

The Meaning of לַיְלָה in Genesis 1:28 in Light of Primaeval History

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## ABSTRACT

The Meaning of מלא in Genesis 1:28 in Light of Primeval History

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The divine promise in Genesis 1:28 marks the climax in the creation of humanity. In this text, God inaugurates humanity by blessing and issuing them with capacities necessary for the performance of their divine duty. Through a macro-syntactic analysis and a word study, this thesis returns to this text with the aim of establishing the meaning of the root מלא as used in the third imperative “to fill the earth.” Toward this goal, this thesis is asking; What is the meaning of מלא in this context? How does the imperative function in relation to the rest of the imperatives? What underlying nuances are expressed or not expressed in this verb sequence? Why is it included here? In context, this study explores any explicit nuances in the verb מלא as used in Gen.1:28 with the purpose of giving a proper understanding of its meaning and function in relation to the divine image bearer. Based on the literature reviewed, the analysis of the use of מלא in the rest of primeval history and in Gen.1:26-28, this thesis has established that the meaning of מלא in Gen. 1:28 is the following: God’s desire for humanity to migrate or move across the earth for the purpose of “imaging” him by ruling over the creation. The results emphasize that human migration is a divine gift, a good gift that God issued volitionally to humanity at creation for His purpose.

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To my niece baby Valencia Jebet.  
You came soon and left quickly.  
For six months you stayed with us,  
you touched our lives forever.  
Your life was a blessing,  
your memory a treasure,  
you are loved beyond words and  
missed beyond measure!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES & FIGURES.....	ix
ABBREVIATIONS.....	x
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.....	3
1.1 Research Objective.....	3
1.2 Steps of Inquiry.....	3
1.3 Status Quaestionis.....	4
1.3.1 Scholars Define מלא.....	6
1.3.1.1 Fertility and Replenishment.....	6
1.3.1.2 Blessing; Life and Prosperity.....	8
1.3.1.3 Function of the Divine-image Bearer.....	10
1.3.2 Genesis 1:28 in Relation to the Rest of Primeval History.....	12
1.4 Research Hypothesis.....	14
1.5 Research Methodology.....	15
1.5.1 Textual Criticism.....	15
1.5.2 Macro-Syntactic Analysis.....	15
1.5.3 Word Study.....	16
CHAPTER TWO: THE MEANING OF מלא IN PRIMEVAL HISTORY.....	17
2:1. Gen. 1:20-22. The Blessings of Fish and Birds.....	17
2.1.1. Textual Criticism.....	17
2.1.2 Macro-Syntactical Analysis.....	17
2:1.3 Translation.....	18
2.1.4 Commentary.....	18
2.2. Genesis 6:11-13: The Earth is filled with Violence.....	27
2.2.1 Textual Criticism.....	27
2.2.2 Macro-Syntactical Analysis.....	27
2.2.3 Translation.....	28
2.2.4 Commentary.....	28
2.3: Genesis 9:1-2.: The Blessing of Noah and his sons.....	36
2.3.1 Textual Criticism.....	36
2.3.2 Macro-Syntactical Analysis.....	37
2.3.3 Translation.....	37
2.3.4 Commentary.....	37
2:4: Preliminary Definition of מלא.....	43
CHAPTER THREE: THE MEANING OF מלא IN GENESIS.1:26-28.....	47
3.1 Textual Criticism.....	47
3.2 Macro-Syntactical Analysis.....	48
3.3 Translation.....	49
3.4 Commentary.....	49
3.4.1 The Plural Pronoun: “May we”.....	50
3.4.2 The “ <i>Image</i> and <i>Likeness</i> ” of God.....	52
3.5 Preliminary Definition of מלא in Gen.1:28.....	68
CHAPTER FOUR: SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION.....	70

4.1 Synthesis.....	70
4.1.1 Significance of מלא in Gen.1:28.....	71
4.1.2 Significance of מלא in Gen.1:28 through the Primeval History.....	73
CONCLUSION.....	74
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	77

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Analysis of verb forms in Gen.1:20-22. ....	18
Table 2: Analysis of verb forms in Gen. 6:11-13. ....	28
Table 3: Breakdown of verb forms in Gen.9:1-2.....	37
Table 4: Analysis of verb forms in Gen.1:26-28. ....	48

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Chiastic structure of Gen.6:11-13. ....	36
Figure 2: A close analysis of Gen.1:27.....	60
Figure 3: Comparative syntactical table of Gen.1 28 and Gen.1:22.....	63
Figure 4: A table showing various occurrence of אָלַם in Gen.1-11. ....	70

## ABBREVIATIONS

ANE	Ancient Near East
AUSS	Andrews University Seminary Studies
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
ESV	English Standard Version
HALOT	Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
IJT	Indian Journal of Theology
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NASV	New American Standard Version
NEB	New English Bible
NET	New English Translation
NIV	New International Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
SCJ	Stone-Campbell Journal
SCM	Student Christian Movement
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
TLOT	Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament
TOTL	Tyndale Old Testament Lecture

## INTRODUCTION

People are on the move. Whereas the movement of people is not a new phenomenon in human history, recent reports indicate a sharp increase in these movements across borders. According to the United Nations report on human migration in 2017 alone, it was estimated that there were over 258 million international migrants. The period between 1990 and 2017 saw an estimated 69% rise in the number of international migrants with an observed sharp rise between 2005 and 2017 (an annual rise of 105 million migrants).<sup>1</sup> This recent intensification of peoples' movement has generated much debate in public discourse, particularly in the western world.

In the United States for instance, the debate on immigration has bred political contrivance and nationalism, much to the chagrin of the immigrants whose presence is often evaluated as an economic cost or benefit.<sup>2</sup> Beneath this assessment of the immigrant is the use of potent words and persistent labels, often rife with racialism. Purveyors of this terminology often designate immigrants with pejoratives such as invader, rapist, thief, drug peddler and terrorist, among others. In effect, this has led to the othering of the immigrant and the perception of such an individual as the enemy. As P. Kathleen explains, "Words do indeed have power, and the poisoned waters of the immigration debate have infiltrated policies and attitudes leading to [...] the conflation of the image of the migrant with terrorist, to rapes, mutilations, disappearances, and anguishing deaths in the desert that go unnoticed and unremarked."<sup>3</sup> Because of the grave and often deadly consequences faced by immigrants, it behooves everyone to take an ethical stance on this issue.

It is the central concern of this thesis to work towards promoting an alternative understanding of human migration based on the teachings of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). Here, I will explore the meaning of the verb מָלֵא (*Maleh*- to fill) in Gen.1:26-28 in light of primeval history<sup>4</sup>, with the aim of demonstrating that embedded in the meaning of the verb מָלֵא as used in this verse, is the notion of motion, movement or migration. Crucially, this thesis will assert that by creating humanity in the image and likeness of God and then mandating them to "fill the

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<sup>1</sup> See United Nations, "International Migration Report 2017", *Social and Economic Affairs* ST/ESA/SER.A/ 40 December 2017 [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017\\_Highlights.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017_Highlights.pdf) Accessed on 6/13/2019.

<sup>2</sup> Dana W. Millbank, *Re-Creating America: The Ethics of U.S. Immigration and Refugee Policy in a Christian Perspective*, (Nashville; Abingdon Press, 1996), 94.

<sup>3</sup> Philip Kathleen, *Hospitality and Emerging Populations: Toward a Theology of Migration in the Context of the Catholic Church in the United States*, (Ph.D. Diss., University of St. Michael, 2015), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Primeval history is a term used to describe Genesis 1 to 11.

earth”, God was not simply inaugurating human movement across the earth but was rather conferring humanity with the divine gift of migration.

This perspective on the divine origin of human migration is not primarily concerned with the proposition of a specific public policy solution. Rather, it maintains that the divine origin of migration allows for a framework concerning migration issues that is significant in the shaping of national policy and the enhancement of our social fabric. This view also contends with various contemporary socio-political constructions and their respective views on migration so as to critically analyze the validity of their claims. The methodology for this approach consists of the challenging, questioning, displacing, shaping, and reforming of prevalent ideas on migration.

Importantly, this thesis emphasizes the centrality of drawing on the biblical view in order to challenge the current tenor and public attitude towards migrants and migration. This is significant because of the central place that the Bible continues to occupy as a significant text in various societies. This is especially true in the west, where it is often invoked in cultural controversy and in the regulation of public discourse. As such, it continues to be a cultural text wielding significant influence and therefore a crucial source in the analytical process.

## CHAPTER ONE: STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.

### **1.1 Objective.**

The central objective of this thesis is to explore the meaning of the verb אָלַל in Genesis 1: 26-28 in context of Genesis 1 to 11. This exploration proceeds from a proposed hypothesis that embedded in the meaning of the verb אָלַל in Genesis 1: 26-28 is the notion of motion, movement or migration when viewed in light of primeval history.

### **1.2 Steps of Inquiry.**

To establish the veracity of a hypothesis, one has to examine it in various relevant contexts. Consequently, this thesis will seek to establish the meaning of the verb אָלַל as used outside Gen.1:28 and within primeval history. Thus, the root אָלַל will be analyzed in the following passages:

- i. Genesis 1:20-22. The Blessing of the Sea Creatures.
- ii. Genesis 6:11-13. The Earth is filled with violence.
- iii. Genesis 9:1-2. Blessing of Noah and his sons.

Through a macro-syntactic analysis, these passages will be examined in their final form in order to establish the various nuances in the text and determine how אָלַל is used in the context of Gen.1-11 as it applies to Gen.1:28.

The scope of this study is limited to determining the meaning of the verb אָלַל in Gen.1:26-28 within the primeval history. There are two reasons for this limitation: Firstly, אָלַל occurs approximately 300 times in the whole of the Hebrew Bible, with about 40 of these appearances in Genesis alone. This volume requires a narrowed scope. Secondly, the universal nature of the primeval history in which Gen.1:28 is located, distinctly sets it apart from the rest of Genesis.<sup>5</sup> As a narrative of origins, it is here that we interact for the first time with the verb אָלַל. And precisely because of its universal nature, it is the secondary objective<sup>6</sup> of this thesis to demonstrate that

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<sup>5</sup> Westermann has made a strong argument against the isolating of Gen.1-3 from the rest of primeval history (Gen.4-11). See Claus Westermann, *Creation* ((trans. John J. Scullion; Philadelphia: Fortress,1974 ), 19. And whereas the distinctness of the primeval history is here highlighted, it should not be construed to mean it is disconnected from the rest of the book of Genesis. And while this thesis holds for a strong connection between Gen.1-11 and the rest of Genesis, it is beyond the scope of this study to adumbrate on the reasons here. For a quick survey on this see Trevor Potter, “*Blessed to Build God’s Kingdom: The Blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) in Light of the Primeval History*” (M.A Thesis: Concordia University, 2014), 12-20.

<sup>6</sup> Although this thesis will restrict itself to proving its hypothesis, it is the intention of this writer to carry on with this research further at a later time in the near future in order to achieve the second objective.

human migration, arising from the meaning of מָלַךְ in Gen.1:28, is a universal and historical phenomenon of divine origin. Thus, by limiting this study within primeval period this objective can be properly established.<sup>7</sup>

Because it remains the central concern of this thesis to establish the meaning of מָלַךְ in Gen.1:26-28, and viewed in light of the primeval history, a sequel of definitions from various scholars will be accessed.

And in order to achieve its goal, this thesis will be asking the following questions:

- i. How do scholars define the verb מָלַךְ as used in Gen.1:28?
- ii. How is the verb מָלַךְ functioning outside Gen.1:28 but within the primeval history?
- iii. Is there any connection in the meaning of the verb מָלַךְ and the image motif in Gen.1:26-28?
- iv. What is the meaning of the verb מָלַךְ according to Gen.1:28?

### 1.3 Status Quaestionis.

Studying Genesis is not a novel field of study. Not the least because of its historical distance and complexity, but certainly for the attraction and attention it has received from various scholarly circles. The words of E. A. Speiser is still true more than 50 years after he first established a similar view regarding the amount of scholarly attention on Genesis. He wrote:

Genesis has proved to be by far the most popular book of the Pentateuch, attracting the greatest amount of attention and giving rise to the largest volume and comment. The variety and universal appeal of its contents and the literary quality of its narratives are one reason for this continuous interest. Another reason [...] lies in the manifold challenge that Genesis has always presented to the philosophers and theologians [...] by now, the total extent of publication on the subject is probably beyond computation. The chances are that a latter-day Ecclesiastes would repeat his predecessor's complaint that "of making many books there is no end" but would apply this saying exclusively to the extant material on Genesis.<sup>8</sup>

One particular passage that has received much scholarly attention is Genesis 1:26-28. In this text, the creation account reaches its climax with the creation of humanity. After God had created all

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<sup>7</sup> Recent studies in Bible and migration have majorly drawn from the Patriarchal narratives through to the rest of the Hebrew Canon. However, there is a dearth of scholarly attention on the same subject drawing from the primeval history. This objective will aim at filling this gap through further study. See for instance, Casey Strine, "More than Neighbors?: The Old Testament as a Resource for thinking About Migration" in *Bible Society* (2015) [https://www.europeana.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/More\\_than\\_neighbours..pdf](https://www.europeana.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/More_than_neighbours..pdf) Accessed on 7/31/2019; M. Daniel Carroll R, "Welcoming the Stranger: Toward a Theology of Immigration In Deuteronomy," *For Our Good Always: Studies on the Message and Influence of Deuteronomy in Honor of Daniel I. Block* (Ed. Jason S. Derouchie et al, (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2013.).

<sup>8</sup> Ephraim A. Speiser, *The Anchor Bible: Genesis* (Ed. William F. Albright and David Noel Freedman; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), LX.

that was necessary for human existence, the narrative “slows down to emphasize his significance.”<sup>9</sup> However, it is the creation of *adam* in the image (צלם) and likeness (דמות) of God, as asserted in this passage, that has generated quite a discussion among biblical scholars who try to search for the meaning of צלם and דמות of God as it bears heavily on the relationship of human beings and God.<sup>10</sup> I shall seek later on in this thesis to briefly discuss and analyze the meaning of these two terms: צלם and דמות.

And immediately following the creation of humanity is v. 28. God blesses humanity while adjuring them to “be fruitful and be many and fill the earth and subdue it, and rule” over the creation. This is significant as it informs the understanding of the nature of divine image and likeness. While the gender division in v. 27b is anticipating the command to “be fruitful and multiply,”<sup>11</sup> the injunction to “rule and subdue it” highlights the royal function of the created image-bearer.<sup>12</sup> But what is puzzling is how the third imperative, “to fill the earth” (מלא), functions in relation to humanity as a created being in the image of God and its connection to the rest of the imperatives. What is the meaning of מלא in this context? How does the imperative function in relation to the rest of the imperatives? What underlying nuances are expressed or not expressed in this verb sequence? Why is it included here? It is the aim of this thesis to explore any explicit nuances in the verb מלא as used in Gen.1:26-28 so as to give a proper understanding of its meaning and function in relation to the divine image bearer.

Consequently, this research seeks to determine the meaning of the verb מלא as used in Gen. 1:26-28 and in light of the primeval history.

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<sup>9</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15* (Ed. David A. Hubbard et al Columbia: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1987), 27. See also Bruce C. Birch and Walter Brueggemann et al, “The Created Order and the Recreation of the Broken Order” In *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (2d.ed. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 43; Phyllis A. Bird, “Sexual Differentiation and Divine Image in the Genesis Creation Texts”, in *The Image of God: Gender Models in Judeo-Christian tradition.* ( Ed. K. E. Borresen; Minn.: Fortress, 1995), 7; Westermann, *Creation*, 47; Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), 14-16.

<sup>10</sup> See for instance Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 28; Catherine L. McDowell, *Image of God in the Garden of Eden*, (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2015). Andreas Schule, “Made in the Image of God: Concepts of Divine Images in Gen1-3” in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 117 (2005): 1-20; Nathan MacDonald, “The Imago Dei and Election : Reading Genesis 1:26-28 and Old Testament Scholarship with Karl Barth,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 10 (2008): 303–27; Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (trans., John H. Marks; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), 55.

<sup>11</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 33; Bird, “Sexual Differentiation”, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Catherine, *Image of God*, 130.

### 1.3.1: Scholars Define מלא

The meaning of the root מלא in the Hebrew Bible is often rendered as “to fill” or when in passive “to be/become full”. In addition, the Hebrew Bible has the adjective *mālē* “full,” *millū’im* “consecration” from *ml’ yād* “to consecrate.”<sup>13</sup> In Biblical Aramaic, a parallel attestation of this verb appears in Peal and Hithpeel meaning “to fill” and, “to be filled with” respectively. In other Semitic languages, similar meaning is found. In the Akkadian language, for instance, *malu* “to be full or become full”, the substantive *mīlu* as “flood high water”, and *tamlu* meaning “heap, terrace”. The North and South Arabic and the Ethiopic attest *ml’* “to be full or to fill.”<sup>14</sup>

Various scholars, through appropriation of diverse methods and approaches, have also attended to the meaning of מלא in the divine injunction of Gen.1:28. Employed in a benedictory formula, the root מלא appears here for the second time in this chapter after Gen.1:22. In determining the meaning of this root, scholars focus on its usage in the Hebrew Bible. This thesis, however, will primarily explore how different scholars have analyzed v. 28 and how in their analysis they establish the meaning and/or function of the root מלא in Genesis 1:28. Generally, various interpretations by different scholars demonstrate diverse nuances that can be separated into three categories: 1. Fertility and Replenishment; 2. Blessing: Life and Prosperity, and 3. A function of the divine-image bearer.

#### 1.3.1.1 Fertility and Replenishment.

In determining the meaning of the root מלא, some scholars have argued that the imperative be fruitful (פְּרֹ), multiply (וּרְבֹ) and fill (וּמְלֵא) the earth (אֶת־הָאָרֶץ) defines God’s blessing to humanity. They identify the nature of this blessing as being primarily associated with human fertility and replenishment.<sup>15</sup> T. C Vriezen sees this blessing as connected to the creation of two

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<sup>13</sup> M. Delcor, “מלא”, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament (TLOT)*, (Edited by Ernst Jenni & Claus Westermann; Trans. Mark E. Biddle, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997), 2: 664.

<sup>14</sup> H. Fabry, “מלא” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (TDOT)* (Ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by David E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 6:297.

<sup>15</sup> Th. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (rev. and enl. ed.; Newton, Mass.: Charles T. Branford Company, 1970); Bruce K. Waltke & Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2001); Bird, “Sexual Differentiation”; Westermann, *Creation*; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 161; St. Augustine, *On Genesis: On Genesis: A Refutation of the Manichees Unfinished Literal Commentary on Genesis The Literal Meaning of Genesis* (Ed. John E. Rotelle; trans. Edmund Hill, Op; Heye Park: New City Press, 2006); Von Rad, *Genesis*, 58; Avivah Gottlieb Zorberg, *Genesis: The Beginning of Desire*, (Philadelphia, Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1995), 8; Benno Jacob, *The First Book of the Bible; Genesis* (Trans. Ernest I. Jacob and Walter

sexes, male and female in Gen 1:27b. He argues that “at creation the two sexes were created [...] God grants man sexual life, and fertility is granted by the *blessing* of God (Gen.i.28).”<sup>16</sup> According to B. Waltke and C. Fredricks, the blessing in Genesis 1:28 “fosters humanity’s fertility.”<sup>17</sup> H. Mowvly describes this pronouncement as a blessing granting the “power to be fruitful.” This fruitfulness is actualized in the children born.<sup>18</sup> But what, in fact, is the meaning and purpose of human fertility? C. Westermann, while describing this text as effecting the “power of fertility”, suggests a possible meaning. He writes that “the power of the blessing as a power of fertility means not only the capacity to beget, conceive, and bear, but the whole process of propagation through conception and birth, from the choice of partner right up to the care and education of the child”.<sup>19</sup> For P. A. Bird, however, there is intentionality in the granting of this blessing in a way that suggests purpose. This is because the blessing is made right after *adam*’s gender specification in the preceding verse. And because the created order thus far exhibited permanence and immutability, humanity- as a creature- had to reflect this feature. She explains,

the word that most clearly located *adam* (italics by author) among the creatures is the blessings of v28 [...] the immediate intention of this word in its expanded form is surely to describe the filling of an empty earth through the multiplication of the original specimen pairs, there may be another intention as well. For P, the power of created life to replenish itself is a power given to each species at its creation and therefore not dependent upon subsequent rites or petition for its effect<sup>20</sup>.

In other words, the need for human sustainability explains the basis for this blessing. For Bird therefore, the blessing of fertility in v. 28 bestows upon *adam* permanence and immutability. This explains the basis for the gifting of humanity with the capacity to reproduce, a humanity whose identity is already defined by gender differentiation in v. 27b.<sup>21</sup>

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Jacob; New York: Ktav Publishing house, 1974), 11; Harry Mowvley, “The Concept and Content of ‘Blessing’ in the Old Testament,” *The Bible Translator* 16.2 (1965): 74–80.

<sup>16</sup> Vriezen, *An Outline*, 411.

<sup>17</sup> Waltke & Fredricks, *Genesis*, 67.

<sup>18</sup> Mowvley, “The Concept”, 75

<sup>19</sup> Westermann, *Creation*, 49. This description paints the blessing of fertility as a positive or a good thing. The aim certainly for Westermann is polemical. He is seeking to contradict any notion that sees sex as carnal and sinful, and as such something that should be despised. A similar view is shared by Augustine in his repudiation of the *Manicheism*; See St. Augustine, *On Genesis*, 58.

<sup>20</sup> Phyllis A. Bird, “‘Male and Female He Created Them’: Gen 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation,” *HTR* 74.2 (1981): 129–159, 146-147; See also P. J. Wiseman, *Clues to Creation in Genesis* (London: Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1977), 199.

<sup>21</sup> Bird, “Sexual Differentiation”, 10-11.

Furthermore, it is argued that sustenance serves to protect the created species<sup>22</sup>; which in this case is the human species. Westermann observes that the blessing of fertility was “something promoting man’s progress as man.”<sup>23</sup> He goes on to say, “the continued effectiveness of the blessing is [...] ‘preservation’.”<sup>24</sup> In other words, the protection of human species is made here in anticipation of death in Genesis 3 due to the fall of man and this blessing thus serves as a means of protection, granting man the ability to “procreate in spite of death.”<sup>25</sup> Consequently, this guarantees the perpetuity of the human species.

In summary, the imperative “to fill” (מלא) the earth is here understood as “replenishment”, or the capacity to abundantly increase through human reproduction. This will continue to form the reference point for determining the meaning of the verb מלא.

### 1.3.1.2 Blessing; Life and Prosperity.

The divine injunction given to humanity in Gen.1:28, has also been understood by scholars as a blessing granting life and prosperity.<sup>26</sup> In essence, the successive imperatives in this text constitute explanatory components of the idea of blessing.<sup>27</sup> Although it can be argued that this interpretation is in some way connected to the blessing of fertility and replenishment above, it is important to analyze it as a distinct perspective of this passage. According to H. E. Ryle, the blessing of humanity as underscored in these imperatives is “connected to the gift of life.”<sup>28</sup> For T. Brodie however, the nature of this blessing compares to a “stream of divine power and life.”<sup>29</sup> The understanding of this divine injunction as a blessing signifying life is quite telling for it not only illustrates the shared connection between humanity and the animals in v. 22<sup>30</sup>, but points to a

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<sup>22</sup> The blessing of fertility is also granted to other living creatures in Gen.1:22 and serves to highlight the existing shared relation between the beasts and humanity.

