

# Baal-Study of Hebrew Words

## STUDY OF HEBREW WORDS FOR BAAL

Studies on Baal can be somewhat complicated because the same word **baal** can be either a verb ([01166](#)), a noun or a proper noun. Baal is also a component of many Hebrew names of places and persons.

1. [Baal](#) - as a verb
2. [Baal](#) - as a noun
3. [Baal](#) - as a proper name
4. [Baal](#) - used in combination of place names
5. [Baal](#) - Baal-peor
6. [Baal](#) - Dictionary Description (most of this information is extra-Biblical)

---

**Baal** (verb) ([01166](#)) (baal לַבַּאֵל) to marry, to rule over, to have dominion, to get a husband. In relation to marriage, it refers to marrying a woman (Dt. 24:1); or a woman to be married (Prov. 30:23). Figuratively, the verb **baal** refers at least 3 times to Jehovah's "marriage" to Israel (Isa 54:5, Jer. 3:14, Jer 31:32-note), and conversely to faithless Israel's pursuit of idolatry figuratively described as "marriage to the daughter of a foreign god" (Malachi 2:11-note). Baal is used to mean dominion over land ("ruled in Moab" 1 Chr. 4:22) and "other masters besides You have **ruled** us" (Isa. 26:13). Used as a participle, it means to be married to (Ge. 20:3). In 2 Kings 12:3 **baal** refers to "the **high** (baal) places."

**Waltke** says "The verb with its derivatives, not counting its usage in compounds or as proper names, occurs more than one hundred times. One may own (bā'al) a house (Ex 22:7), or rule over (bā'al) territory (cf. 1 Chr. 4:22). A man may take (lāqah) a wife and marry (bā'al) her (Deut. 24:1).

A focus on the verb bā'al from the theological standpoint leads to a consideration of marriage terminology employed by God in defining his relationship to His people (**Ed**: Israel). "For your Maker is your **husband** (ba'al), the Lord of hosts is his name" (Isaiah 54:5ff.). In Jeremiah the existing marriage relationship becomes a motivation for repentance: "For I am a **husband** unto you" (Jeremiah 3:14, ASV; RSV renders "I am your master"). In the justly famous new covenant passage the former covenant is described as a broken covenant, a situation which is the more sobering and shocking because "I was a husband (ba'al) to them, says Jehovah" (Jeremiah 31:32, ASV, RSV similar, cf. Malachi 2:11).

**Baal as a verb** ([01166](#)) - 18x in 16v - Usage: gets a husband(1), high(1), husband(3), married(4), married\*(2), marries(2), marry(1), marrying\*(1), master(1), ruled(2).

Jeremiah 3:14 'Return, O faithless sons,' declares the LORD; 'For I am a **master** to you, And I will take you one from a city and two from a family, And I will bring you to Zion.'

**Amplified** - Return, O faithless children [of the whole twelve tribes], says the Lord, for I am **Lord and Master and Husband** to you, and I will take you [not as a nation, but individually]—one from a city and two from a tribal family—and I will bring you to Zion.<sup>(</sup>

**NET Note** - Or "I am your true husband." There is a wordplay between the term "true master" and the name of the pagan god Baal. The pronoun "I" is emphatic, creating a contrast between the LORD as Israel's true master/husband versus Baal as Israel's illegitimate lover/master. See Jer 2:23–25.

Genesis 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is **married** (literally "and she is owned by an owner")."

Deuteronomy 21:13 "She shall also remove the clothes of her captivity and shall remain in your house, and mourn her father and mother a full month; and after that you may go in to her and be her **husband** (literally "a woman married to a husband.") and she shall be your wife.

Deuteronomy 22:22 "If a man is found lying with a **married** ("a woman married to a husband") woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel.

Deuteronomy 24:1 "When a man takes a wife and **marries** her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house,

Ruth 1:13-[note](#) would you therefore wait until they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from **marrying**? No, my daughters; for it is harder for me than for you, for the hand of the LORD has gone forth against me."

2 Kings 12:3 Only the **high** (baal) places ([bamah](#)) were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places ([bamah](#)).

**MacArthur** - As with most kings of Judah, Joash failed to remove these places of worship where, contrary to the Mosaic law, the people sacrificed and burned incense to the Lord (cf. Dt 12:2–7, 13, 14). The open-air, hilltop worship centers which the Israelites **inherited from the Canaanites** had been rededicated to the Lord; the **use of pagan altars had been forbidden** (Nu 33:52; Dt 7:5; 12:3). After the building of the Temple, worship at the high places was condemned (1 Ki 11:7, 8; 12:31; 2Ki 16:17–20; 21:3; 23:26). ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

1 Chronicles 4:22 and Jokim, the men of Cozeba, Joash, Saraph, who **ruled** in Moab, and Jashubi-lehem. And the records are ancient.

Proverbs 30:23 Under an unloved woman when she **gets a husband**, And a maidservant when she supplants her mistress.

Isaiah 26:13 O LORD our God, other masters besides You have **ruled** us; But through You alone we confess Your name.

Isaiah 54:1 "Shout for joy, O barren one (referring to Israel in exile), you who have borne no child; Break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed; For the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous Than the sons of the **married** woman," says the LORD (speaks of Lord's promise to do good to Israel in the future).

Isaiah 54:5 "For your **husband** is your Maker, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth.

**MacArthur** -The basis for forgetting past failures is Israel's relationship to the Lord as her husband (Isa 62:4, 5) and Redeemer (Isa 41:14). (([MacArthur Study Bible](#)))

Isaiah 62:4 It will no longer be said to you, "Forsaken," Nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; But you will be called, "My delight is in her," And your land, "**Married**" (KJV = Beulah); For the LORD delights in you, And to Him your land will be **married**.

**NET Note:** Hebrew (beulah), traditionally transliterated "**Beulah**" (so KJV, ASV, NIV).

**Waltke** - The name of the land, Beulah (passive participle of bā'al), signifies both the intimacy and the joy of YHWH in conjunction with the land ('ereṣ,

**Comment** - From Beulah thus comes the phrase "Beulah Land"...it spoke of God's promise to Israel of a FUTURE LAND and A FUTURE HOPE. NT believers can use the term by way of application because they have been engrafted as wild olive branches into the rich root of the olive tree of the Abrahamic covenant. But Christians must be ever mindful of from whence they have come as Paul writes in Ep 2:11-13-[note](#) (...separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off...) lest they become ARROGANT. Lord keep us humble and ever mindful of the SOURCE of all blessing and our inability to ever merit Your grace and mercy. Amen.

Isaiah 62:5 For as a young man **marries** a virgin ("O Jerusalem"), So your sons **will marry** you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So your God will rejoice over you.

**NET Note:** In the context (Isa 62:4b, see also Isa 54:5–7) the Lord is the one who "marries" Zion.

Jeremiah 3:14 'Return, O faithless sons,' declares the LORD; 'For I am a master to you, And I will take you one from a city and two from a family, And I will bring you to Zion.'

