**Baal “Lord”** WEBSTER 1828 DICTIONARY

**BA'AL**, n. An idol among the ancient Chaldeans and Syrians, representing the sun. The word signifies also lord, or commander; and the character of the idol was varied by different nations, at different times. Thus Baal Berith is supposed to signify the Lord of the Covenant; Baal Peor, or rather Baal Phegor, the Lord of the dead. Ps. cvi, Baal Zebub, the god of flies, &c.

**Baal SMITH’S BIBLE DICTIONARY**

**Ba'al.** *(lord).*

1. A Reubenite 1Ch\_5:5.

2. The son of Jehiel, and grandfather of Saul. 1Ch\_8:30; 1Ch\_9:36.

The supreme male divinity of the Phoenician and Canaanitish nations, as Ashtoreth was their supreme female divinity. Some suppose Baal to correspond to the sun and Ashtoreth to the moon; others that Baal was Jupiter and Ashtoreth Venus. There can be no doubt of the very high antiquity of the worship of Baal. It prevailed in the time of Moses among the Moabites and Midianites, Num\_22:41, and through them spread to the Israelites. Num\_25:3-18; Num\_4:3.

In the times of the kings, it became the religion of the court and people of the ten tribes, 1Ki\_16:31-33; 1Ki\_18:19; 1Ki\_18:22, and appears never to have been permanently abolished among them. 2Ki\_17:16 Temples were erected to Baal in Judah, 1Ki\_16:32 and he was worshipped with much ceremony. 1Ki\_18:19; 1Ki\_26-28; 2Ki\_10:22. The attractiveness of this worship to the Jews undoubtedly grew out of its licentious character. We find this worship also in Phoenician colonies.

The religion of the ancient British islands much resembled this ancient worship of Baal, and may have been derived from it. Nor need we hesitate to regard the Babylonian Bel, Isa\_46:1, or Beaus, as essentially identical with Baal, though perhaps under some modified form. The plural, **Baalim**, is found frequently, showing that he was probably worshipped under different compounds, among which appear --

3. *Baal-Berith.* *(the covenant Baal),* Jdg\_8:33; Jdg\_9:4, the god who comes into covenant with the worshippers.

4. *Baal-Zebub.* *(lord of the fly),* and worshipped at Ekron. 2Ki\_1:2-3; 2Ki\_1:16.

5. *Baal-Hanan.* a. The name of one of the early kings of Edom. Gen\_36:38-39; 1Ch\_1:49-50.

b. The name of one of David's officers, who had the superintendence of his olive and sycamore plantations. 1Ch\_27:28.

6. *Baal-Peor.* *(lord of the opening,* that is, *for others to join in the worship).* We have already referred to the worship of this god. The narrative Numbers 25 seems clearly to show that this form of Baal-worship was connected with licentious rites.

**Geographical.** This word occurs as the prefix or suffix to the names of several places in Palestine, some of which are as follows:

7. **Baal** a town of Simeon, named only in 1Ch\_4:33 which from the parallel list in Jos\_19:8 seems to have been identical with *Baalath-Beer*.

8. **Baalah.** *(mistress).*

a. Another name for **Kirjath-Jearim**, or **Kirjath-Baal**, the well-known town now Kuriet el Enab. Jos\_15:9-10; 1Ch\_13:6.

b. A town in the south of Judah, Jos\_15:29 which in Jos\_19:3, is called **Balah**, and in the parallel list, 1Ch\_4:29, **Bilhah**.

9. **Baalath.** *(mistress),* a town of Dan named with Gibbethon, Gath-rim-mon and other Philistine places. Jos\_19:44.

10. *Baalath-Beer.* *(lord of the well).* **Baal, 7**, a town among those in the south part of Judah, given to Simeon, which also bore the name of **Ramath-Negeb**, or "the height of the south." Jos\_19:8.

11. *Baal-Gad.* *(lord of fortune),* used to denote the most northern, Jos\_11:17; Jos\_12:7, or perhaps northwestern, Jos\_13:5, point to which Joshua's victories extended. It was in all probability a Phoenician or Canaanite sanctuary of Baal under the aspect of Gad or Fortune.

12. *Baal-Hamon.* *(lord of a multitude),* a place at which Solomon had a vineyard, evidently of great extent. Son\_8:11.