<sup>23</sup> Westermann, *Creation*, 49,

<sup>24</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 161. See also Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 24; Zorberg, *Genesis*; 8-10; Jeremy Cohen, “*Be Fruitful and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It*” (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 12.

<sup>25</sup> Waltke & Fredricks, *Genesis*, 67.

<sup>26</sup> Herbert E. Ryle, *The Book of Genesis*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921); Walter Brueggemann, “Ministry Among: The Power of Blessing,” *Journal for Preachers* 22.3 (1999): 21–29; Horst Dietrich Preuss, *Old Testament Theology Vol. 1* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 180.

<sup>27</sup> Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, 180.

<sup>28</sup> Ryle, *The Book of Genesis*, 16,

<sup>29</sup> Thomas L. Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue: A Literary Historical and Theological Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 114.

<sup>30</sup> Cassuto commenting on Gen.1:22 writes “Also the blessing bestowed upon man on the sixth day (v28) is couched in similar terms as though to say; Be fruitful and multiply like the fish”. Umberto Cassuto, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I From Adam to Noah Genesis I-VI8*. (Trans. Israel Abrahams; Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1961), 51.

sharp distinction with the vegetative world precisely on principle of life. Human beings and animals possess instincts and energies which are to be exercised and are remunerated by God's blessing. However, by connecting v. 28 and the creation of man in the image and likeness of God in v. 27, a distinction between man and the living creatures is also apparent.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, W. Brueggemann has defined the blessing of humanity, which is similarly echoed upon the living creatures in Gen.1:22, as the "force of life".<sup>32</sup> He explains that this force of life forms the substance that constitute blessing.<sup>33</sup> Brueggemann here draws a significant connection of life as it relates to blessing. However, he fails to demonstrate how this "substance" of blessing is concretely manifested in relation to life. This demonstration is significant for two reasons: firstly, it reinforces the view that the pronouncements in v. 28 are explicating in a concrete way (the imperatives here employ concrete and performative words) the divine blessing and secondly, it will be in concordance with the general notion of blessing in the OT. As Mowvley explains, "In the Old Testament [...] the blessing is a solemn, deliberate act through which specific and concrete advantages are conveyed."<sup>34</sup> He goes on to say "[...] blessing, once given, is irrevocable. [...] it is much more than a vague wish or hope."<sup>35</sup> In other words, a blessing is not only distinctly concrete in character, but also permanent. Although the fall radically challenges the nature of this blessing in Gen.3, it does not uproot it.<sup>36</sup> Its realization continues to manifest itself across the canon of the Hebrew Bible as A. Richardson observes. For him, blessing in the Old Testament is prosperity in material form or an active actualization of divine good will or grace resulting in prosperity and happiness among men. He states that "In the OT this prosperity or blessedness is usually measured in material things-long life, increase of family, crops and herds, peace and wealth (Gen.1:22,28; Deut. 33:11; II Sam.6:11)."<sup>37</sup> Elsewhere, this notion of blessing

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<sup>31</sup> Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 15-16.

<sup>32</sup> Brueggemann, "Power of Blessing", 21.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 21.

<sup>34</sup> Mowvley, "The Concept", 75

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>36</sup> Cohen, "*Be Fertile*", 13-14.

<sup>37</sup> Alan Richardson, "Bless, Blessed, Blessing" in *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (Ed. Alan Richardson; Bloomsbury, London: SCM Press,1962), 33; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 24.

as prosperity has also been described as “well-being,”<sup>38</sup> happiness,<sup>39</sup> and “help and deliverance.”<sup>40</sup>

By approaching the meaning of Gen.1:28 as blessing, two things can be noted: first, it tends to abstract the meaning of the sequential imperatives, and secondly, it makes it hard to comprehensively grasp the meaning of each imperative due to abstraction. Consequently, this will continue to be a deterrent in the attempt to fully determine the meaning of the verb אָלַף as used in this verse.

### 1.3.1.3 Function of the Divine-Image Bearer.

The scholarly contribution in this category demonstrates a somewhat nuanced analysis. For in the attempt to determine the meaning of “image and likeness” in man, some have taken the divine injunctions in Gen.1:28 to show that functions therein bear on this idea.<sup>41</sup> That is, the idea of image and likeness as connected to v. 28 is echoing v. 26b where the purpose for human creation is made. According to Von Rad, the text (Gen 1:26) “speaks less of the nature of God’s image than of its purpose. There is less said about the gift itself than about the task.”<sup>42</sup> C. Westermann adds that, “the most striking statement of the primeval story [...] is that God created human beings in his image. [...] The image and likeness of God includes what we call responsibility.”<sup>43</sup> It is argued that the nature of this responsibility is spelt out in the divine instructions. Cohen writes,

The importance of dominion in Gen.1:26b—the divinely stated rationale for the creation of God in the people is their *function* of ruling over nature, or, conversely, when one encounters human rule over creatures, one perceives nothing than *imago Dei*. David Asselin wrote; ‘Man does not rule over the animal kingdom because he is God’s image; rather, he is God’s image precisely because he rules over the animal kingdom’.<sup>44</sup>

Von Rad explains,

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<sup>38</sup> Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, 180. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 275. Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue*, 128-130.

<sup>39</sup> Cassuto, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*.

<sup>40</sup> Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, 180.

<sup>41</sup> Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology Vol.1* (London: SCM Press,1975), 146; Claus Westermann, *Genesis; An Introduction* (Trans. John J. Scullion; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 111; Westermann, *Creation*, 52; David J.A. Clines, “The Image of God in Man”, *TOTL* (1967): 53-103; Cohen, “*Be Fertile*”12-19; Gordon J. Wenham, “Genesis” in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* ( Ed. James D.G. Dunn; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), 39; R.W.L Moberly, *Old Testament Theology; The Theology of the Book of Genesis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 46.

<sup>42</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis*, 57.

<sup>43</sup> Westermann, *Genesis*, 11.

<sup>44</sup> Cohen, “*Be Fertile*”, 22

[...] the purpose of this image of God in man, that is, the function committed to man in virtue of it, namely, his status as lord in the world. [...] God set man in the world as a sign of his own sovereign authority, in order that man should uphold and enforce his-God's-claims as lord [...]. What is crucial about man's image of God is his function in the non-human world. Thus, through the image of God in man Creation, in addition to coming from God, receives a particular ordering towards God.<sup>45</sup>

For both Cohen and Von Rad, the exercise of authority over the creation by man is a demonstration of “function” in the manner articulated by the imperatives of v. 28. This functioning is intrinsic to his nature as a divine image bearer.<sup>46</sup> In other words, man is exercising his power over the rest of the creation as a consequence of his being the divine image.

But if indeed the nature of this function speaks to the meaning of “image and likeness” in man, then it has to be qualified. For the capacity to procreate, as a function, is never in the nature of God. Bird contends that the idea of God possessing a form of sexuality is “utterly foreign” and “repugnant” a notion to the author of text. She writes “*Unlike God, but like the other creatures, adam is characterized by sexual differentiation.*”<sup>47</sup> Bird's view bear a key implication for the understanding of function as defining the meaning of divine image in man. It shows that the nature of this image is beyond divine function. Perhaps, it reaches on to the constitution of humanity.

Moreover, this idea of man's authority over creation has in the recent times sparked a heated discussion on this verse from several quarters. Medieval historian Lynn White initiated the debate with his publishing of “*The Historic Roots of our Ecological Crisis*” in 1967. This led various Bible scholars to grapple with the concept of dominion in Gen.1:28 while critically focusing on the meaning of the Hebrew verbs *וּמָלְאָהוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וּכְבָשׁוּהָ וּרְדוּ* (“fill the earth and subdue it and rule”). The attempt to relate these terms to the contemporary discourse on climate change has led to the development of ecological readings of this verse.<sup>48</sup> These readings have bred a variety of opinions on the matter.

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<sup>45</sup> Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 146-147.

<sup>46</sup> Clines, “The Image”, 97-99.

<sup>47</sup> Bird, “Male and Female”, 148. See also Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis Interpretation; A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1982), 33.

<sup>48</sup> Lynn White, “Historical Roots of the Ecological Crisis” *Science*. 155 (1967): 1203-1207.

Jeanne Kay, “Human Dominion over Nature in the Hebrew Bible,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 79.2 (1989): 214–32. Gina Hens-Piazza, “A Theology of Ecology: God's Image and the Natural World” *BTB* 13 (1983): 107-110; Amongla Jamir, “Kabash and Radah in Gen 1:28: A Prerogative for Exploitation or Stewardship?” *IJT* 53 (2011): 35–44; Richard Bauckham, “Humans, Animals, and the Environment in Genesis 1-3”, In *Genesis and Christian Theology* (Ed. Nathan MacDonald et al; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2012), 175-189.

Some scholars share White's argument that Gen.1:28 bestows upon man unlimited power over the rest of the creation, implying that the Bible indeed promotes human exploitation of the environment through modern science and technology.<sup>49</sup> Conversely, other scholars have staunchly defended an anthropocentric reading of this verse.<sup>50</sup> They argue that in no way does the text imply the exploitation of the earth but is rather a function given to humanity so as to mediate blessing to the realm entrusted to him.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, the environmental crises of today is not informed by biblical values but instead by modern extraction, greed and irresponsibility.

Throughout this discussion, scholars have sought to establish a connection between the image motif and the meaning of Gen.1:28. However, the total weight of the analysis explored did not supply a meaning to the verb  $\text{אָלַם}$  as used in this verse.

### **1.3.2 Genesis 1:28 in Relation to the Rest of Primeval History.**

Scholars generally agree that the divine injunctions in Gen.1:28 find relation and pervasiveness in Primeval history. They draw this conclusion based on the literary and thematic connection between this verse and chapters 1-11. These scholars employ a variety of methods that fall under the generalized categories of diachronic and synchronic methodologies.

Brueggemann employs source criticism in his analysis of the P narratives, in this case Gen.1-11, with the aim of establishing a central unifying theme of kerygmatic assertion and establishes Gen.1:28 as the central key. He writes that "the formidable blessing declaration in Gen.1:28 provides a focus for understanding the kerygma of the entire tradition."<sup>52</sup> He observes that whereas this assertion is made in Gen.1, its echo reverberates throughout the P narratives. He cites for instance the flood narratives that P utilizes to emphasize this connection. He goes on to demonstrate how the idea of the "image of God" in the story of Noah is linked to Gen.1:26 and in both instance the benedictory formula of Gen.1.28 is employed. The significance of this link, he concludes, is the demonstration that P is announcing a new creation after the flood.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Lynn White, "Historical", 1205,

<sup>50</sup>Bernhard W. Anderson, "Human Dominion over Nature," in *Biblical Studies in Contemporary Thought* (Ed. Miriam Ward; Burlington, VT: The Institute, 1975). See also Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 32.

<sup>51</sup> Westermann, *Creation*, 52. See also Bauckham, "Humans", 189; Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 32; Francis Shaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man; The Christian View of Ecology*, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1970), 69-70; Theodore Hiebert, "Rethinking Dominion [Sic] Theology," *Direction* 25.2 (1996): 16-25.

<sup>52</sup> Walter Brueggemann, "The Kerygma of the Priestly Writers," *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 84.4 (1972), 397-414: 400.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Besides, Westermann utilizes the genealogical record in order to establish this connection. By utilizing the source critical method, he notes that the divine blessing of increase is central as it concludes the creation of humankind. He then demonstrates how the genealogical records form the central framework upon which this blessing is realized across the Primeval history. He writes, “The blessing of 1:28 is realized in the genealogy of ch.5. The realization of the blessing of 9:1 in the genealogy of ch.10 corresponds to this.”<sup>54</sup> He points out that ch.5 and ch.10 exhibit a chronological and territorial growth respectively.

For Westermann however, this concept of genealogy as relating to the blessing, is a fluid idea. He argues that the fulfilment of the command “to fill the earth and subdue it” in the development and growth of human achievements (see Gen.4:17-26) also betrays a genealogy of a different kind. This genealogy, he contends, expresses itself in the various work and progress of human civilization (i.e. it is beyond biological growth and includes technological advances). The building of the tower for instance (Gen.11:1-9), represents this realization as it speaks of the possibility of work of human hands.<sup>55</sup> For Westermann therefore, genealogy is a sufficient support demonstrating the pervasiveness of Gen.1:28 in primeval history.

In addition, L. A. Turner has also made an important contribution in establishing this connection. While employing a literary and structural analysis of the text in its final form, he discusses in great length how this divine injunction is echoed across the primeval history. He points out that the “aloneness” of Adam in Gen.2 is pointing to a need for a woman so as to realize the blessing of reproduction. He goes on to show how the fall and the curses particularly in Gen.3:14-19 create a complex environment for the fulfilment of Gen. 1:28 for the curse pronounced affects every concept in the divine injunction. He writes,

[Each of the]...concepts of 1:28 is modified in 3:14-19 to show that their fulfilment will be far more troublesome than originally expected. The dominion which humans should have exercised over the whole animal creation is now qualified by the ongoing struggle between the seed of the serpent and the Woman (3: 14-15). The command to humans to subdue the earth is made much more difficult to fulfil through the cursing of the ground, its producing thorns and thistles, which will result in toil and sweat for humans engaged in agriculture (3: 17-19). [...] Childbirth is the means by which the imperative to multiply will be fulfilled, but here it is made into a painful and troublesome affair – at first sight a disincentive to human procreation.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Westermann, *Creation*, 24.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 25-26.

<sup>56</sup> Lawrence A. Turner, “Announcement of Plot in Genesis” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Sheffield, 1988.), 10.

Turner goes on to show how this curse radically affects the realization of this blessing. This manifests itself in fratricide (4:1-16), death in the genealogies, the flood (6-8) and the tower of Babel (Gen.11:1-9). But even as the curse was lurking in the background, he observes, the blessing is weaved throughout towards its actualization. The success is seen in the relentless march of generations (ch.4,5,10,11:10-32), as well as the reiteration of the blessing in Gen.9:1-3,7.<sup>57</sup>

Other scholars have also drawn similar connections and are worth mentioning here. They include; G.V. Smith,<sup>58</sup> M. D. Johnson,<sup>59</sup> D. J. A Cline,<sup>60</sup> N. Sarna,<sup>61</sup> and Von Rad.<sup>62</sup> They agree on the connection and influence of Gen.1:28 to the narratives of primeval history. These scholars establish these linkages with similar data to the scholars reviewed above.

#### **1.4 Research Hypothesis.**

The scholarly literature above has examined the various ways that Gen.1:28 has been interpreted, with the aim of determining the meaning of the verb מלא as used in this verse. Whereas the scholarly material reviewed invokes a wide array of methodologies, it demonstrates a dearth of attention on the meaning of the verb מלא as used in this verse. This is due to scholars approaching the sequential imperatives as a unit and not as separate parts of a whole. The reason for this is that these imperatives form a close degree of interrelationship with each other. Conversely, there exists a distinct nature in each of the concepts represented in this divine announcement. Consequently, a determination of what each of these verbs mean and how they function in this verse is important. Such undertaking will not only enrich the bond of these verbs within this unit but also invite a fresher understanding of this passage and the OT in general.

Therefore, the central concern of this thesis is to determine the meaning of the verb מלא as used in Gen.1:28. To achieve this goal, this study will proceed from a hypothesis that embedded in the meaning of the verb מלא in Genesis 1: 26-28, and viewed in light of the primeval history, is the notion of motion, movement or migration.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 10-30.

<sup>58</sup> Gary V Smith, "Structure and Purpose in Genesis 1-11", *JETS* 20:4 (1977): 307-319.

<sup>59</sup> M. D. Johnson, *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

<sup>60</sup> David J. A. Clines, "Theme in Genesis 1-11," *CBQ* 38.4 (1976): 483–507.

<sup>61</sup> Sarna, *Understanding*.

<sup>62</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis, A Commentary*.

Importantly, the secondary goal of this thesis will be to use the findings from this study to reflect on the current debate on immigration. Ultimately, the goal is the subversion and disarmament of prominent anti-immigration notions by demonstrating that human migration is good. Even further, it is good because it is a gift of divine origin. As such, this thesis will be contributing in the studies of Old Testament ethics while cultivating a fresh reading of scripture through the prism of migration.<sup>63</sup>

## **1.5 Research Methodology.**

While I will seek to interact with scholars employing historical critical approaches, I will not be utilizing any form of diachronic methods. Instead, I intend on approaching the study of this text in its final form through a macro-syntactic analysis.

### **1.5.1 Textual Criticism.**

Clines has defined textual criticism as “the discipline that strives to reach behind the mediaeval manuscripts, to the probable precise wording of the biblical book.”<sup>64</sup> Its aim, he adds, “is to reconstruct authentic original text, starting from the secondary, derivative, defective manuscripts that actually exist.”<sup>65</sup> This is done by an application of elaborate rules on any piece of textual evidence. Thus, textual criticism is the foundation upon which exegesis builds. In this study, I will be evaluating available evidence or variant readings relating to all the relevant texts in order to draw valuable conclusions. This will be done prior to a macro syntactic examination of the text.

### **1.5.2 Macro-Syntactic Analysis.**

After establishing the text, I will embark on a macro syntactic analysis of these texts with the aim of getting a better translation. Here, I will seek to separate the text into narrative and discourse categories and assess its grammatical constructions before finally analyzing how all these texts interact with each other.

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<sup>63</sup> While this goal will not be fully developed and realized by the end of this thesis due to the limited scope of an MA thesis, it is the intention of this writer to pursue this secondary goal in his further studies.

<sup>64</sup> David Clines, “Methods in Old Testament Study” in *Beginning Old Testament Study*, (2d. rev. Ed., J. W. Rogerson, St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1998); 25-48, 28.

<sup>65</sup> David Clines, “The Post-Modern Adventure in Biblical Studies” in *Auguries: The Jubilee Volume of the Sheffield Department of Biblical Studies*, ( ed., D.J.A. Clines and S.D. Moore, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); 276-291, 279; Peter K. McCarter, *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible, Vol. 11 of Old Testament Series.* ( Ed. Gene M. Tucker; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 12.

### 1.5.3 Word Study.

Since this thesis concerns itself with establishing the meaning of the מלא in Gen.1:28, it is fitting that this word be studied in depth. The aim here is to not only understand the meaning of מלא at its foundational and comparative level (i.e. in comparison with other Semitic cognates within the ANE), but also the nuances buried in this word and especially in the instances of its use within the context of primaeval history. Additionally, other substantial words to be studied include צלם and דמיון since they bear greatly on v. 28.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE MEANING OF מלא IN PRIMEVAL HISTORY.

This chapter will focus on examining Genesis 1:20-22, 6:11-13 and 9:1-2 with the aim of establishing how the verb מלא is used in each of these passages. In this analysis, this thesis will establish the text through textual criticism, provide a translation and then demonstrate in summary a syntactical analysis of the text on a table before commenting on the analysis and the translation of the text

### **2:1. Gen. 1:20-22. The Blessings of Fish and Birds.**

#### **2.1.1. Textual Criticism.**

v. 20: The Septuagint (LXX) here suggests the addition of καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως translated as “and it was so” by inserting וַיְהִי־כֵן at the end of this verse. The vulgate, the Samaritan Pentateuch, however, follows the Masoretic text (MT). This phrase וַיְהִי־כֵן is used six times in the entire book of Genesis,<sup>66</sup> all in chapter 1. Therefore, it appears that the LXX is suggesting this addition as a way of harmonizing the text so as to enhance this refrain that bears a poetic flavor. The MT reading is therefore retained.

v. 21: The Samaritan Pentateuch and the LXX (B) have למיניהם which bear similar form as ומחלביהן in Genesis 4:4 of the same manuscripts. The difference is the omission of the ך in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural pronominal suffix in the MT. Both the Samaritan Pentateuch and the LXX have a usual tendency of harmonizing a text. Since there is no evidence that the meaning of this text is hampered by the MT’s omission, the hard reading is preferred.

#### **2:1.2. Macro-Syntactical Analysis: Gen. 1:20-22.**

VERSE	BIBLICAL HEBREW TEXT	VERB FORM	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
1:20a	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God said,
1:20b	יִשְׂרָצוּ הַמַּיִם שָׂרָץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה	Yiqtol (Disc.)	“May the waters swarm with swarms of living creature,
1:20c	וְעוֹף יַעֲוֹף עַל־הָאָרֶץ עַל־ פְּנֵי רִקְיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם:	Waw-X-Yiqtol (Disc.) Jussive	and may birds fly above the earth, across the expanse of the heaven”
1:21a	וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַתַּנִּינִם הַגְּדֹלִים	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God created the great sea creatures,

<sup>66</sup> Genesis 1:7,9,11,15,24 & 30.

1:21b	וְאֵת כָּל־נֹפֵשׁ הַחַיָּה הָרֹמְשֵׁת אֲשֶׁר שָׂרְצוּ הַמַּיִם לְמִינֵהֶם	SNC (Nar.)	and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm according to their kind,
1:21c	וְאֵת כָּל־עוֹף כְּנָף לְמִינֵהוּ	SNC (Nar.)	and every winged bird according to its kind.
1:21d	וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב:	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God saw that it was good.
1:22a	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God blessed them saying,
1:22b	פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הַמַּיִם בַּיַּמִּים	Imperatives (Disc.) Volitional.	“Be fruitful, multiply and fill the waters in the seas,
1:22c	וְהָעוֹף יִרְבַּ בָּאָרֶץ:	Waw-X-Yiqtol (D)	And may the birds multiply on land.”

Table 1: Analysis of verb forms in Gen. 1:20-22.

### 2.1.3: Translation.

1:20: And God said,

“May the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures and  
May birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heaven”.

1:21: And God created the great sea creatures and

every living creature that moves,  
with which the waters swarm, according to their kind,  
and every winged bird according to its kind.

And God saw that it was good.

1:22: And God blessed them saying,

“be fruitful and multiply and fill the water in the seas and  
may the flying creatures multiply on earth.”

### 2.1.4: Commentary.

The events in this pericope happen on the fifth day of creation. Beginning at verse 20, the narrator identifies God as the creator. He is the subject performing acts of creation and the narrative proceeds to demonstrate how God brought about creation. In verse 20b, the writer employs a *Yiqtol* verb in the first position of the discourse clause- *יִשְׂרְצוּ* . This signifies that this verb ought to be translated as a jussive.<sup>67</sup> Equally, the verb *יְעוֹפֵף* in a *waw-X-Yiqtol* grammatical construction here is jussive ( *וְעוֹף יְעוֹפֵף עַל־הָאָרֶץ* ). Typically, this verb would have been translated as an indicative

<sup>67</sup> Alviero Niccacci, *The Syntax of the Verb* (trans. W.G. E. Watson; University of Sheffield; JSOT Press, 1986), 77. See also Ernest J. Revell, “The System of the Verb in Standard Biblical Prose,” *HUCA* 60 (1989): 1–37, 14.

future. However, according to A. Niccacci, a *waw-X-Yiqtol* construction “can be labelled as jussive when preceded by one of the direct volitive forms which occur in Hebrew.”<sup>68</sup> A comparable case is also observed in v. 22 where the verb *יָרַב* appears in a similar grammatical construction and preceded by a clause with three imperatives (*פָּרְוּ וּרְבּוּ וּמְלֹאוּ אֶת־הַמַּיִם בַּיְמִים*). This therefore means that v. 22 bears a volitional mood from the preceding clause and as such ought to be translated as jussive.