**NET Note:** "I am your true husband." There is a wordplay between the term "true master" and the name of the pagan god Baal. The pronoun "I" is emphatic, creating a contrast between the LORD as Israel's true master/husband versus Baal as Israel's illegitimate lover/master. See Jer 2:23–25.

Jeremiah 31:32-note not like the (old) covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a **husband** to them," declares the LORD.

Malachi 2:11-note "Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD which He loves and has **married** the daughter of a foreign god.

**NET Note** - "has married the daughter of a foreign god." Marriage is used here as a metaphor to describe Judah's idolatry, that is, her unfaithfulness to the LORD and "remarriage" to pagan gods. But spiritual intermarriage found expression in literal, physical marriage as well, as Mal 2:14–16-note indicate.

---

**Baal** (noun) (01167)(ba'al) means lord, owner (Ex 21:22, 28, 29, 34, 36, et al), possessor, husband (Pr 12:4), master, leader (as of a city - Jdg 9:2, 51). This Hebrew word is often combined with another Hebrew word but the English translation only gives one word, so it can be confusing. E.g., in Pr 24:8 the word "schemer" is actually two Hebrew words - **possessor** (baal) of schemes. For this reason there are many notes on the 71 uses below.

**Baker** - A masculine singular noun meaning lord, husband, owner, possessor, the title of a Canaanite deity (Baal). It can also denote rulers and leaders (Isa. 16:8). Commonly, it refers to legally owning something such as an ox or bull (Ex. 21:28); house (Ex. 22:8[7]; or land (Job 31:38). The word can also describe possessing a quality, attribute, or characteristic like anger (Prov. 22:24); wrath (Prov. 29:22); hair (2 Kgs. 1:8); appetite (Prov. 23:2); wisdom (Eccl. 7:12). When Joseph is called a dreamer, he is literally a possessor of dreams (Gen. 37:19). Further, the word can connote husband as used of Abraham (Gen. 20:3) and elsewhere (Ex. 21:3; Deut. 22:22). (The Complete Word Study Dictionary:OT)

The phrase "riches being hoarded by their **owner** (baal) to his hurt" (Eccl 5:13) is interesting as it depicts this man as "lord" or "master" over his riches, but in the end the riches become (in a sense) the lord of the "owner" (cp 1 Ti 6:9, Mt 6:24).

**Baal** (noun) - Usage in NAS: allies\*(1), archers\*(1), bird\*(1), bound(1), bridegroom(1), captain(1), case\*(1), charmer\*(1), citizens(1), creditor\*(1), dominant(1), dreamer\*(1), due(1), husband(8), husbands(2), leaders(6), lords(1), man(3), married\*(2), master's(1), masters(1), men(14), owner(15), owners(2), possessors(2), relative by marriage(1), schemer\*(1), who has(1), who practice(1), wrathful\*(1).

**Baal** (noun) - 75x in 71 verses -

Genesis 14:13 Then a fugitive came and told Abram the Hebrew. Now he was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and these were **allies** with Abram.

**Comment** - Allies is actually two words - "possessors (baal) of a treaty with (beriyth = covenant)."

Genesis 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married."

**NET Note** - "and she is owned by an owner." Baal (noun - 01167) and Baal (verb - 01166)

Genesis 37:19 They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer!

**NET** is more literal - "**master** (baal) of dreams!"

Genesis 49:23 "The archers bitterly attacked him, And shot at him and harassed him;

**Comment** - Archers is two Hebrew words - Baal (master, owner) + chets (arrows)

Exodus 21:3 "If he comes alone, he shall go out alone; if he is the **husband** of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him.

**NET Note** - The phrase says, "if he was the possessor of a wife"; the noun לְבַיִת; (ba'al) can mean "possessor" or "husband." If there was a wife, she shared his fortunes or his servitude; if he entered with her, she would accompany him when he left.

Exodus 21:22 "If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's **husband** may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide.

Exodus 21:28 "If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall surely be stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the **owner** of the ox shall go unpunished.

Exodus 21:29 "If, however, an ox was previously in the habit of goring and its owner has been warned, yet he does not confine it and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its **owner** also shall be put to death.

Exodus 21:34 the **owner** of the pit shall make restitution; he shall give money to its owner, and the dead animal shall become his

Exodus 21:36 "Or if it is known that the ox was previously in the habit of goring, yet its **owner** has not confined it, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead animal shall become his.

Exodus 22:8 "If the thief is not caught, then the **owner** of the house shall appear before the judges, to determine whether he laid his hands on his neighbor's property.

Exodus 22:11 an oath before the LORD shall be made by the two of them that he has not laid hands on his neighbor's property; and its **owner** shall accept it, and he shall not make restitution.

Exodus 22:12 "But if it is actually stolen from him, he shall make restitution to its **owner**.

Exodus 22:14 "If a man borrows anything from his neighbor, and it is injured or dies while its **owner** is not with it, he shall make full restitution.

Exodus 22:15 "If its **owner** is with it, he shall not make restitution; if it is hired, it came for its hire.

Leviticus 21:4 'He shall not defile himself as a **relative by marriage** among his people, and so profane himself.

**NET Note** - Heb "He shall not defile himself a husband in his peoples, to profane himself." The meaning of the line is disputed, but it appears to prohibit a priest from burying any relative by marriage (as opposed to the blood relatives of vv. 2–3), including his wife (compare B. A. Levine, Leviticus [JPSTC], 142–43 with J. E. Hartley, Leviticus [WBC], 343, 348).

Numbers 21:28 "For a fire went forth from Heshbon, A flame from the town of Sihon; It devoured Ar of Moab, The **dominant (baal)** heights ( of the Arnon.

**Comment** - Dominant heights is " baale bamoth" = lords of (the) high places;**Young's Literal** = "Owners of the high places"

Deuteronomy 15:2 "This is the manner of remission: every **creditor** shall release what he has loaned to his neighbor; he shall not exact it of his neighbor and his brother, because the LORD'S remission has been proclaimed.

**Comment: Creditor** = possessor (baal) + loan (mashsheh)

Deuteronomy 22:22 "If a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel.

**Comment:** Married woman = "woman married (01166) to a husband (01167)."

Deuteronomy 24:4 then her former **husband** who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.

Joshua 24:11 "You crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho; and the **citizens** of Jericho fought against you, and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Girgashite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. Thus I gave them into your hand.

Judges 9:2 "Speak, now, in the hearing of all the **leaders** of Shechem, 'Which is better for you, that seventy men, all the sons of Jerubbaal, rule over you, or that one man rule over you?' Also, remember that I am your bone and your flesh."

Judges 9:3 And his mother's relatives spoke all these words on his behalf in the hearing of all the **leaders** of Shechem; and they were inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our relative."

Judges 9:6 All the **men** (leaders) of Shechem and all Beth-millo assembled together, and they went and made Abimelech king, by the oak of the pillar which was in Shechem.

