

Exodus Chapter Two

Exodus chapter two records the birth and protection of Moses who would be used by God to deliver Israel from Egypt. But before Moses could fulfill this role ordained for him by God, the Lord would have to first deliver Moses from death. Pharaoh's decree that is recorded in Exodus 1:16 and 22 required that every Israelite infant boy must be put to death by drowning them in the Nile.

This chapter is beautiful story of how God used three women to deliver Moses. It features Moses' biological mother, who is not identified in the pericope. However, Exodus 6:20 and Numbers 26:59 reveal that her name was Jochebed. His father is also not named but Exodus 6:20, Numbers 26:59 and 1 Chronicles 6:3 record that his name was Amram.

Also, Moses' sister, who is also not named in the passage, is involved in the deliverance of Moses from death. Exodus 15:20-21 reveals that her name was Miriam. She oversaw Moses as he floated in the Nile. It was her who suggested to Pharaoh's daughter getting an Israelite nurse for the baby, which was of course Moses' biological mother, Jochebed.

Lastly, the daughter of Pharaoh is used mightily by God. History tells us that she was the daughter of Thutmose I (1526-1512) and her name was Hatshepsut. In the story, she adopts Moses. Hatshepsut was the half-sister of Thutmose II (1512-1504) who died under mysterious circumstances. Thutmose II named his son Thutmose III (1504-1450) as coregent and heir when he knew he was dying. Hatshepsut dominated the first twenty years of the reign of Thutmose III.

So, Moses had been reared as a foster son of Hatshepsut and there is the very likelihood that Moses posed a real threat to the younger Thutmose since Hatshepsut had no natural sons. That is, Moses was in all likelihood a candidate to be the next Pharaoh and only his Jewish origins could stand in his way. Therefore, Thutmose and Moses were rivals and Moses the one favored by Hatshepsut. Thutmose III ruled throughout the years of Moses self-imposed exile after killing an Egyptian in defense of a fellow Israelite (1504-1450 B.C.).

So the Lord used these three women to deliver Moses from death. He used the maternal instincts of these three women to save the future deliverer of Israel. These three women delivered Moses because they were functioning in a role that was honored in their culture, and ordained by God, namely, giving birth to children, preserving them and raising them.

Birth of Moses

Exodus 2:1-2 records the birth of Moses who will be used by God to lead Israel out of Egypt. Moses would be used by God to confront Pharaoh so as to demand

that he let Israel leave Egypt to serve the Lord. In verse 2, we see the mother of Moses hiding him because his life was in jeopardy due to Pharaoh's edict that is recorded in Exodus 1:16 and 22, which required that Israelite infant boys be put to death by drowning them in the Nile.

The Old Testament tells us that Moses was 80 just prior to the Exodus (Exodus 7:7) and was 120 at his death (Deuteronomy 34:7). His death was in 1406 B.C. because it was at the very end of the wilderness period. Therefore, his birth date was 1526 B.C. His birth was in the very year of the death of Amenhotep I and at the beginning of the reign of Thutmose I.

Exodus 2:1

Exodus 2:1 Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. (NASB95)

Exodus 2 does not identify the father or mother of Moses. However, Exodus 6:20 and Numbers 26:59 reveal that his mother's name was Jochebed. Exodus 6:20, Numbers 26:59 and 1 Chronicles 6:3 reveal that his father's name was Amram.

Exodus 2:1 only tells us that Moses was from the tribe of Levi, which descended from the third child that Leah bore to Jacob. His name means, "My husband will be attached to me" and his birth is recorded in Genesis 29:34. Genesis 46:11 records the names of the sons of Levi, which were Gershon, Kohath and Merari. Numbers 26:58-65 records the names of the families of Levi, which includes Moses' family history.

Now, the tribe of Levi was the priestly tribe in Israel. This tribe received this great honor as a result of taking their stand with Moses against the idolatry of the Israelites at Sinai according to Exodus 32:26. The Levites manifested the violent nature of their progenitor by killing three thousand idolatrous, uncontrollable mob of Israelites, which was justified since it was sanctioned by God and was in obedience to Moses' command who was himself a member of the tribe of Levi.

This tribe never received an inheritance of their own land but were apportioned forty-eight towns and pasturelands among the twelve tribes, including Ephraim and Manasseh according to Numbers 35:1-5 and Joshua 21:1-41.

The Lord gave the tribe of Levi a perpetual priesthood (Numbers 18:1, 8). The priesthood began with Aaron (the brother of Moses) and was to be carried on by his natural sons (Exodus 28:1). If you had any defects, you were disqualified from the priesthood and excluded from service in the Tabernacle of the Temple (Leviticus 21:17-23). The priesthood: (1) Taught the Law (Leviticus 10:11). (2) Offered sacrifices (Leviticus 9). (3) Maintained the Tabernacle and the Temple (Numbers 18:3). (4) Functioned in the Holy Place (Ex. 30:7-10). (5) Ceremonially

inspected unclean persons (Leviticus 13; 14). (6) Judged disputes (Deuteronomy 17:8-13). (7) Collected taxes from the people (tithes) (Number 18:21, 26; Hebrews 7:5).

The Levitical priests received certain portions of the sacrificial offerings (Numbers 18:8-14). They received one tenth of one regular tithe that Israel paid (Numbers 18:21-28; cf. Leviticus 27:30-33). Thirteen cities were assigned to them (Joshua 21:13-19). A special tithe went to them every third year (Deuteronomy 14:27-29; 26:12). They were also given the redemption money for the firstborn in Israel (Leviticus 27). The priests received a percentage of the booty of war (Numbers 31:25-27). They also received a portion of the showbread (Leviticus 24:5-9).

There were three branches in the tribe of Levi which were not of the Aaronic line (Numbers 4): (1) Kohathites: Responsible for the articles of furniture, vessels and veil. (2) Gershonites: Responsible for coverings, hangings and door. (3) Merarites: Responsible for planks, bars and cords.

God has chosen the entire nation of Israel to be priests (Exodus 19:5-6). However, when the nation failed, the Levites who backed up Moses (Exodus 26-28), were commissioned for the priesthood (Numbers 3:5-9).

Douglas Stuart commenting on Exodus 2:1 writes, “The verse pointedly tells the reader that Moses was fully a Levite, that is, from Levite stock on both his father’s and his mother’s side. This means that he was unquestionably of the tribe that would soon be specially designated by God to provide the religious and spiritual leadership for the people of Israel (Exod 32:26–29; Num 3:12; 8:6–26; Deut 10:8–9)—the tribe that showed itself readily loyal to Yahweh (e.g., Exod 32:26), the tribe that would supply the priests to bridge the holiness gap between God and Israel (Exod 28–30) and the tribe selected to provide most of Israel’s regular court judges (Deut 21:5). That the Levites were destined during Moses’ lifetime to become the “clergy” tribe for all Israel was well known even to the first readers of the book of Exodus, since the writing of the book postdated the appointment of the Levites to their sacred tasks.”¹

Exodus 2:2

Exodus 2:2 The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months. (NASB95)

Verse 2 describes Moses as being a “beautiful” child. The word “beautiful” translates the Hebrew adjective *tôḥ* (טוֹחַ), which means that Moses as an infant was not only beautiful in appearance but also that he was healthy. Acts 7:20 records

¹ Stuart, D. K. (2007). *Vol. 2: Exodus* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (86). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Stephen describing Moses as “no ordinary child” in that he was lovely in the sight of the Lord.

Exodus 2:2 describes Moses’ mother, Jochebed, hiding Moses so that he would not be drowned in the Nile by the Egyptians. However, no mention is made of his father, Amram, which does not suggest that he was not in agreement with Jochebed about hiding the child. Moses’ father is not mentioned in the story because he would have been expected to work as a slave, which would involve being away from all day. It would fall to Moses’ mother to protect while his father was away working as a slave for Pharaoh.

Hebrews 11:23 reveals that it was by faith that Jochebed hid Moses from the Egyptian authorities.

Hebrews 11:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s edict. (NASB95)

Protection of Moses

Exodus 2:3-10 records the protection of Moses from being the victim of Pharaoh’s decree to drown Israelite infants in the Nile.

Exodus 2:3

Exodus 2:3 But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile. (NASB95)

It would be easy for Jochebed to hide Moses for three months since during this time a newborn would be sleeping extensively. Also, he would be small enough to hide in the home and would not move around much. The crying would not be a problem because the cry of a infant girl and boy is indistinguishable of course. However, after three months it would be very difficult to hide Moses from the authorities.

Interestingly, “basket” is the noun *tē·bā(h)* (תֵּבָה), which only appears in the Old Testament in Genesis 6-8 and Exodus 2:3 and 5. Moses, who wrote both Exodus and Genesis under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, obviously wants the reader to not miss the connection between the deliverance of Noah and his family from the flood and his deliverance from Pharaoh. In other words, Moses wants the reader to understand that just as God protected Noah from the flood with an ark so God protected Moses with an ark.

This Hebrew noun *tē·bā(h)* was not a flimsy container but rather it was a covered papyrus box, which undoubtedly was modified with air holes and or insect

netting so as to give protection from insects and the sun. It obviously had a secure lid because it would need to be opened eventually. It was of course water-proofed to float. So the word depicts a chest shape vessel. It implies a squared vessel or boat. It was designed only to float and would have certain sloped edges in order to remain in the water without floundering. So Moses' family built a tiny little vessel or a tiny ark to put him which was designed to preserve his life

This little ark is described by the Hebrew noun *gō-mě(')* (גֹּמֵ'), “**wicker,**” which describes this ark as being made of papyrus, which was a kind of river or marsh plant that needed an abundance of water in its environment and was tall with tufts (sedge) on the top of the plant. It had the attribute of floating on water, which made it good for floating vessels. It is described as being covered over with tar and pitch, which refers to the fact that it was covered over with water material.

Now, the fact that Jochebed hid Moses in this tiny little waterproofed ark does not imply that the child was floating around the Nile all day. Jochebed would only put Moses in this little vessel when the Egyptian military would be making their sweeps in the Israelite towns. This would only be occasionally since if they did this around the clock, they would not be able to fulfill their other duties such as protected the nation from foreign invaders. So there would not be a constant need to put Moses in this little vessel since the military could not be occupied all day with checking each Israelite home to see if Pharaoh's decree was being carried out. Undoubtedly, the Israelites developed a warning system and had look-outs who would warn the nation of one of these sweeps by the military.

Exodus 2:4

Exodus 2:4 His sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him. (NASB95)

Moses' sister is used by his mother to hide him from the Egyptian authorities as they were making their sweeps. His sister is also not named but Exodus 15:20-21 reveals that her name was Miriam. The fact that Miriam was involved in the concealment of Moses from the Egyptian authorities indicates that this was a concerted family effort to protect him.