The jussive, together with the imperative and the cohortative, are classified as volitive. This volitivity, according to Waltke and O’Connor, belongs to the same class that “expresses the speaker’s will.”<sup>69</sup> In other words, jussives belonging to this class function to show the intentionality, desire or wish embedded in a statement by a speaker. In translating a jussive, Hebrew grammar suggests the use of modal auxiliaries “let” or “may”<sup>70</sup>. Common with various English Bible translations is the use of the verb “to let”<sup>71</sup>. According to the Cambridge Dictionary of English Grammar, however, the verb “let” connotes “giving permission, and issuing a command/ imperative”<sup>72</sup>. Thus, the use of the auxiliary verb “let” to translate a jussive form simply fails to do justice to the essential meaning of this volitive for at the crux of a jussive is the element of will or desire.<sup>73</sup>

In seeking to translate a verb that is morphologically a jussive, this thesis insists that both the form and the sense of the jussive ought to be captured and assimilated in a translation. The reason for this insistence is twofold: First, S. N. Callaham has observed that biblical Hebrew generally lacks the modal auxiliary verbs to express volition. Hence, it employs relatively “impoverished coding systems for modality.” To express varied forms of modality, writers of Biblical Hebrew had to draw from a very narrow range of verb forms.<sup>74</sup> The implication is that a

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 78.

<sup>69</sup> Bruce K. Waltke & M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 565.

<sup>70</sup> Page H. Kelley, *Biblical Hebrew: And Introductory Grammar* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1992), 131.

<sup>71</sup> See for instance, ESV, KJV, ASV, NIV.

<sup>72</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ “Let, Let’s” in *Cambridge English Dictionary* <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/let-let-s> accessed on 8/14/2019.

<sup>73</sup> Bill T. Arnold & John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 61-62. See also Waltke & O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 565; John A. Cook, *The Biblical Hebrew Verbal System: A Grammaticalization Approach*, (Ph.D. Diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2002), 65; Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius Hebrew Grammar* (ed. E. Kautzsch; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), 321.

<sup>74</sup> Scott N. Callaham, *Modality and the Biblical Hebrew Infinitive Absolute* (Ph.D. Diss.: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006), 37.

presence of a modal form in the text is significant and is a reminder that the author intended to communicate something important to the reader through a particular modal style. Secondly, because translation is an interpretation, a translator ought to submit their translation theory to the stylistic guide of the author. Their final translation must incorporate both the form and the sense of a text as intended by the author. This is significant because the meaning of a text may hinge on the manner in which that text is evinced by the source. Therefore, a translator must desist from obliterating such critical connections within the text in its original language.

This position, however, differs with Waltke and O'Connor's advice to translators to try "to distinguish between *jussive form* and *jussive sense*."<sup>75</sup> Their advice encourages a translator to be the final adjudicator over whether to retain the jussive sense in a translation or not. To demonstrate their argument, they use the Aaronide blessing in Num.6:24-26 where all the six verbs bear a volitional sense and are identified as jussives while only two are translated formally as jussives. They argue that "in some instances the distinctive form of the jussive is not used even when it could appear."<sup>76</sup> They, however, neither provide any justification for this assertion nor a concise manner by which translators may implement their advice. T. Potter has also observed similar weakness in Waltke and O'Connor's view. He avers that,

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.<sup>77</sup>

To demonstrate the nature of this preconceived theological understanding, Potter cites an example from Gen.1:3 where Waltke and O'Connor render it as jussive of divine command.<sup>78</sup> They describe the nature of this jussive as "directed from a superior to an inferior."<sup>79</sup> Van der Merwe has also described jussives as "indirect command."<sup>80</sup> This description, however, lacks evidentiary support from the text. Therefore, Potter rightly concludes that,

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<sup>75</sup> Waltke & O'Connor, *An Introduction*, 566

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Potter, *Blessed*, 27

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Waltke & O'Connor, *An Introduction*, 568. Arnold and Choi also draw a similar observation that divine jussive is a command while "wish", they argue, is used in an instance where an inferior uses the jussive with the superior as subject. See Arnold and Choi, *A Guide*, 61-62.

<sup>80</sup>Christo H. J. van der Merwe et al, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition London; T&T Clark,2017), 70.

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*,” the implication is that a deity cannot, or would not, use a jussive in the 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.<sup>81</sup>

Central to Potter’s argument, is that the dichotomy between form and sense as amplified by Waltke and O’Connor concerning translation is unnecessary,<sup>82</sup> for sense is a part of style by which a writer chooses to relay meaning. A continued cultivation of this separation can result in a loss of the meaning intended by the original source. As E. L. Greenstein explains, “Meaning in literature entails tone, mood, attitude, the feeling, the voice of a speaker, not merely information.”<sup>83</sup> Buffon, a French philosopher and naturalist while observing the crucial role of style in writing quipped, “style is the man himself.”<sup>84</sup> That is to say, a style in which a writer chooses to communicate is central to the meaning therein. Thus, it is the duty of a translator to exercise restraint when deciding how to render the style of a given text. This caution is key especially where the preservation of the style may produce a theological meaning that departs from that of the translator. H. M. Orlinsky explains, “[...] it is not the task of the Bible translator to improve upon the original, to gloss over the difficulties and obscurities in it, to depart from the original for esthetic or theological reasons, so that recognition of the original is lost.”<sup>85</sup> This is exactly the problem with Waltke and O’Connor’s advice above. Orlinsky goes on to say “We know only what the biblical text tells us; and that is all that anyone can know from the Hebrew Bible itself. [...] But we cannot read into his text what he simply did not say; and anyone who does this is simply not being faithful to his biblical, Hebraic source.”<sup>86</sup> Orlinsky’s point has to do with the operating parameters of a translator.

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<sup>81</sup> Potter, *Blessed*, 27-28.

<sup>82</sup> Studies on Syntax and syntactical analysis in linguistics have continued to fuel this dichotomy for long. Effectively, its impact has shaped and influenced various philosophies and theories of biblical translation. However, attempts to collapse this separation have recently developed and should be encouraged. For more on this see Talmy Givón, *Syntax: A Functional-Typological Introduction Vol. 1* (Amsterdam, Phil.: John Benjamins, 1984), 1-24, 29-45; Edward L. Greenstein, “Theories of Modern Bible Translation” in *Prooftexts*, 3.1 (1983): 9-39.

<sup>83</sup> Greenstein, “Theories,” 12.

<sup>84</sup> Samuel Arthur Bent, *Familiar Short Sayings of Greater Men* (6<sup>th</sup> ed Rev and Enl., Boston: Ticknor and Company, Piccadilly, 1882), 75. Buffon made this statement in his reception address at the French academy.

<sup>85</sup> Harry M. Orlinsky, “The New Jewish Version of the Torah: Toward a New Philosophy of Bible Translation” in *JBL* 82.3 (1963): 249-264, 254.

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

Paramount to a translator's task, therefore, is to render the text in a way that remains faithful to the original Hebraic source.

Having established a case for the preservation of volitional sense in a translation, this thesis employs the auxiliary verb "may" to express the jussive sense in this passage. This rendering is significant for it does not only preserve the original coding, but also expresses rich theological meaning. It shows that creation flows from God's will. He is not commanding the living creatures and the birds into existence as they instead originate in his desire for them to be. Having established the realm of their occupancy (on the second day), he wills them into being.

That the foundation of the creation of these creatures is the desire of God, is quite telling. For purpose finds itself embedded in creation. In other words, creation and the creatures are not products of randomness and chance but rather betray order and thoughtfulness in the exercise of divine will. Brueggemann writes, "the creator has a purpose and will for creation. The creation exists only because of that will."<sup>87</sup> He wills them into being so that they can occupy and reign in realms that he has already established for them. Potter observes that, "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.'"<sup>88</sup>

In order to effectively reign in their respective spheres, their presence is important. However, the vastness of these spheres would place a strain on them given their numbers at creation. Hence, God in his wisdom invites them to share in his creative activity, albeit in a distinct manner. He does so by blessing them to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the water in the seas" and for the birds to "multiply on earth" (v. 22). These divine injunctions therefore become a critical vehicle by which God guarantees these creatures not only their perpetuity but also the actualization of the divine will. Wenham comments, "the word of blessings [...] by God [...] guarantees and effects the hoped-for success. So here the words of command 'be fruitful and multiply' carry with them the divine promises that they can be carried out."<sup>89</sup> This verb בָּרַךְ (to bless) is a significant word in understanding the divine pronouncement in this verse.

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<sup>87</sup> Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 13.

<sup>88</sup> Potter, *Blessed*, 26.

<sup>89</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 24.

Appearing frequently in the Pentateuch, and particularly in Genesis and Deuteronomy, is the root בָּרַךְ which is related to the concept of blessing.<sup>90</sup> The noun form of בָּרַךְ is associated with “the knee, lap or water pool.”<sup>91</sup> The literal root idea of בָּרַךְ in both the Hebrew and Aramaic portions of the Bible however means “to kneel/bend the knee, bless.”<sup>92</sup> It later developed and acquired the notion of “praise or worship” which was descriptive of the worshipper kneeling in a posture of giving thanks (i.e. to bless) before a king or a supreme one (God /or gods).<sup>93</sup> Although God is often the subject issuing the blessing, this idea of kneeling in worship is never applied to him but to people. Individuals are also seen in some instances as the subjects bestowing blessings on others.<sup>94</sup> While it is true that individuals bestowed blessings, it was ultimately God alone from whom the blessings originated. In Numbers 22 for example, Balak thought that Balaam possessed the power to bless and to curse. He wanted Balaam to curse Israel. Since Israel was already blessed of God, Balaam could only confirm the blessing to the disappointment of Balak. Clearly, blessings can only be granted or withheld at God’s behest and when issued, are irrevocable.<sup>95</sup> In addition, this idea of blessing in the Hebrew mind, unlike the vague and abstract use of the word ‘bless’ in English, was uttered with the expected effect of concrete results. Mowvelly explains, “In the Old Testament [...] the blessing is a solemn, deliberate act through which specific and concrete advantages are conveyed.”<sup>96</sup> J. McKeon adds, “the pronouncements of blessings [...] in the Pentateuch were powerful and efficacious. [...] The effect of blessing included fertility, prosperity, authority and security.”<sup>97</sup>

Moreover, various scholars have also attended to the meaning of בָּרַךְ (blessing/to bless) in the Hebrew Bible. Their definitions can be summarized as below;

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<sup>90</sup> The root בָּרַךְ occurs over 315 times in the Old Testament, with a combined occurrence of 130 times in Genesis and Deuteronomy. See also J. McKeown, “Blessings and Curses” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, (ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker; Downers Grove, Ill; InterVarsity Press, 2012), 83.

<sup>91</sup> Mowvelly, “The Concept”, 74; Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner & J. J. Stamm, “בָּרַךְ” in *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT)*, (Translated and edited under the supervision of M.E.J. Richardson et al, New York: Brill 2000), 1:160

<sup>92</sup> Westermann, בָּרַךְ in *TLOT*, 268; HALOT, “בָּרַךְ”, 1: 160; Paul Rotenberry, “Blessing in the Old Testament: A Study of Genesis 12:3,” *Restoration Quarterly* 2.1 (1958): 32-36, 34.

<sup>93</sup> Mowvelly, “The Concept”, 74.

<sup>94</sup> For instance, blessings by priests (Num. 6:22-27); Isaac blesses Jacob (Gen.27:27-29, 28:1).

<sup>95</sup> Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: Commentary (Old Testament)*, (London; SCM Press, 1962), 87.

<sup>96</sup> Mowvelly, “The Concept,” 75.

<sup>97</sup> McKeown, “Blessings and Curses,” 86.

- 1) That blessing is an expression of the power of fertility, success, and resources. This concept of fertility is not only related to ability to have children, but also the fertility of the land and animals in one's possession.<sup>98</sup>
- 2) That blessing is an act that imparts the potency of life and prosperity. It is the act of God in which he imparts vital power to the creation, especially the living creatures and human beings.<sup>99</sup>
- 3) That blessing is the peace and the freedom from any form of danger or threat, and the rest that one enjoys is because of one's well-being accorded by the blessing.<sup>100</sup>
- 4) That blessing is the power authorizing the exercise of dominion over a defined realm.<sup>101</sup>
- 5) That blessing carries with it the notion of spiritual and physical enrichment. The emphasis here is the idea that while blessing is concretely manifested, it is basically because of continued fellowship with God. This fellowship is spiritual.<sup>102</sup>

These summarized views above demonstrate the understanding of בָּרַךְ from what is uttered by the one who blesses when “doing” the blessing. None of them, however, engage with the rendering of the word itself as used in this text. Thus, whatever is said after this verb is assumed to be explicating on the root בָּרַךְ. Though the benediction would oftentimes be made in the act of blessing an individual, it is the argument of this thesis that benediction itself is not the blessing, but the concrete effect of blessing as imagined. In v. 22 for instance, the verb בָּרַךְ is (3<sup>rd</sup> masculine, singular from בָּרַךְ) is in the Piel form. Most Hebrew grammars describe the function of Piel as “expressing an intensive type of action with an active voice.”<sup>103</sup> According to Waltke and O'Connor however, Piel “expresses the bringing about of a state.”<sup>104</sup> With intransitive verbs Piel

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<sup>98</sup> Wenham, *Genesis*, 24; Westermann, *Genesis*; Cassuto, *Genesis*; Mowvley, “The Concept”, 75; Waltke and Fredrick, *Genesis*, 63; Jacob, *The First Book*, 11.

<sup>99</sup> Sarita Gallagher, “Genesis: Declaration of God's Blessing - Chapter 2 from ‘Abrahamic Blessing: A Missiological Narrative of Revival in Papua New Guinea’” *Vetus Testamentum*, 9. 2 (1959): 158-177, 13, 165; Sarna, *Genesis*, 89. Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 37; Von Rad, *Genesis*, 54, 155; Waltke and Fredrick, *Genesis*, 63.

<sup>100</sup> Preuss, *Old Testament*, 180; Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 99.

<sup>101</sup> Cassuto, *Genesis*, 58; Gallagher, *Genesis*, 17; Jacob, *The First Book*, 11

<sup>102</sup> Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 263.

<sup>103</sup> Gary Pratico and Miles Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2007), 309; Gesenius, *Gesenius Hebrew*, 141.

<sup>104</sup> Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction*, 400.

means “Put somebody in the state of rest which the stative specifies.”<sup>105</sup> In other words, the Piel places emphasis not in the cause of an action but the consequence of the action.

Applied to this text, God put the living creatures into a state of blessedness. While in this state, God then declares the benediction; be fruitful, multiply and fill the waters. That is to say, by putting them into a blessed state, God is not simply issuing them with power and potency of life<sup>106</sup> but is also planting them into a state where the kind of life he desires of them is possible. It is a state, designed by God, that gives, nourishes, and enables thriving. Put differently, God is planting them into an organized system, an economic system,<sup>107</sup> that provides for living the kind of life that is very good in the eyes of God (1:31). The life under this system is provided for a purpose. God intends for the living creatures to rule or to steward their realms of occupancy. Their fecundity and increase therefore serves to reify the quality of life in this system or state here described as blessed.

Conspicuously missing in the divine injunctions in v. 22 made upon the birds are the words “be fruitful, and to fill”. Instead, the birds are only told “to multiply on earth.” Are they not supposed to be fruitful as well and fill the earth? Cassuto observes that, “The aerial creatures were not blessed with the same exceeding fertility as the fish, hence in their case only the term *multiply* is used.”<sup>108</sup> Cassuto’s argument however is based on silence. Furthermore, he does not explain the meaning of “multiply”. And to follow the logic of his argument, how then is this multiplication going to happen without the birds being “fruitful”? The text does not say anything about this withholding. However, there are two ways that one can explain this difference. Firstly, it could be an instance of verbal ellipses where the writer is utilizing this literary tool in order to achieve a rhetorical effect.<sup>109</sup> Secondly, it could be that the author is restating the benediction in summary to

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<sup>105</sup> Albrecht Goetz, “The So-Called Intensive of the Semitic Languages” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 62.1 (1942) :1-8, 6; See also Jan Joosten, “The Functions of the Semitic D Stem: Biblical Hebrew Materials for a Comparative-Historical Approach” *Orientalia*, Nova Series, 67.2 (1998): 202-230.

<sup>106</sup> Gallagher, *Genesis*, 17; Potter, *Blessed*, 134.

<sup>107</sup> Merriam Webster defines economy broadly as, “a system of life, a mode of operation or arrangement, organization”. \_\_\_\_\_ “Economy” in *Merriam-Webster English Dictionary*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/economy> accessed 18/09/2019. Further reflection on the significance of employing the language of economy here will be illustrated clearly in the next chapter on the use of בָּרַךְ.

<sup>108</sup> Cassuto, *Genesis*, 52.

<sup>109</sup> See Van der Merwe et al, *A Biblical*, 65. Waltke & O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 223-224; And for a more detailed study on verbal ellipses in linguistics, see Elixabete Murguia, *Syntactic Identity and Locality Restrictions on Verbal Ellipses* (Ph.D. Diss. University of Maryland, 2004). (Verbal ellipses in Biblical Hebrew is pervasive in Hebrew poetry. Studies on the interpretation of Genesis 1 often pose questions on the literary genre of Genesis 1: Whether it is prose or poetry, history, or parable? Indeed, the movement of this narrative towards a climax points to a prose; yet the prominence of repetition, alliteration, and silence leads one to conclude that it is poetry. H. Blocher, has however argued that it is a blend of both prose and poetry). Henry Blocher, *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis*, (trans. David G. Preston; Downers Grove III: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 31-33.

avoid repetition with the aim of emphasizing the earth as the ultimate breeding place for birds. That is, he identifies the earth as the location for birds to multiply, parallel to the seas for fish. Therefore, the birds and the fish are blessed to rule their realms through multiplication equally.

Importantly, in v. 21, the progression in the creation culminates in a distinction among the creatures of the animal world. They are described as *נִפְשׁוֹת חַיִּים* (living creatures) and *הַתַּיִמִּים הַגְּדֹלִים* (great monsters/huge creatures), an interesting distinction. For Speiser, this juxtaposition is intended simply to draw on the existing variety in God’s creation of small and larger creatures.<sup>110</sup> Rashi however, building on the etymology of *נִפְשׁוֹת* (soul), links *נִפְשׁוֹת חַיִּים* with *שָׂרָץ* in v. 20 and concludes that the difference is intended to show that living creatures, unlike the sea monsters (huge creatures), have vitality as demonstrated by their later increase in number.<sup>111</sup> On the contrary, Wenham sees no rivalry as intended between these two groups of creatures. He claims that the highlighted distinction serves to show that every creature including “sea monsters were created by God” and to “precisely insist on his sovereignty over them.”<sup>112</sup> In other words, it is pointing to the totality of all that exist in the animal world; small, large, huge, fearsome or friendly, as originating from the creative will of God and are equally good. Or as Von Rad so succinctly states, “nothing in this realm, which, we saw, as we saw, is close nevertheless to the dimension of chaos, is outside the creative will of God. Outside God there is nothing to fear; even this creature is good in God’s sight!”<sup>113</sup>

Finally, the verb *מָלָא* appearing in v. 22 as part of the imperatives in the divine injunction *וַיִּבְרָא וַיְרַבּוּ וַיִּמְלְאוּ* is of interest for this thesis. However, scholars attending to this passage seem to overlook it in their analysis of this verse. The common trend among various scholars is to lump it together with the rest of the imperatives while generalizing it as underscoring “fertility and increase”<sup>114</sup> or “blessing.”<sup>115</sup> This study will be seeking to establish a comprehensive meaning of this word *מָלָא*. This will be done after an initial analysis of each of the pericopes set for study within the primeval history in this thesis. This bridling therefore is intentional for strategic reasons.

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<sup>110</sup> Speiser, *Genesis*, 7; Cassuto, *A Commentary*, 48.

<sup>111</sup> Shlomo Yitzhaki (Rashi), *Pentateuch with Targum Onkelos, Haphtaroth and Rashi Commentary*, (trans. M. Rosenbaum and M. Silberman; New York: Hebrew Publishing, 1934), 5-6.

<sup>112</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 24.

<sup>113</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis*, 55.

<sup>114</sup> Cassuto, *A Commentary*, 51; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 68

<sup>115</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 24.

## 2.2. Genesis 6:11-13: The Earth is filled with Violence.

### 2.2.1: Textual Criticism.

v. 13: The LXX places καὶ (and) before the particle אֶת. Additionally, one of the codices of Samaritan targum version of the Pentateuch has מֵאֵת translated as ‘from’ as a probable correction here. The Vulgate, the Ethiopic and the Samaritan Pentateuch follow the MT. The Qumran 6Q1 Paleo-Genesis however, sides with the LXX. Indeed, the phrase אֶת-הָאָרֶץ in this verse presents a complex translation due to its construction in the witnesses relied on by MT. Perhaps the Targum is reading from a MSS with a different conception of word division. In addition, since the LXX and the Samaritan Targum often employ textual harmonization, this could explain their suggested emendation, especially in context of this difficult construction. Certainly, rarely does a Hiphil appear with מֵאֵת.<sup>116</sup> This thesis prefers the difficult reading.

### 2.2.2: Macro-Syntactical Analysis: Gen. 6:11-13.

VERSE	BIBLICAL HEBREW TEXT	VERB FORM	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
6:11a	וַתִּשְׁחַת הָאָרֶץ לְפָנָי הָאֱלֹהִים	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	Now the earth was ruined in the eyes of God.
6:11b	וַתִּמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ חֲמָס:	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And the earth was filled with violence.
6:12a	וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וַהֲגִיחַ נִשְׁחָתָהּ	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God saw the earth and behold, it was ruined,
6:12b	כִּי-הִשְׁחִית כָּל-בֶּשֶׂר אֶת- דַּרְכּוֹ עַל-הָאָרֶץ: ס	Qatal (Nar.)	for all the flesh had ruined its way on the earth.
6:13a	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים לְנֹחַ	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God said to Noah,
6:13b	קֵץ כָּל-בֶּשֶׂר בָּא לְפָנָי	SNC (Disc.)	“End of all flesh has come before me
6:13c	כִּי-מִלְאָהּ הָאָרֶץ חֲמָס מִפְּנֵיהֶם	Qatal (Disc.)- retros.	because the earth is filled with violence because of them

<sup>116</sup> Moshe A. Ziyor, “A Note on Genesis VI 13”, *Vetus Testamentum*, 41.3 (1991): 366-369, 367.

6:13d	וְהִנְנִי מְשַׁחֵתֶם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ:	וְהִנְנִי +SNC with Part. (Disc.)	I am about to destroy them with the earth.”
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Table 2: Analysis of verb forms in Gen. 6:11-13.