Judges 9:7 Now when they told Jotham, he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted his voice and called out. Thus he said to them, "Listen to me, O **men** (leaders) of Shechem, that God may listen to you.

Judges 9:18 but you have risen against my father's house today and have killed his sons, seventy men, on one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maidservant, king over the **men** (leaders) Shechem, because he is your relative--

Judges 9:20 "But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and consume the **men** (leaders) Shechem and Beth-millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem and from Beth-millo, and consume Abimelech."

Judges 9:23 Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the **men** (leaders) Shechem; and the **men** (leaders) Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech,

Judges 9:24 so that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood might be laid on Abimelech their brother, who killed them, and on the **men** (leaders) Shechem, who strengthened his hands to kill his brothers.

Judges 9:25 The **men** (leaders) Shechem set men in ambush against him on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed all who might pass by them along the road; and it was told to Abimelech.

Judges 9:26 Now Gaal the son of Ebed came with his relatives, and crossed over into Shechem; and the **men** (leaders) Shechem put their trust in him.

Judges 9:39 So Gaal went out before the **leaders** of Shechem and fought with Abimelech.

Judges 9:46 When all the **leaders** of the tower of Shechem heard of it, they entered the inner chamber of the temple of El-berith.

Judges 9:47 It was told Abimelech that all the **leaders** of the tower of Shechem were gathered together.

Judges 9:51 But there was a strong tower in the center of the city, and all the men and women with all the **leaders** of the city fled there and shut themselves in; and they went up on the roof of the tower.

Judges 19:22 While they were celebrating, behold, the men of the city, certain worthless fellows, surrounded the house, pounding the door; and they spoke to the **owner** of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came into your house that we may have relations with him."

Judges 19:23 Then the man, the **owner** of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my fellows, please do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not commit this act of folly.

Judges 20:5 "But the **men** (**Baal** - citizens, leaders) of Gibeah rose up against me and surrounded the house at night because of me. They intended to kill me; instead, they ravished my concubine so that she died.

1 Samuel 23:11 "Will the **men** (**Baal** - citizens, leaders) of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down just as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant." And the LORD said, "He will come down."

1 Samuel 23:12 Then David said, "Will the **men** (**Baal** - citizens, leaders) of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?" And the LORD said, "They will surrender you."

2 Samuel 11:26 Now when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her **husband**. (for her lord)

2 Samuel 21:12 then David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the **men** (**baal** - leaders, lords) of Jabesh-gilead, who had stolen them from the open square of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them on the day the Philistines struck down Saul in Gilboa.

Nehemiah 6:18 For many in Judah were **bound** by oath to him because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah the son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah.

**Comment** - Bound by oath = "were lords of oath"

Esther 1:17 "For the queen's conduct will become known to all the women causing them to look with contempt on their **husbands** by saying, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in to his presence, but she did not come.'

Esther 1:20 "When the king's edict which he will make is heard throughout all his kingdom, great as it is, then all women will give honor to their **husbands**, great and small."

Job 31:39 If I have eaten its fruit without money, Or have caused its **owners** to lose their lives,

**HCSB Note** = Lit or caused the breath of its tenants to breathe out

Proverbs 1:17 Indeed, it is useless to spread the baited net In the sight of any **bird**;

**Comment** - "bird" is two words and is literally "all of the possessors of wings."

Proverbs 1:19 So are the ways of everyone who gains by violence; It takes away the life of its **possessors**.

Proverbs 3:27 Do not withhold good from **those** (baal - owners) to whom it is due, When it is in your power to do it.

Proverbs 12:4 An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who shames him is like rottenness in his bones.

Proverbs 16:22 Understanding is a fountain of life to one who has it, But the discipline of fools is folly.

**Comment** - "to one who has" (possesses),

Proverbs 17:8 A bribe is a charm in the sight of its **owner**; Wherever he turns, he prospers.

Proverbs 22:24 Do not associate with a **man (baal)** given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man,

**Comment** - "a man given to anger" is literally "possessor of anger."

Proverbs 23:2 And put a knife to your throat If you are a **man (baal)** of great appetite.

**Comment** - "man" = literally "possessor of"

Proverbs 24:8 One who plans to do evil, Men will call a schemer.

**Comment** - "schemer" is actually two words - possessor (baal) of schemes (mezimmah),

**NET Note** - Heb "possessor of schemes"; NAB "an intriguer." The picture of the wicked person is graphic: He devises plans to do evil and is known as a schemer. Elsewhere the "schemes" are outrageous and lewd (e.g., Lev 18:7; Judg 20:6). Here the description portrays him as a cold, calculating, active person: "the fool is capable of intense mental activity but it adds up to sin" (W. McKane, Proverbs [OTL], 399).

Proverbs 29:22 An angry man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered **man** abounds in transgression.

**Comment** - hot-tempered man is two words = possessor (baal) of wrath, rage (chemah)

**NET Note** - Heb "possessor of wrath." Here "wrath" is an attributive (cf. ASV "a wrathful man"; KJV "a furious man").

Proverbs 31:11 The heart of her **husband** trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain.

Proverbs 31:23 Her **husband** is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land.

Proverbs 31:28 Her children rise up and bless her; Her **husband** also, and he praises her, saying:

Ecclesiastes 5:11 When good things increase, those who consume them increase. So what is the advantage to their **owners** except to look on?

**NET Note** on owners (baal) - The form is plural in the Hebrew text, but the plural is one of intensification; it is used here to emphasize the owner's authority over his wealth

Ecclesiastes 5:13 There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun: riches being hoarded by their **owner** to his hurt.

Ecclesiastes 7:12 For wisdom is protection just as money is protection, But the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its **possessors**.

Ecclesiastes 8:8 No man has authority to restrain the wind with the wind, or authority over the day of death; and there is no discharge in the time of war, and evil will not deliver those who **practice** it.

**NET Note** - "so wickedness cannot rescue the wicked." where "wicked" in Hebrew is "its owners" (or possessors).

Ecclesiastes 10:11 If the serpent bites before being charmed, there is no profit for the charmer.

**Comment** - charmer (NLT and NET have "snake charmer") is two words - master (baal) of the tongue (lashon)

Ecclesiastes 12:11 The words of wise men are like goads, and **masters** of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd.

Isaiah 1:3 "An ox knows its **owner**, And a donkey its master's manger, But Israel does not know, My people do not understand."

Isaiah 16:8 For the fields of Heshbon have withered, the vines of Sibmah as well; The **lords** of the nations have trampled down its choice clusters Which reached as far as Jazer and wandered to the deserts; Its tendrils spread themselves out and passed over the sea.

Isaiah 50:8 He who vindicates Me is near; Who will contend with Me? Let us stand up to each other; Who has a **case** against Me? Let him draw near to Me.

**Comment** - "who has a case against me" is two words - "lord" (baal) of my judgment (misphat)"

Jeremiah 37:13 While he was at the Gate of Benjamin, a **captain** of the guard whose name was Irijah, the son of Shelemiah the son of Hananiah was there; and he arrested Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "You are going over to the Chaldeans!"

