

00822 בָּרָא found in TWOT #278

0278.0 בָּרָא (*bārā'*) I, **create, make, Creator (Qal); choose, cut down, dispatch, (Piel); be created, be done** (Niphael; RSV "yet unborn" in Psa 102:18 [H 19]; "clear ground" in Josh 17:15, 18; RSV and ASV "mark" in Ezk 21:19 [H 24]).

(278a) בְּרִיאָה (*b<sup>e</sup>ri'â*) **new thing.**

The root *bārā'* has the basic meaning "to create." It differs from *yāšar* "to fashion" in that the latter primarily emphasizes the shaping of an object while *bārā'* emphasizes the initiation of the object.

The question of the meaning of the root *bārā'* is complicated by its connotation in the Piel of "cut down" (Josh 17:15, 18; Ezek 23:47). This meaning may also obtain in the use of the word in Ezek 21:19 [H 24] where it need not connote carving a signpost, but simply the act of cutting down a branch or sapling as a marker). If this meaning attests to the concrete form of the Qal, the word may have meant "to form," "to fashion" in the sense of carving or cutting out. But it is possible that the Piel form may represent an entirely different root. KB (2d ed.) posits a second root used in the Piel meaning "to cut down." THOT (in loc.) follows KB (3d ed.) that there is one root with the basic meaning "separate," "divide." This would explain the usages of the Piel, but, as is often the case, is not decisive for the nuance of the meaning "create" in the Qal. And, since the word is used in such a distinctive sense in the Qal it is best to consider the meaning of the root solely on the basis of usage.

The word is used in the Qal only of God's activity and is thus a purely theological term. This distinctive use of the word is especially appropriate to the concept of creation by divine fiat.

The root *bārā'* denotes the concept of "initiating something new" in a number of passages. In Isa 41:20 it is used of the changes that will take place in the Restoration when God effects that which is new and different. It is used of the creation of new things (*ḥādāshôt*) in Isa 48:6-7 and the creation of the new heavens and the new earth (Isa 65:17). Marvels never seen before are described by this word (Exo 34:10), and Jeremiah uses the term of a fundamental change that will take place in the natural order (Jer 31:22). The Psalmist prayed that God would create in him a clean heart (Psa 51:10 [H 12]) and coupled this with the petition that God would put a new spirit within him (See also Num 16:30; Isa 4:5; Isa 65:18).

The word also possesses the meaning of "bringing into existence" in several passages (Isa 43:1; Ezek 21:30 [H 35]; Ezek 28:13, 15).

It is not surprising that this word with its distinctive emphases is used most frequently to describe the creation of the universe and the natural phenomena (Gen 1:1, 21, 27; Gen 2:3 etc.). The usages of the term in this sense present a clearly defined theology. The magnitude of God's power is exemplified in creation. This has implications for the weak (Isa 40:26; cf. Isa 40:27-31) and for the unfolding of God's purposes in history (Isa 42:5; Isa 45:12). Creation displays the majesty (Amos 4:13), orderliness (Isa 45:18), and sovereignty (Psa 89:12 [H 13]) of God. Anthropologically, the common creation of man forms a plea for unity in Mal 2:10. And man is seen as created for vanity in Psa 89:47 [H 48].

*THOT* argues that this word is used only in the P document and other late literature. Of course this view can only be sustained by dividing and post-dating the documents.

The limitation of this word to divine activity indicates that the area of meaning delineated by the root falls outside the sphere of human ability. Since the word never occurs with the object of the material, and since the primary emphasis of the word is on the newness of the created object, the word lends itself well to the concept of creation ex nihilo, although that concept is not necessarily inherent within the meaning of the word.

*b<sup>er</sup>i'â*. New thing (RSV "something new"). The word connotes something new or extraordinary (Num 16:30). It thus reflects a basic connotation of the root *bārā'* (Exo 34:10; Isa 48:6; Jer 31:22).

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