↑	bg		into your hand they have been given.
כָּל־רֶמֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר הוּא־חַי <sup>9:3</sup>	SNC		fg		Every creeping thing that is alive
לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָה	X-Yiqtol	↓	fg		will be food for you,
כִּי־רָק יֵעָשֶׂב	SNC				even green plants;
נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־כָּל:	Qatal	0	fg		I have given everything to you.”

Table A5: Blessing of Noah and his Sons

## 6. Gen. 9:18-29:

Discourse:	Grammatical Construction:	LP: Pr.:	Narrative:	Translation
אָריר פֿגנען	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	<sup>9:18</sup> וַיֵּהְיוּ בְנֵי־נֹחַ הַיֹּצְאִים מִן־הַתֵּבָה	And the sons of Noah who came out from the ark were
	SNC	fg	שֵׁם וְחָם וַיָּפֶת	Shem, Ham, and Japheth.
	SNC	bg	וְחָם הוּא אָבִי כְנָעַן:	And Ham was the father of Canaan.
	SNC	fg	<sup>9:19</sup> שְׁלֹשָׁה אֵלֶּה בְנֵי־נֹחַ	These three were the sons of Noah,
	Waw-X-Qatal	↑ bg	וּמֵאֵלֶּה נִפְצָה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ:	and from them, all the earth was dispersed.
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	<sup>9:20</sup> וַיִּתְחַל נֹחַ אִישׁ הָאֲדָמָה	And Noah began to be a man of the soil,
	↓		וַיִּטֵּעַ כֶּרֶם:	and he planted a vineyard.
	Chain		<sup>9:21</sup> וַיִּשְׁתֶּה מִן־הַיַּיִן וַיִּשְׁכָּר	And he drank from the wine and became drunk
	↓		וַיִּתְגַּל בְּתוֹדֹ אֹהֶל־הוּא:	and he uncovered himself in his tent.
	Chain		<sup>9:22</sup> וַיֵּרָא חָם אָבִי כְנָעַן	And Ham, the father of Canaan, looked at
	SNC	fg	אֶת עֶרְוַת אָבִיו	the nakedness of his father
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	וַיַּגֵּד לְשְׁנֵי־אָחָיו בַּחוּץ:	and told his two brothers outside.
	↓		<sup>9:23</sup> וַיִּקַּח שֵׁם וַיָּפֶת אֶת־הַשָּׂמֶלֶה	And Shem and Japheth took the garment,
	↓		וַיִּשְׁלְמוּ עַל־שִׁכְמָם שְׁנֵיהֶם	and laid it on two their shoulders,
	↓		וַיֵּלְכוּ אֲחֵרָנִית	and walked backwards
	Chain		וַיִּכְסּוּ אֶת עֶרְוַת אֲבִיהֶם	and covered the nakedness of their father;
	SNC	fg	וּפְנֵיהֶם אֲחֵרָנִית	their faces were turned away.
	Waw-X-Qatal	↑ bg	וְעֶרְוַת אֲבִיהֶם לֹא רָאוּ:	And the nakedness of their father, they did not look at.
	Wayyiqtol	0 fg	<sup>9:24</sup> וַיִּיקָץ נֹחַ מִיַּיְנוֹ	And Noah awoke from his wine,
	↓		וַיֵּדַע אֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה־לּוֹ בְּנוֹ הַקָּטָן:	and knew what his youngest son had done to him.
	Chain		<sup>9:25</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר	And he said,
	SNC (Participle)	fg		“Cursed be Canaan;

עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים יִהְיֶה לְאַחֵיו:	X-Yiqtol	↓	fg		a slave of slaves he will be to his brothers.”
	Wayyiqtol	0	fg	וַיֹּאמֶר <sup>9:26</sup>	And he said,
בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שָׁם	SNC (Participle)		fg		“Blessed be YHWH, the God of Shem;
וַיְהִי כְנָעַן עֶבֶד לָמוֹ:	WeYiqtol	↓	fg		that Canaan may be his slave.
יִפְתָּ אֱלֹהִים לְיַפֶּת <sup>9:27</sup>	Yiqtol				May God enlarge Japeth,
וַיֵּשְׁבֶן בְּאֶהֱלֵי־שָׁם	WeYiqtol	↓	fg		That he may dwell in the tents of Shem,
וַיְהִי כְנָעַן עֶבֶד לָמוֹ:	WeYiqtol				and that Canaan may be his slave.”
	Wayyiqtol	0	fg	וַיְהִי־כֵן אַחֲרֵי הַמָּבּוּל <sup>9:28</sup>	And after the flood Noah lived
	SNC		bg	שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה	three hundred
	SNC			וַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה:	and fifty years.
	Wayyiqtol	0	fg	וַיְהִיוֹ כָּל־יְמֵי־נֹחַ <sup>9:29</sup>	And all the days of Noah were
	SNC		fg	תִּשְׁעֵ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה	nine hundred
	SNC			וַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה	and fifty years,
	Wayyiqtol	0	fg	וַיָּמָת:	and he died.

Table 6: Noah Blessing God