Joel 1:8 Wail like a virgin girded with sackcloth For the **bridegroom** of her youth.

Nahum 1:2 A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; The LORD is avenging and **wrathful**. (baal) The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies.

**Comment** - wrathful = "possessor of wrath ()"

#### **Gilbrant** on **baal** as a masculine noun

It is used of the master or **owner** of a house (Judg. 19:22), **owner** of an animal (Isa. 1:3; Exo. 21:28), **owner** of a field (Job 31:39), **owner** of money (Deut. 15:2), other nations, i.e., conquerors (Isa. 16:8, used of the Assyrians).

Other major meanings are "**husband**" (Exo. 21:22, 23; 2 Sam. 11:26; Joel 1:8) and "**lords of a city**," i.e., inhabitants (citizens) of a city (Josh. 24:11; "**leaders**" - Jdg. 9:2; 2 Sam. 21:12; 2:4,5), i.e., not just rulers, but all the citizens (i.e., landowners) of the city. The terms "**possessor**" or "**lord**" of something also employ this term. Rare usages include possessor of horns (a ram) in Da 8:6, 20; of wings (a bird), Ecc. 10:20; of hair (hairy man), 2 Ki. 1:8; of dreams (a dreamer, Joseph), Gen. 37:19; one who has legal causes (Ex. 24:14); masters of covenant or oath (Gen. 14:13; Neh. 6:18); and master of the tongue, a charmer (Ecc. 10:11). "Prudence is a fountain of life to its owner," Prov. 16:22; 1:19; 17:8. A wicked person (Ecc. 8:8), and a needy person (Prov. 3:27), are interesting usages in the wisdom literature. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

#### **Bruce Waltke** on **ba'al** as a masculine noun

Ugaritic also has the double use of master and the name of a deity. The root in most semitic languages means either "lord" or, when followed by a genitive, "owner."

In addition to ba'al as **owner** of things, the noun in the plural is used for **citizens** (ba'alim) of a city (Joshua 24:11). In Judges 9 where the noun occurs sixteen times, ASV consistently translates "men," but RSV in addition to "men" employs "citizens" (Judges 9:2) and "people" (Judges 9:46). ba'al can refer to **partner or ally** (Genesis 14:13). Idiomatically ba'al as **master of something** characterizes the person (e.g. **ba'al of wrath**, Proverbs 22:24; **of appetite**, Proverbs 23:2; **of dreams**, Genesis 37:19) or identifies occupation (e.g. officer, **ba'al of the guard**, Jeremiah 37:13). (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament.)

---

**Baal** (as a proper noun) ([01168](#)) (**ba'al**) refers to the pagan god who was called by the name '**Baal**'. Elijah contended with and exterminated the prophets of **Baal** (1 Ki 18:18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 40). One of the more incredible mentions of Baal is Jehu's eradication of them from the northern kingdom (see 2 Ki 10:18-28). Before God would use Gideon to deliver His people from the Moabites, He first had him tear down his father's backyard altar to **Baal** (Jdg 6:25, 28, 30-31-note). As a result Gideon was named Jerrubball ("Let **Baal** contend against him" - Jdg 6:32-note). Under Gideon Israel was set free from Moabite oppression, but apparently they people were not set free from the "seed" of Baal worship in their hearts for "Then it came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the sons of Israel again played the harlot (SPIRITUAL ADULTERY!) with the **Baals**, and made **Baal**-berith their god" (Jdg 8:33-note)! Wow! Our hearts are more deceitful than all else and are desperately sick (Jer 17:9)! In 1 Sa 7:4 we see that "Israel removed the **Baals** and the Ashtaroth and served the LORD alone" but they must have backslide because we see their cry in 1 Sam 12:10! Beware of idols.

Idols need to be radically uprooted lest they revive and return!



Judges 2:11-13-note is a representative passage of the horrible choice of Israel...

Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the **Baals**, and they forsook the LORD (FORSOOK INDICATES THEY LEFT THE LIVING GOD IN A LURCH TO GO AFTER LIFELESS IDOLS! THEY HAD A "SPIRITUAL VACUUM" -- IF WE WILL NOT WORSHIP "THE" GOD, WE FOR SURE WILL WORSHIP "A" GOD!), the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them (WHAT WE BOW TO WE WILL END UP SERVING AS OUR MASTER -- MONEY, SEX, ETC); thus they provoked the LORD to anger. So they forsook the LORD and served **Baal** (REMEMBER "BAAL" MEANS LORD, MASTER, OWNER - SO THESE ISRAELITES WERE IN BONDAGE TO A LIFELESS IDOL!) and the Ashtaroth.

2 Kings 17:6 records the exile of the Northern Kingdom of Assyria "In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and carried Israel away into exile to Assyria" and 2 Kings 17:16 explains (in part - read the litany of charges in 2 Ki 17:6-15) why God allowed them to be taken into exile - "They forsook all the commandments of the LORD their God and made for themselves molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served **Baal**." The Southern Kingdom (and their kings) did not understand God's anger against the Northern Kingdom's idolatry and for 2 Kings 21:3 records that Manasseh "rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he erected altars for **Baal** and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them." Later King Josiah burned the vessels used to worship **Baal** (2 Ki 23:4, 5, 2 Chr 34:4). Jeremiah 2:8 records that in Judah before the Babylonian exile "the prophets prophesied by **Baal**", they went "after the **Baals**" (Jer 2:23), offered "sacrifices to **Baal**" (Jer 7:9), "walked after the stubbornness of their heart and after the **Baals**, as their fathers taught them (NOW THIS IS REAL "GENERATIONAL" SIN!)," (Jer 9:14), they even "built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to **Baal**" (Jer 19:5), the prophets "prophesied by **Baal** and led My people Israel astray," (Jer 23:13), "their fathers forgot My name because of **Baal**" (Jer 23:27), ""They built the high places of **Baal** that are in the valley of Ben-hinnom to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech" (Jer 32:35). Hosea 11:2 records a horrible thing - "The more they called them, The more they went from them; They kept sacrificing to the Baals And burning incense to idols."

**Baker** on Baal as a proper noun (01168) - A. A masculine proper noun naming the Canaanite god Baal; lord. Used with the definite article, it means the god Baal served by the Canaanites and Philistines, but Israel was caught up in worshiping this pagan god, too (Judg. 2:11, 13; 6:25; 28, 30; 1 Kgs. 18:18, 19, 21; 19:18; 2 Kgs. 3:2; 10:18-23; Hos. 2:8[10]). The word occurs in the plural, indicating the many manifestations of pagan polytheism (Judg. 2:11; 1 Sam. 7:4; 12:10; 1 Kgs. 18:18; Jer. 2:23; Hos. 11:2). It is used without the definite article as a name indicating, e.g., high places of Baal (Num. 22:41; NIV renders as Bamoth Baal). In construct with a following word, ba'al beriyt, it means lord of the covenant (Judg. 8:33; 9:4).