Miriam was too old to be expected working out in the home or out in the field as other young women were expected to. However, she is old enough to be given the responsibility of keeping an eye on her baby brother in his little ark. She must have been eleven or twelve years of age and smart too. This is evidenced by the fact that she had the presence of mind to suggest to Pharaoh's daughter that Moses be provided with a nurse from the Israelite women and of course, Miriam got her mother.

Now Miriam was not simply there watching to see what happened but was in fact on guard in case anything did happen and she had to be able to act immediately and accordingly to protect Moses. Remember, Jochebed and Miriam don't want Moses to be discovered. They are hiding him. However, he is discovered and by of all people Pharaoh's daughter! Therefore, the tiny ark that Moses was placed in was not meant to be discovered, nor was it planted in area deliberately to get the attention of Pharaoh's daughter since for an Egyptian to discover the child would put the child in harm's way. So this is a totally unexpected turn of events which looked like it would result in the death of the child but instead it resulted in the deliverance of the child.

Exodus 2:5

Exodus 2:5 The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the Nile, with her maidens walking alongside the Nile; and she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid, and she brought it to her. (NASB95)

The daughter of Pharaoh is Queen Hatshepsut whose father was Thutmose I (1526-1512) and who was the half-sister of Thutmose II (1512-1504) who died under mysterious circumstances. Thutmose II named his son Thutmose III (1504-1450) as coregent and heir when he knew he was dying.

Hatshepsut dominated the first twenty years of the reign of Thutmose III. Forbidden by custom to be the Pharaoh, she acted out the part nonetheless and by all criteria was one of the most fascinating and influential persons of Egyptian history. Without question she pulled the strings in the early years of Thutmose III, a relationship he hated but was powerless to oppose. Only after her death did she show his contempt for her by removing every inscriptional and monumental reference to her.

This woman is the daughter of Pharaoh who rescued Moses as an infant from the Nile River and may have been in her early teens by 1526 B.C., which is the date of the birth of Moses. Only she of all women of the period possessed the presumption and independence to violate an ordinance of the king and under his very nose at that!

Now, we would expect the death of Moses to take place at this point in the story since it is Pharaoh's daughter who discovers him. However, the discovery by this particular Egyptian did not result in his death but his preservation. This is God's providence. He was behind this unexpected turn of events.

The providence of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God's glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God. Therefore, the fact that the daughter of Pharaoh discovered Moses and was not antagonistic to the Israelite

baby boys did not happen by chance or fate but because God ordained for it to take place in order to fulfill His plan for Moses and the Israelite nation and to bring glory to Himself.

God's sovereignty is expressed in the comprehensive plan or decree for world history. The decree of God is the chosen and adopted plan of all God's works. Therefore, the fact that the daughter of Pharaoh discovered Moses and did not report this discovery to her father or the authorities was part of God's chosen and adopted plan for not only Moses but the Israelite nation whom he would deliver.

The decree of God is His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will, whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass. Therefore, the fact that the daughter of Pharaoh discovered Moses and did not report this discovery to her father resulting in his death was part of God's eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will for His own glory.

The decree of God is the sovereign choice of the divine will (His attribute of sovereignty) and mentality (His omniscience) by which all things are brought into being and controlled, made subject to His pleasure, and producing His glorification. Therefore, the fact that the daughter of Pharaoh discovered Moses and did not report this discovery to her father resulting in his death was the result of God's sovereign will and omniscience by which all these events were brought into being and were controlled and made subject to God's pleasure and glorified Him.

The "decree of God" is His eternal, holy, wise and sovereign purpose, comprehending at once all things that ever were or will be in their causes, courses, conditions, successions, and relations and determining their certain futurity (i.e., that they will certainly take place). When I say "comprehending" I mean that the omniscience of God is the source of the divine decrees by "determining" I mean that the sovereignty of God chose before anything existed which things would actually become historical events. Therefore, the omniscience of God comprehended at once in eternity past that the daughter of Pharaoh would discover Moses and would not report this discovery to her father resulting in his death.

God also comprehended at once in eternity past the course that these events would take and their conditions and relations and determined that these events would take place. All history was yet future at the time of the divine decree. Therefore, the fact that the daughter of Pharaoh discovered Moses and did not report this discovery to her father resulting in Moses' death was known by God in eternity past before anything was created and was sovereignly determined by God to take place at the time these events did.

The decree of God is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of events, which will happen in time and regarding the precise order and manner of their occurrence. Therefore, it was God's eternal and immutable will

that the daughter of Pharaoh would discover Moses and would not report this discovery to her father resulting in his death. God decreed that these events would take place in time and the precise order of events leading up to these events and the manner in which these events would transpire.

The will of God in common usage refers to what God desires of an individual or group in a particular situation. The will of God in relation to the divine decrees refers to the decision God made in eternity past, from His attribute of sovereignty, which established that certain things would actually come into being while other things would not. The will of God is His sovereign choice as to what will take place in time. God from His sovereignty decided in eternity past that the daughter of Pharaoh would discover Moses and would not report this discovery to her father resulting in his death and He decided that these events would take place in the exact time that they did.

God in eternity past decreed that angels and human beings would have volition and would be allowed to make decisions contrary to His sovereign will and without compromising His justice. In giving angels and men volition, God decreed that their decisions, whatever they might be, would certainly take place—even those that are contrary to His desires. Therefore, God decreed that the decisions of Jochebed, Miriam and Pharaoh's daughter would all take place in time and even those by Pharaoh himself, which were contrary to His desires.

Being omniscient, God had the good sense to know ahead of time what men and angels would decide, and He not only decreed that those decisions would exist but He also decreed the exact manner, consistent with His integrity, in which He would handle our decisions. Since God is omniscient He knew ahead of time the decisions that Pharaoh, his daughter, Jochebed and Miriam would make and decreed that those decisions would exist and He also decreed the exact manner in which He would handle their decisions.

Therefore, the fact that the daughter of Pharaoh discovered Moses and did not report this discovery to her father resulting in his death was a part of God's sovereign will that is based upon His omniscient knowledge of all the facts concerning what will take place in the future.

The Lord knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angelic history. Therefore, the Lord looked down the corridors of time and decreed to take place that the daughter of Pharaoh would discover Moses and would not report this discovery to her father resulting in his death.

Exodus 2:6

Exodus 2:6 When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the boy was crying. And she had pity on him and said, “This is one of the Hebrews’ children.” (NASB95)

The fact that Moses was crying indicates why he was discovered by the Egyptians. Her response to finding him makes clear that she was not in agreement with her father’s decree to kill the Israelite infant boys for she has compassion for him. She was able to identify Moses as one of the Hebrew boys since she was well aware of her father’s decree and that the child was resting in a little ark that was hidden among the reeds by the banks of the Nile. It was obvious the child was being hidden by its mother. Also, Hebrew baby boys would be clothed differently than Egyptian baby boys.

Exodus 2:7

Exodus 2:7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you?” (NASB95)

Miriam who was watching Moses and was nearby takes quick action when she sees the compassionate response of Pharaoh’s daughter to her baby brother’s crying. The response of Pharaoh’s daughter is totally unexpected for one would expect her to be in agreement with her father’s decree. However, she is not. Miriam jumps into action and suggests an Israelite woman be brought in to nurse the child.

Miriam knew enough Egyptian to have a conversation with Hatshepsut. This would not be unusual since the Israelites had been in Egyptian for over four centuries or since the days of Joseph.

Exodus 2:8

Exodus 2:8 Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go ahead.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. (NASB95)

This decision by Pharaoh’s teen age daughter results in the protection of Moses from the decree of infanticide. The worst fears of Jochebed and Miriam were realized, namely that the Egyptians had discovered Moses. In fact, he was discovered by the king’s own teen age daughter. However, this would deliver Moses from death and would preserve him alive.

So here we have Pharaoh’s own teen age daughter violating her father’s decree by sparing this Hebrew baby boy and not only that but in fact adopting the child. This speaks of her character and determination and self assurance, which is exactly what history records of Hatshepsut.

The Exodus according to the biblical chronological data took place in 1446 B.C., which took place during the reign of Amenhotep II of the eighteenth dynasty of Egypt. Exodus 7:7 tells us that Moses was 80 just prior to the Exodus and 120 at His death according to Deuteronomy 34:7. Since Moses' death was at the very close of the wilderness period, it occurred in 1406. Simple calculation yields a birth date of 1526 B.C. for Moses, thus he was born in the very year of the death of Amenhotep I and at the beginning of the reign of Thutmose I whose daughter was Hatshepsut.

In the thirteenth year of her father's reign, she appears to be a very free spirited and independent minded teen age girl and because of her privilege position was able to do whatever she wanted to do. It appears that she had her father in her back pocket because Acts 7:22 teaches that she gave Moses an Egyptian education and served as an officer in the Egyptian army, which Josephus confirms. So it appears that she said "Daddy, I found a Hebrew baby boy and I'm keeping him for myself!" His response was something like "Sure honey, no problem."

Exodus 2:9

Exodus 2:9 Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. (NASB95)

Not only did Pharaoh's daughter save Moses but is in total agreement with Miriam's suggestion. Amazingly, Pharaoh's daughter will not only protect Moses but also pay his mother to nurse him! Furthermore, Moses was born into slavery. However, here he is adopted into a royal family, which is a picture of believers who were born into the slavery to sin and Satan but through faith in Christ are not adopted in God's royal family (Romans 8:15, 23; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5).

It is a rags to riches story. Moses went from being a slave to being royalty. He was from death to life, which is pictured of the believer who was spiritually dead but receives eternal life through faith in Christ. He was delivered from the condemnation of slavery and placed in a home of royalty, which is a picture of the believer who was condemned to the slavery of sin but placed in the royal family of God through faith in Christ.

Notice, that Miriam takes her baby brother back to their mother so that she could nurse Moses. Verse 9 records a nursing contract since Hatshepsut states that she will compensate financially the woman who nurses Moses. However, the legal possession of Moses would remain with Hatshepsut who was making the payment. In the ancient world, children were nursed for three or four years before being weaned. (Breast-feeding Practices in Ancient Israel," 61–83; Stuart, Hosea-Jonah, 32; some of the key evidence comes from 2 Macc 7:27 and 1 Sam 1:23, as well as

from the Egyptian “Instructions of Ani” (ANET, 420).² Therefore, Pharaoh’s daughter recognizes that she will not take possession of Moses until later.

More than likely because of this arrangement, Jochebed would nurse Moses at the residence of Hatshepsut. It would obviously been very difficult for Jochebed to hand over her baby boy when it was time to give him to Hatshepsut. However, Moses did not lose all contact with his mother and the rest of his family. Hatshepsut’s compassion and love for Moses makes clear that she would never hurt him by keeping him from his biological family. Exodus 4 reveals that Moses and Aaron, his brother never lost contact with each other.

