

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

## Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

---

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

---

5-3-1937

### The Messianic Sedes in Genesis

Ludwig Helmstetter

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, [ir\\_helmstetterl@csl.edu](mailto:ir_helmstetterl@csl.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Helmstetter, Ludwig, "The Messianic Sedes in Genesis" (1937). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 5.  
<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/5>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

T H E M E S S I A N I C S E E D S

I N G E N E S I S

A thesis  
presented to the faculty of  
Concordia Seminary  
St. Louis, Mo.  
by

Ludwig Halmstetter

in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree  
of

Bachelor of Divinity

26485

52278

Approved May 3, 1919  
P. E. Kretzmann

BV  
4070  
C69  
B3  
1937  
V.2  
C.2

52278

46-37  
Austen  
Swift

CONCORDIA SEMINARY LIBRARY  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI



## Contents

### Chapter I. Introduction

1. Scope of the thesis . . . . .	1
2. Approach used in treating the text . . . . .	1
3. Reason for studying these texts . . . . .	2
4. Treatment of differing interpretations . . . . .	3

### Chapter II. The Protevangel

1. Importance of the context . . . . .	4
a. God deals with sin's entrance into the world	
b. The curse contains man's blessing	
c. Man cursed nevertheless	
2. "Thee"; Who is spoken to? . . . . .	6
a. God is the speaker	
b. Addresses the serpent	
c. Curses it	
d. Serpent cannot have been the real temptor	
e. Real temptor not mentioned in the curses	
f. N.T. reports the act committed as done by Satan	
g. Which part of the curse is addressed to Satan	
h. Identity of the temptor sheds light on the blessing	
3. "Thy Seed" . . . . .	10
a. Derivation of the term	
b. Application to Satan	
c. The Scriptural usus loquendi	
4. "Her Seed" . . . . .	12
a. Seed implies continued life for the race	
b. Purpose of the seed.	
c. Use of שָׂרָא may be collective or individual	
d. Syntax gives evidence for the individual meaning	
e. Context: symmetric alignment; שָׂרָא; work and nature of the seed.	
f. Conclusions to be drawn	
g. N.T. substantiation of Messianic interpretation	
5. Messianic Interpretation of the Church . . . . .	18
6. Theology of the Protevangel . . . . .	18
7. Differing Interpretations . . . . .	19
a. Rationalistic	
b. Jewish	
c. Catholic	
d. Typical	



### Chapter III. The Blessing of the Patriarchs

1. Connection with the Protovangel . . . . .	25
a. Protovangel goes into a world of sin	
b. Godly line of Seth (Noah) bears the promise	
c. The Patriarchal blessing half-way between Eden and Bethlehem	
2. The Passages (English & Hebrew) . . . . .	26
3. The Spiritual Blessing . . . . .	27
a. A priori Messianic	
b. The Niphal and Hithpael forms	
c. Universality of the blessing	
d. The blessing understood by the Patriarchs	
4. The Temporal Blessing . . . . .	33
a. A staggering heaping of extravagance	
b. Why study the temporal blessing	
c. Details of the blessing in fulfilment	
5. Relation of the temporal promise to the spiritual . . .	37
a. Magnifies it	
b. Both promises received on faith	
6. Theology . . . . .	38
7. Differing Interpretations . . . . .	39

### Chapter IV. The Coming of Shiloh

1. Preliminary Observations . . . . .	41
a. Trouble made the Patriarchs heaven-minded	
b. The promise transmitted by the mouth of Jacob	
c. History shows that the Messianic promise went to Judah	
2. The Temporal Promise . . . . .	44
a. Success against enemies	
b. Lion-like nature	
3. The Spiritual Promise . . . . .	46
a. Proper rendition of $PP'N\dot{Q}$ .	
b. "Until"	
c. Who is Shiloh?	
d. What does $\eta\zeta\sim\psi$ mean?	
e. The Messianic Kingdom	
4. Theology . . . . .	53
5. Differing Interpretations . . . . .	54
Bibliography . . . . .	57



## Chapter I. General Introduction.

### 1. Scope of the Thesis

The scope of this thesis is a study of the Messianic content of the Book of Genesis. It is not the purpose merely to restate traditional orthodox interpretations of the passages in question and to refute differing interpretations; nor is any attempt made to present new points of interpretation. The approach is fundamentally that of the Bible student whose purpose is to see what the text says and what Holy Scripture says about it.

### 2. The Approach

To write an exegetical treatise from this approach it is necessary first of all to honor the text as the inspired Word of God which is able to make men wise unto salvation. This attitude gives the Bible student the proper place and puts Scripture on the high pedestal that God intended for it: man is not to sit in judgment on what is said in the text or on how it is said, but is to be an attentive listener to what God has to say. As we approach this work, we are therefore conscious of the caution given Ps. 46,10: "Be still, and know that I am God", and Eccl. 5,5: "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." In addition it is necessary to be conscious of the central purpose of Scripture, as it is stated by Christ John 5,39: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify



of me." Knowing that the O.T. canon in its entirety speaks of Christ, we must take it for granted that also the Book of Genesis contains Christ as its center. The burden of proof lies with the negative.

### 3. Reason for Studying These Texts

In studying the three <sup>chief</sup> passages in the Book of Genesis that have been understood as referring to Christ, we are not approaching an interesting sidelight in the book of origins, but the first appearances of the Gospel <sup>the</sup> of salvation of man. It is <sup>the</sup> will of God that also we of the N.T. times study these passages carefully, as He says by St. Peter: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1, 19). In studying these prophecies we must be conscious of the fact that the writers of the O.T. realized that they were writing about the Messiah when they did so. 1 Pet. 1, 10.11: "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." That also Moses, when we do well to consider the author of the entire Pentateuch, wrote of Christ we know from John 5, 46, where Christ says of Moses, "He wrote of Me" (also Acts 26, 22.23a). We therefore know from the outset that there are prophecies of the Redeemer in the O.T. and specifically in the writings of Moses. It is up to the Bible student and theologian to recognize these prophecies when he meets them and to endeavor to understand them as fully as possible. To achieve this end in connection with the Messianic passages in Genesis is the purpose of this thesis.