13. *Baal-Hazor.* *(village of Baal),* a place where Absalom appears to have had a sheep-farm, and where Amnon was murdered. 2Sa\_13:23.

14. *Mountain Baal-Hermon.* *(Lord of Hermon),* Jdg\_3:3, and simply Baal-hermon. 1Ch\_5:23 This is usually considered as a distinct place from Mount Hermon; but we know that this mountain had at least three names Deu\_3:9 and Baal-hermon may have been a fourth in use among the Phoenician worshippers.

15. *Baal-Meon.* *(lord of the house),* one of the towns which were built by the Reubenites. Num\_32:38. It also occurs in 1Ch\_5:8 and on each occasion with Nebo. In the time of Ezekiel, it was Moabite, one of the cities which were the "glory of the country." Eze\_25:9.

16. *Baal-Perazim.* *(lord of divisions),* the scene of a victory of David over the Philistines, and of a great destruction of their images. 2Sa\_5:20; 1Ch\_14:11. See Isa\_28:21 where it is called *Mountain Perazim*.

17. *Baal-Shalisha.* *(lord of Shalisha),* a place named only in 2Ki\_4:42 apparently not far from Gilgal; Compare 2Ki\_4:38.

18. *Baal-Tamar.* *(lord of the palm tree),* a place named only in Jdg\_20:33 as near Gibeah of Benjamin. The palm tree (Hebrew, **tamar**) of Deborah, Jdg\_4:5, was situated somewhere in the locality, and is possibly alluded to.

19. *Baal-Zephon.* *(lord of the north),* a place in Egypt near where the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. Num\_33:7; Eze\_14:2; Eze\_9. We place Baal-zephon on the western shore of the Gulf of Suez, a little below its head, which at that time was about 30 or 40 miles northward of the Present head.

**INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA**

**Baal (1)**

bā´al̀ (בּעל, *ba‛al*; Βάαλ, *Báal*, or Βαάλ, *Baál*): The Babylonian Belu or Bel, “Lord,” was the title of the supreme god among the Canaanites.

I. Name and Character of Baal

II. Attributes of Baal

III. Baal-Worship

IV. Temples, etc.

V. Use of the Name

VI. Forms of Baal

1. Baal-berith

2. Baal-gad

3. Baal-hamon

4. Baal-hermon

5. Baal-peor

6. Baal-zebub

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 worshipped under two aspects, beneficent and destructive. On the one hand he gave light and warmth to his worshippers; 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” (2Ki\_16:3; 2Ki\_21:6). The forms under which Baal was worshipped were necessarily as numerous as the communities which worshipped 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” (Jdg\_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 (Jos\_11:17) in the north of Palestine. Occasionally the second element was noun as in Baal-Shemaim, “lord of heaven,” Baalzebub (2Ki\_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 (1Ch\_8:31; 1Ch\_9:40) and Beeliada (1Ch\_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 (Hos\_2:16) declares that henceforth the God of Israel should no longer be called Baali, “my Baal,” and personal names like Esh-baal (1Ch\_8:33; 1Ch\_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 1Ki\_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 (Jer\_11:13), apparently on the flat roofs of the houses (Jer\_32:29); and the temple of Baal contained an image of the god in the shape of a pillar or Bethel (2Ki\_10:26, 2Ki\_10:27). In the reign of Ahab, Baal was served in Israel by 450 priests (1Ki\_18:19), as well as by prophets (2Ki\_10:19), and his worshippers wore special vestments when his ritual was performed (2Ki\_10:22). The ordinary offering made to the god consisted of incense (Jer\_7:9) and burnt sacrifices; on extraordinary occasions the victim was human (Jer\_19:5). At times the priests worked themselves into a state of ecstasy, and dancing round the altar slashed themselves with knives (1Ki\_18:26, 1Ki\_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, ἀισχύνη, *aischúnē* “shame” being intended to be read. We find the same usage in Rom\_11:4. The feminine counterpart of Baal was Baalah or Baalath which is found in a good many of the local names (see Baethgen, *Beitrage zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, 1888).

VI. Forms of Baal

**1. Baal-Berith**

**Baal-berith** בּעל בּרית, *ba‛al berı̄th*; Βααλβερίθ, *Baalberı́th*, “Covenant Baal,” was worshipped at Shechem after the death of Gideon (Jdg\_8:33; Jdg\_9:4). In Jdg\_9:46 the name is replaced by El-berith, “Covenant-god.” The covenant was that made by the god with his worshippers, less probably between the Israelites and the native Canaanites.