Exodus 2:10

Exodus 2:10 The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. And she named him Moses, and said, “Because I drew him out of the water.” (NASB95)

Verse 10 records the adoption of Moses, which involve the reception of an Egyptian name. “Moses” is the Hebrew noun *mō·šē(h)* (מֹשֶׁה), which is the Hebrew equivalent of the Egyptian noun *ms* ‘boy-child,’ from the verb *msi*, “bear, give birth.” This word appears also in Egyptian names, as for example Ptahmose, Tuthmosis, Ahmose, and Harmose. Therefore, Moses’ name is transliterated from Egyptian.

Hatshepsut’s motivation for this name comes from the fact that she drew him out from the Nile, which is the source of life in Egypt. The sound of the name from the perspective of the Hebrews would correspond to their verb which means “to draw out.” Hatshepsut’s words produced a Hebrew wordplay to capture the significance of the story of Moses’ deliverance in the sound of the name. Therefore, Hatshepsut would be thinking of Moses being born out of the Nile, which is the source of life to the Egyptians. However, the Israelites would think of Moses from the perspective that he was drawn out of water by Pharaoh’s daughter so as to draw them out of Egypt.

The NET Bible commenting on Moses’ name write, “The etymology is not precise; rather, it is a wordplay (called paronomasia). Either the narrator merely attributed words to her (which is unlikely outside of fiction), or the Hebrew account simply translated what she had said into Hebrew, finding a Hebrew verb with the same sounds as the name. Such wordplays on names (also popular etymology) are common in the Bible. Most agree that the name is an Egyptian name. Josephus attempted to connect the biblical etymology with the name in Greek, *Mouses*, stating that *Mo* is Egyptian for water, and *uses* means those

² Stuart, D. K. (2007). *Vol. 2: Exodus* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

rescued from it (*Ant.* 2.9.6 [2.228]; see also J. Gwyn Griffiths, “The Egyptian Derivation of the Name Moses,” *JNES* 12 [1953]: 225). But the solution to the name is not to be derived from the Greek rendering. Due to the estimation Egyptians had of the Nile, the princess would have thought of the child from the river as a supernatural provision. The Egyptian hieroglyphic *ms* can be the noun ‘child’ or the perfective verb ‘be born.’ This was often connected with divine elements for names: Ptah-mose, ‘Ptah is born.’ Also the name Rameses (*R’-m-sw*) means ‘[the god] Re’ is he who has born him.’ If the name Moses is Egyptian, there are some philological difficulties (see the above article for their treatment). The significance of all this is that when the child was named by the princess, an Egyptian word related to *ms* was used, meaning something like ‘child’ or ‘born.’ The name might have even been longer, perhaps having a theophoric element (divine name) with it – ‘child of [some god].’ The name’s motivation came from the fact that she drew him from the Nile, the source of life in Egypt. But the sound of the name recalled for the Hebrews the verb ‘to draw out’ in their own language. Translating the words of the princess into Hebrew allowed for the effective wordplay to capture the significance of the story in the sound of the name. The implication for the Israelites is something to this effect: ‘You called him ‘born one’ in your language and after your custom, but in our language that name means ‘drawing out’ – which is what was to become of him. You drew him out of the water, but he would draw us out of Egypt through the water.’ So the circumstances of the story show Moses to be a man of destiny, and this naming episode summarizes how divine providence was at work in Israel. To the Israelites the name forever commemorated the portent of this event in the early life of the great deliverer.” (see Isa 63:11)³

“**Moses**” follows the usual pattern of naming individuals in the ancient world in the sense that a name was not selected prior to birth which is the practice in the twenty-first century in Western civilization. Rather, the name of a child was selected after birth. So the common Egyptian name, which means “son” or “to be born a son” is chosen by Hatshepsut because it sounds something like *mōšēh*, which is the active participle of the verb *māšāh*, “draw out,” which connects to the circumstances of Moses’ discovery and being “drawn out” of the water.

Therefore, Hatshepsut is honoring the Hebrew origins of her adopted son but also establishes him as a legitimate Egyptian with an Egyptian name, which emphasizes that she is adopting a son.

Acts 7:21-22 records Stephen as teaching the Jews that Hatshepsut raised Moses as her adopted child and gave him an Egyptian education fit for royalty.

³ Biblical Studies Press. (2006; 2006). *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Ex 2:10). Biblical Studies Press.

Therefore, Exodus 2:1-10 records Pharaoh's Satanically inspired attempt to kill all the Israelite infant boys being thwarted this time by his own daughter. In chapter one, the actions of the Hebrew midwives saved the lives of the infant Israelite boys and now in chapter three we see Pharaoh's own daughter conspiring against him and disobeying his decree. This again was all by the hand of God.

Moses Grows Up, Kills an Egyptian and Flees to Midian

Exodus 2:11-22 transfers the story of Moses from his birth and childhood to that of living as a foreigner in the household of Pharaoh to living as a foreigner and a fugitive in the land of Midian. It records Moses living a life of privilege and luxury in the greatest nation on earth at the time to living in obscurity as a fugitive in the land of Midian, in the Sinai wilderness. This pericope takes the story of Moses from his infancy to the age of forty (cf. Acts 7:23). Thus, this passage records events in the life of Moses which took place in 1486 B.C. since he was born in 1526 B.C. At this point in his life, Moses was highly educated and spoke both fluent Hebrew and Egyptian (cf. Acts 7:22).

Exodus 2:11

Exodus 2:11 Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. (NASB95)

“His brethren” appears twice in this verse in order to inform the reader that Moses identified with the suffering of his people, Israel and was very sympathetic and concerned about them and outraged at the treatment of them by the Egyptians. It also tells the reader that Moses no longer considered himself, if he ever did, an Egyptian but rather an Israelite.

Exodus 2:12

Exodus 2:12 So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. (NASB95)

The fact that Moses looked in all directions before killing the Egyptian indicates that this was premeditated murder. God had not authorized the killing of this Egyptian. Though his motivation to help his people was good and righteous, Moses' murder of the Egyptian was not the means by which the Lord wanted him to deliver the Israelites. Moses hid the dead Egyptian in the sand because this would be quickest and best way to conceal the murder from the Egyptian authorities.

Stephen gives us insight into the motivation of Moses in killing the Egyptian. He teaches he assumed that the Israelites understood that God was going to use him to give them deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. However, the Israelites did not see it that way.

Acts 7:23 “But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel. 24 And when he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian. 25 And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand.” (NASB95)

So at this point, Moses had a personal sense of destiny meaning that he had the conviction that God had put on earth for the express purpose of delivering his people Israel from Egyptian bondage.

The murder of an Egyptian by Moses makes clear that he no longer identified with the Egyptians, though he was dressed like them and educated by them. Rather, this act, though not sanctioned by God, indicates that Moses had cast his lot with the Israelites. He was willing to give up the wealth and privilege of living in Pharaoh’s household and serving the Egyptian people in order to suffer along with the Israelites. Hebrews 11:24-26 comments on Moses’ actions as recorded in Exodus 2:11-12.

Hebrews 11:24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, 25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. 27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen. (NASB95)

Neufeld writes, “Moses’ upbringing contributed to this attitude: he was the only Israelite who ‘needed nothing.’ He had no vested interest in getting something for himself by throwing off Egyptian power, and, free from ambition for personal gain, he could be used by Yahweh to take the risks necessary to promote the just cause of the Israelites.” (See E. Neufeld, “Why Moses?” JBQ 20 (1991–1992): 271–73.4)

Exodus 2:13-14

Exodus 2:13 He went out the next day, and behold, two Hebrews were fighting with each other; and he said to the offender, “Why are you striking your companion?” 14 But he said, “Who made you a prince or a judge over

⁴ Stuart, D. K. (2007). *Vol. 2: Exodus* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

us? Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid and said, “Surely the matter has become known.” (NASB95)

This passage reveals that the Israelites did not acknowledge Moses as their deliverer, though he defended and killed an Egyptian on behalf of one of them at great risk to himself and his future in Egypt. These two verses record Moses attempting to reconcile two Hebrews, which is rejected by them. They reject him as their ruler, which is a picture of the Jewish people rejecting Jesus Christ two thousand years ago.

Moses' murder of the Egyptian had spread like wildfire throughout the Israelite community. The Egyptians would have noticed one of their overseers missing and would have a criminal investigation underway. The Israelite would surely be blamed and would be treated even more cruelly. Thus, it is understandable why the Israelites resent Moses attempt to reconcile them. Therefore, Moses becomes afraid because he sees that the Israelites are not responsive to his intervention and he knows that the Egyptians and in particular his rival Thutmose III would be enraged against him and would surely seek the death penalty for his crime.

So Moses learns an important lesson, namely to wait for God's timing. Though he was absolutely correct to discern that God would use him to deliver the Israelites, he had yet to learn to wait for God's perfect timing. He got ahead of God. God would indeed use him mightily but it would be on God's terms and not Moses. He had to learn patience and he needed further training before he had the capacity to lead God's people. Namely, he had to learn humility in the sense that God needed to bring to a place in his soul where he had the conviction that he could do nothing without God's power and could do nothing unless God first gives his approval.

Exodus 2:15

Exodus 2:15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian, and he sat down by a well. (NASB95)

This is the second time that the Scriptures record that Moses' life was threatened by a Pharaoh. When he was an infant, Thutmose I sought to kill him and all Israelites infant boys. Now, here at forty years of age, he is being sought by another Pharaoh, which history reveals was Thutmose III, who also resented Moses since his mother Hatshepsut favored Moses over him.

When Moses fled Egypt, he was truly a man without a country. The Egyptians had rejected him for the murder of a fellow Egyptian and his own people, the nation of Israel had rejected him as well. This was truly a lonely time for him but served to train him to be a leader of God's people. Thus, his flight from Egypt

marks the end of the first major period of his life as well as the beginning of the second major stage of his life.