#### 4. Treatment of Differing Opinions

Since this thesis is written as a study of what the text says, it is more convenient to place the differing interpretations of commentators as well as the perpetrations of modernism and unbelief in a separate part after the positive presentation is completed. To treat each variant interpretation of the individual points that are in question in these passages would be too lengthy. Greater unity is achieved by grouping the false comprehensions and interpretations under logical heads.



## Chapter II

### The Protevangel, Genesis 3,15

I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

#### 1. Importance of the Context

The words of Gen. 3,15 do not convey the correct meaning if taken out of their context. Considered in the light of the context, they are the climax of one of the two most dramatic moments of world history, the other being the crucifixion and resurrection of the Savior. After the great and glorious universe was completed, man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1,25.26ff) and placed into the universe as its head. Over the whole Creation God placed the superscription, "Behold, it was very good." Gen. 3, however, describes the entrance of evil, the opposite of good, into God's perfect creation. God is aware of this and soon appears on the scene in righteous indignation. He first questions man, the head and only responsible being in all the visible universe. Adam, the head of his race, not being able to deny the act of disobedience, pushes its blame upon the woman "whom thou gavest to be with me." The woman likewise cannot evade the charge, but pushes the blame on the serpent. Adam and Eve know that the Lord has come to carry out the threat spoken Gen. 2,16: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The Lord does not carry out that threat immediately, but first turns to the serpent with the curse, "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" (Gen. 3,14). The curse continues, but contains what we have found to be the first mention of the greatest blessing contained in Scripture: "And I will put enmity between thee and the



woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel."

Before taking up the detailed study of the text, it is well to review the next several verses to see how man fared under God's righteous wrath. The Bible is written for man, and man's lot before God is its main interest. After the curse of Gen. 3,15 God turns first to the woman, no doubt because it was she that had permitted evil to enter the world. It is a significant fact that Adam and Eve did not BRING evil into the world, as is at times said, but they PERMITTED it to enter. Because they failed in this responsibility, a severe curse is pronounced. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be subject to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (3,16). The fault of Adam was not only that he had disobeyed by eating from the fruit of the forbidden tree, but also that he had ~~disobeyed~~ disobeyed his wife where God had forbidden. Therefore his curse is based especially on that added disobedience: "And unto Adam he said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Gen. 3,17-19. Then God made clothes for Adam and Eve and drove them from the Garden of Eden, lest they approach also to the tree of life.

Now the question before us is, what is the relation of 3,15 to the rest of this history? This study centers mainly about the identity



of "her Seed"; but to establish that we must first determine who is spoken to and who is meant by "thy seed".

## 2. "Thee": Who is Spoken To?

The meaning of all words spoken in conversation is definitely colored by the consideration of the speaker and the person spoken to. The simple words "watch your step" spoken to the competitive athlete set up an entirely different train of thought in the mind than the same words addressed to a lady walking too close to the edge of an elevated railroad platform. Consideration of the person speaking is especially important when one compares a threat of revenge uttered by a child against a stalking fullback with the same threat made against a rival. If we were to quote infinitely more extreme examples of how the person of the speaker and the one spoken to affects the meaning of what is said, we should hardly produce a situation in which these factors are more significant than in the sentence before us. The words are those of אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, previously introduced in the narrative as Creator of heaven and earth; who formed man by a special act of creation and created him in His own image; who solemnly and plainly gave to man the injunction which had just been broken: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2,16,17. The person addressed in the first Messianic prophecy, however, is not fallen man. Boehl says: "Das evangelische Wort redet nicht direct zum Menschen, weil offenbar von den gefallenon Menschen kein Wollen und kein Vollbringen des Guten ferner zu erwarten war." P.50. What is said here is indeed of deep significance for the fallen creature; it is a very definite blessing to him. But it is spoken in the form



of a curse on him who led man to disobey the clear and definite injunction of the Lord. It is "a divine blessing, wrapt in judgments" (Briggs, p.75). The identity of the one who is cursed therefore sheds light on the blessing.

The statement of vv. 14.15 is addressed to the serpent,  $\psi \tau \rho \alpha \nu$ . This is the beast that had appeared to Eve in the garden, had spoken to her about the command of God, had led her to waver in strict obedience to it and thus had been the moving cause of the transgression that had brought about this painful meeting. This beast is cursed in v.14: "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." But it cannot be that the argumentation which led Eve to disobey originated with one of the lower creatures which had at the time of creation been made subject to man. The animal world was not fitted out with the intelligence by virtue of which man ruled over it. Should it have been possible that a creature could deceive man, his efficient rule over all the beasts (included in the "it was very good" pronounced upon the complete order of things) would have been a farce. Boehl makes this pertinent observation: "Wie wagt es wohl ein Tier, dort Gottgleichheit in Aussicht zu stellen, wo der Allerhochste den Tod angedroht hat? Nur ein ganz eminenter Feind Gottes, ein wider Gott und seine Schöpfung in Wuth Entbrannter konnte es wagen, in solcher Weise das Gegenteil von dem zu behaupten, was Gott gesagt." P.51. It was not the serpent itself that perpetrated the temptation, just as the sword of Herod was not the moral agent that killed John the Baptist. The serpent was the means used by a higher power that wanted to destroy the work of God, and that saw the necessity of approaching into the closer confidence of the woman in some disguise, since she was equipped to withstand any approaches. When God now thunders the curses of righteous wrath over him who had brought evil into His creation (which was entirely



good, Gen. 1,31), He first punishes the serpent (v.14), just as the father of a slain child will soon destroy the weapon with which the deed was committed (Keil, p.72).

