

Hebrew Verb Word Study of “to give” נתן

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INTRODUCTION

1 Chronicles 29:6-9 describes the grandeur of the Temple's construction and David's challenge to Israel to follow his example of giving. Their willingness to participate in the Temple's building mirrors the building of the Tabernacle in Exodus 35:4-29. "Now who is willing to consecrate themselves to the LORD today" (29:5)? The prophet Ezra uses the word נתן in light of the community of leaders' and congregation's generous contributions "toward the work on the temple of God" (29:7). Here, נתן is defined to give, bestow, grant, permit, ascribe, employ, devote, consecrate, dedicate, pay wages, sell, exchange, lend, commit, and entrust.¹

For this idea, providing consideration to the utilization of נתן will recognize its usage within 1 Chronicles 29 to other passages related or unrelated. This study will consist of the inspection of the historical tradition, Scriptural usage, direct contextual significance, and exegetical implication of נתן in the Tanakh. Consequently, this thesis will contend that 1 Chronicles 29:6-9 expresses the willingness of those in a relationship with God enables them to give "freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD" (29:9).

I. GENERIC USAGE OF נתן (HISTORICAL/DIACHRONIC/SCRIPTURAL)

In expressions of etymology נתן is transliterated *nathan*, Strong's 5414). It's historical use from a primitive root meaning to give, (put, or set (nearly = נָשָׂא, and sometimes "" with it: a. literally, (especially often in Ezekiel, P): with accusative + נָשָׂא on, ring on hand (example: Genesis 41:42), b. figurative, (in many phrases: with נָשָׂא, put my spirit upon him (example: Isaiah 42:1)).²

¹ Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: *A Reader's Edition* (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson, 2014), 1632. Examination of 1 Chronicles 29 for נתן comparison of word study analysis.

² Strong's Exhaustive Concordance: New American Standard Bible. Updated ed. La Habra: Lockman Foundation, 1995. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/concordances/strongs-exhaustive-concordance/>.

The usage of נתן has over two-thousand-eleven occurrences within the Tanakh. Considering this vast number of occurrences, one finds a distinction in its meaning in Jeremiah 3:8 where נתן is rendered to give personally, deliver or hand to, as an indictment. Here, Israel, in many ways, takes its relationship with God for granted again. They believe that in their unfaithfulness that all they have to do is call upon God's name, and he will forget everything. God's punishment—a "certificate of divorce" for faithless Israel and eventually her exile (Deut. 24:1). The given of וְלִקְרָאָהּ is translated as "I had put her away."

Another example of a similar meaning of נתן is its rendering of granting a request: Ruth 1:9: "May the Lord *grant* that you may find a place of rest, each one in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they raised their voices and wept."

II. CONTEXTUAL SETTING AND EXEGETICAL MEANING

The contextual setting of 1 Chronicles 29:6-9 in its fundamental use of the word נתן is an expression of a determined heart in return to God. In the opening verses of 1 Chron. 29, we find the elder statesman David praying before the assembly of Israel. All had assembled to worship the Lord and listen to David concerning Solomon and the temple construction (1–9). In his final public prayer, David mentions God's power and glory, his divine attributes, and that his sovereignty that rules "over all" and gives "strength to all. David's utterances are filled with humility as he expresses to Israel that they could not willingly give to the temple's erection without God granting them. One should realize that everything David and the congregation gives belongs to the Lord first and the one who willingly returns to the Lord blesses oneself. Only God could grant Solomon and Israel the love and passion for obeying him willingly (14-19). In view of David's prayer, one cannot overlook the attitude of the leaders of Israel in their sacrificial giving (29:6): "those in charge of the kings work וַיִּתְּנוּ (gave willingly)."

There is no greater articulation of יהוה than the Johannine verse “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son” (John 3:16). “But John speaks more clearly than all others, when he represents *the Word*, who from the beginning *was God with God*, as in union with the Father, the original cause of all things.”³ Hence, the Son whose eternal reign as the son of David, is not simply called God but is also acknowledged to occupy an eternal dominion.

David’s gifts reflected his devotion to God in his declaration that the temple was for God and therefore should have the finest of material and craftsmanship reflecting the sovereign God’s holiness. “David closed his farewell address by recounting the wealth that he had furnished for the building of the temple (29:1-5).”⁴ His prayer flowed from the sacrificial giving on both his participation and that of Israel. יהוה in this context represents that all glory, honor, and praise belong to God alone (29:10-13, 20).

III. CONCLUSION

As one wrenches oneself from the selfish grip of personal welfare, one has the potential to embrace community on a grander scale through sacrificial giving. David’s response to the theological certainties of God’s magnanimity and power is one of reverence and humility, and is the exemplar to Israel in their answer of giving both financially and materially to the building of the house of God. These truths advance the theological basis for hope for the rebuilding postexilic community. A. W. Tozer expressed this idea in this manner, “Let any man turn to God in earnest, let him begin to exercise himself unto godliness, let him seek to develop his powers of spiritual receptivity by trust and obedience

³ John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia, PA: Nicklin and Howe, 1816), 137.

⁴ Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 199.

and humility, and the results will exceed anything he may have hoped in his leaner and weaker days.”⁵ Therefore, יָנַד in 1 Chronicles 29:6-9 is the expression of one who is willing to submit oneself wholeheartedly to the sovereign will of God.

⁵ A. W. Tozer., *The Essential Tozer Collection: The Pursuit of God, The Purpose of Man, The Crucified Life* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2013, 48.

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