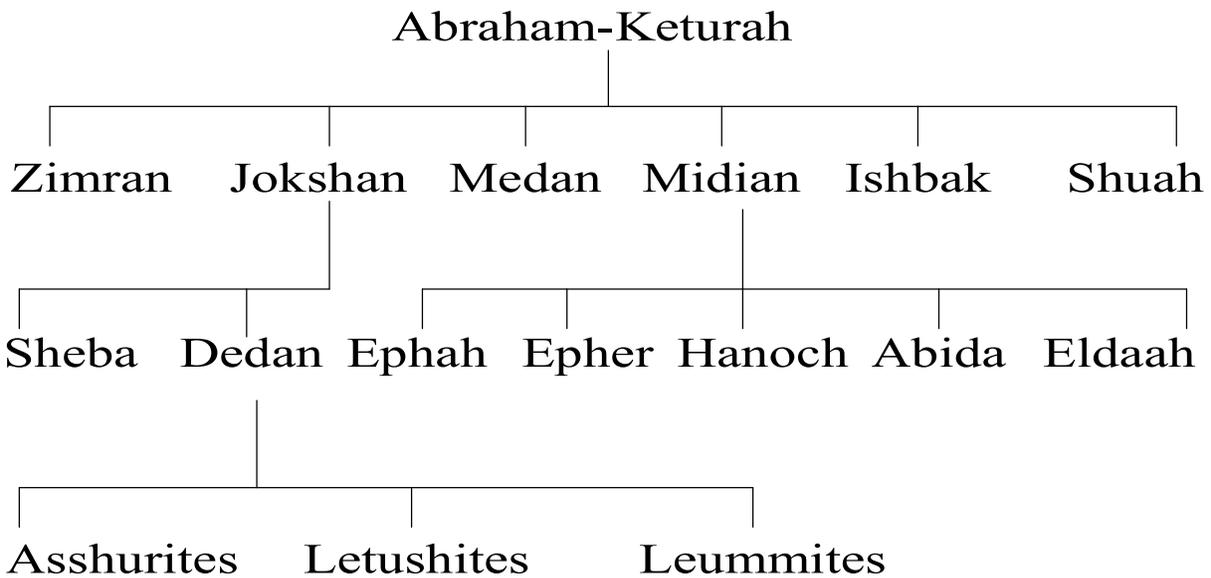
The life of Moses is divided into three equal portions of forty years each (Acts 7:23, 30, 36): (1) Life in Egypt: Moses' birth, adoption into the home of Pharaoh, and the avenging of his countrymen. (2) Exile in Midian (Arabia): Middle years of Moses' life where he was married, call by God to service, and culminating in his return to Egypt as a prophet of God. (3) In the Wilderness as Leader of Israel: Leader of the nation of Israel involving his leading the Exodus, the journey to Sinai, receiving the Law at Sinai culminating in his death. Stephen gives a brief summary of Moses' life in Act 7.

The Midianites descended from Abraham through Keturah according to Genesis 25:2 and 1 Chronicles 1:32. Midian was the fourth son of this union. The name "Midian" means "strife." Genesis 25:4 records that Ephah, Ephher, Hanoch, Abida and Eldaah were sons of Midian. The descendants of Midian were a well-known Arabian tribe. They traded in gold and incense according to Isaiah 60:6, Genesis 37:25, 28, and did this from Moab to Sinai and Ephah according to Numbers 22:4, 7, Judges 6-8.

The first wife of Moses, Zipporah was a Midianite and her brother Hobab guided Israel through the steppe of Sinai (Num. 10:29-32) and later, Midianites in association with the Moabites fought Israel (Num. 25; 31:1-12) and Gideon drove them out of Israel (Judges 7-8). Joseph was sold to the Midianites who intermarried with the descendants of Ishmael (Genesis 37:28).

The names "**Ishmaelites**" and "**Midianites**" in Genesis 37:25, 27, 28, 36 and Genesis 39:1 are synonymous terms, which is confirmed by Judges 8:24, which says of the Midianites "**they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.**" Evidently, the descendants of Ishmael and Midian intermarried (See Genesis 25:2, 17-18; 29:9) since both were descended from Abraham, Ishmael's mother was Hagar and Midian's was Keturah.

The use of these two terms in Genesis 37 indicates that the term "Ishmaelite" was a generic term or general designation for "nomadic traders" or "desert tribes" whereas "Midianite" indicates a specific ethnic affiliation. Or in other words, the term "**Midianites**" in Genesis 37 refers to a specific ethnic affiliation among the league of desert tribes or nomadic traders known by the generic use of the term "**Ishmaelites.**"



The Midianites occupied portions of the central and northern Sinai peninsula in addition to their primary location which was in northwestern Arabia. Thus, they were found in Moses' day from the Arabian gulf in the south to the plains of Moab in the north. It must be emphasized that there were no fixed boundaries as we know today for these people. The Old Testament describes them as a nomadic people. So it would be foolish to think of fixing a precise location for these people.

Exodus 2:16-17

Exodus 2:16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came to draw water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. 17 Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them and watered their flock. (NASB95)

These two verses reveal further the great character of Moses in that he stands up again for the oppressed. In this instance, it is seven young ladies who were attempting to water their flocks when shepherds came and drove them away from the troughs. Evidently, Moses was physically imposing because he intimidated a group of shepherds by himself.

Compare this with the fact that he killed an Egyptian overseer. Then, he does the work of seven girls. He did not know these women but this did not prevent him from helping strangers. So he was a man who acted based upon principle rather than personal loyalty.

Exodus 2:18 When they came to Reuel their father, he said, “Why have you come back so soon today?” **19** So they said, “An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and what is more, he even drew the water for us and watered the flock.” **20** He said to his daughters, “Where is he then? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat.” (NASB95)

The name of the father of these seven girls whom Moses rescued is named here as “**Reuel**” *rē’û·’ēl* (רְעוּאֵל) whereas in Exodus 3:1, 4:18 and 18:1, he is called “**Jethro**” *yit-rô* (יִתְרֹ) and “**Hobab**” *hō·bāb* (חֻבַּב) in Judges 4:11. “Jethro” was the man’s name or we would say to day his “first” name whereas “Reuel” was his clan’s name or what we would call his “last” name. “Hobab” was Moses’ son-in-law since the vowels of “son-in-law” and “father-in-law” is the result of a misunderstanding of a Masorete who first pointed Numbers 10:29 as “father-in-law” rather than “son-in-law.” Both words share the Masoretic pointing for the consonants חתן.

Commenting on this, Stuart cites W.F. Albright, “The sisters’ father, eventually Moses’ father-in-law, is usually called Jethro (3:1; 4:18; 18:1), but he also appears to bear the name (depending on the way the text is translated) of Reuel here and also Hobab (Judg 4:11). From Num 10:29 Hobab is sometimes thought to be identified as Zipporah’s grandfather. W. F. Albright solved the confusion in his article, “Jethro, Hobab and Reuel in Early Hebrew Tradition,” *CBQ* 25 (1963): 1–11, essentially as follows: Jethro was the man’s usual name, with the variant Jether (Exod 4:18); Reuel was his clan name (what we might call his “last” name today); whereas Hobab was Moses’ son-in-law. The vowels of “son-in-law” and “father-in-law” are choices of Masoretic pointing for the consonants חתן, which both words share. Thus the confusion about Hobab is simply the result of a misunderstanding by the medieval Masorete who first pointed Num 10:29 as “father-in-law” rather than the proper “son-in-law.” Cf. G. F. Moore, *Judges*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1895), 32–33; M. Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus* (New York: Behrman, 1969), 47. A number of critical scholars, however, regard the name differentiation as evidence of different sources. Cf. M. Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (Chico, Cal.: Scholars Press, 1981), 183–84; R. F. Johnson, “Jethro,” *IDB* 2:896; G. Widengren, “What Do We Know about Moses?” in *Proclamation and Presence* (Macon: Mercer University Press), 28–30. Yet another approach is taken by J. D. Hays (“Moses: The Private Man Behind the Public Leader,” *BR* 16 [2000]: 16–26, 60–63), who suggests that Reuel was Zipporah’s father-in-law and Jethro her brother and thus Moses’ brother-in-law (with the word חתן meaning generally “in-

law”). None of the three names (Reuel, Jethro, Hobab) has any special symbolic meaning for the narrative.”⁵

Interestingly, in verse 16, Jethro is simply called “**the priest of Midian**” where as in verse 17 his clan name is given. This is significant because it indicates he was a believer in Yahweh, who is the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses. It means that he worshipped Yahweh.

Notice that the girls identify Moses as an Egyptian, which indicates his dress and manner was Egyptian. Their father questions why they didn’t show him hospitality and invite him back for dinner as a reward for rescuing them. Evidently, the girls were so excited about Moses rescuing them that they forgot to invite him back for dinner to show their appreciation. They forgot their manners because they were so excited that someone as courageous as Moses had entered their lives. The three questions of their father emphasizes his indignation towards his daughters. Exodus 2:18-20 depicts as a very gracious and hospitable individual who appreciated the type of character Moses displayed with his daughters.

Exodus 2:21-22

Exodus 2:21 Moses was willing to dwell with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses. 22 Then she gave birth to a son, and he named him Gershom, for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.” (NASB95)

This verse records that Moses settled with Jethro in Midian and married Jethro’s daughter Zipporah who gives Moses his first child who he names “Gershom” whose name in Hebrew means “a sojourner there,” which expresses Moses’ circumstances from his perspective. He was an exile from Egypt and rejected by Israel. He was a man without a country. He was unwelcome in both nations. So even though he was settling down in Midian and was starting a family there, he did not consider Midian home. This must have been extremely difficult for Moses who had the conviction that he would be used by God to deliver Israel, yet his circumstances at this time suggested that he was a failure and was of no use for God’s purposes. His faith would be tested during the next forty years of exile in Midian. He would appear to be put on the shelf by God but this was far from the case. During the next forty years in Midian, the Lord would be forging the character of Moses, preparing for future service that would glorify Himself.

This personal sense of destiny that he was to be the deliverer of the nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage drove Moses to kill the Egyptian. His years in Midian were peaceful but he was a man of action. Thus, it must have been

⁵ Stuart, D. K. (2007). *Vol. 2: Exodus* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

frustrating even though he found a wife and was raising a family with her. He would not content until he fulfilled that destiny, which surely was inspired by his miraculous deliverance from death at three months of age.

Exodus 2:23-25

Exodus 2:23 Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. 24 So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 25 God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them. (NASB95)

These verses form a postscript to the narrative introducing Moses as the deliverer of Israel. Moses situation is summarized in verse 22. By returning the reader back to the situation of Israel in bondage in Egypt, these verses conclude the section of introduction to the story of the Exodus of Israel (1:1-2:25). This postscript prepares us for God to enter the picture and take action against Egypt on behalf of Israel.

This postscript begins by stating that the king of Egypt died who was Thutmose III. History tells us that Amenhotep II assumed the throne in Egypt. This would make possible for Moses to return to Egypt. He would no longer be a fugitive. This postscript also reveals that Israel's situation continues to remain the same even though there has been a change on the throne. The people are described as crying out for help and groaning. The reason for their misery is said to be their slavery. The postscript ends by stating that God will now act on Israel's behalf because of the covenant that He established with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which promised to make from the descendants of these men a great nation and also giving them the land of Canaan.

When the Bible says, "**God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**" it does "not" mean that He had forgotten this covenant He established with these men but rather it signifies that God is about to act upon the unconditional promises that He made to these men in this covenant. It denotes that God is about to act upon His commitment and contract He made with these men and by acting on His promises to these men, He demonstrates Himself to be a trustworthy covenant partner. It also expresses His compassion for Israel. It tells us that God is not detached but concerned about the suffering of men and seeks to alleviate it, which He did at the Cross when He sacrificed His Son to deliver the human race from sin and Satan.

Abrahamic Covenant

Abraham is also the recipient of covenant promises from God as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3, 6-9; 13:14-18, 15:6, 18-21; 17; 22:15-18. These covenant promises are called by theologians the “Abrahamic covenant,” which was originally established with Abraham when he left Haran and is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3.

The Abrahamic covenant was originally established with Abraham when he left Haran and is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3. In His covenant promises to Abraham, the Lord emphasized to Abraham that he would not only be a progenitor biologically but also one spiritually.