God does not honor the real evildoer with direct mention. If one will divest oneself of all previous knowledge and information concerning this passage, this fact brings up a difficulty. As has already been shown, it is evident from the preceding account of Genesis that the serpent could not have led Eve to sin. It must have been the agent of another being. Because one body cannot inhabit another body or control its will, the tempter must be a spiritual being. This fact becomes very significant in the consideration of the achievement of the Seed of the Woman. But in the array of curses called forth by the act of disobedience, not one is addressed to the real evildoer. Without penetrating the text any further, one should be tempted to suppose that it must have been the serpent itself after all. But every return to that supposition re-emphasizes its absurdity. It is therefore logical to look for the curse upon the real evildoer in v.15, right after the curse on his instrument. In order to establish the supposition that v.15 is not addressed to the serpent, but to the real tempter, we must first determine the real identity of the tempter and then see whether the curse here spoken has been carried out upon him.

Who was the tempter? According to all that God has revealed to us, the statement of John 8,44, that the devil is the father of lying, is based directly on Gen. 3, where lying is introduced into God's perfect creation. In the same passage the devil is spoken of as a murderer from the beginning, which statement is again based on the fact that it was he who brought about the fulfillment of God's threat to man: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2,17). The same thought is stated a bit more succinctly in the apo-



cryptical book Ecclesiasticus, 2,24: "Thru the envy of the devil is death come into the world." All believing commentators agree with Keil: "Dieser Feind ist der Satan" (p.74). Those who will deny that Satan was the tempter must not only deny the correctness of these statements, but also leave a difficulty in the text unsolved.

That the specific curse of v.15 refers to the tempter and not to the serpent is evident from a comparison of that curse with what happened in the opening verses of the chapter. Eve was approached by the tempter and grew intimate with him. They set up friendly relations. That is the thing the tempter had intended to accomplish by entering a beast, toward which Eve would naturally be friendly and considerate. In v.15 now the curse is one of enmity: it is the nullification of the friendship established. And as the friendship was not primarily between Eve and the serpent, but with the real tempter, so the enmity that will henceforth obtain will not be between the woman and the beast; it will be "between thee and the women". That is spoken to the real tempter, Satan, altho according to its form the address is still to the serpent. "Gott tut dem hinter der Schlange verborgenen Verfuehrer gar nicht die Ehre an, ihm mit hohen Worten, mit Engelzungen, niederschmettern; Gott bleibt stehen bei der Huelle, die Satan selbst gewaehlt, und weiss ihn auch in dieser Huelle zu fangen und in Bande zu legen." Boehl 53.

At this point we must also consider the application of v.15 to the serpent and its descendants as a possibility. Dr. Maier points out (p.66) that "the hatred and repulsion which often exists between serpent and man may be a natural and inveterate reminiscence of this event, altho this point has been unduly emphasized." He continues with a quotation from Adam Clark that settles the matter as far as the present argument is concerned: "It is yet to be discovered that the serpentine race have any peculiar enmity against mankind, nor is there



any proof that men hate serpents more than they do other noxious animals. Men have much more enmity to the common rat and magpie than they have to all the serpents in the land, because the former destroy the grain, etc., and serpents in general, far from seeking to do men mischief, flee his approach, and generally avoid his dwelling." Even the citation of poisonous snakes that will attack man does not prove the hostility of the serpentine race to the human race. One cannot generalize from individual instances, nor are even the most vicious aggressive snakes any more hostile than other beasts that will attack man. We must conclude that our text does not refer to the race of snakes, but only to the real tempter, Satan. The serpent and its race has been adequately cursed v.14. Our reason for ascertaining whether this curse (v.15) is spoken to Satan and Satan only is well stated by Koil: "Durch die Natur des Feindes wird also schon der Begriff des  $\text{זרע}$  eigentuemlich modificirt";\* and Boehl: "Die richtige Einsicht nun in das Wesen dieses Verfuehrers wird uns einen tieferen Einblick in das Wesen des ihm gegenueber gestellten Weibessamens verschaffen" (p.51). Having now identified the enemy that is being cursed v.15, our next concern is, who is the tempter's seed?

### 3. "Thy Seed"

The noun  $\text{זרע}$  is derived from the verb root  $\text{זרע}$ , "to sow". It is used to denote both the act of sowing and the seed which is sown. When used of man, it naturally denotes offspring. But since in this passage not the serpent itself, but Satan is addressed, we have the word  $\text{זרע}$  applied to a spirit, which of course can have no offspring. The "seed" of Satan "embraces collectively all those who may come into the service of Satan, the evil angels and the human beings that serve his purpose" (Maier, p.66). That is Scriptural language. 1 John 3,8:



"He that sinneth is of the devil". John 8,44b the devil is called the father of lying. Rev. 12,9 is less clear, but based on the temptation in Eden and the same usus loquendi: "That old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." Mt. 23,33 the Pharisees are called "serpents" and "generation of vipers". John 8, 44a the unbelieving Jews are addressed: "Ye are of your father the devil". Acts 13,10 St. Paul calls Elymas the sorcerer "Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness". 1 John 3,10 speaks plain language: "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother". Less clear, the pertinent, is Job 30,8: "They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth". 1 Sam. 10,27; 1 K. 21,23; Judg. 20,13; Dout. 13,13 use the phrase "children of Belial" of wicked people. Judg. 19,22; 2 Sam. 23,6; 1 K. 21,10; 1 Sam. 2,12 have "sons of Belial". This array of Biblical expressions, which is by no means exhaustive, is sufficiently complete to show that Scripture in both the Old and the New Testament has one very definite conception of the "seed" of Satan: the party of the devil embracing all evil spirits and all unbelieving mankind. In them all is the evil principle and power that utilized the serpent in the temptation and which is cursed in Gen. 3,15. Briggs (p.75) puts it this way: "The seed of the serpent embraces all the evil race derived from him .... the serpents of the higher world, the evil spirits, and .. the serpents among mankind, the evil men, and seducers, .... indeed all the forces of evil which array themselves against the children of God". Keil (p.75): Es "sind alle, welche die Verheissung nicht beachtet und bewahrt haben, der alten Schlange als Beute anheimgefallen und dem Schlangensamen zuzusachsen, welchem der Kopf zer-treten wird".