B. A proper noun naming a city, Baal. It denoted a border city of the tribe of Simeon (NIV renders as Baalath with a note; 1 Chr. 4:33).

C. A masculine proper name, Baal. The name describes the immediate son of Reaiah but a descendant of Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob (1 Chr. 5:5).

D. A masculine proper name found as a descendant of Benjamin (1 Chr. 8:30) from the line that produced King Saul (1 Chr. 9:36). (Ibid)

**Baal** (proper noun) - Num. 22:41; Nu 25:3 Jdg. 2:11; Jdg. 2:13; Jdg. 3:7; Jdg. 6:25; Jdg. 6:28; Jdg. 6:30; Jdg. 6:31; Jdg. 6:32; Jdg. 8:33; Jdg. 10:6; Jdg. 10:10; 1 Sam. 7:4; 1 Sam. 12:10; 1 Ki. 16:31; 1 Ki. 16:32; 1 Ki. 18:18; 1 Ki. 18:19; 1 Ki. 18:21; 1 Ki. 18:22; 1 Ki. 18:25; 1 Ki. 18:26; 1 Ki. 18:40; 1 Ki. 19:18; 1 Ki. 22:53; 2 Ki. 3:2; 2 Ki. 10:18; 2 Ki. 10:19; 2 Ki. 10:20; 2 Ki. 10:21; 2 Ki. 10:22; 2 Ki. 10:23; 2 Ki. 10:25; 2 Ki. 10:26; 2 Ki. 10:27; 2 Ki. 10:28; 2 Ki. 11:18; 2 Ki. 17:16; 2 Ki. 21:3; 2 Ki. 23:4; 2 Ki. 23:5; 2 Chr. 17:3; 2 Chr. 23:17; 2 Chr. 24:7; 2 Chr. 28:2; 2 Chr. 33:3; 2 Chr. 34:4; Jer. 2:8; Jer. 2:23; Jer. 7:9; Jer. 9:14; Jer. 11:13; Jer. 11:17; Jer. 12:16; Jer. 19:5; Jer. 23:13; Jer. 23:27; Jer. 32:29; Jer. 32:35; Hos. 2:8; Hos. 2:13; Hos. 2:17; Hos. 11:2; Hos. 13:1; Zeph. 1:4

---

**BAAL AS A COMPONENT OF MANY HEBREW NAMES** - **Baal** was incorporated as parts of the names of individuals and places. It is notable that in Joshua as they were conquering the promised land there was a distinct propensity for the wicked, depraved Canaanites to name their cities after their god **Baal**!

- Gideon was named **Jerrubbaal** (Jdg 6:32+, Jdg 7:1+, Jdg 8:29+, et al),
- Jezebel the daughter of **Ethbaal** king of the Sidonians (1 Ki 16:31)
- **Baal**-berith or "Baal of covenant" (Jdg 8:33+),
- **Baal**-peor (Nu 25:3+, Dt 4:3, et al), ([01187](#)) is a masculine noun that refers to a proper name = Nu 25:3,5; Dt 4:3 (twice); Ps 106:28; Hosea 9:10, Baal of Peor refers to Baal worshiped at Peor.



- Bamoth-**baal** (Josh 13:17),
- **Baal**-meon (abode) (Nu 32:38+),
- Baal-zephon (Nu 33:7+),
- **Baal**-gad (Josh 11:17, 12:7, 13:5),
- Bamoth-**baal** and Beth-**baal**-meon (Josh 13:17),
- **Baal**ah (Josh 15:9, 10, 11, 29),
- Kiriath-**baal** (Josh 15:60, 18:14),
- **Baal**ath-beer (Josh 19:8),
- **Baal**ath (Josh 19:44),
- Mount **Baal**-hermon (Jdg 3:3+, 1 Chr 5:23),
- **Baal**-tamar (Jdg 20:33) (As an aside I think it is very telling that even after conquering much of the Promised Land, Israel failed to change the idolatrous names of some of the cities -- beware if you fail to kill sin in your life, for to do so is to make provision for the lusts of your flesh and it just a matter of time before you are snared again! - cp Ro 13:14+),
- **Baal**-perazim (2 Sa 5:20, 1 Chr 14:11),
- **Baal**e-judah (2 Sa 6:2),
- **Baal**-hazor (2 Sa 13:23),
- [Baal-zebub](#) (2 Ki 1:2 - Baal-Zebub meant "lord of flies," a derisive pun on the god's real name "Baal-Zebul," which meant "Baal the prince," or "lord of life." See use of this name by Jews accusing Jesus of casting out demons by this so-called god Luke 11:15),
- **Baal**-shalishah (2 Ki 4:42),
- **Baal**-hanan (1 Chr 1:49),
- **Baal**-meon (1 Chr 5:8, Ezek 25:9),
- Esh**baal** (1 Chr 8:33),
- Merib-**baal** (1 Chr 8:34),
- **Baal**-hanan (1 Chr 27:28),
- Gur-**baal** (2 Chr 26:7),
- **Baal**-hamon (Song 8:11),
- **Baal**is (Jer 40:14), see also Ge 36:38-39, Ex 14:2, 9.

## ARTICLES RELATED TO BAAL

Source: [Gotquestions.org](http://Gotquestions.org)

[Gotquestions.org](http://Gotquestions.org) is a highly recommended website which is very conservative and very Biblical.

### QUESTION - [Who was Baal?](#)

**ANSWER** - Baal was the name of the supreme god worshiped in ancient Canaan and Phoenicia. The practice of Baal worship infiltrated Jewish religious life during the time of the Judges (Judges 3:7), became widespread in Israel during the reign of Ahab (1 Kings 16:31-33) and also affected Judah (2 Chronicles 28:1-2). The word *baal* means "lord"; the plural is *baalim*. In general, Baal was a fertility god who was believed to enable the earth to produce crops and people to produce children. Different regions worshiped Baal in different ways, and Baal proved to be a highly adaptable god. Various locales emphasized one or another of his attributes and developed special "denominations" of Baalism. [Baal of Peor](#) (Numbers 25:3) and Baal-Berith (Judges 8:33) are two examples of such localized deities.

According to Canaanite mythology, Baal was the son of El, the chief god, and Asherah, the goddess of the sea. Baal was considered the most powerful of all gods, eclipsing El, who was seen as rather weak and ineffective. In various battles Baal defeated Yamm, the god of the sea, and Mot, the god of death and the underworld. Baal's sisters/consorts were Ashtoreth, a fertility goddess associated with the stars, and Anath, a goddess of love and war. The Canaanites worshiped Baal as the sun god and as the storm god—he is usually depicted holding a lightning bolt—who defeated enemies and produced crops. They also worshiped him as a fertility god who provided children. Baal worship was rooted in sensuality and involved ritualistic prostitution in the temples. At times, appeasing Baal required human sacrifice, usually the firstborn of the one making the sacrifice (Jeremiah 19:5). The priests of Baal appealed to their god in rites of wild abandon which included loud, ecstatic cries and self-inflicted injury (1 Kings 18:28).