Let’s look at in detail the “Abrahamic” covenant, which was originally established with Abraham when he left Haran and is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3.

Genesis 12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you. 2 And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing. 3 And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” (NASB95)

The Abrahamic covenant contained three categories of promises: (1) Personal (2) National (3) Universal and Spiritual.

(1) Personal: **“I will bless you and make your name great”** (Gen. 12:2), which refers to the fact that the Lord would make Abraham a famous character with a great reputation among men and before God. This fame and reputation is expressed in that Abraham is called a **“father of a multitude”** in Genesis 17:5, a prince of God in Genesis 23:6, the man in God’s confidence in Genesis 18:17-19, a prophet in Genesis 20:7, the servant of God in Psalm 105:6 and the friend of God in 2 Chronicles 20:7 and James 2:23.

(2) National: **“I will make you into a great nation”** (Gen. 12:2), which refers to the nation of Israel.

(3) Spiritual and Universal: **“And all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you”** (Gen. 12:3) refers to the fact that through Jesus Christ, Abraham would be a blessing to all mankind (Deut. 28:8-14; Is. 60:3-5, 11, 16) since it is only through Jesus Christ that one becomes Abraham’s seed and heirs of the promise (Gal. 3:29; Eph. 2:13, 19).

The phrase **“and you shall be a blessing”** is “not” a promise since the verb *hayah*, **“you shall be”** is in the “imperative” mood expressing a command and literally means, “so become a blessing” indicating that Abraham had a responsibility to walk by faith, which is expressed by obedience to the Lord’s commands.

The promises “**I will bless them that bless you and the one who curses you I will curse**” refers to the fact that the Lord is identifying Himself with the cause of Abraham and guaranteeing protection for Abraham and his descendants.

“**Bless**” is the verb *barakh*, which appears five times in Genesis 12:1-3 and means, “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.” Therefore, the verb *barakh* indicates that Abraham and his descendants were endowed with power by the Lord for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity.”

Bruce K. Waltke, “The three nuances of bless-posterity (13:2, 5; 14:22-23; 24:35; 26:12-13; 30:43; 32:3-21), potency/fertility (1:28; 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; 28:3, 14; 35:11) and victory (cf. 1:22)-are spelled out in 22:17. Horst says, ‘Blessing brings the power for life, the enhancement of life, and the increase of life’” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 205; Zondervan).

The Lord blessed Abram in the sense that the Lord multiplied his descendants so that his posterity was great in number both, racially and spiritually. Also, the Lord blessed Abram in the sense that the Lord multiplied his possessions and livestock and prospered him financially. The Lord blessed anyone who was associated with Abraham.

The phrase “**I will bless you**” was fulfilled “temporally” according to Genesis 13:14-18; 15:18-21; 24:34-35 and it has been fulfilled “spiritually” according to Genesis 15:6 and John 8:56.

“**Name**” is the noun *shem*, which refers to a person’s character, reputation and fame among men and in the kingdom of God.

The promise “**I will make your name great**” refers to the fact that the Lord would make Abraham a famous character with a great reputation among men and before God. This fame and reputation is expressed throughout Scripture in that Abraham is called a “**father of a multitude**” in Genesis 17:5, a prince of God in Genesis 23:6, the man in God’s confidence in Genesis 18:17-19, a prophet in Genesis 20:7, the servant of God in Psalm 105:6 and the friend of God in 2 Chronicles 20:7 and James 2:23.

Again, the phrase “**and you shall be a blessing**” is “not” a promise since the verb *hayah*, “**you shall be**” is in the “imperative” mood expressing a command and literally means, “so become a blessing” indicating that Abraham had a responsibility to walk by faith, which is expressed by obedience to the Lord’s commands. The imperative mood of the verb *hayah* indicates that others would be blessed when Abraham walked by faith and was obedient to the Lord. Therefore, the imperative mood of *hayah* teaches us that the Lord wants us to be a blessing to others and this is accomplished by obedience to the Lord, which expresses our faith in the Lord.

The promises **“I will bless them that bless you and the one who curses you I will curse”** identifies the Lord with the cause of Abraham. Therefore, blessing Abraham would be equivalent to doing it to God whereas those who curse Abraham would be cursing God.

The promises **“I will bless them that bless you and the one who curses you I will curse”** refers to the fact that the Lord would bless those who bless Abraham and curse those who curse him.

The promise **“in you all the families of the earth will be blessed”** refers to the fact that through Jesus Christ, the Promised Seed of Genesis 3:15, Abraham would be a blessing to all mankind (Dt. 28:8-14; Is. 60:3-5, 11, 16) since it is only through the Lord Jesus Christ that one becomes Abraham’s seed and heirs of the promise (Gal. 3:29; Eph. 2:13, 19). This promise was the Gospel of salvation proclaimed to Abraham (Gal. 3:8) and reaches back to the divided **“families”** (10:5, 20, 31) of the earth at the Tower of Babel who were alienated from God due to sin and rebellion and the deception of Satan but who would be blessed through faith alone in Christ alone.

Galatians 3 teaches that Gentiles and Jews who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior become the **“spiritual”** posterity of Abraham and heirs according to the promise made to Abraham in relation to the nations.

The promise **“in you all the families of the earth will be blessed”** gives us further information regarding the Promised **“Seed”** of Genesis 3:15 who would destroy the works of the devil and would deliver Adam and Eve’s descendants from sin and Satan and indicates that the human nature of Jesus Christ would originate from the line of Abraham.

Up to this point in Genesis, the human nature of Jesus Christ is identified as coming from the line of Seth (Luke 3:38) and Shem (Gen. 9:24-27; Luke 3:36) and now Genesis 12:3 states that Jesus Christ would be a descendant of Abraham.

The promise **“in you all the families of the earth will be blessed”** refers to God’s plan to reverse the curse of Genesis 3 and all the effects of the Fall of Adam and is God’s promise of salvation to the human race and is repeated five times in the Book of Genesis (Gen. 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). This covenant with Abraham was reaffirmed and confirmed after Abraham’s faith was tested (Gen. 22:15-18) and was confined to the Jews who are the racial descendants of Abraham (Gen. 17:1-14).

The **“Abrahamic”** covenant has several applications in different areas of theology: (1) Soteriology: Study of salvation (2) Resurrection (3) Eschatology: Study of events that are future to the rapture of the church.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians that Christian believers enter into the blessings promised to Abraham (Gal. 3:14, 29; 4:22-31) and his argument is based on this same covenant promise made with Abraham (Rom. 4:1-25). Paul taught

that after the Fall of Adam, God revealed His purpose to provide salvation for sinners (Gen. 3:15) and which purpose was progressively revealed to man and the promise made to Abraham represented a significant and progressive step in that revelation.

In Matthew 22:23-32, the Lord refuted the Sadducees unbelief in the resurrection by stating that God had revealed Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex. 3:15), with whom He had entered into covenant relationships. Thus since these men had died without receiving the fulfillment of the promises (Heb. 11:13) and since the covenants could not be broken, it was essential for God to raise these men from the dead in order to fulfill His word.

In Acts 26:6-8, Paul united the **“promise to the fathers”** with the resurrection from the dead.

Dwight Pentecost writes concerning the “Abrahamic” covenant and eschatology, “The eternal aspects of this covenant, which guarantee Israel a permanent national existence, perpetual title to the land of promise, and the certainty to material and spiritual blessing through Christ-and guarantee Gentile nations a share in these blessings-determine the whole eschatological program of the Word of God”.⁶

The “Abrahamic” covenant serves as the foundation for the message delivered to the nation of Israel by the Old Testament prophets and writers. The “Abrahamic” covenant marked the “patriarchal” dispensation, which ended with Exodus of Israel and the giving of the Law at Sinai. The “Abrahamic” covenant is declared to be eternal or everlasting in Genesis 17:7, 13, 19; 1 Chronicles 16:17 and Psalm 105:10 and is confirmed repeatedly by reiteration and enlargement.

The “Abrahamic” covenant was solemnized by a divinely ordered ritual symbolizing the shedding of blood and passing between the parts of the sacrifice (Gen. 15:7-21; Jer. 34:18). This ceremony assured Abraham that his seed would inherit the land in the exact boundaries given to him in Genesis 15:18-21.

The Lord gave circumcision to Abraham and his descendants to distinguish those who would inherit the promises as individuals through faith from those who were only physical seed of Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

The “Abrahamic” covenant was confirmed by the birth of Isaac and Jacob who also received the promises repeated in their original form (Gen. 17:10; 28:12-13).

A comparison of Hebrews 6:13-18 and Genesis 15:8-21 records that the “Abrahamic” covenant was immutable and was not only promised but solemnly confirmed by an oath from God.

Genesis 12:6-9 records Abraham’s journey through the land of Canaan, which the Lord had promised to Abraham and his descendants.

⁶ Thy Kingdom Come, page 81, Victor Books

Genesis 12:6 Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land. 7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. (NASB95)

The Lord identifies the land of Canaan as the land that was promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:1.

Now, remember, this promise was not yet fulfilled since the Canaanites were still occupying the land, thus Abram had to continue to trust the Lord to deliver on His promise. Many times the promise often seems long and delayed and the believer must simply continue trusting the Lord day by day and trusting that His timing is always perfect.

Psalm 37:34 Wait for the LORD and keep His way, and He will exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you will see it. (NASB95)

Throughout his lifetime, Abraham had to rest in the promise that the Lord made to him that he and his descendants would possess the land of Canaan and he had to trust the Lord to fulfill this promise in His perfect timing.

Genesis 12:8 Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. 9 Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev. (NASB95)

Genesis 13:14-18 records the Lord promising land to Abram and is called in theology, the “Palestinian” covenant, which is the sixth covenant in history God has made with men. The “Palestinian” covenant is in fact an extension of the “Abrahamic” covenant, which is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3.

Like the “Abrahamic” covenant, the “Palestinian” covenant that the Lord established with Abram denoted the Lord’s gracious undertaking for the benefit of Abram and his descendants. Like the “Abrahamic” covenant, the “Palestinian” covenant was “unconditional” meaning that its fulfillment was totally and completely dependent upon the Lord’s faithfulness. We will note this covenant in detail in the next section.

Genesis 13:14 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward 15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. 16 I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. 17 Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.” (NASB95)

Genesis 15:1-6 records the Lord’s guarantee to Abraham that he would have a child and that his descendants would be innumerable.

Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.” **2**, Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” **3** And Abram said, “Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.” **4** Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.” **5** And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” (NASB95)

The Lord guarantees Abram that the promises would be literally fulfilled by a child of Abram’s own and to drive the point home, the Lord compares the number of the stars of the universe to the number of descendants of Abram there will be in the future.

Bruce K. Waltke, “The representation of offspring like the uncountable stars is not just an amazing promise but an assurance of God’s creative and sovereign power”.⁷

The promise of Genesis 15:4-5 not only pertains to Abram’s “natural” progeny (cf. Deut. 1:10; 10:22; Heb. 11:12) but according to Romans 4 it refers to his “spiritual” progeny (cf. Gal. 3:29).