#### 4. "Her Seed"

This is one of those points of interpretation on which serious-minded and thinking interpreters differ. In the present approach to the matter we shall not start with an enumeration of the interpretations that have been given, nor shall we introduce the matter with statements of Scripture, because there are no direct quotations of this passage; we shall approach the text itself, let it speak for itself, investigate the possibilities of interpretation that present themselves, follow reason as far as it can take us, and then turn to such statements of Scripture as have a bearing on our findings. We shall use commentators only to state individual points succinctly and for corroboration of factual data.

When the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened after their disobedience, they were afraid, not only, as they told God, because they were naked, but surely also because the threat "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" was now the next rung of the ladder for them. There is no indication in the sacred record that man could expect anything but the carrying out of this threat at this time. When, in the brief hearing before their judge they pleaded guilty of disobedience, the sentence was not first pronounced upon man, but upon the serpent, and then upon the tempter. While man was awaiting his own sentence, he had to hear in the sentence of the tempter of perpetual enmity between the woman and the tempter. But man also heard something good; the woman was to have a seed. That told man that it was not all over for him; there must have been a change in God's dispensation as far as man was concerned. Already in the Lord's reference to "her seed" there is involved the official change from the religion of self-righteousness to the religion of grace; for it is only by God's grace that she can at this time be given a seed. On the part of God, this



is a strategic move that will result in crushing Satan's rebellion forever. Looking a few verses farther, we see that the threat of death is carried out upon man, but in a modified way. His body and soul will be separated in death, but he is not to be separated from God as Satan is. With the mention of a seed continued life is promised the race of man. This much is immediately certain: Eve will have descendants. At this moment that information is a great comfort to both Adam and Eve.

The Lord does not leave it a mystery why man, who could expect nothing but death, should have a seed. He announces the purpose of the seed:  $\text{וְיָרָדְךָ אֲדָמָה}$ . Satan's purpose in leading man to disobedience was to destroy the works of God. God's purpose now is to overcome Satan and at the same time not to destroy man with him. In the warfare of Satan's rebellion against God, God now announces His strategy. He does not need to keep it secret. Satan had hoped to align man on his side against God (the "death" of 2,17 is essentially the state of separation from God in which Satan was already at this time); that plan is frustrated in that God first of all puts enmity between Satan and the woman. Then God does not inflict upon man the death that already rests on Satan, but gives man a seed. When the seed will appear, He does not say. When it does appear, the seed also is to be in a state of enmity against Satan. Their enmity will come to a head in a struggle that will end in a crushed head for Satan and an injured heel for "her Seed". In that way God's purpose of giving new life to man will be accomplished and Satan will be definitely overcome by man.

To every thinking person there must now come the question, why could Satan overcome Eve and thru her Adam when they were in the state of perfection, and then be overcome by their offspring when mankind was in a weakened condition? To answer that question we must first examine



the Hebrew text carefully. First we take up the use of the term זָרַע in those passages where it refers to progeny. Gen. 15,5 it stands for "a descendant": וְאַתָּה זָרַע. Two verses later it stands for "descendants": telling Abram to behold the stars, the Lord says, כֹּה יִהְיֶה זָרְעֶךָ. Often it denotes an individual. At the birth of Seth, Gen. 4, 25, Eve says, שָׂדֵי אֵלֶּיךָ זָרַע אֲחֵרָתָהּ הָיָה. Gen. 21,12 זָרַע can refer only to one person: בְּיָצֵאתָ מִן־הָאָרֶץ זָרַע יִנְּסֶנּוּ. In the following verse God speaks to Abram concerning Ishmael: זָרַע בְּנֵי הוּא. 1 Sam. 1,11 Hannah prays the Lord, בְּתִתֶּנּוּ לִּי זָרַע אֲנִי אֶמְשָׁח. Gen. 4,1 Eve thinks she has the זָרַע mentioned Gen. 3,15 when her first child is born. 2 Sam. 7,12 the Lord speaks to David about the succession to the throne: וְהָיָה לְךָ אֶת־זָרְעֶךָ. In certain phrases זָרַע naturally has a collective meaning, as in Is. 14,20: זָרַע כְּרִי־סָ. The word study of זָרַע therefore leads to the conclusion that it may be used collectively or individually, as the context demands.

The next step is to study the syntax of the verse. זָרַע הוּא is immediately spoken of as הוּא, "he", and the injury given him is reported with תִּשָּׂא אֶת־קַדְמֹתָיִךָ עָלָיו, "you will raise him with respect to the heel" (the verb תִּשָּׂא is in question as to its meaning). The use of the singular pronoun and pronominal suffix points first of all to an individual meaning, but does not exclude the collective idea. But without any further consideration of the context one would in a case like this incline to take the individual meaning, since a plural pronoun might be expected, if the collective meaning were intended.