### 2.2.3: Translation.

**6:11.** Now the earth was ruined in the eyes of God.  
And the earth was filled with violence.<sup>117</sup>

**6:12.** And God saw the earth and behold,  
it was ruined, for all the flesh had ruined its way on the earth.

**6:13.** And God said to Noah,  
“End of all flesh has come before me  
because the earth is filled with violence because of them.  
I am about to destroy<sup>118</sup> them with the earth”

### 2.2.4: Commentary.

The narrative begins by giving prominence to God’s diagnosis of the earth, while emphasizing the weightiness of the situation at hand. The writer employs the word לִפְנֵי in v. 11 as a key to understanding the nature of this assessment. The preposition לִפְנֵי can be translated as “in the face of,”<sup>119</sup> or “in view of.”<sup>120</sup> According to Van der Merwe, לִפְנֵי has the idea of being “in the observable presence”<sup>121</sup> of someone i.e. God. This denotes a spatial presence where one can frame an evaluation or an opinion about whatever they are seeing in front of them.<sup>122</sup> Used in this verse therefore, לִפְנֵי is functioning perceptually to highlight and to invite the reader to see with God and even agree with God’s personal evaluation of the earth; that the earth is corrupt and filled with violence, hence it is not good. As such, the reader is set to expect events that might follow in response to God’s view of the earth.<sup>123</sup>

The use of לִפְנֵי therefore is significant as it echoes not only the seeing motif that is pervasive in Genesis but also God’s assessment of the creation in Gen.1:31. Thusly, it exhibits similarity between the events in this narrative and the creation story. This connection, however, is

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<sup>117</sup>The verb מָלֵא appears here in the Niphal form, with a reflexive meaning. The earth is therefore both the actor and the object of this verb but with emphasis on the earth as the patient affected by the spreading violence. On function and meaning of reflexive meaning in Niphal see, Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 380; Joosten, “The Functions”, 207-212.

<sup>118</sup> The nuance here is that of urgent and immediate. See footnote 148.

<sup>119</sup>Gesenius, *Gesenius Hebrew*, 297

<sup>120</sup> Speiser, *Genesis*, 51

<sup>121</sup> Van der Merwe, *A Biblical*, 358

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 359.

<sup>123</sup> Arnold and Choi, *A Guide*, 116.

betrayed in the difference highlighted in both narratives. In Gen.1, God was ordering the chaos in the world by “filling” the earth with his creation, while God’s assessment in this narrative is that the ordering on earth has been destroyed. Instead, the earth is filled with violence. Brueggemann writes, “God has concluded that the world has betrayed his intent. The noble decisions of God have been treated shabbily.”<sup>124</sup> In other words, the earth is experiencing a de-creation process. The narrative therefore is expectant of God’s next step in addressing this malady on earth.

Describing the nature of God’s assessment of the earth, the narrative uses the word **נִשְׁחָתָה** (Niphal imperfect, waw+3fs) from the verb **שָׁחַת**. In the Niphal, **שָׁחַת** means to “be spoiled” or “be ruined,”<sup>125</sup> and it is used elsewhere to describe the damage on the land by flies (Ex. 8:20); the spoiling of a garment (Jer.13:7); and a pot spoiled in the hands of a potter (Jer.18:24). In the Hiphil, it denotes the idea of “causing oneself to ruin something suddenly.”<sup>126</sup> Consequently, we read of the destruction of the people (Gen.18:28); cities ruined by war, (Gen.19:14); and destruction caused by divine judgement (Isa. 65:8). For D. Vetter, however, the verb “always refers to a ruin effected in the realm of community or individual experience.”<sup>127</sup> It describes not only the physical destruction but also moral, economic, and social collapse. In other words, when something is ruined or destroyed then it has completely lost its intended purpose. D. B. Sharp explains,

In respect to living beings (human and animal), the term implies the taking of life. Secondly, objects (e. g., cities, fields, trees) are reduced to a state in which they are no longer capable of fulfilling the purpose for which they were intended. Finally, it is used to imply the "destruction" of that interior attitude or orientation of human beings—individually or collectively—which prompts them to act in a manner that leads to righteous living. When this attitude or orientation is destroyed, individuals or a collective people/nation no longer act in a manner compatible with their covenantal responsibilities.<sup>128</sup>

For Sharp, therefore, the verb is describing the inherent ruining of the earth (all the creatures in it) and/or whose effects are concretely manifested externally. And these effects are not only individual but social.

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<sup>124</sup> Brueggemann, *Genesis*,76.

<sup>125</sup> HALOT, “ שָׁחַת ”, 4:1470.

<sup>126</sup> D. Vetter, “ שָׁחַת ” *TLOT*, 3:1317.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, 1318.

<sup>128</sup> Donald B. Sharp, “A Biblical Foundation for an Environmental Theology: A New Perspective on Genesis 1:26-28 and 6:11-13”, *Science et Esprit*, XLVII/3 (1995):305-313, 310.

Applied to this text (v.11), the narrative is informing that the earth was ruined in a way that it had lost its intended purpose obtained at creation. The earth, that is the planet and all in it,<sup>129</sup> was in total chaos. J. Skinner comments, “The concept of ‘corruption’ (root, *shat*) may be viewed as a general term describing the violation of the divinely appointed order God had established in Creation.”<sup>130</sup> This creation order had placed the earth in a blessed state with a capacity to achieve its divine purpose. While תהו is highlighting the reality of a return to chaos, it is also pointing to the intensity and the gravity of the situation on earth. That is, it had become useless, unproductive, and un-purposeful. Taking the earth as its subject (אֶרֶץ is mentioned six times), the verb therefore serves to draw a dark contrast with the state of the earth at the conclusion of the six days of creation.

This darkness, the ruining of the earth, is further explicated as being “filled with violence.” The nominal חַמָּס translated as ‘violence’ is used twice (v. 11,13) in this passage and bears a broad range of meanings that includes murder, false accusation/verbal abuse, hatred, and bloodshed. In a social setting, it describes the oppression and exploitation of the poor.<sup>131</sup> It also denotes “the violent breach of a just order.”<sup>132</sup> Elsewhere, it is used to describe a false witness (Deut.19:16) and causeless hatred (Ps.25:19). Similarly, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed by fire because of their sin (חַמָּס). Ezekiel would later express that the destruction of Sodom was due to her callous disregard of the existence of poverty amidst an economy of plenty (Ezek.16:49).<sup>133</sup> It is further clear that this חַמָּס, expressed itself beyond individuals and to society. Sarna rightly observes that “[...] the Bible, dealing with non-Israelites, does not conceive of their sin in what we should call today- in fragrant misuse of the word- “religious” terms. That is to say, he does not accuse them of idolatrous or cultic offenses. The culpability of the generation of the flood lies strictly in the socio-moral sphere.”<sup>134</sup> Left to herself without rescue from this violence, the earth would obliterate herself to extinction.

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<sup>129</sup> Contra Sharp; Sharp in his ecological reading of the passage translates earth here to mean land. See Ibid, 310.

<sup>130</sup> John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, (2nd ed., International Critical Commentary Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910), 159.

<sup>131</sup> H. Haag, “חַמָּס” in *TDOT*, 482-483.

<sup>132</sup> Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 157.

<sup>133</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, 52.

<sup>134</sup> Sarna, 53. See also Benno Jacob, *The First Book of the Bible; Genesis* (Translated by Ernest I. Jacob and Walter Jacob, N.Y.: Ktav Publishing House, 1974), 48.

Moreover, Von Rad has observed that **צַחֵק** also became the “cry of appeal with which a man whose life was threatened called out for the protection of the community and its laws.”<sup>135</sup> He draws from Jeremiah 20:8; Habakkuk 1:2; and Job 19:7, to illustrate this use of **צַחֵק**. This idea of **צַחֵק** as crying for appeal echoes the story of Cain and Abel, where the blood of the wronged brother cried for appeal to the God, the righteous judge (Gen.4:10). For by killing his brother, Cain had violated God’s order for “blood and life belong to God alone; wherever a man commits murder he attacks God’s very own right of possession. [...] spilled blood cannot be shoveled underground; it cries aloud to heaven and complains directly to the Lord of life.”<sup>136</sup> One possibility is that as bloodshed, murder, and all forms of social injustice against the weak intensified on earth, cries of appeal reached God and he showed up. This violence is a cumulative consequence of the effect of the fall up to this point.<sup>137</sup> The fall forced humanity into a state other than the original blessed state. A state of corruption where, unlike the blessed state that enabled them with a capacity to be fecund, increase and fill the earth, they experienced death and were disposed to violence. In total, **צַחֵק** (violence) had become the vehicle upon which human corruption concretely established itself on earth, making it difficult for the creation to exist in accordance to its intended purpose.

The narrative then proceeds to establish the cause of the destruction of the earth. In v. 12, the text notes that God assessed the earth. The fact that God is here surveying the earth is significant. It clearly affirms that having created the world, God did not withdraw and is very much concerned with his creation. God is neither the absent “watchmaker” nor a blind one.<sup>138</sup> The phrase “**וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים**” echoes Genesis 1:31 with similar construction where “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” This idea of seeing as used here is not simply a glance at an object. Rather

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<sup>135</sup> Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 157.

<sup>136</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis*, 102; See also David Clines, “Noah’s Flood I: The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” *Faith and Thought* 100.2 (1972-3): 128-142, 133.

<sup>137</sup> We can see the effects of the fall (Gen.3) in the Fratricide (Gen. 4:8); In Lamech’s killing of a boy for merely wounding him (4:23); he defies God’s order on vengeance and sets his own (4:24); death in the genealogy (5:1-ff); Painful toiling experienced by people and longing for comfort (5:29); and moral perversion (6:5). Cassuto, *Genesis*, 52. Cassuto’s rendering of **צַחֵק** collectively as “unrighteousness” is sound. It however abstracts the notion of **צַחֵק** when viewed in context of its various usage across the Hebrew canon. The word “violence” is therefore preferred instead since it relays a more concrete effect from what the text establishes as the root cause of **צַחֵק**.

<sup>138</sup> See Sarna, *Genesis*, 52; Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 77. The analogy of a Watchmaker was first used by W. Paley to lay proof, from design, for the existence of a creator. Taking the cue from Paley’s watchmaker analogy, R. Dawkins would later argue against the existence of God. Basing on Darwinism, he asserted that there is a watchmaker, and it is the forces of physics alone, and they are blind. For more on this see, William Paley, *Natural Theology or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity* (London: R. Faulder, 1802); Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design* (London: Penguin Books, 2016).

it has the idea of seeing with perception and understanding so as to make an opinion about the object in sight. It implies the investigation of the facts with the intention of acting effectively.<sup>139</sup> The narrative echo of 1:31 here is deliberate and serves to heighten the sense of tragedy that has overtaken the world since it was created.<sup>140</sup> God’s surprise and shock exists to manifest the intensity of this tragedy.

Evidently, God’s shock arises from beyond the *prima facie* state of the situation on earth. He is surprised by who he finds culpable of the problem. For he establishes that “all the flesh had ruined its way on the earth.” The phrase כָּל־בְּעָרְבָא refers to all living beings: both human beings and animals.<sup>141</sup> By linking both human beings and animals, the narrative aims at pointing out their failure in living out their creation purpose. Although human beings were charged with stewarding the earth, the purpose of the animals was defined within their respective realms on earth (Gen.1.20-22,28).<sup>142</sup> They had failed in their tasks by “ruining their way on earth”. The word דָּרַךְ here carries with it the notion of morality denoting “manner, custom, behavior or conduct.”<sup>143</sup> Applied to this passage, one gets the sense that all the flesh had done was live their lives in a way that was contrary to the natural order. That is, both humans and animals had transgressed the parameters of the standard and order, set and ordained at creation by God. Clines expounds that, “The ‘way’ is not God’s way [...] but the way of flesh, that is, the natural order of existence of living creatures, the manner of life and conduct prescribed to them.”<sup>144</sup> By forsaking their natural way, they were guilty of unnatural sins. The conduct led to the destruction of the earth with violence. As W. J. Dumbrell observes, “This is a picture of the total rupture of created relationships on the part of the creature.”<sup>145</sup> That is, their moral progress outside the natural order had led them into a quagmire.

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<sup>139</sup> Waltke & Fredrick, *Genesis*, 134; D. Vetter, “ראה”, *TLOT*, 3:1178.

<sup>140</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 171.

<sup>141</sup> Jacob, *Genesis*,48. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 171. In the flood narratives, this phrase appears 13 time and only 4 times is it used in reference to animals apart from human beings. (7:15-16; 6:19; 8:17).

<sup>142</sup> Whereas land animals were not a part of those issued with a blessing to rule their realms of occupancy at creation (1:24-25), they are not innocent either for they too had drifted from the natural way. As Clines observes “[...], this transgression of limits is not confined to man; as is usual, the phrase ‘all flesh’ includes the animals as well as man. Their transgression has been, as becomes clear from 9:5, that they have forsaken their created status as man’s subjects (1:28) and as vegetarians (1:30), and have become carnivores, preying even upon man. As so frequently in the Old Testament, man’s sinfulness has blighted animals and earth.” Clines, “Noah’s Flood I,” 134.

<sup>143</sup> HALOT, “דָּרַךְ”, 1:232. For similar use see Jer.12:1; Isa.59:8; Also used of God’s behavior Deut. 32:4, Gen.18:19. Waltke and Fredrick, *Genesis*, 134.

<sup>144</sup> Clines, “Noah’s Flood I”, 133.

<sup>145</sup> William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: An Old Testament Covenant Theology* (Exeter: Peterborough, 1984), 14.

Unable to dissociate themselves from this state, a “smoke” of violence arose and filled the earth leading to its destruction. God therefore declared an indictment against them.

However, R. Alter sees the violence filling the earth as a consequence of the divine imperative in Gen.1:28. He explains, “Humankind had been enjoined to multiply and fill the earth, but the proliferation of human population leads to a proliferation of lawless behavior.”<sup>146</sup> When considered against the evidence provided in the text, Alter’s view does not obtain. Perhaps, he could be reading into the text from ancient sources parallel to this period. For instance, in the Atrahasis Epic, the oldest Mesopotamian flood narrative, human proliferation is blamed for occasioning the flood. In order to prevent human increase from happening again, the gods reach an agreement by inflicting women with sterility, a high infant mortality rate, and artificial barrenness by cultic practices.<sup>147</sup> Importantly, the reiteration of the creation mandate (1:28) to Noah and his sons in 9:1 clearly re-affirms the good of human increase as issued then. Certainly, the indictment of God in 6:12 identifies the culprit.

God’s indictment is followed up by his inflexible determination to punish the creation that has been disobedient to him. Contrary to his resting on the seventh day after the creation of what he had declared as “very good,” (2:2), God is at work here. He reveals to Noah that the end is coming. Used in construct with a participle, הִנְנֵה here emphasizes the imminence and certainty of God’s judgement.<sup>148</sup> Evidently, God is impatient with those willing to compromise the purpose of his creation. Instead of “being fruitful, multiplying and filling the earth” (1:28, c/v.22), they were busy filling the earth with violence. J. Morgan comments that,

In Priestly imagination, the flourishing of humans and the fruitfulness of the earth are fast-bound together, but for humans to inhabit and ‘flesh-out’ the earth does not come without risk. In marked juxtaposition to the Priestly ideal envisaged in Genesis 1:1-2.4a, when, in Genesis 6, humans do begin to multiply, the earth ends up filled not with glory, but with violence; not consecrated, but desecrated (6:11-12).<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses; A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W.W. Norton Co.,2004), 40. From a comparative approach, J.D. Levenson sees the chaos as a fall back to pre-creation order and that this return is occasioned by sea dragon. He writes, “Rising anew, they have escaped their appointed bounds and thus flung a challenge at their divine vanquisher”. Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil; The Jewish drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,1988), 8-13.

<sup>147</sup> Isaac M. Kikawada and Arthur Quinn, *Before Abraham Was: The Unity of Genesis 1-11* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 47.

<sup>148</sup> HALOT “הִנְנֵה”, 1:252. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 172; Cassuto, *A Commentary*, 57

<sup>149</sup> Jonathan D. Morgan, “Filling the Earth: A Consecration Motif in the Priestly Creation Story?” *In Judaïsme Ancien: International Journal of History and Philology* 4 (2016): 41-56, 54.

God therefore declares that he will destroy them. The same verb *שחית* used for the ruining of the earth is used here to signify God acting to bring to justice those guilty of the corruption. M.A. Zipor observes that “the interpretation neatly reveals the linguistic device of using repeatedly the root *sht* (with its dual meaning: "corrupt" and "destroy"), in order to stress the idea of "measure for measure."<sup>150</sup> In other words, this repetition underscores that God is a righteous judge who dispenses justice to the guilty. He issues a punishment fitting the crime.<sup>151</sup>

The phrase *וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ מִשְׁחִיתָם* in v.13 is slightly ambiguous and the construction *וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ* is unusual. A cursory look into major translations seem to render it as “I will destroy them with the earth.”<sup>152</sup> The phrase *וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ* rendered in this thesis as “with the earth”, has attracted various suggestions as to its possible translation. They include;

- 1) From the earth; In making this suggestion, Rashi sees the phrase *וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ* as being similar in meaning to *מִן הָאָרֶץ* (from the earth) hence all flesh “will be destroyed from the earth”. This rendering is also suggested in one of the codices of Samaritan targum version of the Pentateuch.<sup>153</sup>
- 2) *וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ* is taken to be explicating further on the nature of the impending destruction. Thus, “And I am about to destroy them, that is to say, destroy the earth.”<sup>154</sup>
- 3) Together with the earth; Rashi in his second explanation renders this phrase as “together with the earth” denoting the destruction of all flesh that is to happen alongside the earth. He writes, “for the earth was blotted out and washed away to the depth of a furrow of three handbreadths.”<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Zipor. “A Note on Genesis”, 367; Cassuto, *Genesis*, 13.

<sup>151</sup> God’s use of violence here and elsewhere in the Old Testament has generated a lot of discussion from various circles. However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully prosecute a proper view on divine violence in the Bible. For a detailed discussion on this see Terrence E. Fretheim, “God and Violence in the Old Testament,” *Word & World* 24.1 (2004):18-28; Eric A. Seibert, “Recent Research on Divine Violence in the Old Testament (with Special Attention to Christian Theological Perspectives),” *Currents in Biblical Research* 15.1 (2016): 8–40.

<sup>152</sup> See ESV, ASV, KJV; but NET has “Now I am about to destroy them and the earth”, NEB “I will destroy them along with the earth”. For more see footnote 92.

<sup>153</sup> Yitzhaki *Pentateuch*, 28.

<sup>154</sup> Jacob, *The First Book*, 48.

<sup>155</sup> Yitzhaki *Pentateuch*, 28. See also the Vulgate; Peshitta; Onkelos Genesis.

- 4) And the earth; This is a suggested rendering offered in the Septuagint; when applied to this verse, the sense one gets is that the destruction is directed to them (all flesh) and the earth.<sup>156</sup>

The first suggestion is not warranted since the text does not appropriate the emendation<sup>157</sup> and secondly the nature of destruction as described here is going to be completely absolute. The second and the fourth proposals are unlikely for the reason that they lack grammatical support. The third suggestion bears some possibility since grammatically it can be supported.<sup>158</sup> The implication is that since they destroyed the earth, “I shall destroy them together with the earth.” The destruction of the earth here becomes purely a consequence of their destruction.<sup>159</sup> Waltke and O’Connor have noted that the preposition  $\text{לְ}$  can function as a mark of accompaniment, hence reinforcing the third proposal.<sup>160</sup> In addition, they also observe that  $\text{לְ}$  can also be used “for the purpose of helping” i.e. as a tool.<sup>161</sup> As such it could mean that  $\text{לְ}$  in this verse is identifying the earth as a tool aiding in the punishment of “all the flesh”.

One can therefore conclude that  $\text{לְ}$  is highlighting the earth as both a tool and a consequence of the destruction about to come. And whereas such a view may find a strong grammatical support from the text, this thesis stresses that the earth as a tool is the main idea communicated in this text. Granted that the earth is already destroyed (by all flesh), the earth as a tool in this destruction serves to advance the de-creation motif that permeates the flood narrative. For just as the earth was a tool in God’s hand at the creation of living creatures (Gen.1:20,24), it is also a tool in his hand aiding in the destruction of “all flesh”. For through the flood, the earth’s conditions for sustaining life is de-activated. The earth cannot be a dwelling place for “all the flesh” anymore.<sup>162</sup> Thus, Sarna rightly concludes that, “man cannot undermine the moral basis of society without endangering the very existence of civilization. In fact, society by its own corruption, actually may be said to initiate a process of inevitable retribution.”<sup>163</sup> But it must be

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<sup>156</sup> LXX Gen.6:13

<sup>157</sup> See textual notes above.

<sup>158</sup> Similar usage is observed in 2Sam.16:17b.

<sup>159</sup> See also Cassuto, *A Commentary*, 58.

<sup>160</sup> Waltke & O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 195 #1 ; Arnold and Choi, *A Guide*, 101.

<sup>161</sup> Waltke & O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 195 #4 ; HALOT “ $\text{לְ}$ ” in, 1:101. Similar usage is seen in Gen.4:1; Job 26:4.

<sup>162</sup> See Von Rad, *Genesis*, 54.

<sup>163</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, 52.

added that such “inevitable retribution” does not arise out of the earth’s independence, but rightly as a tool under the grip of God’s hand.

In summary, the narrative section of this passage (v. 11-12) describe the reasons leading to the destruction of the earth by repeating God’s resolution noted in the discourse section (v. 13). This threefold description can be represented in a chiastic structure as in the table below. In this account, “the earth was ruined” and “the earth was filled with violence.” But God transforms these descriptions into direct accusations; “The earth is filled with violence because of them” and “I am about to ruin them with the earth.” Through this structure one is able to note the emphasis that is placed on the root cause of this corruption and thus contend with the justice dispensed. The table below helps to demonstrate this view in a chiastic structure.

**A Summary of Gen. 6:11-13 in Chiastic Structure.**

s/o	BIBLICAL HEBREW TEXT	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
A	וַתִּשְׁחַת הָאֲרֶץ לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים	And the earth was ruined before God
B	וַתִּמְלֵא הָאֲרֶץ חָמָס (וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאֲרֶץ וְהִנֵּה נִשְׁחָתָה)	And the earth was filled with violence. (And God saw the earth, and behold it was ruined).
C	כִּי-הִשְׁחִית כָּל-בֶּשֶׁר אֶת-דְּרָכָו עַל- הָאֲרֶץ: ֹס	for all the flesh had ruined their way on the earth.
C'	קֵץ כָּל-בֶּשֶׁר	End of all flesh
B'	כִּי-מְלֵאָה הָאֲרֶץ חָמָס	For all the earth is filled with violence
A'	וְהִנְנִי מְשַׁחִיתָם אֶת-הָאֲרֶץ:	I am about to ruin them with the earth.