Deuteronomy 10:22 “Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons in all, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven.” (NASB95)

Galatians 3:29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise. (NASB95)

Genesis 15:6 Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. (NASB95)

Abram’s faith in the Lord in Genesis 15:6 and the Lord imputing His righteousness to Abram as a result of his faith is employed by the New Testament writers as the pattern of a sinner’s justification (Rm. 4).

Romans 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.” (NASB95)

“Believed” is the verb *`aman*, which is in the “hiphil” (causative) stem meaning, “to cause to have confidence in, to trust.”

The object of Abram’s faith is the Lord Himself who alone can make this guarantee to Abram because He sovereign and omnipotent and omniscient. Although, the New Testament writers employ Genesis 15:6 to teach that

⁷ Genesis, A Commentary, page 242; Zondervan

justification is through faith alone in Christ alone, it does “not” mean that Genesis 15:6 records the moment when Abram first got saved. There at least three reasons for this.

First of all, Abram had already obeyed the Lord’s call to leave Ur and Haran (Acts 7:2-5; Gen. 12:1-5). Secondly, the Lord had entered into a covenant agreement with him as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 and 15:4-5, which is something the Lord would never do with an unbeliever. Thirdly, the perfect tense of the verb *ʾaman*, “**believed**” demonstrates that Abram’s faith did “not” begin after the events recorded in Genesis 15:1-5 since it represents the state of Abram trusting in the Lord, which flowed from his initial faith in the Lord the moment he got saved in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Bible Knowledge Commentary, The Old Testament, “Abram’s faith is recorded here because it is foundational for establishing the Abrahamic covenant. The Abrahamic Covenant did not give Abram redemption; it was a covenant made with Abram who had already believed and to whom righteousness had already been imputed”.⁸

“**Reckoned**” is the verb *chashav*, which refers to the Lord imputing His righteousness to Abram and as a result it refers to His “viewpoint” of Abram as a result of Abram’s faith in Him in delivering on His promise to give Abram a son.

Imputation is the function of the justice of God in crediting something to someone for cursing or for blessing. At the moment of spiritual birth, God imputed His righteousness to the believer so that he is “positionally” the righteousness of God meaning God has given His righteousness as a gift to the believer and that God views the believer as righteous as Himself.

Romans 3:21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction. (NASB95)

The righteousness of God is received through faith in the gospel concerning Jesus Christ since in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God, Jesus Christ is revealed.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.” (NASB95)

The Bible teaches us that the Lord Jesus Christ is the believer’s righteousness.

⁸ page 55, Victor Books

1 Corinthians 1:30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption. (NASB95)

The righteousness of God can never be attained by anyone through human power and dynamics or by keeping the Mosaic Law but rather it is received as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ who is the righteousness of God incarnate (Romans 4:1-5).

Genesis 15:7 records the Lord reconfirming His promise to Abram to give him the land of Canaan.

Genesis 15:7 And He said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.” (NASB95)

Therefore, the phrase “**I am the Lord**” expresses the unimpeachable authority of the Lord’s declaration to give Abram the land of Canaan in order to possess it.

Covenants made by kings in the days of Abram began with the king identifying himself and giving a brief historical background and this the Lord does by beginning His covenant with Abram by identifying Himself to Abram as the One who brought him out of the idolatry of Ur of the Chaldeans.

Genesis 15:7 records the Lord reiterating and confirming His original promises to Abram recorded in Genesis 12:7 and Genesis 13:14-17 to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan. The northern border of the land of the Canaanites went as far as Sidon, which is 120 miles north of Jerusalem and the southern border extended to Gerar, which is about 11 miles south-southeast of Gaza, which was on the coast 50 miles southeast of Jerusalem.

In Genesis 15:7, the promise by the Lord to Abram to give him the land of Canaan is a reference again to the “Palestinian” covenant.

Genesis 15:8 He said, “O Lord GOD, how may I know that I will possess it?” (NASB95)

Abram’s question recorded in Genesis 15:8 was motivated by faith and was simply a question asking for more details or more accurately the specific means by which the Lord would accomplish giving him the land of Canaan. Therefore, Abram’s question in Genesis 15:8 does not indicate that Abram doubted how the Lord would fulfill His promise but rather he simply asked for confirmation as to the specific the means he will accomplish giving Abram the land.

In Genesis 15:9-21, the Lord gives Abram quite a few details surrounding the specific means by which the Lord would bring about Abram possessing the land of Canaan. The specific means by which the Lord will give Abram the land of Canaan would be through the unconditional covenant that the Lord initially made with Abram in Genesis 12:1-3 and 13:14-17, which would be enlarged and amplified and confirmed as demonstrated in the covenant ceremony recorded in Genesis 15:9-21.

Also, the specific means by which the Lord will give Abram the land of Canaan would be through suffering as indicated by the Lord's prophecy in Genesis 15:13-16 that Abram's descendants, specifically, the nation of Israel would suffer in Egypt for four hundred years before they would finally leave Egypt and then enter the land of Canaan to possess it.

Also, although not specifically mentioned but it is implied, is that it would be through resurrection from the dead that Abram would personally enter into possessing the land of Canaan, which will take place during the millennial reign of Christ.

Genesis 15:9 So He said to him, "Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10 Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. 11 The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. 12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. 14 But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions." (NASB95)

"Your descendants" is a reference to the nation of Israel and the "land" in which the nation of Israel would be strangers in and would be enslaved to and oppressed for four hundred years is Egypt.

"Four hundred years" is a "round" number for the more precise figure of four hundred thirty years appears in Exodus 12:40-41; Acts 7:6; Gal. 3:16-17.

Genesis 15:15 "As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. 16 Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." 17 It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. (NASB95)

The flaming torch symbolizes the Lord's presence and the fact that the torch alone passes through the pieces teaches Abram that this covenant that the Lord is making with him is "unconditional" meaning its fulfillment is totally and completely dependent upon the Lord's faithfulness.

Genesis 15:18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates." (NASB95)

"Your descendants" refers to the "regenerate" Israel or Jews racially who are saved who entered into this covenant that the Lord made with Abram by believing

in Promised “Seed,” as their Savior namely, Jesus Christ. Never in Israel’s history has she secured these boundaries and thus this promise awaits its fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ. According to Genesis 15:18, the boundaries of Israel during the millennial reign of Christ would be the river of Egypt on the south and the Euphrates River in Iraq in the north.

Genesis 15:19 “the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite 20 and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim 21 and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite.” (NASB95)

In Genesis 17:1-8, the Lord enlarges again upon the covenant He made with Abraham not only promising him that he would have many descendants but he would also be the father of many nations, which has been fulfilled in a two-fold sense: (1) Biological (2) Spiritual.

Genesis 17:1 Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly.” 3 Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, 4 “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you will be the father of a multitude of nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.” (NASB95)

The promise to make Abraham a father of many nations was fulfilled in a “biological” sense through Hagar and the Ishmaelites (Gen. 17:20; 21:13; 25:12-18); through Keturah and the Midianites and others (Gen. 25:1-4); through Isaac and Rebekah, the Edomites (Gen. 25:23; 36:1-43); through Isaac and Rebekah, the Israelites (Gen. 12:2; 18:18).

The Lord’s promise to make Abraham a father or progenitor of many nations was fulfilled and continues to be fulfilled in a “spiritual” sense through those individuals who exercised faith alone in Christ alone (John 3:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:15-29). This is how the Lord’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that in him “**all the families of the earth would be blessed**” would be accomplished.

The “Seed” God covenanted with Abraham found its fulfillment uniquely in the Lord Jesus Christ (see Galatians 3:16).

Genesis 17:6, “I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you.” (NASB95)

The Lord’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 17:6 that “**kings will come forth from you**” is a reference to primarily the kings of Israel (Gen. 35:11; 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:8-16) and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Genesis 17:7 “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.” (NASB95)

The promise recorded in Genesis 17:7 **“I will establish My covenant with him (Isaac) for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him”** indicates that the Promised Seed, the Savior, Jesus Christ would come through the line of Isaac rather than Ishmael.

Genesis 17:8 “I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” (NASB95)

Genesis 17:9-14 records the Lord giving Abraham and his descendants the ritual of circumcision to observe as a sign to ratify the covenant that He established with Abraham when he left Haran. Then in Genesis 17:15-22, we saw that the Lord promised Abraham that his wife Sarah would be the progenitrix or the mother of numerous nations and kings. Genesis 22:15-18 records the Lord reconfirming the promises of this covenant and then enlarges upon them.

Every time Abraham made a sacrifice for God the Lord responded by giving Abraham more: (1) God commanded Abraham to leave his hometown and as a result God rewarded him with a new one (Gen. 12:1; Heb. 11:8). (2) Abraham offered the best of the land to Lot and separated from Lot and as a result God rewarded him by giving him more land (Gen. 13:5-18). (3) Abraham gave up the King of Sodom's reward (Gen. 14:17-24) and God gave Abraham more wealth (Gen. 15:1-6). (4) God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac after he waited so long for him to be born (Genesis 22:1-19; Hebrews 11:17-19) and as a result the Lord rewards Abraham by enlarging upon the previously made covenant (Gen. 22:15-18). In each case, where Abraham was obedient to God, God rewarded Abraham with a deeper and more intimate fellowship with Himself.

Genesis 22:15 Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son.” (NASB95)

The Lord's statement **“by Myself I have sworn”** indicates that the Abrahamic covenant, which will be reconfirmed and enlarged upon in Genesis 22:17-18 is “unconditional” and “guarantees” its fulfillment.

The phrase **“declares the Lord”** expresses the Lord's faithfulness in fulfilling that which He has promised, indicating that the Lord is “guaranteeing” the fulfillment of the covenant promises to Abraham and his descendants.

The reason for the Lord guaranteeing the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham is given in the Lord's statement **“because you have done this thing.”** This statement refers to Abraham's obedience to the Lord's command in Genesis 22:2 **“Take now your son, your only son whom you love and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.”**

The word “**only**” in Genesis 22:2 and 16 is incorrectly translated since Abraham had many sons (Ishmael through Hagar, see Genesis 16; Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah through Keturah, see Genesis 25:1-2) and so Isaac was not an “only” child.

“**Only**” is the adjective *yachidh* and means, “uniquely born one” and this interpretation is supported in that Isaac was a “miracle” baby since his mother was ninety years old and his father was one-hundred years old when he was born.

Furthermore, John 3:16 employs the adjective *monogenes* (monogenhv\$) translated “**begotten**” in the NASB and is used to describe God the Father’s Son, Jesus Christ as being uniquely born of a virgin.

Hebrews 11:17 employs *monogenes* translated “**begotten**” in the NASB but like the word in John 3:16, it means, “uniquely born one” since it is used to describe Isaac who was born to parents who were well past the age of having the capacity to procreate. Jesus Christ was born of a virgin and Isaac was born of parents who were in their old age and so like Jesus Christ, Isaac was unique.