Since the syntax gives us a definite clue but establishes nothing by proof, we must look to the context. Several significant facts are to be noted. First, the alignment of foes in the predicted enmity: Eve against Satan; Satan's following against Eve's Seed; Satan against



Eve's Seed. To say that because Satan's following (a collective term) is aligned against Eve's Seed the  $\eta\eta\omega$  must be collective, is offset entirely by the fact that in the next clause an individual (Satan) is pitted against Eve's Seed. The argument of symmetry achieves nothing. Next we consider the action. The first clause speaks of enmity between Eve and Satan; that is clear, but adds nothing to the progress of the argument. The second clause speaks of Satan's seed and the woman's seed. In the fulfillment we shall have to look after this; for the present nothing can be done with it. The second half of the verse speaks of struggle between the Seed of the woman and Satan himself. The action of both combatants is described with  $\eta\eta\omega$ , a verb much in question. The action of  $\eta\eta\omega$  must be of such a general nature that it can be predicated of both the serpent and the Seed of the Woman. The philological facts on  $\eta\eta\omega$  are well presented by Keil (p.73): "Fuer  $\eta\eta\omega$  ist durch das Chald., Syr., und Rabb. die Bedeutung terere, conterere ganz gesichert, vgl. Roodiger in Ges. thes. s.v., die wir in Einklang mit  $\sigma\upsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\iota\beta\epsilon\iota\nu$  Roem. 16,20 festhalten, weil sie zu allen Stellen, wo das Wort noch vorkommt (Hi. 9,17; Ps. 139,11), besser und leichter passt als die auf Combination des  $\eta\eta\omega$  mit  $\eta\eta\omega$  gegruendete Bedeutung inhiaro, feindselig trachten. Das Verbun ist mit doppeltem Objektsakkusativ constuirt, wobei der zweite Acc. die naechere Bestimmung des ersten gibt, s. Ges. 159 Ann. Ev. 281". Several other facts support these observations of Keil. No verb of hostile endeavor (as to snap after) is construed with the double accusative; to give the verb a different meaning each time it occurs in the verse does violence to the language; and the situation demands the defeat of Satan as a sufficient and fitting curse upon him. The meaning of the verb conterere, Gr.  $\sigma\upsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\iota\beta\epsilon\iota\nu$ , is not in question; it means "to rub together with injuring effect." The picture presented in the verse before us then is this: in the struggle between the Seed of the Woman and Satan



a severe wound will be inflicted on each combatant. The Seed of the Woman will injure the serpent's head, presumably by stepping on it, since His heel is injured; to the serpent this is a fatal wound. The serpent will injure the Seed of the Woman at the heel. A sting in the heel could be fatal and thus as complete a crushing of a man as the crushing of a serpent's head. But the contrast between head and heel does not indicate a fatal wound in the heel; nor does the situation call for the fall of both combatants. From the fact that this sentence is a curse upon Satan we may assume that the wound inflicted by him on the heel of the Woman's Seed is not fatal. But Satan's own power falls completely.

These considerations bring us closer to identifying the  $\text{זר}$  in this that we now know that he is able to overcome Satan. This achievement of "her Seed" is one in which Eve herself had failed. It is not a combat with a bodily power, but with a spiritual prince. In such a fight physical numbers mean nothing; what avails is power in the spiritual world. It may therefore be definitely inferred from the text that "her Seed" will be a supernatural being. That inference is strengthened by the fact that Eve calls her first child  $\text{אֶת־הָאָדָם}$ , Gen. 4,1, showing how she understood the promise of "her Seed". Then it is also not strange that the coming Seed is spoken of as "her Seed" and not as usual, "his seed". If the Seed will be what Eve called  $\text{אָדָם}$ , the father of that seed must also be  $\text{אָדָם}$  and not a mere man.

These observations lead us to some very definite conclusions. The  $\text{זר}$  will certainly be an individual who is God but also man, both  $\text{אָדָם}$  and  $\text{אֱלֹהִים}$ , who will be at perpetual enmity with all the devil's following and will overcome Satan himself with a crushing defeat. That is Christ, the Messiah, who was man and God and who overcame Satan on Cal-



vary. To prove this we now call in Scripture, which shows us that there is nothing indefinite or equivocal about this whole passage. We can substantiate the conclusion that the משיח must be the Messiah and the Messiah only by showing from Scripture these points: 1. That Christ was at enmity with the party of Satan ("I will put enmity between .... thy seed and her Seed"); 2. that He overcame Satan ("He shall crush thy head"); 3. that He was both man and God.

1. That Christ was at enmity with the seed of Satan follows from His activity in casting out devils and evil spirits, His censure of the Pharisees ("O generation of vipers") and all His preaching against the world, which is an ally of Satan. - 2. That Christ overcame Satan is taught in several clear passages. 1 John 3,8: "The Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil". The diction of Rom. 16,20 is not accidental: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet". Job. 2,14: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that thru death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Then there are all those passages which show the strenuous the futile activity of Satan in the life of Jesus: the murder of the babes at Bethlehem; the temptation, Mt. 4; the temptation in Gethsemane, Mt. 26,36ff and parallels; when Peter wants to dissuade Jesus from going into His passion, Jesus does not answer Peter, but says, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Mt. 16,23; Mk.8,33). - 3. That Christ was both man and God is clear from many passages; e.g., Gal. 4, 4: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Other passages on the true deity of Christ are given in the elaborate Catalog of Testimonies, Concordia Triglotta, Pp. 1106 - 1156; on both the true deity and the true humanity of Christ we have elaborate treatises in all scriptural dogmatics. To present detailed proof for these questions goes beyond the scope of this essay.