*Figure 1: Chiastic structure of Gen. 6:11-13.*

**2.3: Genesis 9:1-2.: The Blessing of Noah and his sons.**

**2.3.1: Textual Criticism.**

v. 2: The code *versionis Graecae* of the LXX here suggests an addition of καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τοῖς κτήνεσι by inserting וְעַל כָּל- בְּהֵמָה “and over all livestock.” The Samaritan Pentateuch, the Vulgate, the Targum, and the Ethiopic do not observe this addition. Perhaps this is an instance of LXX’s habit of harmonization. This thesis therefore maintains the hard reading.

v. 2: The Samaritan Pentateuch has ובכלל in one of its various manuscript witnesses. The LXX, the Ethiopic and the Targum follow the MT. Importantly, the evidential weight for the suggested

change is weak because it is only found in one of the manuscripts supporting the Samaritan Pentateuch. Therefore, the MT text is maintained

**2.3.2: Macro-Syntactical Analysis: Gen. 9:1-2.**

VERSE	BIBLICAL HEBREW TEXT	VERB FORM	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
9:1a	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-נֹחַ וְאֶת-בָּנָיו	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And God blessed Noah and his sons,
9:1b	וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם	Wayyiqtol (Nar.)	And he said to them,
9:1c	פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ:	Imperatives (Disc.) Volitional	“be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth”.
9:2a	וּמוֹרָאֵכֶם וְחִתְּכֶם יִהְיֶה	Waw-X-Yiqtol (Disc.) Jussive.	And may the fear and the dread of you be
9:2b	עַל כָּל-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ וְעַל כָּל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם	SNC (Disc.)	on all the beast of the earth, and all the birds of the heaven,
9:2c	בְּכָל-אֲשֶׁר תֵּרַמֵּשׂ הָאֲדָמָה	X-Yiqtol (Disc.) Jussive	on everything that creeps on the ground,
9:2d	וּבְכָל-דְּגַי הַיָּם	SNC (Disc.)	and all the fish of the sea.
9:2e	בְּיַדְכֶם נָתַנוּ:	X-Qatal (Disc.)	Into your hand they have been given.

Table 3: Breakdown of verb forms in Gen. 9:1-2.

**2.3.3: Translation.**

- 9:1.** And God blessed Noah and his sons,  
and he said to them,  
“be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth”
- 9:2.** And may the fear and the dread of you be on  
all the beast of the earth and  
all the birds of the heaven,  
on everything that creeps on the ground and,  
all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they have been given.

**2.3.4: Commentary.**

This passage announces that the intent and mandate of creation are active and operating in this new creation. It does so by echoing the issuing to Noah, and his sons, of the commission originally given to Adam in 1.28. According to Wenham however, this is the “third time that God has blessed mankind and the third time that man has been told to be ‘fruitful and multiply.’”<sup>164</sup> He

<sup>164</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 192. See also Waltke and Fredrick, *Genesis*, 144

sees in 5:2 and 8:17 the second time that humanity was given the injunction to increase. However, a closer look at 5:2 shows that the narrative is recounting the blessing event at the creation of humanity; who is created in the image and likeness of God. A fact further supported by the narrator's comment, "on the day they were created" (בַּיּוֹם הַבְּרָאָהֶם).<sup>165</sup> Similarly, 8:17 narrates God's instruction to Noah to release from the ark all the living creatures so that they may abound on earth by fruitfulness and multiplication. The living creatures identified here however are not inclusive of human beings. For the preposition בְּ in the phrase וּבְעוֹף יְרֵב־הַמָּקֵה in 8.17b is specifying and clarifying these living creatures mentioned,<sup>166</sup> the list of which does not include Noah and his sons. In any case, 8:17 is echoing the blessing event in 1:21-22 and not 1:28. Thus, it can be concluded that 5:2 and 8:17 are not a second time when blessing and divine announcements respectively are made to humanity.<sup>167</sup> Instead, 9:1 is in fact the second time that God is blessing and issuing a fresh mandate to humanity, namely Noah and his sons. Indeed, this pronouncement reiterates similar announcements in Gen.1.28.

Importantly, the continued use of these verbs in this retained sequence is quite telling for it reveals not only the intentionality but also the significance and potency in the verbs used. The verb פָּרָו (Qal imperative masculine plural- be fruitful), from the root פָּרָה among various Semitic languages, generally bear the idea "to separate, divide, bear fruit, or bloom," with its noun form meaning 'fruit'.<sup>168</sup> In the Ancient Near East, a fruit produced from a plant provided food for human nourishment or poison threatening life. Thus, the fruit was regarded as a "bearer of mysterious powers and the symbols of perpetual renewed life."<sup>169</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, the verbal form of the root פָּרָה occurs 29 times mainly bearing the idea "to be fruit bearing or fertile."<sup>170</sup> Apart from being used to describe the ability of plants to bear fruit, it is also utilized in reference to the fertility of the land (Lev. 25:19, Neh.9:36), animals (Gen. 8:17), human beings (Gen. 35:11) and especially to assure the fertility of the couple (Gen.28:2-3). It is evident from this analysis that the root פָּרָה carries with it the idea of being able to have a fruit. Applied to the text under study,

<sup>165</sup> See also Potter, *Blessed*, 63.

<sup>166</sup> Arnold and Choi, *A Guide*, 104; Van der Merwe et al, *A Biblical*, 339 §39.6; Waltke & O'Connor, *An Introduction*, 198; HALOT "פָּ", 1:105 A similar occurrence is observed in Genesis 7:21, 9:20.

<sup>167</sup> See also Potter, *Blessed*, 63.

<sup>168</sup> Kedar-Kopfstein B., פָּרָה in *TDOT*, 81-82.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 83-84.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

God intentionally (volitive-imperative) endows humanity with the capacity to reproduce a fruit i.e. descendants. That is, the ability to bear children imbued with similar facility. The implication here is that, in the post flood state, God is still willing that human beings should continue to possess their fecund potency as it were from his original design. The reality of death and barrenness in the post-flood state intensifies the significance of this divine gift. Notice also that humanity in the post-flood state is still retaining the image of God in them (9:6).

Besides, the verb רָבּוּ (Qal imperative masculine plural- multiply) from the root רָבָה share various derivative forms. A narrowed focus on רָבָה in Biblical Hebrew show that when רָבָה appears in the stative, infinitive and participial forms, it generally means “be great, numerous.”<sup>171</sup> In Biblical Aramaic however, the verbal form bears the idea of “grow, or increase” while its nominal form has the notion of “greatness, or magnificence.”<sup>172</sup> Beyond the Primeval history and across the Hebrew canon, this word appears mostly in contexts where a promise of children or descendants is made (Gen.16:10,Ex.32:13); to describe the increase of Israel (Ex.1:9, Deut. 1:10); to a prophetic promise of increase (Ezek.36:10). In the Primeval account it appears generally in context where blessing is made or echoed (Gen.1:22,28,8:17 & 9:7). In the context of 9:1 therefore, רָבָה is expressing God’s will for humanity to increase in their number. Used together with פָּרָה and in the post-flood context, it is expressing God’s desire to continue with the increase of human beings with a two-fold aim; first, to enhance the third imperative (מְלֹא) so that humanity can effectively carry on with God’s original design and purpose of his creation i.e. ruling over the creation. Secondly, with the reality of sin manifesting itself in conflict and death within the human family, this increase will serve to enhance human perpetuity. Indeed, the desired increase in number is possible since humanity is primarily endowed with the ability to bear fruit. In summary, רָבָה is intensifying פָּרָה, while enhancing מְלֹא, and thus highlighting its significance which is illustrated in the retained sequence of the verbs in the issued injunction.

Importantly, the echoing of 1:28 in 9:1 is further continued down in v. 2 where all the birds, fish and animals are subjected to the authority of humanity. However, the similarities between this injunction and 1:28 is slightly varied in the language and grammatical construction of v. 2. The language difference is highlighted in the terms used. For instance, in 1:28, God commanded *adam*

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<sup>171</sup>HALOT, “רָבָה”, 3: 1176; Heinz-J Fabry, “רָבָה”, *TDOT*, 277.

<sup>172</sup> Fabry, “רָבָה” *TDOT*, 274.

to rule (רָדוּ) over all the living creatures<sup>173</sup>; while in 9:2 God retains the order but adds that fear and dread of Noah and his sons shall fall on all living creatures, namely the birds, the fish and everything that moves on the ground. Indeed, further difference can be seen in the verbal construction appearing in both verses. The volitional clause (Imperative) in 9:1 precedes the *Waw-X-Yiqtol* construction beginning v. 2 and therefore continues the jussive sense to the end of this verse.<sup>174</sup> Compared with 1:28d, the construction is a *weQATAL* preceded by a volitive, (imperative) meaning the entire clause continues the imperative sense in its translation.<sup>175</sup> Thus, it can be concluded that God is willfully re-instituting mankind into the original position and purpose of creation with a more redefined exercise of authority on non-human life. This redefining is clearly marked by the change of terms from his original desire for humanity to rule (רָדוּ) non-human life, to a desire for human fear (מִוֹרָא) and dread (תַּחַת) to shape and govern non-human life.

The language change expressed in these new terms slightly modifying the original command is both telling and puzzling; for why would God desire that human fear and dread should fall on the living creatures? For Rashi, this human fear describes the vitality of human life more so than their interaction with animal world. He writes, “When will the fear of you be upon the beasts? So long as you are alive.”<sup>176</sup> According to V. Hamilton, this new command is arising from the fact that humanity has been given permission to eat meat for food. He explains, “the opening chapters of Genesis were quite explicit that in the beginning man and 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 consequence for the animal world.”<sup>177</sup> Von Rad, however, disagrees with Hamilton. He avers that the animal world has been living in fear and terror of humanity since humanity began to eat meat and it does not start with this injunction. For him, the weight of this command is not so much in what is positively stated by God, but rather by what is prohibited. To him, this idea of dreadful fear granted to humanity in the governing of non-human

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<sup>173</sup> Contra Origen who argued that the command in 1:28 excluded wild animals since they are not mentioned. On the contrary, this verb רָדוּ describes collectively all the animals that move on the earth. Similar occurrence and functioning of רָדוּ is seen in Psalm 104:20 where it is used to describe animals of the forest coming (lit. creeping/moving) out. See also HALOT “רָדוּ”, 3:1246; Origen, *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus* (trans., Ronald E. Heine, Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 72-88.

<sup>174</sup> Niccacci, *The Syntax*, 78.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 82 §57.

<sup>176</sup> Yitzhaki (Rashi), *Pentateuch*, 37

<sup>177</sup> Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 2 vols The New International Commentary on the Old Testament 1-2* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-1995), 313.

life is not a new command. Rather, it is a renewal of “man’s sovereign right over the animals” with a central focus on the new caveat to never touch blood (v. 4).<sup>178</sup>

Besides, other scholars have also adduced that this command is given in order to arrest the enmity that existed between humanity and the animal world. According to Waltke and Fredrick’s, this human fear and dread bears a militaristic sense and so marks a chronological end to the peaceful interaction between humans and animals. And at the root of this conflict is the fall leading to a deviation of creation’s originally assigned roles. They explain, “Before the flood, when all flesh corrupted its behavior, animals got out of control, having no fear of human beings.”<sup>179</sup> To restore order, therefore, God confirms human domination over animals. Wenham adds that, this variation in words and order “reflects the animosity between man and the animal world that followed after the fall in (3:15).”<sup>180</sup> In other words, the fallen condition of humanity has not changed in the post-flood state. For although God promises to never again curse the ground on account of mankind, it is purely out of his desire and not because humanity has changed. In contrast, humanity is continually evil all along (6:5,8:21). Therefore, the change in terminology in this new command, helps to not only reinforce this continued reality but also concretize it through human and non-human life relation.

The root ירא occurs 435 times in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>181</sup> Often rendered as “fear,” ירא conveys a wide semantic range, it is mostly used in reference to “fear of God.”<sup>182</sup> Whereas this fear of God is understood in a positive sense, i.e. reverence to God or the obedience to God, it also bears a sense of God’s terror.<sup>183</sup> Whereas God had revealed and used his wrath to recreate order in the aftermath, he now allows his image bearer to employ it in his role as God’s behalf to steward order among his subjects i.e. non-human life.

Indeed, the nature of fear implied in this text is not a positive form of fear. For the construction מוראָךְּם וְחַתְּכֶם is a hendiadys with חת employed to modify מוראָ hence creating a rhetorical effect.<sup>184</sup> In other words, it is clarifying the type of human fear that God intends to fall

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<sup>178</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis*, 127.

<sup>179</sup> Waltke & Fredricks, *Genesis*, 144.

<sup>180</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 192. See also Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Studies in Bible and Feminist Criticism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006), 357.

<sup>181</sup> Hans F. Fuhs, “ירא” *TDOT*, 292.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid*, 295-296

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, 300-301.

<sup>184</sup> Rosmari Lillas, *Hendiadys in the Hebrew Bible: An Investigation of the Applications of the Term* (Ph.D. Diss.; University of Gothenburg, 2012), 173.

on the animal world. It is not a positive kind of fear but a dreadful fear. And although it has been demonstrated that this pericope echoes the creation event in Genesis 1, with Noah as the “second Adam”<sup>185</sup> or “new Adam,”<sup>186</sup> it is clear that key differences exist. For in the original creation, God’s assessment was that “it was very good” (1:31). With such evaluation, there was no need for human’s dreadful fear in ruling over the animal world for the living creatures lived in perfect harmony with each other. Contrasted with Genesis 1 however, God’s view in the post flood state is that the human curse due to the fall is still alive. Granted that God is not issuing a new injunction to set aside his initial announcement in 1:28, the difference in v.2 therefore serves more to clarify human rule than to set it aside. That is, the intention of creating humans in his divine image with the purpose of ruling over the creation has not changed. Just as humanity experienced God as a wrathful God, humanity bearing the image of God is to reflect similar force towards the animal in the post flood world. In other words, to exercise dreadful fear on the animal world is to reflect God in stewarding the creation (the animal world) towards its created purpose. Jacob explains, “As man respectfully shies away from God, so the beast will from man because he [man] is an image of God (v.6).”<sup>187</sup> This injunction therefore is aimed at keeping the animal world in its ordained way so that the creation, collectively, achieves its divine purpose.<sup>188</sup>

Moreover, the text informs us that human beings, in the post-flood world, were maintained as God’s representatives on earth. That God’s dream for his creation is still under the stewardship of mankind is affirming of this fact. In his charging of Noah and his sons over non-human life, he says *וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת הַבְּהֵמָה וְאֶת הַחַיָּה וְאֶת כָּל הָרֶמֶשׂ יָרֹץ אֲשֶׁר בָּאֲרֶץ לְיַד נֹחַ* (into your hands they have been given). Grammatically, this is an X-Qatal construction, with emphasis on the human possession(into your hands) of the animals. In a discourse, it is also functioning syntactically to relate foreground information.<sup>189</sup> By placing the animals into the hands of humanity, God is granting humanity the permission to eat meat. This is a new addition to the ruling (lit. placed under human feet) command in Gen. 1:28. This points to the fact that despite falling short of God’s expectation and existing in a fallen state, God not only retains humanity to serve him in the same position but also sustains him through supplementary food provision. Brueggemann commenting on this text, writes “God yields no ground on his

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<sup>185</sup> Hamilton, *The Book*, 313.

<sup>186</sup> Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2012), 176.

<sup>187</sup> Jacob, *Genesis*, 61.

<sup>188</sup> See also footnote 128.

<sup>189</sup> Niccacci, *The Syntax of the verb*, 73 §51, 117§87,123 §94

purpose for creation. If anything, this is an even more exalted view of human reality.”<sup>190</sup> By issuing Noah and his sons with his creation mandate, God betrays his confidence in humanity, and affirms that his purpose for the creation remains on course as he had initially planned.

Lastly, the injunction is issued after God blessed Noah and his sons. Rendered in the Piel form, the role of the verb בָּרַךְ here is significant. It not only points to the grounding of humanity in a system that enables them to live out their purpose going forward, but it also draws a contrast to the system of life occasioning the flood. That is to say, if taking their own way (דָּרָךְ) led to the ruining of the earth (שָׁחַת) and thus the generation and spread of violence (טִמְּוֹן) on earth, then God is here reinstating humanity back to the ordained way. Where the pre-flood system was characterized by unrighteousness (טִמְּוֹן), this system situates life in righteousness. It is a system that irrigates the divine order into germination, growth, and maturation. This therefore is not simply an echo of the creation event in 1:28. Rather, it is God’s act of placing humanity in a state imbued with alternative possibility and flourishing life, other than the pre-flood corrupt state that was saturated with violence and chaos.

#### **2:4: Preliminary Definition of מָלַא.**

The analysis of the various pericopes above have yielded sufficient data to start establishing a preliminary definition of the root מָלַא. From these different passages however, some observation is drawn; that apart from Gen. 6:11-13, Gen.1:20-22 and 9:1-2 contain the verb as a third imperative in the divine injunction. In these two passages, the injunction containing the verb מָלַא is issued in a context of blessing. In addition, the grammatical analysis on these two passages has established the mood as volitional. The significance of which grounds the effect of the imperative in the will of God. That is, whatever the meaning of this injunction, God is issuing it out of his will for the good of his creation and the advancement of its purpose. However, the unique occurrence of the verb מָלַא in 6:11-13 compared to the rest of the passages studied, does not suggest a different meaning of the root מָלַא. Rather, as is demonstrated below, its meaning in this text is similar to the passages under study.

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<sup>190</sup> Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 83.

Indeed, the divine announcement in 9:1-2, and similar to 1:20-22, is issued with a future anticipation.<sup>191</sup> However, this future does not only lie in the distant time but also in the immediate, closer to the day of its issuing. A look at how this promise is actualized therefore aids in establishing the initial meaning of the third imperative in the divine injunction. Notably, the immediate fulfillment of the promise to “be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth” is realized in Noah’s sons whose descendants were dispersed over the earth (9:18-19). Chapter 10 narrates how the increase and scattering of the people happened with a stress on the different nations that formed from Noah’s three sons. This growth is emphatic and illustrates the continued fulfillment of the injunction to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” issued to Noah and his sons in 9:1-2. Through migration, these nations settled in certain territorial boundaries with a spotlight on land as a critical element in this growth.

The story of the tower of Babel in Gen.11 elucidates this dispersing into new lands and details a scattering that led to the actualization of the third imperative “fill the earth”. Against God’s will, the people of Babel decided to press together in their new settlement in Shinar. To realize their plan, they decided to build a city and a tower for their protection and sheltering, causing God to act and inhibit the fruition of their plan. In discussing the sin of the people of the tower of Babel, G. Plaut writes,

The sin of the generation of the Babel consisted of their refusal to “fill the earth” [...] God’s action, therefore was not so much a punishment as carrying out of His plan [...] Man proposed, but God disposed. A certain Pathos adheres to this interpretation of the story. It senses in the generation of Babel not arrogance but anxiety, not a desire to reach the heavens so much as the need to press together on earth.<sup>192</sup>

For Plaut therefore, this people’s idea to “press together on earth” was aimed at inhibiting or derailing the actualization of the third imperative in the divine injunction. It was an attempt to thwart the expressed will of God over his creation. And so, by confounding their language, God acted not to punish them but to cause them to actualize his command.<sup>193</sup> Hence, they spread out (from the verb פָּרֹץ ) over all the earth (v. 8). This leads Sarna to conclude that the act of God in

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<sup>191</sup> The imperative here is functioning with an heterosis effect creating a prediction to be fulfilled in the future. Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 572. See also Potter, *Blessed*, 133.

<sup>192</sup> Günther Plaut W., ed., *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981), 83; Sarna, *Understanding*, 67; Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, “God Came Down... and God Scattered: Acts of Punishment or Acts of Grace?” *Review & Expositor* 103.2 (2006): 403–417, 413.

<sup>193</sup> Plaut, *The Torah*, 83.

spreading these people out over the whole earth is in effect the actualization of the imperative מְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ (fill the earth).

She explains,

Man had fulfilled part of the divine blessing- “be fertile and increase”- but he had balked apparently at “filling the earth”. [Therefore]the confounding of human speech was not an end in itself. It was only the means by which God’s true purpose could be accomplished, namely, that men spread out over the whole earth.<sup>194</sup>

Both Sarna and Plaut see the actualization of the divine will מְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ in the spreading out of the people of Babel across the earth. That is, “to fill the earth” as an injunction issued to Noah and his sons by God means to spread out over the whole earth. For Sarna and Plaut, the word פוּץ meaning “spread out,”<sup>195</sup> is amplifying the verb מלא in the divine command מְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ. According to Cambridge English dictionary, the phrase to “spread out” describes an act of people in which they “move from being close together in a group to being in a different place across a larger area.”<sup>196</sup> Put differently, “to spread out” is to migrate or to move to different places on earth. Therefore, *motion* or *movement* is a nuance buried in the verb מלא as used in these pericopes under study.

When applied in context of the texts under study, the spread of violence on earth in 6:11 generated from the corruption of the earth. This corruption had been occasioned by human disobedience i.e. they had established a way other than the one set for them by God (v. 12; Gen. 3). The culmination of the spread of this violence, therefore, reaches its climax in v. 13 where God describes its impact on earth as complete.<sup>197</sup> God destroys the earth with the flood and starts anew. In his commencement, he blesses Noah and his sons in 9:1-2 and wills them to have a capacity to be fecund, intensify them (including the fruit) with the ability to multiply and spread them out on earth for his divine purpose. A similar desire is pronounced on the living creatures and the birds

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<sup>194</sup> Sarna, *Understanding*, 67.

<sup>195</sup> Ringgren, “פוּץ”, *TDOT*, 509-512.

<sup>196</sup> “\_\_\_\_\_” Spread out” in *Cambridge English Dictionary* <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/spread-out> Accessed on 9/13/2019/. Similar idea in English is also in the words “scatter, scattering, disperse”. The word

<sup>197</sup> The verb מלא is in the stative form (Qal) giving a perceptual analysis of the state of violence on earth. The idea rendered here is that the expressive impact of the violence that was spreading had reached its restive state and its effect was whole. Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 363.

in 1:22 to be realized within the defined realms of their habitation, the purpose of which was to enable their exercising of rulership in their designated realms.

Sarna and Plaut's analysis therefore provide a rich contribution to the understanding of the verb מלא. Reflecting on the examination of מלא in its various occurrence, this thesis agrees with Sarna and Plaut's analysis on the meaning of the verb מלא in the command מלאו את הארץ. The notion of human movement is not only envisaged but imbedded in this verb and fully operative in the imperative. Consequently, this thesis offers a preliminary meaning of the root מלא as employed in Gen. 1: 26-28 as; *God's desire for humanity to spread out/ move/migrate to different places over whole the earth.*

### **CHAPTER THREE: THE MEANING OF מלא IN GENESIS 1:26-28.**

In this chapter, this thesis turns the spokes of its axis towards a close analysis of Gen.1:26-28. The central task of this chapter is to determine the meaning of מלא as employed in the third imperative of Gen.1:28. Through textual criticism, the text will be established followed by a macro- syntactical analysis and a translation, after which we will provide a detailed commentary, including a study of various key words of exegetical import in this text. The aim is to determine the meaning and function of these key words in relation to the meaning of the verb מלא in this text.

#### **3.1 Textual Criticism.**

v. 26a: The Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch, and the vulgate have וכי (and) added to כְּדַמוֹתַי . The MT rendering emphasizes that כְּדַמוֹתַי is in apposition to בְּצַלְמִי.<sup>198</sup> Besides, the exegetical value of the proposed addition is insignificant, hence the MT reading is preferred.

v. 26b: The Syriac has added *hjwt* ' by inserting הַיָּת before הָאָרֶץ (the earth). The Samaritan Pentateuch, the vulgate and the Septuagint however follow the MT reading. This addition in the Syriac version could have been drawn to echo 1:24-25 because of its harmonizing tendencies. Thus, the MT reading is retained.

v. 27: One of the Septuagint manuscripts ( *textus Graecus originalis*) has בְּצַלְמִי omitted or deleted. However, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Vulgate, and the Targum Jonathan support the MT reading. It is possible that the omission in the Septuagint manuscript was a scribal intention to clarify or simplify the syntax and avoid a redundancy in this text<sup>199</sup>. Yet in the MT reading, the chiasm and the poetic value makes significant the preservation of this reading. Thus, the hard reading is retained.

v. 28a: Here the Septuagint has τῶν κτηνῶν καὶ πάσης γῆς γῆς while the Peshitta has *wbb 'jr* , inserting וּבְבֵהֶמָּה . However, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Targum and the Vulgate follow the MT reading. The suggested addition is likely intended to harmonize the text with 1:26 as it is often seen in the harmonizing tendencies of these versions of the variant manuscripts.<sup>200</sup> The hard reading is, however, preferred.