Before the Hebrews entered the Promised Land, the Lord God warned against worshiping Canaan's gods (Deuteronomy 6:14-15), but Israel turned to idolatry anyway. During the reign of Ahab and Jezebel, at the height of Baal worship in Israel, God directly confronted the paganism through His prophet Elijah. First, God showed that He, not Baal, controlled the rain by sending a drought

lasting three-and-one-half years (1 Kings 17:1). Then Elijah called for a showdown on Mt. Carmel to prove once and for all who the true God was. All day long, 450 prophets of Baal called on their god to send fire from heaven—surely an easy task for a god associated with lightning bolts—but “there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention” (1 Kings 18:29). After Baal’s prophets gave up, Elijah prayed a simple prayer, and God answered immediately with fire from heaven. The evidence was overwhelming, and the people “fell prostrate and cried, ‘The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!’” (verse 39).

In Matthew 12:27, Jesus calls Satan “Beelzebub,” linking the devil to Baal-Zebub, a Philistine deity (2 Kings 1:2). The Baalim of the Old Testament were nothing more than demons masquerading as gods, and **all idolatry is ultimately devil-worship** (1 Corinthians 10:20+). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

---

### QUESTION - [Why was the worship of Baal and Asherah a constant struggle for the Israelites?](#)

**ANSWER** - Throughout the Old Testament in the Bible, we find what seems a confusing trend of [idol worship](#) among the Israelites, who especially struggled with the worship of Baal and Asherah (or Ashtoreth). God had commanded Israel not to worship idols (Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 5:7)—indeed, they were to avoid even mentioning a false god’s name (Exodus 23:13). They were warned not to intermarry with the pagan nations and to avoid practices that might be construed as pagan worship rites (Leviticus 20:23; 2 Kings 17:15; Ezekiel 11:12). Israel was a nation [chosen by God](#) to one day bear the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. Yet, even with so much riding on their heritage and future, Israel continued to struggle with idol worship.

After the death of Joshua, the worship of Baal and Asherah became a plague upon the Israelites and was a perennial problem. [Baal](#), also known as the sun god or the storm god, is the name of the supreme male deity worshiped by ancient Phoenicians and Canaanites. [Asherah](#), the moon goddess, was the principal female deity worshiped by ancient Syrians, Phoenicians, and Canaanites. The Israelites neglected to heed the Lord’s warning not to compromise with idolaters. The ensuing generations forgot the God who had rescued them from Egypt (Judges 2:10–12).

Of course, the period of the judges wasn’t the first time Israel had been tempted by idol worship. In Exodus 32, we see how quickly the Israelites gave up on Moses’ return from Mount Sinai and created an idol of gold for themselves. Ezekiel 20 reveals a summary of the Israelites’ affairs with idols and God’s relentless mercy on His children (also see 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles).

As for why the worship of Baal and Asherah *specifically* was such a problem for Israel, there are several reasons we can cite: first, the worship of Baal and Asherah held the allure of illicit sex, since the religion involved ritual prostitution. This is exactly what we see in the incident of [Baal of Peor](#), as “the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods” (Numbers 25:1–2). It was during this episode that an Israelite named Zimri brazenly brought a Midianite woman into the camp and went straight to his tent, where the two began having sex (verses 6–8, 14).

Another reason that the worship of Baal and Asherah was a perennial problem for Israel is due to what we could call national peer pressure. Israel wanted to be like the other nations (see 1 Samuel 8:5, 20). The other nations worshiped Baal and Asherah, and so many Israelites felt a pull to do the same.

Of course, we cannot overlook the fact of Satan’s temptations and mankind’s basic [sinfulness](#). (**ED**: “the [flesh](#)”) The enemy of our souls tempted Israel to worship idols; the sacrifices made to Baal and Asherah were really sacrifices to demons (1 Corinthians 10:20+). The stubborn willfulness of humanity works in tandem with Satan’s seductions and causes us to jump at any chance to rebel against God. Thus Israel repeatedly forsook God’s commands, despite losing God’s blessings, and chased after the Baals and Asherahs to their own destruction.

The book of Hosea aptly uses adultery as a metaphor in describing Israel’s problem with idol worship. The Israelites were trapped in a vicious cycle of idol worship, punishment, restoration, then forgiveness, after which they went back to their idols once more. God’s patience with Israel is unfathomable by human standards; God’s nature is the essence of love, and He gives His sons and daughters chances to repent (1 John 4:8; Romans 8:38–39; 2 Peter 3:9).

The problem of Baal and Asherah worship was finally solved after God removed Israel from the Promised Land. Due to the Israelites’ idolatry and disregard of the Law, God brought the nations of Assyria and Babylon against them in an act of judgment. After the exile, Israel was restored to the land, and the people did not dally again with idols.

While Christians today may be quick to judge the Israelites for their idolatry, we must remember that idols take many forms. Idolatrous sins still lure and tempt the modern-day believer (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8–10), though perhaps they have taken new shapes. Instead of ancient forms of Baal and Asherah, we today sometimes honor possessions, success, physical pleasure, and religious perfection to the dishonoring of God. Just as God disciplined the Israelites for their idolatry and forgave them when they repented, He will graciously discipline us and extend the offer of forgiveness in Christ (Hebrews 12:7–11; 1 John 1:9; 2 Peter 3:9). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

---

## QUESTION - [What was Baal Peor in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Baal Peor, or the Baal of Peor, was a local deity worshiped by the Moabites. When the Israelites, following Moses to the Promised Land, were in the vicinity of Peor, some of them fell into idolatry and worshiped Baal Peor. As a result of their sin, the men of Israel were judged by God.

The story of Baal Peor starts when [Balaak](#), the king of the Moabites, hired [Balaam](#), a prophet-for-hire, to curse Israel. Balaak had seen the progress and might of Israel and was trying to do something that would stop them. Balaam took the money but was unable to curse Israel because the Lord would not allow him to do so. Balaam then met with the king of Moab and went through the motions of receiving a word from God; each time (seven times total) he ended up blessing Israel instead of cursing them (Numbers 23–24). At the time of the third oracle, Balaam and Balaak were observing the Israelite camp from a place called Peor (Numbers 23:28). By the end of the seventh try, Balaak finally got the message that Balaam would not curse Israel for him.

In Numbers 25, we find that the women of [Midian](#) began to seduce the men of Israel to [sexual sin](#) and to sacrifice to their gods. Since the gods of the pagans were often fertility gods, the “worship” often involved sexual acts. The incident is recorded in Numbers 25:1–3: “While Israel was staying in Shittim, ([What is the significance of Shittim in the Bible?](#)) the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Midianite women, who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate the sacrificial meal and bowed down before these gods. So Israel yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor. And the Lord’s anger burned against them.” As a judgment against the Israelites’ sin, God sent a plague among the people (verse 9).