## 5. The Messianic Interpretation of the Church

The Christian church of early times followed Eve in considering Gen. 3,15 directly Messianic. The LXX demonstrated their conviction by translating  $\chi\lambda\lambda$  with  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ , even tho they translated the antecedent  $\eta\epsilon\gamma\gamma\eta$  with the neuter  $\sigma\upsilon\tau\epsilon\gamma\mu\alpha$ . The fact that this passage is never quoted directly in the N.T. does not mean that it was not known to the Evangelists and Apostles; they often refer to it, as we have shown. The Jerusalem Targum and the Targum of Jonathan comment with the words: "in delibus Messiae remedium futurum esse humano gonori" (that is, against the injury of Satan). (Boehl,70) The later acceptance of the Messianic interpretation is adequately stated by Boehl, p.70f:

Die Kirchenväter, auch Hieronymus und Augustin, liessen das Protevangelium absichts liegen und Augustin beginnt die clariora vaticinia mit der Vorheissung an Abraham (de civ. Dei, l.XVI, c.12). Erst in der Reformationszeit, besonders durch Luther in seinen Enarrationes in Genesis, dann weiter durch Melancthon in seinen Commentar zur Genesis, kam das Protevangelium wieder zu Ehren. Luther hat auch den unvorgaenglichen Ruhm, dass er dieses Evangelium sozusagen erst wieder entdeckt und allen Glauben der Vaeter auf dasselbe bezogen hat. Ferner legen die meisten Ausleger aus der nachreformatorischen Zeit unser Evangelium nach der personlich messianischen Auffassung aus. Solche Auslegungen finden sich z.B. in den "Critici sacri" und in der "Synopsis von Polus; ebenso verfähhrt Calov in der "Biblia illustrata"; Hiller, "Vorbilder Jesu Christi", pag. 19. u.A.

## 6. The Theology of the Protevangel

Having satisfied ourselves that Gen. 3,15 refers to the Messiah, we can now see also other points of theology, draw new inferences and notice more implications. The phrase "her Seed" now plainly refers to the virgin birth, as Luther has pointed out. The enmity between "thy seed and her Seed" takes on new meaning when we think of the inveterate hostility shown toward Christ by His countrymen who were children of the devil. The threat of God in 2,17 is now no longer modified, but is carried out to the full in the case of every individual



human being, being vicariously inflicted on the Savior on the cross. Thereby continued spiritual life is granted the race of man by God's free choice. As we now review the entire drama of Gen. 3 the most outstanding theological fact is the free grace of God. At a time when no one deserved anything but curses, God not only cursed, but also blessed. Gen. 3 is Scripture's profoundest treatise on the free grace of God, excluding the merit of man completely and utterly with the account of the Fall. Here we see the basis of and reason for St. Paul's continued emphasis on the exclusion of works from grace. What force does not Gen. 3, especially 3,15, put into these household passages from St. Paul: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom. 3,21); "By grace are ye saved thru faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2,8); "And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace" (Rom. 11,6); "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life thru Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6,23). The longer one studies the theology of Gen. 3, the more forcefully does it impress itself on one that the heart and center of the Prot-evangel is the grace of God in Christ Jesus, which is also the heart and center of the Pauline Epistles and of all Scripture.

#### 7. Differing Interpretations

In strict contradiction to the Scripture teaching that the inspired writers of the Old Testament prophesied directly and specifically concerning the coming of the promised Messiah, modern critical theories consider such prophecy an impossibility. The several unscriptural interpretations are the consequence of a spiritual blindness that does not want to see what the inspired record plainly says. The two fundamental theories that are most dominant are that of the



progressive development of revelation and that of the late composition of the Pentateuch by an editor who used sources known as J, E, JE, etc. When interpreters have once left the principle that the text must be revered as the Word of God and that it must be interpreted according to rules based on the laws of human thought and language and on the nature and purpose of Holy Writ, then they can without trouble read their own ideas into the plain text without difficulty and without compunctions of conscience. That is the explanation for the amazing fortitude that has characterized the rationalistic interpretation of the text we are discussing in this essay.

The leading spokesman of the rationalistic interpreters is Skinner, author of the volume on Genesis in the International Critical Commentary. In the text of his exposition he does not mention the Messianic interpretation at all, but treats it negatively in an extended footnote. He presents the sum total of his findings in the verso thus: "The general meaning of the sentence is clear: in the war between men and serpents the former will crush the head of the foe, while the latter can only wound in the heel." P.79. He ignores the fact that in v.15 Satan is addressed and that according to his interpretation Satan himself is not punished for bringing sin into the world. The difficulty with the verb  $\eta\psi$  he solves by deriving it in one case from  $\eta\psi$  in the sense of "be eager for", "aim at", and in the other from  $\eta\psi$ , "bruise". That is doing violence to the language. "Thy seed" and "her seed" he renders: "The whole brood of serpents, and the whole race of men." P.79 (on the whole race of men, also Briggs, p.75, and Hengstenberg, p.54). As already stated, not the serpent but Satan is addressed; "thy seed" must be Satan's seed. For that reason "her seed" cannot be the race of men: man has already failed to overcome Satan and therefore cannot hope to do so in the future when men will be more numerous because in spiritual conflict phy-



sical numbers mean nothing. It is not surprising that he says, p.82: "It is doubtful if, from the standpoint of strict historical exegesis, the passage can be regarded as in any sense a Protovangelium". With the mention of "strict historical exegesis" he refers to the contention of modern critics that the doctrines involved in a Protovangelium were not revealed to mankind until much later. That is of course shameless rebellion against the plain Word of God and unblushing exaltation of the product of his own imagination.

Dillman, who finds in the words of Gen. 3,15 the "idea of man's vocation to ceaseless moral warfare with the 'serpent-brood' of sinful thoughts, and an implicit promise of the ultimate destruction of the evil power," operates with the same principles. Of all the efforts to discredit the Bible, one of the most successful among the ignorant and uneducated is the type represented by this feat of Dillman: using a pious thought of a general character to hide a fundamental doctrine that does not fit into his scheme of theology. Gunkel, quoted by Skinner p.82, presents another such theory, which finds more acceptance among modern Bible interpreters than one might expect. He holds that originally the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent were mythological characters that were engaged in a mythical combat. It is a favorite pastime of higher criticism to place the early Bible stories on a par with the ancient mythologies of the heathen nations. But by this procedure the divine origin of Scripture is completely discarded and the whole Bible loses its worth.