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<sup>198</sup> See Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 4; Waltke & O'Connor, *An Introduction*, 230.

<sup>199</sup> Ellis R. Brotzman & Eric J. Tully, *Old Testament Textual Criticism*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 260.

<sup>200</sup> See also Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 5.

v. 28b: The Samaritan Pentateuch added a definite article and hence employs הַהַיָּה. The addition could be due to the manuscript's harmonization tendencies.<sup>201</sup> Regardless, the change has no significant exegetical value. Consequently, the MT text is retained.

### 3.2 Macro-Syntactical Analysis: Gen. 1:26-28:

VERSE	BIBLICAL HEBREW TEXT	VERB FORM	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
1:26a	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים	Wayyiqtol (Nar)	And God said,
1:26b	וַנַּעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ	Yiqtol (Disc)	“May we make an earthling in our image, after our likeness”
1:26c	וַיְרַדּוּ בְדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ	WeYiqtol (Disc)-continues the volitional mood.	So that they may rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the sky and over the livestock and over all the earth
1:26d	וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ:	SNC (Disc)	And over every creeping thing that creeps on earth”
1:27a	וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים   אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ	Wayyiqtol (Nar)	So, God created the earthling in his image,
1:27b	בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ	X-Qatal (Nar)	In the image of God, he created him,
1:27c	זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:	X-Qatal (Nar)	Male and female, he created them.
1:28a	וַיְבָרֵךְ 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 (Disc)	“be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it;
1:28d	וַיְרַדּוּ בְדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם	WeQatal (Disc)	So that you may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heaven,
1:28e	וּבְכָל-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ עַל-	SNC	And over every living thing that creeps on the earth.

Table 4: Analysis of verb forms in Gen. 1:26-28.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

### **3.3 Translation.**

1:26. And<sup>202</sup> God said,

“May we make an earthling in our image, according to our likeness,  
so<sup>203</sup> that they may rule over the fish of the sea and  
the birds of the sky  
and over the livestock and over all the earth,  
and over every creeping thing that creeps on earth”.

1:27: So<sup>204</sup>, God created the earthling in his<sup>205</sup> image,  
in the image of God, he created him,  
male and female, he created them.

1:28: And 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  
the birds of the heaven,  
and over every living thing that creeps on the earth.

### **3.4 Commentary.**

The creation work of God in this chapter reaches a climactic moment in this passage. God, on the sixth day, decides to create a *adam* in his image, thereby establishing him as the crown of his handiwork. For apart from the *adam*, who is made in the “image of God”, the remaining creatures are created “according to their kinds” (1:21,24, 25). Unlike the rest of the creation, the creation of the *adam* is preceded by a deliberative act.

However, a closer consideration of this text reveals an interpretive quandary. Though it asserts that humanity is created in the image and likeness of God, the text’s explication on the meaning of this idea is lacking. Also missing in this text is the precise identity of those referred to in the cohortative plural “May we”. The attempt to resolve this exegetical dilemma has therefore attracted various scholarly attention making this passage an exceptionally fecund source of diverse exegetical and theological reflections. For centuries, the central focus of this scholarly engagement has revolved around two key questions arising from this text. First; Why is God referred to in

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<sup>202</sup> See also KJV, ASV, but NIV & ESV, renders it as “then” as though to underscore the event in this text as part of series of creation in sequence.

<sup>203</sup> The ׀ is here functioning as a conjunctive-sequential *waw*. It is here introducing a clause that expresses the purpose of God’s creation of humanity. See Waltke & O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 650; Van der Merwe, *A Biblical Hebrew*, 199 & 425. See also NIV, but ASV, NRSV, KJV has “let them”, ESV has “and let them”.

<sup>204</sup> See also ESV, KJV, & NIV. ASV has retained “and” in its translation.

<sup>205</sup> See also NRSV. However, KJV,ESV, NIV, have added “own” to clarify on the image. Since the text explicitly specifies the image by apposition, the added emphasis is unwarranted.

plural pronoun form (“May *we*, in *our*/ according to *our*”) in this passage? Secondly; what does it mean that the *adam* is created in the *image* and *likeness* of God?

Whereas the initial question is of peripheral concern to this study, considerable attention will be allocated to the latter question due to its import to this thesis. Nevertheless, the former question warrants a comment.

### 3.4.1 The Plural Pronoun: “May we.”

The issue of the Maker’s identity stems from the grammatical plural forms used in v.26. For the verb  $\text{נַעֲשֶׂה}$  (1 common plural- May we make), and the personal pronouns in  $\text{בְּצַלְמֵנוּ}$  (1common plural suffix-in *our* image) and  $\text{כְּדִמוּתֵנוּ}$  (1common plural suffix- according to *our* likeness) used are in the plural. In seeking to establish the precise identity of the person(s) referred to in plural form, scholars have suggested six different possibilities. They are;<sup>206</sup>

A) That the plural is employed because God is addressing his heavenly court i.e. the angels.<sup>207</sup>

B) That God is addressing Christ. Hence, the text is adumbrating the concept of the Trinity.<sup>208</sup>

C) That the P source appropriated a polytheistic view into this text.<sup>209</sup>

D) That the plural utilized here refers to the plural of majesty.<sup>210</sup>

E) That this is a plural of self-deliberation or self-encouragement.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> This summary is adapted from Wenham. For a detailed discussion see Wenham, *Genesis*, 27-28; Clines, “The Image of God”, 62-69; Gerhard Hasel, “The Meaning of ‘Let us’ in Gn. 1:26,” *AUSS* 13 (1975): 58-66; Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26: The New America Commentary* (Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1996), 161. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 133-134.

<sup>207</sup> According to Wenham, this view is supported by Philo onward as well as Jewish commentators. Recent commentators in favor of this position include; Skinner, Von Rad, Zimmerli, Kline Mettinger, Gispén, and Day. Some biblical texts used to support this view include; Isa. 6:6-8; Job 1:6; Ezek. 1, 3, 10.

<sup>208</sup> For Wenham this represents a traditional view held by Christians and was posited by the Epistles of Barnabas and Justin Martyr. To this list, Hasel adds Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Theophilus of Antioch and affirmed more by the church council of Sirmium in A.D 351. Hasel, “The Meaning of”, 58.

<sup>209</sup> Wenham observes that this position was developed by Herman Gunkel.

<sup>210</sup> According to Wenham, this perspective was propounded by some scholars including; Keil, Dillmann and Driver.

<sup>211</sup> According to Wenham, this view was postulated by Jouon, Cassuto. Most recent commentators in support of this view are Dion, Gross, Steck and Westermann. Also, Speiser, *Genesis*, 7.

F) That the plural used here is used because of plurality within the Godhead. i.e. God is addressing his Spirit that is present at creation (1:2).<sup>212</sup>

When each of these views is considered against the totality of available evidence, only view A, E and F warrant serious consideration. Due to lack of exegetical evidence in Gen.1 to support a Trinitarian reading of this text, option B is rejected by most scholars.<sup>213</sup> Regarding option C, Wenham rejects it on the grounds that Gen.1 is chiefly anti-polytheistic. This is a view he shares with Clines who argues that the writer of Gen.1, as is often agreed, is involved in the task of purging off any form of polytheism. He concludes, “if the plural is here, it is here deliberately. Not as some dimly recalled or partly digested fragment of mythology.”<sup>214</sup> Westermann has however sought to employ a similar argument to set aside option A. He insists that P is persistent in stressing the uniqueness of Yahweh. Besides, there are no Angels or any sort of intermediary beings in P’s theology.<sup>215</sup> R. Middleton has however dismissed Westermann’s objection citing a lack of sufficient evidence, especially when considered from a source-critical standpoint.<sup>216</sup>

Concerning option D, scholars have abandoned it citing a lack of grammatical support or near parallel in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>217</sup> Wenham discards option F citing its implausibility, especially if *רוח* is translated as “wind” in 1:2. On the contrary, Kory Eastvold, while echoing P. Kissling’s insistence on the Spirit as a likely candidate in the Divine duality, observes that it is improbable that “wind” would be the direct object of *רוח* (hover) in the Piel stem.<sup>218</sup> Therefore, option A, E and F remain a possible identity of the participants in the cohortative plural of 1:26.

The implication for option A is the possibility that human beings bear the image not only of God but also of the heavenly beings<sup>219</sup>, either functionally or physically.<sup>220</sup> To sustain this view,

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<sup>212</sup> This view, according to Wenham, was suggested by Clines, and later followed by Hasel. But Clines’ view is building on Karl Barth’s initial view of Plurality within the Deity. For more see Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics III/I*, (ed. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958), 192.

<sup>213</sup> Clines, “Image of God”, 62-63. Clines has argued that a trinitarian reading could not have been the original intent of the author in this text. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 28; Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 161.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid, 64; Von Rad, *Genesis*, 45. Also Bird, “Male and Female He created them,” 147.

<sup>215</sup> Westermann, *Genesis*, 144-145.

<sup>216</sup> Richard J. Middleton, *The Liberating Image: Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005), 19-20.

<sup>217</sup> Clines, “Image of God”, 66. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 28, Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 145. Matthews, *Genesis*, 161. Paul Jouon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, (Rev. and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed translated by T. Muraoka; Rome; Biblical Institute Press, 1947), §136d-e. Hasel, “The Meaning of,” 64.

<sup>218</sup> Kory Eastvold, “The Image of God in Old Testament Theology” *SCJ* 21 (2018): 239-251; 14. Paul Kissling, *Genesis*, (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2009 ), 122-123. Also, Clines, “Image of God,” 69.

<sup>219</sup> Hasel, “The Meaning of,” 62

<sup>220</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis*, 57-59.

one might need to establish an existing shared commonality between God, heavenly beings and humanity. Dominion would support this idea. In Gen 2-3 for instance, (see also Ps.8:5), a similarity between humans and angels is underscored. When the *adam* is showed out of the garden, their previous task of keeping (שמר) the garden is passed on to the Cherubim.<sup>221</sup>

In addition, those in favor of option F ought to demonstrate ways in which humanity reflect the Spirit of God. For Kissling, the work of Bazalel and Oholiab in constructing the tabernacle while under the guidance of the Holy Spirit points to the involvement of the Spirit in the work of creation.<sup>222</sup> Kissling's perspective is significant for it brings a deeper meaning to the notion of image of God than option E might allow, for it illustrates the involvement of humanity in imaging God in creation at a micro-cosmic level.<sup>223</sup> From these possible options, it is clear that a pursuit for a neat and precise identity of the person (s) in the cohortative plural in this text is elusive. And while the ambiguity continues, the intention is preserved. Nonetheless, these options are not mutually exclusive and perhaps the intended audience understood this text in more than one way.<sup>224</sup>

### 3.4.2 The “*Image and Likeness*” of God

The second question concerns the precise meaning of “image of God” in humanity as captured in the phrase *בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ* ( in our *image* , according to our *likeness*). The root meaning of the word *צלם* (image) in Hebrew is uncertain.<sup>225</sup> However, the verbal root meaning of *צלם* in Arabic has the idea of cutting or carving an idol or statue.<sup>226</sup> A similar idea also exists in both Aramaic and Akkadian. In Akkadian for instance, the substantive *šalmu* means “image, a statue, a physical form or a drawing.”<sup>227</sup> In the Hebrew canon, *צלם* occurs 17 times, 10 of which refers to various physical images. They include; idols (Num.33:52); models of tumors (1 Sam 6:5); pictures of men (Ezek. 16:17); humanity's existence is likened to an image or shadow (Ps.73:20). The rest appear in Gen. 1:26, 27; 5:3 and in 9:6. There is a connotation of physical nuance in the use of

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<sup>221</sup> Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 56-59.

<sup>222</sup> Kissling, *Genesis*, 123.

<sup>223</sup> Eastvold, “The Image,” 242.

<sup>224</sup> Kissling, *Genesis*, 123, Eastvold, “The Image,” 242.

<sup>225</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 146; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 29.

<sup>226</sup> H. Wildberger “צלם”, *TLOT* 3:1080; HALOT, “צלם”, 1:1028.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

צלם. Thus, a basic definition of צלם can be a concrete form, representation or depiction of something or someone e.g. a statue.

Equally, דמות (likeness), unlike צלם, is clearer in its meaning. Appearing with an ending that is associated with an abstract noun, it is highly possible that it is related with the verb דמה which means “to be like, resemble.”<sup>228</sup> Frequently translated as “likeness” in the Hebrew Bible, such translation bears the idea of comparability. That is, the Hebrew oftentimes utilizes this word when the appearance of something is compared with something else. A comparable example, is Ps.144:4, “The human being is like a breath.” Moreover, the prophet Ezekiel finds this word particularly apt in aiding him explain his vision. Over twelve times in the book of Ezekiel, דמות is used with various shades of meaning including “representation” and “something which is like.”<sup>229</sup> Still elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, דמות denotes a model of an altar (1 Kgs.16:10). When put together, it is evident that דמות is used to connote the appearance of an object. Whereas this thesis appropriates this understanding of דמות in Gen. 1:26, it is noted that notions of idol imagery in the use of דמות should not be suppressed. Particularly as demonstrated by Randal Garr in his article on old Aramaic inscription from Tell Fakhariyeh where he establishes that both terms צלם and דמות are used to describe the statue of King Haddu-yisi.<sup>230</sup>

Moreover, the preposition כ prefixed on דמות is functioning as a כ of “norm or of agreement in manner”.<sup>231</sup> Hence, it emphasizes דמות as a modifying standard or norm thus further clarifying on צלם. That is, it stresses that the *adam* is an image created in the manner of God’s image. He is not just a form but possesses a resemblance to God’s image. This perhaps draws a distinction between the *adam* as a divine image and other divine images of competing religions common at the time.<sup>232</sup> For like God, the *adam* is a living image of God. Thus, צלם and דמות describe divine image in humanity as a concrete form in resemblance of God’s.

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<sup>228</sup> E. Jenni “דמה”, *TLOT*, 1: 341.

<sup>229</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 29.

<sup>230</sup> W. Randall Garr, “ ‘Image’ and ‘Likeness’ in the Inscription from Tell Fakhariyeh” in *Israel Exploration Journal*, 50 3. 4 (2000), 227-234. Eastvold, “The Image,” 243.

<sup>231</sup> Williams, *William’s Hebrew Syntax*, 102; Arnold & Choi, *A Guide*, 109; Waltke & O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 203.

<sup>232</sup> Lev. 26:30; Isa. 44:9-20; 40:18-19. Prophet Isaiah speaks against the casting of idols in Israel and describes it as reverse creation. He accused the people of forming idols in their (human) image, a reverse of the creation where humanity is formed in the image of God. Elsewhere, Cline has observed that images representing gods in ANE

Having established the meaning of the words *צֶלֶם* and *דְמוּת*, it is important to note that lexical meaning alone is not sufficient to derive a conclusion on the meaning of “Image of God” in this text. This is especially true given the ambiguity and the brevity that characterize Genesis 1. There is consequently a necessity to press further towards a possible precise meaning. From the existing scholarly opinions, it is evident that there is a variety of viewpoints. Some of these views range from those who feel that this theme has been given unnecessary scholarly attention compared to its treatment in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>233</sup> Clines’ observation is illustrative of this view. He writes, “[...] the importance of the doctrine (image of God) is out of all proportion to the laconic treatment it receives in the Old Testament.”<sup>234</sup> For Clines, it appears that the significance of a concept is directly proportional to the intensity of its occurrence. It is argued, however, that the concept of the divine image is a significant biblical idea that is relevant in the development of theological anthropology. Reacting to Clines’ view, Eastvold reiterates the significance of this motif. From a canonical standpoint, he argues that the “Image of God” motif sets the tone for the biblical understanding of the nature of humanity and humanity’s relationship with God.<sup>235</sup> In other words, humanity’s divine parentage recapitulates themes found throughout the canon.

Nevertheless, the attempt to determine the meaning of “image and likeness” in humanity has led to several suggestions. They consist of five main solutions;<sup>236</sup>

- A) “Image” and “likeness” as distinct. That is, image refers to the natural qualities in man (reason, personality) that places him in resemblance to God, while the likeness refers to the supernatural graces.<sup>237</sup>

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were of two kinds; the living person, usually a king, and plastic form. God in Gen.1 however is revealed as deciding to create a living human being in his image and then installing them as his representative. A plastic image is simply a carved statue placed in the temples as images of Gods. Usually they are imagined to have life especially after rituals are performed on it during installation service. See Clines, *The Image of God*, 81; Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 10; Schüle, “Made in the ‘Image of God’”, 1-2. McDowell has shown that *wpt-r* and *mis pîpî pî* rituals in ancient Egypt and Babylon respectively were performed to “animate” divine statues, before installing them in the temple. For details see McDowell, *The Image of God*, 85-115.

<sup>233</sup> Image of God appears three times in the entire Hebrew Canon in Gen.1:26, 9:6; 5:2.

<sup>234</sup> Clines, “Image of God,” 1.

<sup>235</sup> Eastvold, “The Image,” 240.

<sup>236</sup> This summary is adapted from Wenham. For detailed discussion, see Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 29-32. Also, Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 148-155. Clines, “Image of God,” 70-80.

<sup>237</sup> According to Wenham, this view is representative of a traditional Christian view that was developed by Irenaeus Ca.180 CE.

- B) Spiritual qualities or capacities; This view argues that image consists of the spiritual faculties that humanity shares with his creator.<sup>238</sup>
- C) That the image of God refers to corporal attributes in humanity. This view, common in the Old Testament scholarship of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, held that image of God in *adam* consisted of corporeal, external form or physical resemblance. i.e. humanity looks like God<sup>239</sup>
- D) That image makes *adam* God's representative on earth.<sup>240</sup>
- E) Relational view; that image is a capacity to relate to God. God can enter into a personal relationship with humanity and can speak with and enter into covenant relationship with.<sup>241</sup>

A general analysis of each of the options on the precise meaning of the image of God in Gen 1:26 above is necessary. Options A, B, and C have been set aside by scholars due their tendencies to separate a person into spiritual, rational/mental, and corporeal tendencies. For Wenham, option A lacks merit due its failure to expressively capture the original meaning in the text. He observes that “the interchangeability of ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ (cf.5:3) shows that this distinction is foreign to Genesis.”<sup>242</sup> Whereas option B enables for a sharp distinction of humanity’s male and female from the animal world, it does not provide for a difference in the use of image and likeness in 5:1-3 and 9:6. Due to a lack of scriptural basis, this interpretation is set aside.

Moreover, the notion of image denoting physical form or appearance advances the argument for option C. In Gen 5:3, Seth is described as having the image of his father, Adam. Even God is often described in the Old Testament as if he were in a human physical form. He is described as having human body parts such as eyes, ears, hands, or partaking in physical actions such as laughing, smelling, walking.<sup>243</sup> Thus, one could argue that God has a human form, upon which humanity resembles in physical appearance. For example, in Ezekiel 1:26, the prophet sees a vision

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<sup>238</sup> According to Westermann, this view was espoused by Philo, Augustine who too opined that image consists of the soul, in the memory, intellect and will; Schleiermacher identified with this view arguing that image is “a religious and moral personal life”

<sup>239</sup> For Westermann, this view was propounded by P. Humbert, Gunkel, Von Rad, Dillmann, Schmidt, Kohler and Stamm among others. Also, Miller, J. Maxwell. “In the ‘Image’ and ‘Likeness’ of God”, *JBL* 91.3 (1972): 289–304.

<sup>240</sup> This view according to Westermann was first suggested by H. Hehn in his study on “the meaning of images among the Babylonians.” Later it was adopted by Von Rad, J. de Fraine, A. Kruyswijk, and Schmidt.

<sup>241</sup> This view was propounded by Karl Barth. For more see Barth, *Church Dogmatics III/I*, 183-187; Nathan MacDonald, “The Imago Dei and Election: Reading Genesis 1:26-28 and Old Testament Scholarship with Karl Barth.” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 10 (2008): 303–27.

<sup>242</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 30.

<sup>243</sup> Clines, “Image of God,” 70.

of God “ seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance.” Thus, in a sense one could argue that God has a “form” upon which humanity images.

But such understanding of God does not settle too quickly into Old Testament context. For evidence abounds in the Hebrew Bible demonstrating that God has no physical form. Isaiah reiterates this fact by posing a rhetorical question to his audience, “To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? (Isa. 40:18). In Horeb, God spoke to the children of Israel and they could hear his words but could not see any form (Deut. 4:12). Even the vision of Ezekiel above does not suggest that he saw God in human form but a *likeness*. This means “the divine appearance is at two removes from human form.”<sup>244</sup> Hence, Ezekiel’s view of God’s “form” is a comparative and not a definitive form. Still, against option C, is the fact that the Hebrew canon knows nothing about the separation of a human being into physical/ corporeal and spiritual components.<sup>245</sup> Thus, option C is dismissed.

According to Wenham, Option E emphasizes a special kind of creativity in the creation of humanity that puts humanity in a unique relationship with his creator and thus able to respond to him.<sup>246</sup> In other words, the process that goes into the creation of humanity underpins the meaning of divine image in humanity. A reading of *צַלְמִי* (image) in Gen. 5:3 and 9:6 emphasizes the finished “product” rather than the process, thus attenuates the viability of this option. Further, option E fails to articulate in detail the qualities in humanity that distinguish them as divine image bearers.<sup>247</sup> C. L. McDowell, while exploring the relational aspect of the divine image in humanity, observes that image underpins humanity as “God’s kin/species”, God’s kingly son reigning as God’s representative, and “God’s royal statuette designed to manifest God’s presence in the world.”<sup>248</sup> McDowell’s view, however, is reductionist as it emphasizes the relational trait in humanity as denoting the image of God.

Besides, option D locates the meaning of image of God in the representative function of humanity. From a comparative standpoint, it is argued that a King in ANE (Egypt and Assyrian sources) were viewed as an image of God. Images of gods or kings were often viewed as representing the deity or king. The god would also put his image in the temple to signify his

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>245</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 150.

<sup>246</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 31. See also Bird, “Male and female He created them,” 132.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> McDowell, *The Image*, 136-137.

presence, while he retreated to his abode (in heaven, mountains of god etc.). It was believed that a spirit of the god would often indwell an image, thus creating a special bond and relationship.<sup>249</sup> Similarly at creation God breaths into *adam* and then puts him in charge to rule and subdue the rest of creation, which is clearly a royal task (see Gen. 2:7, also Ps.8). Thus, Von Rad comments, “Just as powerful earthly kings, to indicate their claim to dominion, erect an image of themselves in the provinces of their empire where they do not personally appear, so humanity is placed upon earth in God’s image as God’s sovereign emblem.”<sup>250</sup> For Bird therefore, such special status serves to validate and explain the notion of divine image. She writes, “the presupposition and prerequisite for this rule is the divine stamp which sets this creature apart from all the rest, identifying *adam* as God’s own special representative, not simply by designation (command), but by design (nature or constitution)- i.e., as a representative of God.”<sup>251</sup>

Though it makes sense to speak of the king as representative of the deity on earth, the difference lies in the king exercising rulership over the people. Humanity, however, is set to rule over the non-human and the non-animal life. Secondly, with comparative analysis, one is often faced with the burden of justifying the comparison especially in this case where the Egyptian and Babylonian parallels are in context of the former and the latter.<sup>252</sup> For it would have been better to draw comparison from parallels that address the same issues, in this case, the creation of humanity in the image and likeness of God.<sup>253</sup> Further, by locating the meaning of divine image in the *adam*’s representative function, one wonders whether the being of *adam* is insignificant in understanding image of God in him.