According to Numbers 31:16, the women did this on the advice of Balaam. It appears that, since he could not curse Israel, he found another way to fulfill the wishes of [Balaak](#), who was paying him. Balaam knew that, if the Israelite men could be seduced into idol worship, that God Himself would curse them.

The word *peor* simply means “opening” and is the name of the place (a mountain or a spot on a mountain) from which Balaak and Balaam observed the camp of Israel. The meaning of the word may or may not be significant to the naming of the place. (Perhaps there was a cave opening there or some kind of mountain pass, or perhaps the place was called Peor for some other reason.)

The word *baal* is simply the word for “lord,” “master,” or “ruler.” [Baal](#) became a technical or semi-technical name for the gods of the Canaanites. There was not just one god named Baal, but there were many Baals (many Canaanite “lords”). That is why Numbers 25:3 in the NIV does not use “Baal Peor” as if it were a proper name for a god but uses the term more as a description: “the Baal of Peor,” which could also be translated “the Lord of Peor” or “Lord of the Opening.” *Peor* might refer to the mountain top from which Balaam and Balaak observed Israel, or it could have something to do with the literal meaning of the word *peor* (opening), which, in the context of Canaanite worship (and the context of Numbers 25), could have a sexual or scatological connotation. Perhaps the top of the mountain was called Peor because that is where the sexual rites took place.

In any case, Baal Peor is really *the* Baal of Peor or simply the Lord of Peor, which distinguishes this Baal from all the others. This particular god is referred to again in Numbers 25:5. Then Numbers 25:18 speaks of “the Peor incident,” which sounds like Peor is being used as a place name rather than something based on the meaning of the word.

Deuteronomy 4:3 uses Baal Peor as a place name to refer to the incident recorded in Numbers 25 and in the same verse as a designation for the pagan god. “You saw with your own eyes what the LORD did at Baal Peor. The LORD your God destroyed from among you everyone who followed the Baal of Peor.” Joshua 22:17 speaks of the “sin of Peor,” and Hosea 9:10 uses Baal Peor to refer to the place where this incident happened: “When they came to Baal Peor, they consecrated themselves to that shameful idol and became as vile as the thing they loved.” Psalm 106:28 also refers to the Baal of Peor: “They yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor and ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods.”

So it seems that Peor and Baal Peor are both used as place names to refer to the place where Israel sinned in sexual immorality and in worship of a particular Baal. The Baal in question is referred to as Baal Peor. Perhaps he was already referred to by this name, as he was seen to be in charge of this particular location, or perhaps this is the name that the Israelites gave him after the fact.

In any case, this incident at Baal Peor stands out as the first of many times that Israel fell into immorality and idolatry, and it also serves as a warning to Christians. The Corinthians would have been particularly susceptible to this kind of temptation, as the [city of Corinth](#) was filled with idolatry and sexual immorality. The question of eating at idol temples was debated within the congregation. Although he does not mention Baal Peor by name, Paul refers to that incident in 1 Corinthians 10:8: “We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died.” In verses 11–14, Paul goes on to say, “These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to

mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.”

Many things have changed since Israel’s sin at Baal Peor, but the basic temptations have not. Sexual temptation is ever present in modern societies, and the idols of money, pleasure, fame, and “the good life” also vie to take the place of the One True God in the hearts of many people. Even today, Christians must guard against the sin of Baal Peor. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

---

#### QUESTION - [Who was Beelzebub?](#)

**ANSWER** - *Beelzebub* is the Greek form of the name *Baal-zebul*, a pagan Philistine god worshiped in the ancient Philistine city of Ekron during the Old Testament times. It is a term signifying “the lord of flies” (2 Kings 1:2). Archaeological excavations at ancient Philistine sites have uncovered golden images of flies. After the time of the Philistines, the Jews changed the name to “Beelzeboul,” as used in the Greek New Testament, meaning “lord of dung.” This name referenced the god of the fly that was worshiped to obtain deliverance from the injuries of that insect. Some biblical scholars believe Beelzebub was also known as the “god of filth,” which later became a name of bitter scorn in the mouth of the Pharisees. As a result, Beelzebub was a particularly contemptible deity, and his name was used by the Jews as an epithet for Satan.

The word has two parts: *Baal*, which was the name for the Canaanite fertility gods in the Old Testament; and *Zebul*, which means “exalted dwelling.” Putting the two parts together, they formed a name for Satan himself, the prince of demons. This term was first used by the Pharisees in describing Jesus in Matthew 10:24-25. Earlier, they had accused Jesus of casting “out the demons by the ruler of the demons” (Matthew 9:34), referencing Beelzebub (Mark 3:22; Matthew 12:24).

In Matthew 12:22 Jesus healed a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. As a result, “all the people were astonished and said, ‘Could this be the Son of David?’ But when the Pharisees heard this, they denied that this could be a work of God, but instead declared: ‘It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.’” (Matthew 12:23-24).

It is remarkable that the Pharisees reacted to this incredible miracle by Jesus in the very opposite way of that of the multitude, who realized that Jesus was from God. In fact, it was an admission by the Pharisees that Jesus worked miracles or performed deeds beyond the reach of any unaided human power, but they attributed this power to Beelzebub instead of God. Actually, they should have known better: the devil cannot do works of pure goodness. However, in their self-absorbed pride, these Pharisees knew that, if the teachings of Jesus should prevail among the people, their influence over them was at an end. So, the miracle they did not deny, but instead attributed it to an infernal power, “Beelzebub the prince of the demons.”

The greater question is this: what relevance does this have to us as Christians today? In Matthew 10, Jesus provides us with the very essence of what it means to be His disciple. Here we learn that He is about to send out His apostles into the world to preach the gospel (Matthew 10:7). He gives them specific instructions on what to do and what not to do. He warns them, “Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. . . . All men will hate you because of me” (Matthew 10:17, 22). Then He adds, “A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!” (Matthew 10:24-25).

The point Jesus is making to us today is that, if people are calling Him Satan, as did the Pharisees of His time, they would surely call His disciples the same. In John chapter 15 Jesus declares, “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me” (John 15:18-21). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

### Baal - Dictionary Description

- [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org) - [Who is Baal?](#)
- American Tract Society • [Baal](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary • [Baal](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary • [Baal](#)
- CARM Theological Dictionary • [Baal](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary • [Baal](#)

- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Baal \(1\)](#) [Baal \(2\)](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary • [Baal](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible • [Baal \(1\)](#) • [Baal](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT • [Baal](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary • [Baal](#)

## From the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia ([Reference](#))

### I. Name and Character of Baal

In Babylonia it was the title specially applied to Merodach of Babylon, which in time came to be used in place of his actual name. As the word in Hebrew also means "possessor," it has been supposed to have originally signified, when used in a religious sense, the god of a particular piece of land or soil. Of this, however, there is no proof, and the sense of "possessor" is derived from that of "lord." The Babylonian Bel-Merodach was a Sun-god, and so too was the Can Baal whose full title was Baal-Shemaim, "lord of heaven." The Phoenician writer Sanchuniathon (Philo Byblius, Fragmenta II) accordingly says that the children of the first generation of mankind "in time of drought stretched forth their hands to heaven toward the sun; for they regarded him as the sole Lord of heaven, and called him Beel-samēn, which means 'Lord of Heaven' in the Phoenician language and is equivalent to Zeus in Greek" Baal-Shemaim had a temple at Umm el-Awamid between Acre and Tyre, and his name is found in inscriptions from the Phoenician colonies of Sardinia and Carthage.