The same rationalistic spirit is dominant in all those commentaries and Bible editions that not so much as have a reference to the Messianic content of the passage. The Bagster Bible, e.g., in its extensive discussion on Genesis (Bible Helps, p.15f), contains no mention whatever of the Messiah or of sin. Dods, in his piously worded commentary on Genesis, takes no notice of the Messianic element in his comment to vv. 14f.



The flaw in such exegesis is that it ignores the very core and center of Scripture, which is the Messiah.

The Jewish interpretation, as given in the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan and the Jerusalem Targum, takes the seed of the woman to be the Jewish community which will be victorious over the devil in the "days of King Messiah". This collective conception of "her seed" cannot be held because the versions and the N.T. plainly indicate that the Seed of the Woman is an individual, namely Christ. The LXX translate  $\chi\tau\iota\varsigma$  with  $\sigma\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$ , and the N.T. shows that he who overcame Satan was not the Jewish nation but only Christ. This interpretation is no doubt the product of that pride and prejudice that marks the Jewish race. They have put themselves on a pedestal so high that they ascribe to themselves the very work of the Son of God.

The Catholic Interpretation is based on the mistranslation of the Vulgate, which has rendered  $\chi\tau\iota\varsigma$  with ipsa. This has given rise to the doctrine that the virgin Mary is here introduced as the agency for crushing the serpent's head. This is normal Catholic procedure and involves the same errors that characterize the dogmatic perpetrations of Romanistic theology in general. The masculine  $\chi\tau\iota\varsigma$  cannot be read and interpreted as feminine. If it is argued that the three consonants he, waw, and aleph are sometimes read as  $\chi\tau\iota$ , the feminine form, the contention must be granted, but must be supplemented with the information that these cases are always marked as a Q're perpetuum, showing that they are to be read as feminine and not as masculine. In this passage, however, no such marking is found, and both the verb and its suffix are masculine in form. Finally, according to its antecedent,  $\chi\tau\iota\varsigma$ ,  $\chi\tau\iota\varsigma$  must be masculine. That this argument is unscientific is freely admitted by Jerome and other Catholic authorities. But aside from grammatical considerations, the Catholic interpretation is utterly



impossible because the work done by the Seed of the Woman was done by Christ. There is not even the faintest reference in Scripture indicating that the mother of Jesus had any part in this work; all she did was stand beneath the cross at the time of this great struggle. Rather, there is definite proof to the contrary when St. Paul says "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God". A sinner could not have helped in the work of overcoming Satan.

The interpretation of Calvin is known as the typical interpretation. According to Calvin this passage "is a promise of victory over the devil to mankind, united in Christ, its divine head (Skinner, 81). This opinion still has a strong hold even among serious-minded commentators. Briggs, for instance, holds to it: "The seed of the woman embraces the human race as such" (p.75). Even Keil who certainly is not given to wandering from the literal statement of the text says: "Hieraus folgt indess nicht ohne weiteres, dass auch unter dem Weibsamem nur eine einheitliche Person, nur ein Individuum zu verstehen sei. Da das Weib die Mutter aller Lebendigen (v.20), die Stammutter aller Menschen ist, so kann ihr Same nur das Menschengeschlecht sein, welchem der Sieg ueber die Schlange und deren Samen verheissen wird." p.74. But Keil himself refutes this exegesis a few sentences later: "Da dieser Feind nur mit geistlichen Waffen bekampft werden kann, so koennen auch nur diejenigen mit Erfolg ihn bekampfen, welche die geistliche Waffenruestung besitzen und gebrauchen." Mankind as such certainly cannot have these weapons. The fact that believers can fight against Satan is due to the fact that Christ has already overcome Satan for them. Even Hongstenberg, who did much to create proper respect for Messianic prophecy, is not correct here: "As far as the sentence has reference to the serpent, the human race alone can be understood by the seed of the woman; and to this, therefore, the victory over the invisible author of the temptation must also be adjudged. The reference to the human race is also indicated by the connection between 'her seed' in this



and the words, 'Thou shalt bring forth sons', ver. 16. Finally. -  
As the person of the Messiah does not yet distinctly appear even in  
the promises to the Patriarchs, this passage cannot well be explained  
of a personal Messiah; inasmuch as, by such an explanation, the pro-  
gressive expansion of the Messianic prophecy in Genesis would be de-  
stroyed". P.28. The connection between "her seed" in this verse and  
"Thou shalt bring forth sons " in ver. 16 is purely imaginary. "Her  
seed" is he who is to overcome Satan; that is only Christ, without  
any help from the human race; the sons Eve is to bring forth are in  
no way related to the Seed of the Woman in this technical terminology.  
The statement that the person of the Messiah does not appear in the pro-  
mises to the Patriarchs may be true in itself, but the argument he  
makes with it does not hold because ch. 49,10 the reference to Shilo  
can be taken in no other way than as a personal reference to the Mes-  
siah. In other words, Hengstenberg is actually subordinating the plain  
implications of the text to the mental picture of the progressive ex-  
pansion of prophecy. Prophecy did grow by accretion; but not in such  
a way as to involve what Hengstenberg here claims. This whole theory  
is based on a confusion of Christ's victory over Satan with the vic-  
torious struggle of His church. That involves first the error of iden-  
tifying mankind with the Una Sancta and secondly ignores the fact that  
when Christ fought Satan, the Una Sancta could not and did not help Him.

These are the most noteworthy of the interpretations that do not  
agree with Scripture. They do not stand, however, and we must hold  
to our conclusion that this passage speaks primarily of the grace of  
God in Christ Jesus.