The reservations raised on each of the options above leaves no clear solution on the matter. A common weakness in the suggestions above is their reductionistic understanding of divine image in humanity. However, a proper reading of this text in context does not suggest such understanding. Rather, the text states that humanity is created in the image, according to the likeness of God. Clearly, the text is not interested in defining the nature of image of God in humanity.<sup>254</sup> Yet, one is able to establish from this passage that divine image in humanity is not in reference to something

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<sup>249</sup> Cline, Clines, “Image of God,” 81-83.

<sup>250</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis*, 58.

<sup>251</sup> Bird, “Male and female He created them,” 138.

<sup>252</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 153.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>254</sup> This lack of meaning assigned by author according to Bird, describes image as “empty”, an ideal in the use of this term, which enables the author to freely apply it in changing context. For more see Bird, “Male and Female He created Them,” 139-140.

specific or a particular residual character in humanity. Instead, *adam* is presented as a *holistic* being and identified as bi-gendered being, male and female (v. 27; 2:18-25).<sup>255</sup> So, any reading articulating a view other than *adam* as a holistic being is therefore expressing something foreign to the text. Such interpretations can be due to inattention to context and from the influence of various contemporaneous anthropological conceptions that are projected onto the text.<sup>256</sup>

Therefore, this notion of stressing one aspect of a human being in reference to their divine image when the text makes no effort to do so is clearly unwarranted. As F.K Schumann rightly objects, “The *Imago dei* does not consist in any particular detail of the person but describes the human being as a whole without limiting itself to anything taken in isolation.”<sup>257</sup> And aside from his emphasis on corporal aspects, Von Rad comes to a similar conclusion. He writes,

The interpretations, therefore, are to be rejected which proceed from an anthropology strange to the Old Testament and one-sidedly limit God’s image to man’s spiritual nature, relating it to man’s “dignity,” his “personality” or “ability for moral decision” etc. [...] one will do well to split the physical from the spiritual as little as possible: the *whole man* is created in God’s image (emphasis added).<sup>258</sup>

*Adam* is the *image* of God, a copy of the original. By positing the whole human being as the *imago dei*, this thesis argues that such understanding encompasses the difference in humanity. That is, that humanity as a holistic being also means both male and female. For just as any form of separation of humanity into parts or traits as reflecting the image God is strongly opposed, so does any separation into gender. This thesis argues that humanity, essentially as one and many, reflect the image of God. Barth’s view sufficiently concludes this discussion. He declares that,

“He created them male and female”[...] [Image of God] is not a quality of man. Hence there is no point in asking in which of man’s peculiar attributes and attitudes it consists. It does not consist in anything that man is or does. It consist as man himself consists as the creature of God. He would not be man if he were not the image of God. He is the image of God in the fact that he is man.<sup>259</sup>

Moreover, a debate aimed at drawing a distinction in the syntactical function of the preposition כּ in בצלמנו and כּ in כְּדמותנו is proliferate. Indeed, it appears that כְּדמותנו is amplifying בצלמנו

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<sup>255</sup> See also Schüle, “Made in the ‘Image of God’,”7. Schüle adds sexuality in humanity as a trait in which humanity images God. However, this thesis agrees with Bird that “the idea that God might possess any form of sexuality would be have been utterly repugnant a notion to P”. See Bird, *Male and Female He Created them*,”148.

<sup>256</sup> For more on the hermeneutical challenges on the various interpretation on this text, see Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 17.

<sup>257</sup> F.K Schumann, *Von Geheimnis der Schopfung :Creator Spiritus und Imago Dei*, (Gutersloh: Der Rufer Evangelifcher, 1937), as cited by Westermann. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 150.

<sup>258</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis*, 56.

<sup>259</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics III/I* §41, 184; Clines, “The Image of God,” 95.

leading some to conclude that the two are synonymous.<sup>260</sup> Hence, how one term is translated impacts the meaning of the other due to this observed connection. There exist two possible ways of translating the preposition  $\text{כְּ}$ . One option is to translate it as *beth essentiae*, in which case the preposition is rendered “as”. So, the passage would read “May we make man as /in the capacity of/to be our image.” Such function of *beth essentiae* is also found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. In Exd.6:3 for example reads, “I appeared to Abraham...as God Almighty”. If this translation is to hold, then it would mean that *adam* is not made in the image of God but he himself is the image of God.<sup>261</sup> The second option would render the preposition as *beth of norm or manner*, so the text will read “in the image of God”. Similar use of  $\text{כְּ}$  is attested in Exd. 25:40 where a Mosaic tabernacle was made after ( $\text{כְּ}$ ) the pattern of a heavenly original.<sup>262</sup> However, evidence in favor of *beth essentiae* is insufficient. Firstly, according to J. Barr, the use of this form of *beth* in P is absent and does not form part of its style. Secondly, when  $\text{כְּ}$  is used in this way, it is functioning predicatively. That is, it indicates a property of the subject of the verb, and not the object of the verb.<sup>263</sup> Conversely, *beth of norm* when applied to 1:26 in context, intends that “image” is a property of *adam*, which is the direct object of the verb to “make”. This thesis translates the preposition  $\text{כְּ}$  and  $\text{כִּי}$  as *norm*.<sup>264</sup>

The text goes on to further elaborate on the reason for the creation of *adam* in the image of God. He is designed in the image of God so as to rule over the creation; both animate and non-animate life. The verb  $\text{וַיַּבְרֵא$  is a WeYiqtol which serves to explain the aim or the reason for creation of humanity.<sup>265</sup> In other words, it provides the answer to the question; what is humanity created for? The assertion of this text is the affirmation of existing connection between humanity being in the image of God and the function of humanity as the image of God. That is, his design anticipates function. Whereas form clarifies the function of *adam*, function does not define form, but certainly adds onto it. For being in the image, he is set to perform the representative function

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<sup>260</sup> Clines, “The Image of God,” 75-78.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>262</sup> Hamilton, *Genesis*, 137.

<sup>263</sup> James Barr, “The Image of God in the Book of Genesis: A Study of Terminology,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 50.1 (1968): 11-26, 17.

<sup>264</sup> See Ronald J. Williams, *William’s Hebrew Syntax*, (ed. John C. Beckman, 3d ed; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), §252 & §259.

<sup>265</sup> Kautzsch, *Gesenius*, § 111; Williams, *Williams Hebrew*, §178 525; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 4; Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 90. The meaning of the verb  $\text{וַיַּבְרֵא}$  is discussed in v. 28

of ruling over the creation. Similar observation is also made by Schmidt who sees in the image motif a denotation of royal ideology. He notes, “ the king is God’s representative on earth. So,[...] wherever a human being is, God is proclaimed [...] (and) [...] where a person appears, God appears.”<sup>266</sup> Clines clarifies further, “ That man is God’s image means that ...he is a representative rather than representation.”<sup>267</sup> In other words, without being in the image, *adam* cannot function as a representative. This does not only distinguish humanity in relation to the rest of the creation, but it clarifies his relation to them. Von Rad adds, “[...] man’s creation [...] gives (non-human creatures) [...] a new relation to God. The creature[...] receives through man a responsibility to God [...] because of man’s dominion it receives once again the dignity belonging to a special domain of God’s sovereignty.”<sup>268</sup> Humanity, therefore, is to serve as a royal ruler over the non-human creation.

From the active voice of God announcing his decision to create *adam*, the text shifts to the narrator’s voice in v. 27. The verb וַיִּבְרָא is a Wayyiqtol with a closural function.<sup>269</sup> That is, it recounts the desire of God to create humanity in v. 26 as completed. This fulfilment is expressed in a poetic style while amplifying key features of the created being. Notice for instance, the appositional role in each of the colas in the translation provided below.

VERSE	BIBLICAL HEBREW TEXT	VERB FORM	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
1:27a	וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים   אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ	Wayyiqtol (Nar)	<i>So, God created the adam in his image,</i>
1:27b	בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ	X-Qatal (Nar)	<b><u>In the image of God,</u></b> <i>he created him,</i>
1:27c	זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:	X-Qatal (Nar)	<b><u>Male and female,</u></b> <i>he created them.</i>

Figure 2: A close analysis of Gen.1:27.

Evident from the structure of this text above, is the chiasm that emerges with the divine image as its central focus (v. 27b). In addition, the X-Qatal construction above is significant. In

<sup>266</sup> Werner H. Schmidt, *Die Schdpfill17sgeschichte der Priesterschrift*, WMANT 17 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirch~ner-Verlag, 1964), 144 as Cited by Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*.

<sup>267</sup> Clines, “The Image of God,” 101.

<sup>268</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis*, 59.

<sup>269</sup> Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*, 57; Williams, *Williams Hebrew*, §178 .

the Hebrew narrative, a shift from Wayyiqtol to X-Qatal happens with the intention of placing emphasis on the element X.<sup>270</sup> When applied to this text, the emphasis is intended to specify that *adam*, created in the image of God, includes both male and female human life. Contrary to Barth,<sup>271</sup> this notion of “male and female” does not define image of God, rather it asserts that divine image is in both male and female human life.

Notably, *adam*'s creation as male and female points to the duality of humanity. This is significant as it contrasts with some notion that *adam* was an androgynous being whose sexuality was later split into two. Von Rad comments, “the plural in v. 27 (he created them) is intentionally contrasted with the singular (him) and prevents one from assuming the creation of an originally androgynous man. By God’s will man was not created alone but designated for the ‘thou’ of the other sex.”<sup>272</sup> It is significantly telling for Von Rad to note a relational motif in the sexual differentiation in the divine image. For him, the phrase **וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים** does not only convey a biological difference but also the social relations within humanity.<sup>273</sup> This otherness that exist within *adam* accentuates the essence of humanity. In other words, humanity is meant to exist in difference and is always destined to live in community because they are created to live not in mutual exclusion, but in communion with each other.

Besides, that “male and female” are created in the image of God should not be taken to mean that God is a sexual being. Rather, it relates to two things; Firstly, it points to a shared similarity of *adam* with other creatures in their given capacity to reproduce (see Gen. 6:19). Hence, it is anticipating the future blessings in v. 28. Secondly, as divine image bearers, it relates to their ruling function over creation. In other words, as “male and female” created in the image of God, - and divine image being a necessity for undertaking the royal function- through their fecund power humanity shall be able to effectively rule by establishing their presence across the earth. This results in the genealogical growth (Gen.5 &10) and the technological development (Gen.11:1-9).

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<sup>270</sup> Ibid, 70. Emphasis in the english translation is highlighted in bold.

<sup>271</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics III/I*, 194-197.

<sup>272</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis*, 58. See also Barth, *Church Dogmatics III/I*, 186-187.

<sup>273</sup> In the Hebrew Bible **זָכָר** and **אִשָּׁה** are used in various context to denote male or man or son (Jer.30:6 ,20:15, Isa. 66:7) and female or woman (Num.31:15, Jer. 31:22) respectively. This shows that biological orientation reaches beyond to the social-cultural construction, and the reverse is not true. When read in concert with Gen.2, it is impossible to argue that these words are strictly biological with no social significance unlike “man” and “woman” which are taken as social-cultural constructions as used in Gen.2. There is no evidence that “man” and “woman” categorization in Gen. 2 are not informed or based on biology. In fact, it is because of the awareness of their biological difference that Adam is able to “know” his wife (social categorization) and together they have children (4:1& 5:4). Contra; Middleton, *Liberating Image*, 50.

Thus, it is exegetically invalid to delink divine image in the human “male and female” from their divine function while limiting it to biological significance.<sup>274</sup> Thus, human sexuality is not an accident nor simply a biological phenomenon. It is rather a divine gift, willed by God to humanity and is essential for carrying out God’s purpose for humanity. This mandate is further elaborated and inaugurated in 1:28.

In v. 28, the creation of humanity reaches its climax with the declaration of divine blessing and mandate upon humanity. Although this declaration is made in a form that echoes similar blessings and injunctions to animal creatures in 1:22, the difference however can be noticed at the syntactical level as demonstrated in the table below. The verb וַיְבָרֶךְ (3rd masculine, singular from ברך ) in the Piel form is functioning fictively.<sup>275</sup> Similar to 1:22, it emphasizes a state of blessedness, a state that fosters human flourishing and performance of divine function. Unlike v. 22 where God simply speaks the promises (וַיֹּאמֶר) to the animal inhabitants, v. 28 recounts “And God spoke to them”(וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים), thus drawing attention to the personal relationship between God and humanity. In addressing them, God discloses his will for humanity. He promises them to be “fruitful, multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.” Occurring in the imperative modal form similar to v. 22, the verbs employed in this text underscore God’s desire and purpose for humanity.

VERSE	BIBLICAL HEBREW TEXT	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 (Disc)	“be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it;
1:28d	וַיְרָא בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם	WeQatal (Disc)	So that you may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heaven,

<sup>274</sup> P. Bird for instance has argued that “male and female” in this passage refers only to the issues of fertility and is in no way related by the author to the concept of divine image. See Bird, “Male and female He created them,” 147. Conversely, Behr-Sigel has argued that men and women should in fact hold identical position and functions in church and society since they are made in the image of God. Her linking of image to function is based on her reading of Gen. 1:26-27. For more see, Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, “Woman Too is in the Likeness of God” *Mid-Stream* XXI/3 (1982): 369-375. See also Matthews, *Genesis*, 173-174; Hamilton, *Genesis*, 138-139; Westermann, *Creation*, 54.

<sup>275</sup> See the commentary on 1:20-22 for a detailed study of the word ברך .

1:28e	וּבְכָל־חַיָּה הָרֹמֵשׂת עַל־ הָאָרֶץ:	SNC	And over every living thing that creeps on the earth.
1:22a	וַיְבָרֵךְ אֱלֹהִים לְאָמָר	Wayyiqtol (N)	And God blessed them saying,
1:22b	פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הַיָּם בַּיַּמִּים	Imperatives (D) Volitional.	“Be fruitful, multiply and fill the waters in the seas,
1:2c	וְהָעוֹף יִרְבַּ בָּאָרֶץ:	Waw-X-Yiqtol (D)	And may the birds multiply on the earth.”

Figure 3: Comparative syntactical table of Gen.1 28 and Gen. 1:22.

Importantly, the choice of words used to express this injunction emphasize its performative role in humanity. The words פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ (be fruitful and multiply) from פרה and רבה<sup>276</sup> respectively, highlight God’s desire for humanity to increase in number. By declaring them fecund, humanity is divinely gifted with a capacity and implicit promise that God will enable them to fulfill it. As P. Bird points out, unlike the “automatic” reproduction of plants, reproduction for both animals and human beings “is a matter not simply of design, but also of will or of power to realize its end. The blessing activates the latent capacity and directs it toward its goal.”<sup>277</sup> The genealogies bear witness to its realization (Gen. 5 &10). In the sequence of the imperative to multiply and increase is the command to “fill the earth”. This thesis briefly returns to a comprehensive study of this imperative later below.

Besides, the divine announcement further reveals that Adam is told to subdue the earth. Though missing in the divine invitation of v. 26, the word כְּבִשָּׁה from the verb כָּבַשׁ in this text has been touted as the hinge or the bridge between the blessing of fertility and the divine function of rulership. From this, one can possibly argue that וְהָאָרֶץ is epexegetically clarifying the imperative כָּבַשׁ. Syntactically however, כָּבַשׁ is an imperative extending the divine injunction and its object is clearly the earth (inanimate creation). Effectively, in its grammatical form, it is functioning distinctly from וְהָאָרֶץ which is WeQatal.<sup>278</sup>

<sup>276</sup> For a detailed study on the meaning of פרה and רבה see page 46-47 above.

<sup>277</sup> Bird, “Male and Female He Created Them,” 147.

<sup>278</sup> Contra: Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 161.

The verb כבש is often translated as “subdue, subjugate, or violate.”<sup>279</sup> In the Hebrew canon, כבש denote the act of subjecting someone to slavery (Neh.5:5, Jer.34:11); to physically assault (Esth.7:8); to tread sin/iniquities under foot (Mic.7:19); to devour (Zach.9:15); to subject a city, or a population by military means (Josh.18:1, Num.32:22). From this analysis, it can be concluded that כבש connotes subjugation, violence, or a demonstration of force. In this text however, the interpretive possibilities assumes a positive spin to the understanding of כבש. For after the completion of his creation, God looks back at what he created, including equipping humanity with power to subdue the earth, and describes it as “very good” (1:31). Perhaps its meaning is amplified in God’s command to humanity in Gen. 2:15 to “work and preserve” the garden.<sup>280</sup> According to G. Coats, כבש means “render productive” by which the subdued earth is serving its master productively.<sup>281</sup> In total, one can rightly conclude that כבש in this text does not entail the human destruction of the earth, rather, it defines a harmonious and qualitative relationship between humanity and earth. A relationship that is good (Gen1.31).

Consequently, the negative denotation embedded in this word has led some to conclude that this injunction is legitimizing the human plunder and destruction of the environment.<sup>282</sup> In context of this verse, however, the meaning of this word, as relating to human divine function, must be understood in relation to his divine image.<sup>283</sup> Firstly, the imperative defines the nature of relationship between humanity and the earth. That is, being in divine image, humanity relates to the earth as a master or a royal figure.<sup>284</sup> Secondly, it establishes the parameters upon which such dominion is to be exercised. In this case, as God’s image bearer, humanity is to bring the earth under his dominion in the example of God’s כבש. And the model of God’s dominion is revealed in himself as the creator. G. Hens-Piazza explains,

And how does God rules? God invites and frees. “Let there be...” he invokes, his life giving, and creates for permanence. “Be fruitful and multiply”. His mere word, unintrusive, personal in its fashioning, is an act accomplished. He sustains what he

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<sup>279</sup> HALOT “כבש,” 1:460.

<sup>280</sup> See also McDowell, *The Image*, 140-142.

<sup>281</sup> George W. Coats, “The God of Death: Power and Obedience in the Primeval History,” *Interpretation* 29 (1975), 227-239, 229.

<sup>282</sup> White, “Ecological Crisis,” 1205.

<sup>283</sup> See Von Rad, *Genesis*, 59; Clines, “Image,” 95ff; David T. Asselin, “The Notion of Dominion in Genesis 1-3,” *CBO* 16 (1954); 277-294; Barth, *Church Dogmatics III/I*, 187.

<sup>284</sup> From the comparative table (iii) provided above, notice the absence of this imperative in v. 22 where similar injunction is issued. This further establishes humanity as a distinct creature from the non-human life.

creates. “I give you the foliage of plants for food”. God stands in awe-filled respect of what he creates. And God saw that it was good.<sup>285</sup>

In fashioning humanity into his image and likeness, and then charging him with dominion over his creation, God is not only expressing his freedom in creation but also trust upon humanity. Hence, human dominion is a vocation with specific responsibilities. It is not an autonomous or tyrannical rule. For ultimately, humanity in his representative task is accountable to God. Thus, the understanding of human כִּבֵּשׁ in this text is that, like God’s, human’s subduing must be, “[...] care filled, personal, unintrusive. It must be like the creator’s, directed towards fostering and sustaining life. The human task is to guarantee the continuance of the created cosmos as a whole and to tend it for the benefit of whole created life.”<sup>286</sup>

The final theme in the divine sequential imperatives is וַיִּרְוּ. The verb וַיִּרְוּ is a WeQatal occurring after a series of imperatives effectively continuing the volitional/imperative mood.<sup>287</sup> Paralleling the WeYiqtol construction in v. 26c expressing the intention or purpose of creation of humanity in the image of God, v. 28 utilizes WeQatal to express the result of divine injunction issued to humanity.<sup>288</sup> Similar to creation’s purpose for humanity (in v. 26), the result is that humanity may rule over non-human animal life. Similarity notwithstanding, the difference in the grammatical shift from WeYiqtol to WeQatal is subtle. For while WeYiqtol in v. 26c, expressing purpose, marks human ruling over the animal life as *something to be accomplished* in the future, WeQatal in v. 28 emphasizes human ruling over the animal life as *springing* or *proceeding* from the divine injunction issued. This shift therefore is intentional as it is revealing. It betrays the performative function of the imperatives upon the divine image. It endows them, in a state of blessedness, with the capacity upon which they are able to rule over the animal life. It emphasizes that humanity does not draw its power from subjecting the creation into their authority. Rather, they rule over them precisely because they (humanity) have power.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Hens-Piazza, “A Theology of Ecology,” 109. Also, David T. Williams, “Fill the Earth and Subdue it; Gen.1:28” *Scriptura* 44 (1993): 51-65, 61. On ruling by Imaging God, see Bernard Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1966).

<sup>286</sup> Hens-Piazza, “A Theology of Ecology,” 109; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 33; Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 32

<sup>287</sup> Niccacci, *The Syntax of the Verb*, 82 & 88.

<sup>288</sup> Niccacci, *The Syntax of the Verb*, 88-90; Williams, *Syntax of Verbs*, §179, §525& §181; Waltke & O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 577-578, #3 & 10.

<sup>289</sup> Hiebert has argued elsewhere that in ancient Israel’s agrarian society, dominion theology was thought as arising out of experience of powerlessness, rather than out of exercise of power. For more see, Hiebert, “Rethinking,” 22. Scripture reveals that the problem of power persists after the fall in the first creation and continues even after the new creation in Genesis 9ff. See Bernard Anderson, “Creation and Ecology,” *American Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 4.1 (1983); 14-30.

The imperative **יִרְדּוּ** from the verb **רָדָה** is often translated as “to rule, load over, wander about, domineer, tread or trample.”<sup>290</sup> Across the Hebrew Bible, **רָדָה** is used in various contexts, often with a human agent as its subject. It is used in Solomon’s chief supervisors’ dominion over the people/junior officers (1Kings 5:16, 30; 9:23); describes the tyrannical power of Babylonian kings (Isa.14:6); is seen in the rule of the household head over the servants or slaves (lev.25:43); in military defeat where their foes are predicted to rule over Israel (Lev.26:17); used in Israel’s Kings rule over their enemies (1Kings 4:24); the act of treading or tramping over something (Joel 4:13/3:13). Generally, the use of this word points to power, authority, control and/or force. Explicitly, it shows that humanity is issued with power and authority over the creation. Conversely, it does not describe whether humans are to exercise this power by malevolence or benevolence. To determine the conceptual nature of this ruling therefore, context is key. For instance, in context where Israel is dealing with her enemies militarily, the meaning of this word bears an aggressive touch (Num.24:19). However, it can also bear a soft and humane tinge when used to define household hierarchical structures (Lev.25:46, 53).