Genesis 22:17 “indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.” (NASB95)

In Genesis 22:17, Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit employs two infinitive absolutes to express the fact that the Lord is “guaranteeing” the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham as a result of his obedience to God’s command to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac.

“**I will greatly bless you**”: (1) Piel infinitive absolute complement form of the verb *barakh*, “blessing” (2) Second person common (neither masculine nor feminine) singular piel imperfect form of the verb *barakh*, “I will bless” (3) Second person masculine singular pronominal suffix, “you.”

In Genesis 22:17, the verb *barakh* means, “to bless in the sense of enduing someone (Abraham) with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.” Therefore, the verb *barakh* indicates that Abraham and his descendants were endued with power by the Lord for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity.”

The Lord blessed Abraham in the sense that the Lord multiplied his descendants so that his posterity was great in number both, racially and spiritually. Also, the Lord blessed Abraham in the sense that the Lord multiplied his possessions and livestock and prospered him financially.

The phrase “**I will bless you**” was fulfilled “temporally” according to Genesis 13:14-18; 15:18-21; 24:34-35 and it has been fulfilled “spiritually” according to Genesis 15:6 and John 8:56.

The infinitive absolute *barakh* stands before the finite verb of the same root in order to intensify the certainty or force of the verbal idea expressing the certainty

that the Lord would fulfill the promise to bless Abraham. So to the English speaking person this construction literally means, “blessing, I will bless you” but to the Hebrew mind, it simply means, “I will greatly bless you.”

“I will greatly multiply”: (1) Hiphil (causative) infinitive absolute complement form of the verb *ravah*, “multiplying.” (2) First person common (neither masculine nor feminine) singular hiphil (causative) imperfect form of the verb *ravah*.

The infinitive absolute stands before the finite verb of the same root in order to intensify the certainty or force of the verbal idea expressing the certainty that the Lord would fulfill the promise to multiply Abraham’s descendants. So to the English speaking person this construction literally means, “multiplying, I will multiply” but to the Hebrew mind, it simply means, “I will greatly multiply.”

“Your seed” refers to not only Isaac but also those who like Abraham exercise faith alone in Christ alone, which would include the church and regenerate Israel and regenerate Gentiles who lived in dispensations outside of the church age and ultimately it refers to Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the Scriptures teach that the “seed” of Abraham is four-fold: (1) Abraham’s biological or racial descendants, which would include: (a) The Ishmaelites through Hagar (Gen. 17:20; 21:13; 25:12-18) (b) The Midianites and others through Keturah (Gen. 25:1-4) (c) The Edomites through Isaac and Rebekah (Gen. 25:23; 36:1-43). (2) Abraham’s biological or racial descendants the Israelites of Jews through Sarah and Isaac and Rebekah and Jacob (Genesis 12:2, 7; 18:18; Rom. 9:6-9). (3) Abraham’s spiritual descendants, which would include those individuals, both Jew and Gentile racially, who exercised faith alone in Christ alone (Gal. 3:6-29). (4) The Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16).

The comparative clause **“as the stars of the heavens”** echoes the Lord’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:5 and is used to compare the Lord’s promise to Abraham to multiply his descendants with the number of the stars of the universe.

The promise of Genesis 15:4-5 not only pertains to Abram’s “natural” progeny (cf. Deut. 1:10; 10:22; Heb. 11:12) but according to Romans 4 it refers to his “spiritual” progeny (cf. Gal. 3:29).

The comparative clause **“as the sand which is on the seashore”** echoes the Lord’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 13:10 to multiply his descendants as the dust of the earth and drives the point home regarding the Lord’s promise to greatly multiply Abraham’s descendants.

The prophecy that Abram’s descendants would be as the dust of the earth in a “near” sense was fulfilled in the days of Solomon (see 1 Kings 4:20) and will be fulfilled in a “far” sense during the millennial reign of Christ (see Hosea 1:10).

The Lord’s promise to Abraham that **“your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies”** is a prophecy that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the great enemy of God and His people would be defeated, namely, Satan, thus

fulfilling the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 (see Colossians 2:15; Philippians 2:6-11; Ephesians 1:15-22).

In the ancient world, to “possess the gate” of one’s enemies was to have access to a walled city and possessing control of the city. The term “**enemies**” refers to Satan and the kingdom of darkness who at the present time temporarily rule this world (Eph. 2:1-3; 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Jn. 5:19; Rev. 12:10). The Lord Jesus Christ has defeated Satan with His death and resurrection and at His Second Advent, He with His church, and the elect angels will imprison Satan and the fallen angels and assume control over planet earth for a thousand years (see Revelation 19:1-20:6). In another sense, this prophecy also refers to the fact that regenerate Israel will be delivered by Jesus Christ from the armies of the hostile Gentile nations and antichrist during Daniel’s seventieth week and will become head of the nations during the millennial reign of Christ (see Zechariah 14:16-21).

Genesis 22:18 “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” (NASB95)

“**Your seed**” is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord statement that “**in your seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth will be blessed**” echoes the Lord’s promise in Genesis 18:18 and is an enlargement upon the Lord’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that in Abraham “**all the families of the earth will be blessed.**”

Galatians 3:8-14 reveals that the promise in Genesis 18:18 that “**in (Abraham) all the nations of the earth will be blessed**” and the promise in Genesis 22:19 that “**in your Seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed**” are references to the fact that Abraham’s descendent, Jesus Christ, would bring salvation to the Gentile nations through faith in Him.

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us -- for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE” 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (NASB95)

Genesis 22:19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham lived at Beersheba. (NASB95)

Abraham returned with Isaac as he believed he would since according to Hebrews 11:17-19, he reasoned that God would raise Isaac from the dead.

Genesis 28:13-15 records Jacob receiving from the Lord reconfirmation of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant and reassurance that the Lord would protect and prosper him in exile in Paddan Aram.

Genesis 28:10 Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran. 11 He came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his

head, and lay down in that place. 12 He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, “I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. 14 Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (NASB95)

The promises to Jacob that are recorded in Genesis 28:14 echo the promises given to his father Isaac, which are recorded in Genesis 26:4. They also echo the blessing that his father Isaac pronounced upon him before he left home, which is recorded in Genesis 28:3-4. The Lord’s promises to both Jacob and Isaac and the blessing of his father bestowed upon him before he left home were a “reconfirmation” of the promises made to Abraham that are recorded in Genesis 12:2-3, 7, 13:14-18, 15:1-6, 18, 17:1-8 and 22:17.

In Genesis 26:3-4, Isaac received reconfirmation of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant by means of a theophany. In Genesis 26:23-25, the Lord appeared in a theophany to Isaac at Beersheba and gave him reassurance by reconfirming to him the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. In Genesis 28:3-4, the blessing that Isaac bestowed upon Jacob before he left home echoes the promises of the Abrahamic covenant. In Genesis 28:14-15, God’s reiteration of the promises to Abraham and Isaac assures Jacob of God’s faithfulness.

The Lord is reassuring Jacob in his time of adversity that like his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac, that he would receive divine protection and would be prospered by the Lord. The Lord’s reiteration to Jacob of the promises He made to his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac would reassure Jacob that the very God who protected his grandfather and father and prospered them would do so for him.

The Lord’s reiteration to Jacob of the promises He made to his grandfather and father would confirm to Jacob that he was in the Messianic line. So these promises to Jacob would reassure him that the God of his grandfather Abraham and that of his father Isaac would not abandon him.

“**Your descendants**” refers to Isaac’s “biological” descendants, which would be the nation of Israel and it refers to his “spiritual” descendants, which would be anyone, Jew or Gentile who believes in Jesus Christ as their Savior. In a “near” sense “**Your descendants**” refers the nation of Israel (saved and unsaved) and in a “far” sense it refers to saved Israel during the millennial reign of Christ.

The comparative clause “**like the dust of the earth**” echoes the Lord’s promises to Abraham in Genesis 13:10 to multiply his descendants “**as the dust of**

the earth” and **“as the sand on the seashore”** in Genesis 22:17 as well as the promise to Isaac in Genesis 26:4 to multiply his descendants **“as the dust of the earth.”**

The comparative clause **“like the dust of the earth”** drives the point home to Jacob regarding the Lord’s promise to greatly multiply his descendants and would indicate quite clearly to him that the Lord has a plan for his life and would give him assurance during his time of adversity!

The prophecy that Jacob’s descendants would be as the dust of the earth in a “near” sense was fulfilled in the days of Solomon (see 1 Kings 4:20) and will be fulfilled in a “far” sense during the millennial reign of Christ (see Hosea 1:10).

Like his grandfather Abraham, Jacob receives these promises of numerous descendants while he was childless. In fact, at this time, he wasn’t even married!

The Lord’s promise to Isaac that he **“will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south”** echoes the Lord’s promise to his grandfather Abraham that is recorded in Genesis 13:14-15 and pertains to the “Palestinian” Covenant.

The Lord’s promise to Jacob that he and his descendants would spread over the land of Canaan would reassure him that he would be returning to Canaan. The Lord is promising Jacob that He would bring him back to Canaan even though he is fleeing from it at this particular time.

“Spread out” is the verb *parats*, which is a military term meaning “to break out” and implies that the descendants of Jacob who would be the nation of Israel would through military conquest take possession of the land of Canaan. This military conquest of the land of Canaan was accomplished to a certain extent in Israel’s history under Joshua. But it will find its ultimate fulfillment when the Lord Jesus Christ at His Second Advent who at that time will destroy anti-Christ, the false prophet, and the Gentile armies surrounding Israel during the Tribulation period (aka Daniel’s seventieth week) and will establish His millennial reign.

Genesis 28:14 “Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (NASB95)

The Lord’s promise to Jacob that in him, **“all the families of the earth be blessed”** is a “universal” promise and indicates that Jacob would be in the Messianic line meaning that the Lord Jesus Christ in His human nature would descend from him.

The promise **“in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed”** should be translated **“in your Seed or Descendant all the families of the earth shall be blessed”** since the word for “descendants” in the Hebrew text is in the singular making the promise Messianic. This promise is a “reconfirmation” of

the “universal” promise the Lord made to Abraham, which is recorded in Genesis 22:18.

The Lord statement in Genesis 22:18 that **“in your seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth will be blessed”** and the promise to Jacob in Genesis 28:14 that **“in Your Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed”** echoes the Lord’s promise in Genesis 18:18. It is an enlargement upon the Lord’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that in Abraham **“all the families of the earth will be blessed.”**

Galatians 3:8-16 reveals that the promises in Genesis 18:18, **“in (Abraham) all the nations of the earth will be blessed,”** Genesis 22:18, **“in your seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth will be blessed,”** Genesis 26:4, **“by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed,”** Genesis 28:14, **“in Your Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed”** refers to the Lord Jesus Christ who would bring salvation to the Gentile nations through faith in Him.