### II. Attributes of Baal

As the Sun-god, Baal was worshiped under two aspects, beneficent and destructive. On the one hand he gave light and warmth to his worshipers; on the other hand the fierce heats of summer destroyed the vegetation he had himself brought into being. Hence, human victims were sacrificed to him in order to appease his anger in time of plague or other trouble, the victim being usually the first-born of the sacrificer and being burnt alive. In the Old Testament this is euphemistically termed "passing" the victim "through the fire" (2 Kings 16:3; 2 Kings 21:6). The forms under which Baal was worshipped were necessarily as numerous as the communities which worshiped him. Each locality had its own Baal or divine "Lord" who frequently took his name from the city or place to which he belonged. Hence, there was a Baal-Zur, "Baal of Tyre"; Baal-hermon, "Baal of Hermon" (Judges 3:3); Baal-Lebanon, "Baal of Lebanon"; Baal-Tarz, "Baal of Tarsus." At other times the title was attached to the name of an individual god; Thus we have Bel-Merodach, "the Lord Merodach" (or "Bel is Merodach") at Babylon, Baal-Melkarth at Tyre, Baal-gad (Joshua 11:17) in the north of Palestine. Occasionally the second element was noun as in Baal-Shemaim, "lord of heaven," Baalzebub (2 Kings 1:2), "Lord of flies," Baal-Hammān, usually interpreted "Lord of heat," but more probably "Lord of the sunpillar," the tutelary deity of Carthage. All these various forms of the Sun-god were collectively known as the Baalim or "Baals" who took their place by the side of the female Ashtaroth and Ashtrim. At Carthage the female consort of Baal was termed Penē-Baal, "the face" or "reflection of Baal."

### III. Baal-Worship

In the earlier days of Hebrew history the title Baal, or "Lord," was applied to the national God of Israel, a usage which was revived in later times, and is familiar to us in the King James Version. Hence both Jonathan and David had sons called Merib-baal (1 Chronicles 8:31; 1 Chronicles 9:40) and Beeliada (1 Chronicles 14:7). After the time of Ahab, however, the name became associated with the worship and rites of the Phoenician deity introduced into Samaria by Jezebel, and its idolatrous associations accordingly caused it to fall into disrepute. Hosea (Hosea 2:16) declares that henceforth the God of Israel should no longer be called Baali, "my Baal," and personal names like Esh-baal (1 Chronicles 8:33; 1 Chronicles 9:39), and Beelinda into which it entered were changed in form, Baal being turned into bōsheth which in Heb at any rate conveyed the sense of "shame."

### IV. Temples, Etc

Temples of Baal at Samaria and Jerusalem are mentioned in 1 Kings 1:18; where they had been erected at the time when the Ahab dynasty endeavored to fuse Israelites and Jews and Phoenicians into a single people under the same national Phoenician god. Altars on which incense was burned to Baal were set up in all the streets of Jerusalem according to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 11:13), apparently on the flat roofs of the houses (Jeremiah 32:29); and the temple of Baal contained an image of the god in the shape of a pillar or Bethel (2 Kings 10:26, 2 Kings 10:27). In the reign of Ahab, Baal was served in Israel by 450 priests (1 Kings

18:19 ), as well as by prophets (2 Kings 10:19 ), and his worshippers wore special vestments when his ritual was performed (2 Kings 10:22 ). The ordinary offering made to the god consisted of incense (Jeremiah 7:9 ) and burnt sacrifices; on extraordinary occasions the victim was human (Jeremiah 19:5 ). At times the priests worked themselves into a state of ecstasy, and dancing round the altar slashed themselves with knives (1 Kings 18:26 , 1 Kings 18:28 ), like certain dervish orders in modern Islam.

## V. Use of the Name

In accordance with its signification the name of Baal is generally used with the definite art.; in the Septuagint this often takes the feminine form, αἰσχύνῃ , aischúnē "shame" being intended to be read. We find the same usage in Romans 11:4 . The feminine counterpart of Baal was Baalah or Baalath which is found in a good many of the local names.

---

### Harvey Finley - [Baker's Evangelical Dictionary](#)

*Baal* . Baal the most significant male deity of the Canaanites and his consort Asherah were the most alluring deities confronting Israel in the promised land following the conquest. The numerous references to Baal in the Old Testament indicate his attractiveness and influence on the Israelites. The Book of Judges chronicles the numerous times the people fell to the temptation to worship Baal. During the time of Ahab and Jezebel Baal was declared the official national deity. A temple and hundreds of officiants were established for Baal's worship in Samaria (1 Kings 16:29-34 ). A final chapter concerning Baal worship was written during the reigns of Jehu and Josiah, when the southern kingdom and its capital were purged of the worship of Baal (2 Kings 10 ; 23:1-30 ).

Baal's name derives from the Semitic word *ba'lu*, meaning "lord." He was assumed to fulfill several significant roles by the peoples who worshiped him. As god of the storm the roar of his voice in the heavens was the thunder of the sky. He was the god who both created and granted fertility. He was the deity slain by enemies who thus fell into the hands of Death. During the time that Baal was under the control of Death, the vegetation wilted or ceased and procreation stopped. He was the god of justice, feared by evildoers.

The Book of Kings recounts that Jezebel used the plan of the Baal temple in Sidon for the construction of a similar temple in Samaria. Ahab agreed with her to make Baal worship the royal religion of the northern kingdom (1 Kings 16:29-31 ). Baal, like Asherah, was also worshiped at high places.

The cult of Baal involved the offering of many animal sacrifices. Priests would officiate on behalf of the persons presenting sacrificial animals to the god. Some of the northern kingdom rulers even "made their sons pass through fire" offering their own sons as sacrifices to Baal. "Holy prostitutes" both male and female were available to worshippers, encouraging the fertility of both land and people.

*Baal-zebub, Beel-zebul* . Phoenician god worshiped at Ekron in Old Testament times (2 Kings 1:2-16 ). Original meaning of the name is unknown but the Old Testament form, Baal-zebub, means "Lord of the flies"; in Jesus' day this god is derisively called Beel-zebul (NIV Beelzebub), "lord of dung, " and identified with Satan, the ruler of demons (Matthew 12:24 ). Jesus' enemies accused him of casting out demons by invoking Beel-zebul (Mark 3:22 ) and even of being his embodiment (Matthew 10:25 ). Jesus, rejecting this calumny, pointed out that the expulsion of demons was Satan's defeat, heralding the arrival of God's kingdom (Luke 11:20-22 ).