Also, consider its application in the shepherd imagery by Ezekiel, where the wicked shepherd is contrasted with the good shepherd who exercises his ruling/dominion for the benefit of the flock. In other words, the distinctive feature of the good shepherd is that his dominion over the sheep is not only without force, but also without depriving (Ezek.34:4). In a context of care and non-enmity, it is right to conclude that responsibility and care underpins the exercise of dominion (**רָדָה**) by the agent performing the action. Such context lies behind Gen.1:26, 28 where the object of human dominion is non-human animal life. The divine function outlined in this text explicates on human dominion as a divine gift intended for serving and maintaining God’s order in the realm of animal creation.<sup>291</sup> Read together with v. 26, the divine function in v. 28 therefore is a consequence of humanity being made in the image of God. In other words, human beings are to exercise dominion over the animal creation because they are made in the image of God. Brueggemann comments,

It is agreed [...] that the image of God reflected in the 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 [...] The human creature attests to the Godness of God by exercising freedom with and authority over all the other

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<sup>290</sup>HALOT “**רָדָה**,” 3:1190.

<sup>291</sup> Ringgren, “**רָדָה**” TDOT, 1: 335.

creatures entrusted to its care. The image of God in the human person is a mandate of power and responsibility. But it is power exercised 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” (v28).<sup>292</sup>

By observing that humanity is to image God in the exercise of power and responsibility, Brueggemann intends to make two points. First, that humanity in the image of God is a royal figure representing God before the creation. This is significant as it places humanity into accountability before God. Secondly, that human dominion as understood within the context of v. 26, 28 is a good thing. It is good because, while it is intended for the preservation and the flourishing of the creation, it is not without limits. In other words, benevolence underpins the execution of this power over the creation under human rule.<sup>293</sup> This is supported by the fact that even the slaying of animals is not permitted until the time of Noah (Gen. 9:1-3). Human rule must therefore bring positive consequences for the ruled. That is, in ruling, humans must remain humane.

In summary, the divine decision to create humanity in the image God for the purpose of ruling over the creation, established humanity as a distinct creature from the rest. By establishing humanity, both male and female, onto a blessed state where he issued them with a divine mandate, God sets a relationship between humanity and the earth and the other creatures as well. This blessing links humanity to the creation in a way that without it, humanity is unable to “naturally” relate with them. This suzerain-vassal relationship serves to preserve, maintain, and direct creation towards its purpose. It is an injunction that inaugurates humanity into power and issues permission to exercise authority over the earth and non-human life as God’s legitimate representative. The exercise of this power enables humanity to image God’s sovereignty over the creation. Moreover, this divine promise is given for the protection and sustainability of humanity and the creation in anticipation of the fall and return to chaos in Gen. 3.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 32.

<sup>293</sup> Hiebert, “Rethinking Dominion,” 19; Bird, “Male and Female He Created Them,” 137-144; Matthews, *Genesis*, 175; Anderson, “Human Dominion,” 27-45; Bauckham, “Humans”, 189; Shaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, 69-70; Eugen Pentiu, “ ‘Holding Sway in Companionship’: Genesis 1:26 Revisited,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 56:1-4 (2011): 221-238, 233.

<sup>294</sup> Waltke & Fredricks, *Genesis*, 67. The issuing of the divine promise foresees the fall in that, the gift of fruitfulness and multiplication anticipates bareness and murder/death respectively, “to fill the earth” anticipates land conflict (violence filling the earth, Babel story) and displacement/exile, while the charge to have dominion over the earth and over the animal life forestalls enmity between humanity and the earth (disaster and calamities e.g. flood), and between humanity and animal life (9:2-4) respectively.

### **3.5 Preliminary Definition of מלא in Gen.1:28.**

The blessing of fecundity and increase is amplified by the promise to “fill the earth”. As noted earlier, scholars largely define the verb מלא (to fill) collectively with the first two imperatives. For them, מלא in this text denotes the blessing of fertility, increase and prosperity.<sup>295</sup> In the Hebrew Bible however, the verb מלא when functioning transitively assumes a military or cultic significance. An example of military sense include; (Lit)“fill the shields with your bodies (Jer.51:11); “He fills his (hand) with iron bar and spear shaft” (2Sam.23:7). A similar usage in Akkadian from *mullû qašta* would mean “load the bow with an arrow.”<sup>296</sup> Besides, in the religious circles, מלא is used transitively in a context of ordination or when dedicating someone into God’s services. Thus, the substantive *ml’ yād* (fill the hands) describes the act of consecrating a priest into service (Lev.8:33).<sup>297</sup> For example, the ordination of Micah’s son (Judg.17:5) and the ordination of Levi’s sons (Exd. 32:29) into priestly service. It also functions idiomatically in reference to the consecration process as a whole (Ezek.43:26).

However, the exact meaning of the original sense of מלא (‘‘fill the hands’’) is unknown and attempts to trace its meaning have led to Ancient Near Eastern cultures. J. Milgrom, for instance, has observed that *mullû qatam* was used to describe the placing of the scepter into the hands of Adad-Nirari II during his installation as king. He concludes that in Akkadian and biblical passages, both *mullû qatam* and *mille yād* mean “ordain, authorize (through a ceremony).”<sup>298</sup> Besides, L. Hilton in a brief study emphasizes the apparent function of a cupped hand as a vessel for incense in ancient Egyptian religious practices.<sup>299</sup> Several images illustrating such practices show incense being transported in the palm and being burned in utensils or bowls made in the shape of a human hand. Hilton observes that the bearer of the incense could either be a god/goddess, ruler, or a priest offering it to a superior. Interestingly, the idea from Hilton’s study that incense is the content that is “filling the hand” underscores a parallel use of the verb מלא in a

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<sup>295</sup> See pages 6-14 above.

<sup>296</sup> R. Ficker “ מלא”, *TLOT*, 2:665.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>298</sup> Jacob Milgrom, *The Anchor Bible, Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 539.

<sup>299</sup> Lynn Hilton, “The Hand as a Cup in Ancient Temple Worship” L. Hilton Hope, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia* (Springville: Cedar Fort Publishers, 1996), 171-178. (As Cited in Morgan, “Filling the Earth,” 41-56).

priestly context where it is used to describe the descent of God's glory filling the temple (1 Kgs.8:10-11, 2 Chron.5:13-14; Num. 14:21). Indeed, the goal of God filling the temple is significant as it illustrates his "concrete" presence in the sanctuary. The verb is also applied to the description of God's glory and omnipresence in the world (Jer.23:24, Isa.6:3).

Elsewhere, in the Hebrew Bible, מלא is used to describe the act of putting dust into wells (Gen.26:15), the culmination of time (29:21), the act of Spirit coming to indwell an individual (Exd.31:3) and pouring water or some liquid into a trench or a vessel (2Kgs. 4:4).

From the analysis above, it is evident that the verb מלא is functioning to denote motion or movement or where applicable, motion at rest. Importantly, a syntactical analysis of Gen 1:28 reveals that the mood present is volitional.<sup>300</sup> This is significant since it grounds the effect of the imperative in the will of God. Hence, this thesis concludes that; the meaning of מלא in Genesis 1:28 in light of primeval history *denotes the desire of God for humanity to move or migrate across the earth*. Read together with the rest of the sequential imperatives, God is here adjuring humanity with the gift of movement across the earth for the purpose of ruling over the creation.

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<sup>300</sup> Niccacci, *The Syntax of the Verb*, 77, 82. See also Revell, "The System of the Verb", 14.

**CHAPTER FOUR: SYNTHESIS AND INTERPRETATION.**

Having established a preliminary meaning of מלא in both the primeval history and in Gen 1:26-28, this thesis combines these findings together in order to develop a comprehensive meaning of the root מלא. The resulting definition of מלא is then applied to the third imperative in Gen.1:28 with the aim of interpreting the command “fill the earth” relative to the other imperatives. In addition, a brief reflection on the enduring meaning and significance of this command in the primeval history is provided before the conclusion of this thesis is supplied.

**4.1 Synthesis.**

This thesis has sought to explore the meaning of the root מלא in Gen. 1:28 in light of primeval history. Outside Gen. 1:28 but within Gen.1 to 11, the verb מלא appears in four other different places. Twice and in the same order in the creation/re-creation context of Gen.1:22 & Gen.9:1 and twice in a de-creation context in Gen 6:11, 13. Moreover, the grammatical analysis in Gen. 1:22 and 9:1-2 established the mood as volitional. This ground the effect of the imperative in the will of God. In the analysis of מלא in its various usages across the primeval history, this thesis established that the preliminary meaning of the root מלא as employed in Gen. 1: 26-28 is God’s desire for humanity to spread out, move or migrate to different places over whole the earth.

Besides, the analysis of מלא in Gen.1:26-28 has yielded a similar idea. Like in Gen. 1:22 and 9:1, the volitional mood in 1:28 governs the imperative employing מלא marking a similar effect of God’s intention for humanity. Except in Gen. 6:11 and 13, מלא within Gen.1 to 11 appears as the third imperative in the divine injunction. Also, apart from Gen. 1:22 where the injunction is issued to the animals, the other two instances is in context of humanity receiving the command. The table below illustrates these occurrences of מלא in primeval history.

Gen. 1:22	פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הַמַּיִם	“Be fruitful, multiply and fill the waters”
Gen. 1:28	פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ	“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”
Gen. 6:11	וַתִּמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ חָמָס:	And the earth was filled with violence
Gen. 6:13	כִּי־מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ חָמָס	Because the earth is filled with violence
Gen. 9:1	פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ	“Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth”.

*Figure 4: A table showing various occurrence of מלא in Gen.1-11.*

From the analysis of מלא within Gen. 1 to 11, this study has established that the verb מלא is functioning to denote motion or movement or where applicable, motion at rest. Hence, this thesis has defined מלא in Gen. 1:26-28 and in light of primeval history as the following: *God's desire for humanity to migrate or move across the whole earth.* The purpose of this movement is to effectively perform the divine function assigned to humanity. Moreover, this idea of מלא is significant for this thesis since it confirms its initial hypothesis, that embedded in the meaning of the verb מלא in Genesis 1: 26-28, and viewed in light of the primeval history, is the notion of *motion, movement, or migration.*

#### **4.1.1 Significance of מלא in Gen.1:28.**

The purpose of this divine gift amplifies its significance. Firstly, it is intended for humanity to occupy the “empty” earth.<sup>301</sup> By issuing the divine promise to humanity, God intends for its realization. So that if the gift of fruitfulness (פרה) is realized in the successive generations, and the gift of multiplication (רבה) actualized in the genealogy of nations, the gift of human movement (מלא) anticipates land as its object of realization. The “empty” earth as the object of human migration therefore adds to the meaning of this gift. However, when this movement is read in context of the command to “subdue”(כבש) the earth, it defines human migrants as strangers. That is, as they spread into the earth, they come to meet the sprouted vegetation who are the initial “homeowners” of the earth.<sup>302</sup> But in charging humanity to migrate while defining their relationship (כבש) to the earth - a caring and harmonious relationship -God is identifying himself as the primary and ultimate homeowner of the earth. That is, the universal deed of the land is in his name, the same land that he freely gives to humanity to migrate into and possess in community with the rest of the creation.<sup>303</sup>

Moreover, this “emptiness” does not only define human migration but also underscores its abounding opportunities and vulnerability. That the gift is issued in a defined state of blessedness, is as informing as it is revealing. For it does not describe an economic state characterized by wanton extraction, destruction, and greed. Rather, it emphasizes the guiding economic principle of harmony, plenty, and good neighborliness aimed at maintaining and stewarding creation. Using

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<sup>301</sup> See also Bird, “Male and Female He Created them,”146.

<sup>302</sup> Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 52.

<sup>303</sup> See Leviticus 25:23;1 Kings 21:1-4.

the language of “kingdom of God” to describe this blessed state, Potter observes that “it is not greedy and selfish, it is broad and generous.”<sup>304</sup> By this imperative, therefore, humanity is gifted with the capacity to migrate across the earth in order to exploit the abounding opportunities that exist on earth. The exploitation of these opportunities is amplified in the command to “subdue it”.<sup>305</sup>

Secondly, this movement across the earth is directly related to *adam*'s divine function of ruling over the creation.<sup>306</sup> Being in the image of God, humanity is to mirror God, who in his glory fills the earth, by equally migrating so as to fill the earth. By spreading throughout the earth- and in the temple imagery as appropriated by M. Barker- humanity brings the concrete manifestation of God's glory into the whole earth (God's macro-temple). Baker writes,

Adam,[...] wearing the robe of glory and everything it represented, was told “to be fruitful and multiply, and “fill the earth”-the usual translation should read-which should also be read in the temple context: Adam was to fill the earth with glory. Since the Hebrew words for ‘be fruitful’ *parah* and be beautiful/glorified’, *pa'ar*, are similar, and multiply *rabah*, can also mean ‘be great’, the wordplay that characterize temple teaching showed the original Adam created to be beautiful and great, and to fill the earth with glory.<sup>307</sup>

Baker's incorporation of temple imagery into the understanding of this divine imperative is informing. For as a priest in the image of God, *adam* is not only representing God to the creation but also mediating the relationship of the creation to God. In Israel, for instance, the high priest represented Israel to God and God to Israel. Such symbolism as applied to *adam* is not foreign to the Old Testament cultic system.<sup>308</sup> Consequently, effective performance of this task places the burden of presence -closer to the creation- on the divine image bearer.

Thus, to exercise their sovereignty over the creation, humanity is enabled to move around the earth as God's representative. As a special creature, created in the image of God, humanity

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<sup>304</sup> Potter, *Blessed*, 150.

<sup>305</sup> Exploitation is here used positively to mean a productive and compassionate use of the earth as opposed to unfairly taking advantage of it. P. Bird has argued that the subjugation of the earth in this command is essential to the sustaining of human life. See Bird, “Male and Female He Created them,” 153; Hamilton, *Genesis*, 138.

<sup>306</sup> See also David Jobling, “‘And Have Dominion...’: The Interpretation of Genesis 1,28 In Philo Judaeus,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 8.1 (1977): 50–82, 56–57; Potter, *Blessed*, 138. Limburg revisit the image motif in 1:26 and connects it with divine charge in 1:28 concluding that it describes the political ideal (king/people relationship to the creatures) in the relationship between humans and the non-human creation. See James Limburg, “The Responsibility of Royalty: Genesis 1-11 and the Care of the Earth” *Word and World* 11.2 (1991):124-130, 126; Von Rad, *Old Testament*, 146-147.

<sup>307</sup> Margaret Barker, *Creation: A Biblical Vision for the Environment*, (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 204; McDowell, *The Image of God*, 137.

<sup>308</sup> Wenham, *Genesis*, 33.

mediates the concrete presence of God to creation. As Schmidt observes, a person “created by God, is God’s witness...so where the *person appears* (emphasis added), God also appears.”<sup>309</sup> Therefore, by gifting humanity with migration, God desires that humanity’s movement and presence across the earth testify to His presence in creation.

#### 4.1.2 Significance of מלא in Gen.1:28 through the Primeval History.

The echoing and reiteration of the divine command across the primeval history further emphasize the enduring significance of מלא in Gen.1:28. With the fall in Gen. 3, the realization of this divine gift, packaged in the divine promise, faced a difficult situation. This is because the curse, particularly in Gen.3:14-19, created a complex environment for the fulfilment of Gen. 1:28 for the curse upset every concept in the divine injunction.<sup>310</sup> Together with the curse, this fallen state led to fratricide, death, murder, violence and flood, thereby threatening the realization of the divine promise,<sup>311</sup> a promise containing the gift of human migration.

However, God acted to guard this gift. Through his acts of grace, he clothed Adam and Eve, placed a protective mark on Cain, enabled humanity’s growth as seen in the genealogy, spared Noah’s family and re-issued them with the creation command after the flood and placed a rainbow in the clouds as a reminder to Himself that he will never again destroy the earth by flood. Therefore, in “confusing” the language of the people of Shinar and spreading them, God was not punishing but helping them actualize his divine injunction “to fill the earth”.<sup>312</sup> He was guarding against the sabotaging of this command by intensifying human multiplication through their diversity. As part of the divine adjuration to humanity echoed throughout Gen. 1 to 11, מלא therefore underscores human migration as a divine gift by which God desires humanity to fill the earth. It is also a gift that enables the filling of the earth with different voices, different cultures and different life experiences (Gen.11:1-9) for his divine purpose (i.e. building his kingdom).<sup>313</sup>

In summary, מלא in the imperative of Gen. 1:28 in light of primeval history explicates on the notion of human movement/migration on earth. Through this divine gift, humanity reflects God’s image in two ways; First, by ‘putting’ humanity all over the earth (c/o Gen.2:8), and second, by their exercise of sovereignty over the creation through their presence all over the earth. Indeed,

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<sup>309</sup> Schmidt, *Die Schdpfill 7gsgeschichte der Priesterschrift*, 153

<sup>310</sup>Turner, *Announcement*, 10.

<sup>311</sup> Gen. 4:5-8, 23,5:1-31,6:11-13, 7&8.

<sup>312</sup> deClaisse-Walford, “God Came Down,” 413; Sarna, *Understanding*, 67.

<sup>313</sup> Potter, *Blessed*, 150-153.

the idea of ruling underpins the reason behind the creation of human beings in the image of God (Gen.1:26). Therefore, human beings migrate not in spite of their humanity, but precisely because they are human, God's image bearers.<sup>314</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to establish the meaning of the verb מלל in Genesis 1:28 in light of the primeval history. The significant role of the sequential imperatives linking the creation of humanity in the image and likeness of God (1:26-27) and the charge to rule over the creation (v.28b) inspired the undertaking of this research. Specifically, since the gender differentiation in Gen.1:27b anticipates the command to “be fruitful and multiply” and the injunction to “subdue it and to rule over” underpins human royal function, the purpose of the command “to fill the earth” is abstruse. Even further puzzling is its role relative to the rest of the imperatives.

A review of how scholarship approaches the meaning of the third imperative in Gen.1:28 indicated that scholars interpret this imperative as bearing several nuances that include fertility, replenishment, blessings of life and prosperity, and as a divine function assigned to humanity. It further established that scholars interpret this divine announcement as an individual component and seldom as parts of a whole. However, the importance and the distinct nature present in each of these imperatives further propelled this research towards the goal of determining the meaning of the verb מלל in the third imperative of Gen.1:28. The results of this undertaking further augment the meaning of this significant text.

Through a macro-syntactic analysis and a word study, it can be concluded that the use of מלל in Gen. 1: 28 and throughout the primeval history denotes the idea of motion or movement. When applied to the divine imperative in Gen 1:28, it means that God is desiring that humanity migrate or move across the earth for the purpose of ruling over non-human life. This divine duty assigned to humanity underpins the reason behind the creation of humanity in the image and likeness of God (Gen.1:26). It shows that God intends for humanity to represent him on earth. In

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<sup>314</sup> The emphasizes of this point is that human movement is a right because it is linked to the very nature of a human being. On natural law and human rights, Maritain asserts that, “The human person possesses rights because of the very fact that it is a person, a whole, master of itself and of its acts, and which consequently is not merely a means to an end, but an end, an end which must be treated as such. The dignity of the human person(?) (*means*)... there are things which are owed to man because of the very fact that he is man”. For more see Jacques Maritain, *The Right of Man and Natural Law* (New York: Gordian Press, 1971), 65. See also Bryan S. Turner, *Vulnerability and Human Rights*, (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2006).

charging both male and female to rule, God wills that humanity serves as his vice-regents to creation. By gifting humanity with this gift of migration, God is enabling humanity with a capacity to effectively perform their function through their presence closer to the creation spread across the earth.

Notably, this adjuration is issued to humanity in a context of inauguration in which God declared them blessed. The analysis of the root בָּרַךְ showed that God was planting humanity into a state, an organized economic system that enables a growth of life that is qualitatively good (Gen.1:31). Furthermore, the governing volition implies that this economic system does not allow for extraction and destruction, it is not smeared with any form of greed, wanton exploitation, or oppression, but is rather inviting and continually enables for life to flourish. It describes a state of *shalom* and abundance as opposed to violence and scarcity. It is a state with an organized system of life that anticipates the corruption of the earth filled with violence (Gen.6:11-13). It is a kingdom that describes and reorients humanity from chaos into order and gives hope of an alternative life that is full of possibilities and potential to flourish (Gen 9.1).

Lastly, that the meaning of מְלֵא in Gen.1:28 agrees with the hypothesis of this thesis is significant. It further confirms the ethical implication drawn from the initial hypothesis. That is, it emphasizes that human migration is good. It is good because it is a gift of God to humanity for His purpose. A humanity that is created in the image and likeness of God. In moving across the earth therefore, humanity mirrors the image of God. This thesis argues that this vision of migration is significant for it establishes migration in the will of God and the migrants as image-bearers of God in their mobility. Indeed, it contradicts the modern notion of migration that instrumentalizes the migrant. It opposes the current reductive view of migration that is rooted in economics and efficiency, thus treating migrants as raw materials for projects or as pawns for someone's profit.<sup>315</sup> C. Taylor, close to 30 years ago, was very vivid and succinct in describing this mindset. He wrote,

[...] once social arrangements and modes of action are no longer grounded in the order of things or the will of God, they are in a sense up for grabs... The yardstick that henceforth applies is that of instrumental reason. Similarly, once the creatures that surround us lose the significance that accrued to their place in the chain of

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<sup>315</sup> It is often argued that migration is good mainly because of economic benefits such as cheap labor force supplied by the migrants. See for example Adrianna Belmonte (ed), "New Research: The U.S. Economy will Need More Immigrants Soon", *Yahoo Finance*, September 19, 2019 <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/immigration-us-economy-153952247.html> Accessed on 3//13/2020; Robert Joustra and Alissa Wilkinson, *How to Survive the Apocalypse: Zombies, Cylons, Faith, and Politics at the End of the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 26-27.

being, they are open to being treated as raw materials or instruments for our projects.<sup>316</sup>

Besides, this view of migration ( migration as divine gift) provides for a firm foundation for an espousal of a robust theology of migration. In other words, it furthers the case of migration beyond the current proposed foundation of grace, vulnerability and hospitality.<sup>317</sup> It insists that a sustainable engagement of migration in the biblical view must not be satisfied by the voluntary and involuntary migration models of the patriarchs.<sup>318</sup> Rather, it must start from the beginning at creation. It has shown that people move because they are humans, made in the image of God.

Based on the conclusion of this study, there arises areas of future potential study for consideration. Firstly, the need to further pursue the meaning of אָלַל beyond the primeval history. The goal will be to confirm whether a similar definition of אָלַל could be sustained outside the established scope within Genesis and beyond. Even further if confirmed, how this movement/migration motif arising from this divine gift is espoused and developed across the Hebrew canon is worthy of exploration. Secondly, future studies could also address how these findings might serve to build and shape the discourse on biblical theology of immigration and public policy on immigration. That is, in what ways might these conclusions allow for one to enter into a public discourse on migration?

Finally, this study has appropriated a macro-syntactic analysis and word study to yield the meaning of אָלַל as God's desire for humanity to move across the earth for his purpose. However, it would be interesting to see if the application of other methods will yield similar results.

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<sup>316</sup> Charles Tylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Concord, Ontario: House of Anansi Press, 1992), 4-5.

<sup>317</sup> Kathleen for instance has argued for migration on the basis of hospitality, grace and vulnerability. For details see Kathleen, *Hospitality and Emerging Populations*.

<sup>318</sup> Strine, "More than Neighbors?"; Carroll R., *Christians at the Border*.

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