Genesis 28:15 records the “personal” promises that the Lord made to Jacob.

Genesis 28:15 “Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” (NASB95)

Genesis 35:9-13 records the preincarnate Christ appearing to Jacob and reconfirming the change of his name to “Israel” and reconfirming the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Genesis 35:1 Then God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and live there, and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.” 2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves and change your garments 3 and let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.” 4 So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods which they had and the rings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem. 5 As they journeyed, there was a great terror upon the cities which were around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. 6 So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. 7 He built an altar there, and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed Himself to him when he fled from his brother. 8 Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the oak; it was named Allon-bacuth. 9 Then God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and He blessed him. (NASB95)

Jacob would be “blessed” or in other words, “endued with power for success, prosperity, fecundity and longevity” by means of the Word of God since the Word of God is “**alive and powerful**” according to Hebrews 4:12.

God would bless Jacob through six promises, which are contained in Genesis 35:10-12. Therefore, the statement “**He (God) blessed him (Jacob)**” means that Jacob would be the recipient and beneficiary of the omnipotence of God, which would be manifested in time by the Lord fulfilling six promises through Jacob and his descendants (spiritual and biological), which are recorded in Genesis 35:10-12.

Genesis 35:10 God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name. Thus He called him Israel.” (NASB95)

The statement “**You shall no longer be called Jacob but Israel shall be your name**” echoes the Lord’s statement to Jacob at Peniel after wrestling with Jacob, which is recorded in Genesis 32:28. After Jacob wrestled with the Lord at Peniel, the Lord changed Jacob’s name to “**Israel**” and here the Lord reiterates and reconfirms and reaffirms to Jacob that this is still the case.

The name “**Jacob**” means, “heel catcher” implying someone who is a “deceiver” and a “supplanter,” which is a person who takes the place of another by force, scheming or strategy.

“**Israel**” is the proper noun *yisra’el*, which means, “one who fights and overcomes with the power of God” since the Lord states the reason for the name is that Jacob has fought with both God and men and has prevailed. Therefore, the promise “**You shall no longer be called Jacob but Israel shall be your name**” is not only a promise but a reaffirmation to Jacob that would impress upon him the need to live his life in a manner that is consistent with the meaning of his new name. He would live his life in a manner that is consistent with the meaning of his new name by appropriating by faith in prayer the promises that God had given to him just as he did prior to being reunited with Esau (See Genesis 32).

By means of His Word, the Lord would fulfill His first promise to Jacob and empower him to live in a manner consistent with the meaning of his new name *yisra’el*, “**Israel**,” which means, “one who fights and overcomes with the power of God” (See Genesis 35:10).

The bestowal of the name “**Israel**” upon Jacob constituted the essence of the blessing that he requested from the Lord recorded in Genesis 32:26. The name *yisra’el*, “**Israel**” memorializes the historical event of Jacob wrestling the preincarnate Christ, and which wrestling match symbolized Jacob’s struggles in life with men, which in reality were with God.

The name “**Israel**” represents the character of his new divine nature whereas the name “**Jacob**” represents the character of his old Adamic sin nature, which will be permanently eradicated at his physical death. Therefore, the emphasis of the

name change to “**Israel**” implies that Jacob would experience the fulfillment of these six promises during the millennial reign of Christ when he will live permanently in his new nature that God gave him, which is signified by the name “**Israel**.”

Genesis 35:11 God also said to him, “**I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you.**” (NASB95)

The title *El Shaddai*, “**God Almighty**” emphasizes the omnipotence of God and describes the Lord as being able to bring to pass that which He has promised to Jacob (Romans 4:20-21).

The expression “**God Almighty**” (Hebrew: *El Shaddai*) was first used by God of Himself when speaking to Abraham as recorded in Genesis 17:1 and was used by Isaac when blessing Jacob as recorded in Genesis 28:3. Therefore, the title *El Shaddai*, “**God Almighty**” signifies that the six promises contained in Genesis 35:10-12 echo Isaac’s prophecy about Jacob, which is recorded in Genesis 28:3-5 and also recalls the covenant with Abraham recorded in Genesis 17:1-8.

The Lord’s promise to Jacob that he would “**be fruitful and multiply**” echoes the prophecy of Isaac concerning Jacob, which is recorded in Genesis 28:3 and means that the Lord would give Jacob the capacity to be prolific in that he would be the progenitor of a multitude of children in both a biological and spiritual sense. This promise means that the Lord would endue Jacob and his descendants with the ability to be prolific in terms of posterity.

By means of His Word, the Lord would fulfill His second promise to Jacob that he would “**be fruitful and multiply**” and endue him with power for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity (See Genesis 35:11).

The promise “**a nation...shall come from you**” in a “near” sense refers to the nation of Israel (saved and unsaved) and in a “far” sense it refers to saved Israel during the millennial reign of Christ. By means of His Word, the Lord would fulfill His third promise to Jacob that he would be the progenitor of “**a nation**,” and endue Jacob with power to be the progenitor of the nation of Israel (See Genesis 35:11).

The promise “**a company of nations...shall come from you**” was fulfilled and continues to be fulfilled in a “spiritual” sense through those individuals who exercised faith alone in Christ alone (John 3:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-28).

The expression “**a company of nations...shall come from you**” refers to a community of nations that will originate from Jacob and echoes the Lord’s promise to his grandfather Abraham that he would become “**the father of a multitude of nations**” (Genesis 17:4-5) and “**the father of nations**” (Genesis 17:6).

The Lord's promise to Abraham to make him "**the father of a multitude of nations**" and Isaac's desire that the Lord would make Jacob a "**company of peoples**" and the Lord's promise to Jacob that "**a company of nations...shall come from you**" would be fulfilled in both a "biological" and "spiritual" sense.

In a "biological" or "racial" sense, the "**company of nations**" that would originate from Jacob would be the nation of Israel. In a "spiritual" sense the "**company of nations**" that would originate from Jacob be all those who exercise faith alone in Christ alone who would be composed of all nations and races, both male and female, slave and freeman (John 3:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-28). This is how the Lord's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that in him "**all the families of the earth would be blessed**" would be accomplished.

In the same way, that Abraham became a father in a "spiritual" sense to those individuals who exercised faith in Christ so also Jacob would become the father in a "spiritual" sense to all those who exercised faith in Christ. By means of His Word, the Lord would fulfill His fourth promise to Jacob and endue him with power to be the progenitor of "**a company of nations**" in a "spiritual" sense through all those who exercise faith alone in Christ alone.

The promise that "**kings shall come forth from you**" echoes the Lord's promise to Abraham, which is recorded in Genesis 17:6, 16 and is a reference to primarily to the kings of Israel (Gen. 35:11; 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:8-16) and the Lord Jesus Christ. Since the promise that "**kings shall come forth from you**" is a reference to the Kings of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ, it is therefore related to the "Davidic" Covenant, which like the "Abrahamic" Covenant, was an unconditional covenant meaning its fulfillment was totally dependent upon God's faithfulness. By means of His Word, the Lord would fulfill His fifth promise to Jacob and endue him with power to be the progenitor of the kings of Israel and the greatest King of them all, the Lord Jesus Christ (See Genesis 35:11).

Genesis 35:12 "The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you." (NASB95)

The promise of "**land**" is a reference to the "Palestinian Covenant."

"**Your descendants**" refers to Jacob's "biological" descendants, which would be the nation of Israel and it refers to his "spiritual" descendants, which would be anyone, Jew or Gentile who believes in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

In a "near" sense "**Your descendants**" refers to the nation of Israel (saved and unsaved) and in a "far" sense it refers to saved Israel during the millennial reign of Christ. By means of His Word, the Lord would fulfill His sixth and final promise to Jacob and endue him and his descendants (spiritual and biological) with power to possess the land of Canaan (See Genesis 35:12).

Though Jacob was still a resident alien in the land of Canaan, it was really his according to God's promise and would be possessed by him and his descendants through faith in Christ during the millennial reign of Christ.

Genesis 35:13 Then God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him. (NASB95)

Genesis 46:2-4 records Israel/Jacob receives a theophany, divine reassurance and promises (46:2-4).

Genesis 46:1 So Israel set out with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. 2 God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." 3 He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there." (NASB95)

"**God**" is not the usual *Elohim* but rather the singular form of the noun, which is *El* in order to express a contrast between the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who is the one and only true God and the foreign gods of the Canaanites and the Egyptians.

God identifies Himself to Israel as "**I am the God of your father**" in order to reassure Israel that he will be protected by Him just as He protected his father Isaac.

The prohibition "**do not be afraid to go to Egypt**" that was issued to Israel/Jacob indicates that the patriarch was fearful of leaving the Promised Land.

The explanatory clause "**for I will make you a great nation there**" gives the reason why Israel should not be afraid and would give him assurance that it was according to the will of God that he and his family migrate to Egypt.

In Genesis 46:3, God is assuring Israel that everything is ok that he will be protected from the Egyptians and reassures him that God will make his descendants into a great nation while in Egypt in accordance with the promises God made to his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac. The assurance that God gave Israel that He would make Israel's descendants into a great nation while in Egypt is a positive declaration or guarantee from God intended to give Israel confidence and courage.

This statement "**I will make you a great nation there**" is a reference to the "Abrahamic" covenant since it reconfirms the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:2 and 18:17-18 that God would make Abraham's descendants into a great nation.

"**Nation**" is the noun *goy*, which is in the singular referring to Abraham's "national" posterity (Gen. 18:18), the nation of Israel that would originate from Abraham and Sarah's son Isaac and Isaac's son Jacob.

"**Great**" is the adjective *gadol*, which refers both to numbers and to significance or impact the nation of Israel would have on both human and angelic history.

Therefore, the “national” posterity of Abraham, the nation of Israel has been a great nation in history during the reigns of David and Solomon and will be significant according to prophecy since she will be the head of the nations during the millennial reign of Christ (See Isaiah 2:1-4).

Israel has had a huge impact upon human history in that she was the custodian of the Old Testament Scriptures, the recipients of the covenants of promise, the Law (Rm. 9:1-5) and the nation from which the Savior, Jesus Christ would originate (Jn. 4:22).

Prophetically, the promise “**a great nation**” in a “near” sense refers to the nation of Israel (saved and unsaved) and in a “far” sense it refers to saved Israel during the millennial reign of Christ.

Genesis 46:4 ‘I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes.’ (NASB95)

The statement “**I will also surely bring you up again**” is a reference to the “Palestinian” Covenant, which was a confirmation and enlargement of the original “Abrahamic” covenant and amplified the land features of the “Abrahamic” covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18).

The promise “**I will also surely bring you up again**” is “national” promise in that it is a guarantee that the Israelites will return to the land of Canaan. It is a “personal” promise in that it is a guarantee that Israel himself would return to the land of Canaan not only in a coffin (See Genesis 49:29-32) but more importantly that he and all of born again Israel will live in the Promised Land in resurrection bodies during the millennial reign of Christ.