

The Meaning of the Verb "To Plant" (*nata'*) in Genesis 2:8

"The LORD God **planted** (Hebrew: *nata'*) a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed." (Gen 2:8)

The Meaning of the Hebrew Verb *nata'*

Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament: "plant: the insertion of a slip (*neta'* or *shatil*) into the soil"²

New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: "plant, establish, drive"³

Brown, Driver and Briggs: "plant"⁴

Etymology

New (Late) Hebrew: "plant"⁴

Ugaritic: "plant,³ plantings"²

Arabic: "plant"³

The Usage of "To Plant" (*nata'*) in the Pentateuch⁵

"Planting" Refers to the Process of Placing Slips or Seeds into the Ground

Gen 2:8: The LORD God **planted** (Hebrew: *nata'*) a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed.

Gen 9:20: Then Noah began farming and **planted** (Hebrew: *nata'*) a vineyard.

Gen 21:33 Abraham **planted** (Hebrew: *nata'*) a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.

Deut 6:10-11: "Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which **you did not plant** (Hebrew: *nata'*), and you eat and are satisfied...."

Deut 28:39: "**You shall plant** (Hebrew: *nata'*) and cultivate vineyards, but you will neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes, for the worm will devour them."

What is Planted Only Produces Food Over Time

Lev 19:23: 'When you enter the land and **plant** (Hebrew: *nata'*) all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden to you; it shall not be eaten.

Deut 20: 5-6: "The officers also shall speak to the people, saying, 'Who is the man that has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him depart and return to his house, otherwise he might die in the battle and another man would dedicate it. 'Who is the man that **has planted** (Hebrew: *nata'*) a vineyard and has not begun to use its fruit? Let him depart and return to his house, otherwise he might die in the battle and another man would begin to use its fruit."

Deut 28:30: "You shall betroth a wife, but another man will violate her; you shall build a house, but you will not live in it; **you shall plant** (Hebrew: *nata'*) a vineyard, but you will not use its fruit.

Metaphorical Uses of *nata'*

Exod 15:17: "You will bring them and **plant** (Hebrew: *nata'*) them in the mountain of Your inheritance, the place, O LORD, which You have made for Your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established.

The Meaning of the Hebrew Noun *neta'*, the Nounal Form of *nata'*

Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament: "an individual plant or sapling"⁶

New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis : "planting, plant, slip"⁷

Brown, Driver and Briggs : "plantation, planting, plant"⁴

The Old Testament Usages of *neta'*

***Neta'* Means the Individual Plants or Slips which are First Planted**

Isa 17:10-11 For you have forgotten the God of your salvation And have not remembered the rock of your refuge. Therefore you **plant** (Hebrew: *nata'*) delightful **plants** (Hebrew: *neta'*) and set them with vine slips of a strange god. In the day that you **plant** (Hebrew: *neta'*, "your planting") it you carefully fence it in, And in the morning you bring your seed to blossom; but the harvest will be a heap In a day of sickness and incurable pain.

***Neta'* is An Individual Plant that Grows⁹**

Job 14:9 At the scent of water it will flourish and put forth sprigs like a **plant** (Hebrew: *neta'*).

Ps 144:12 Let our sons in their youth be as grown-up **plants** (Hebrew: *neta'*), and our daughters as corner pillars fashioned as for a palace;

***Neta'* as a Plant in a Vineyard**

Isa 5:7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel And the men of Judah His delightful plant (Hebrew: *neta'*). Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.

Implications for Genesis 2:8

God did not create the Garden of Eden with trees and vegetation with the appearance of age. He planted plants and slips which grew by natural means.

¹ NASB

² J. Reindl and H. Ringgren, "nata'," *TDOT*, 9:390.

³ M. G. Abegg, Jr., "nt'," *NIDOTTE*, 3:94.

⁴ *BDB*, 642.

⁵ The usage of *nata'* in the rest of the Old Testament is primarily metaphorical.

⁶ J. Reindl and H. Ringgren, "nata'," *TDOT*, 9:392.

⁷ M. G. Abegg, Jr., "nt'," *NIDOTTE*, 3:94.

⁸ *BDB*, 642.

⁹ Reindl and Ringgren, *TDOT*, 9:392.