### Chapter III

#### The Blessing of the Patriarchs

##### 1. Connection with the Protovangel

The Protovangel was taken alone out of Paradise by the first parents. This was their light and comfort in the hardships which they encountered; Eve showed this at the time when her first child was born, Gen. 4,1 (Fuerbringer \*1). But the time was yet a long way off that the promised Deliverer should appear. Sin became greater and more rampant. Cain became a murderer, Gen. 4. The sons of the godly families took ungodly wives, 6,2. God was finally constrained to destroy the earth by a flood. But there was also a godly race among men. This was the race of Seth, in whose days men began to preach in the name of יהוה, the God of the Covenant, referring in their preaching no doubt to the covenant of Gen. 3,15. Later Enoch arose from the race of Seth; he lived in the true and saving faith, according to Heb. 11, 5f: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; .... for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him." Enoch also preached, Jude 14. Enoch's grandson was Lamech, the father of Noah. Lamech also gives evidence of Messianic expectation in calling his son "Noah", i.e., "Comforter", a name that later came to be applied to the Messiah. Noah was a righteous man, Heb. 11,7, but all the rest of the world (besides Noah's family) was so wicked that God destroyed it by a flood. Noah came forth from the ark as Adam and Eve had gone out of Eden, the only bearer of the promise. His son Shem received the promise when Ho-

\*1 Messianic Prophecies (class notes), p.8.



ah blessed only him with the blessing of יהוה, the God of the covenant, but also Japheth, father of the Germanic races, was promised eventual inheritance in it. Of the descendants of Shem, Abraham became the bearer of the promise. To him, to his son Isaac, and to his grandson Jacob, the second direct Messianic prophecy was made.

From Noah to Abraham we have the following line of ten generations: Shem; Arphaxad; (Cainan); Salah; Heber; Peleg; Reu; Serug; Nahor; Torah; Abraham. Noah lived to see nine of these ten generations and died two years before Abraham was born. On the exact date of the call of Abraham the authorities are not agreed. Ussher has 1921 B.C.; Calmet, 1917 B.C.; Halos 2078 B.C. Recent figures are nearer to the older date, 2078 B.C. Whatever figure be accepted, the promise to Abraham comes, roughly speaking, about half-way between Eden and Bethlehem.

## 2. The Passages

This prophecy is given five times, its occurrence extending from the days of Abraham into the days of Jacob's youth. Of these five occurrences, the first is chief and will be the basis of our study. The others must, however, be drawn into the discussion to supplement the statements of the first; for there are minor variations. These are the passages.

Gen. 12,2.3 (spoken to Abraham): I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Gen. 18,18: Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him.

Gen. 22,17.18 (spoken to Abraham): In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: because thou hast obeyed my voice.



Gen. 28,4 (spoken to Isaac): I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

Gen. 28,14 (spoken to Jacob): Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

In Hebrew we quote only the Messianic clauses:

Gen. 12,3: וְנִבְרָכוּ בְךָ כָּל-פְּסָחוֹת הָאָרֶץ

Gen. 18,18: וְנִבְרָטוּ בְּךָ כָּל-גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ

Gen. 22,18: וְהָיָה בְּרָכְךָ כָּל-גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ

Gen. 26,4: וְהָיָה פְּרֻכְךָ בְּכָל-גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ

Gen. 28,14: וְנִבְרָכוּ בְּךָ כָּל-פְּסָחוֹת הָאָרֶץ וְכָל-בְּרָכְךָ

### 3. The Spiritual Blessings

In studying this prophecy we need not determine whether it is Messianic; that is determined for us by St. Paul Gal. 3,16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." We know from the outset that the עַבְדְּךָ refers to one individual, Christ, the Messiah. All other suggestions are a priori excluded: Scriptura Scripturam interpretatur. A few verses earlier St. Paul has an equally certain reference to this passage (vv. 13.14a): "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ..... that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." All that remains for us to do is to study the detailed implications of the text as a Messianic passage and its relation to the context in which it occurs.



In comparing the five passages that constitute this Messianic series we note certain similarities and certain differences. In each case the verb is introduced with the *vav* consecutivum, placing the action into the future. The first two passages and the last one have the Niphal form of the verb **וְנִבְרַכְתָּ**, while the other two (22,18 and 26,4) have the Hithpael **וְנִבְרַכְתָּ**. In each case the Niphal form is followed by **וְ** with the person of the Patriarch: 12,3, **וְנִבְרַכְתָּ אַתָּה**; 18,18, **וְנִבְרַכְתָּ אֲבוֹתָיִךָ**; 28,14, **וְנִבְרַכְתָּ אַתָּה**; while each instance of the Hithpael is followed by **וְ** with the mention of the Seed: **וְנִבְרַכְתָּ בְּזֶרְעֶךָ**. The Niphal is used twice in the promise to Abraham and in the one promise to Jacob; the Hithpael with the reference to the Seed and not to the Patriarch is used once of Abraham (22,18) and in the promise to Isaac. Literally translated, the passages with the Niphal read: "And there shall be blessed in thee"; those with the Hithpael read: "And there shall bless themselves in thy seed." To proceed in a scientific way, one ought at this point to take note of the subject of the respective verbs to see whether that has any bearing on the choice of mood. 12,3 and 28,14 have the subject **לֹא מֵאֵי הַמַּצְרַיִם** with the Niphal. Both instances of the Hithpael, but also the Niphal in 18,18, have the subject **לֹא מֵאֵי הַמַּצְרַיִם**. For the present argument we can draw nothing from the subjects used, altho we will have to discuss that matter separately on another page. To solve the difficulty of the change from Niphal to Hithpael we must first apply the hermeneutical rule that every word must be taken in its natural meaning unless that is impossible. The natural meaning of the Niphal forms is passive, "shall be blessed", and the Hithpael forms are naturally reflexive, "shall bless themselves", as we have noted above. Then the text using the Niphal form tells Abraham, "they shall be blessed in thee", and those using the Hithpael, "they shall bless themselves in thy seed." Since the context allows the normal meaning of the moods, the only consideration that can move us to for-