**2. Baal-Gad**

**Baal-gad** בּעל גּד, *ba‛al gādh*; Βαλαγάδα, *Balagáda*, “Baal [lord of good luck” (or “Baal is Gad”) was the god of a town called after his name in the north of Palestine, which has often been identified with Baalbek. The god is termed simply Gad in Isa\_65:11 the Revised Version, margin; where he is associated with Meni, the Assyrian Manu (King James Version “troop” and “number”).

**3. Baal-Hamon**

**Baal-hamon** בּעל המון, *ba‛al hāmōn*; Βεελαμών, *Beelamō̇n* is known only from the fact that Solomon had a garden at a place of that name (Son\_8:11). The name is usually explained to mean “Baal of the multitude,” but the cuneiform tablets of the Tell el-Amarna age found in Palestine show that the Egyptian god Amon was worshipped in Canaan and identified there with the native Baal. We are therefore justified in reading the name Baal-Amon, a parallel to the Babylonian Bel-Merodach. The name has no connection with that of the Carthaginian deity Baal-hamman.

**4. Baal-Hermon**

**Baal-hermon** בּעל חרמון, *ba‛al ḥermōn*; Βαλαερμών, *Balaermō̇n* is found in the name of “the mountain of Baal-hermon” (Jdg\_3:3; compare 1Ch\_5:23), which also bore the names of Hermort, Sirion and Shenir (Saniru in the Assyrian inscriptions), the second name being applied to it by the Phoenicians and the third by the Amorites (Deu\_3:9). Baal-hermon will consequently be a formation similar to Baal-Lebanon in an inscription from Cyprus; according to the Phoenician writer Sanchuniathon (*Philo Byblius*, Fragmenta II) the third generation of men “begat sons of surprising size and stature, whose names were given to the mountains of which they had obtained possession.”

**5. Baal-Peor**

**Baal-peor** בּעל פעור, *ba‛al pe‛ōr*; Βεελφεγώρ, *Beelphegō̇r* was god of the Moabite mountains, who took his name from Mount Peor (Num\_23:28), the modern *Fa‛ūr*, and was probably a form of Chemosh (Jerome, *Comm*., Isa\_15:1-9). The sensual rites with which he was worshipped (Num\_25:1-3) indicate his connection with the Phoenician Baal.

**6. Baal-Zebub**

**Baal-zebub** בּעל זבוּב, *ba‛al zebhūbh*; Βααλμυία Θεός, *Baalmuı́a Theós* (“Baal the fly god”) was worshipped at Ekron where he had famous oracle (2Ki\_1:2, 2Ki\_1:3, 2Ki\_1:16). The name is generally translated “the Lord of flies,” the Sun-god being associated with the flies which swarm in Palestine during the earlier summer months. It is met with in Assyrian inscriptions. In the New Testament the name assumes the form of Beelzebul (Βεελζεβούλ), in King James Version: BEELZEBUB (which see).

**FAUSSET’S BIBLE DICTIONARY**

**Baal (1)**

The chief male deity, as Ashtoreth is the chief goddess, of the Canaanites and Phoenicians. Baalim, the plural form, expresses the various aspects of Baal, as different localities viewed him. Baal is also associated with Aaherah, inaccurately translated "THE GROVE" or "groves" (Jdg\_3:7; 2Ch\_33:3; 2Ch\_34:4; 2Ki\_23:5-6). *(See ASHERAH.)* Baal means lord, in the sense of owner, possessor; but *Adown* means lord, master. The Hebrew article distinguishes the proper name Baal from the common noun; Bel, the Babylonian idol (Isa\_46:1), is related. Midian and Moab, as early as Moses' time, tempted Israel, by Balaam's devilish counsel (Rev\_2:14; Jos\_13:22; Num\_25:18), to worship the phase of the deity called Baal-peor (Numbers 25), from *peor*, "*aperire hymenem virgineum*" corresponding to the Latin, *Priapus*.

Terrible licentiousness not only was sanctioned, but formed part of the worship. A plague from Jehovah destroyed 24,000 Israelites in consequence, and was only stopped by the zeal of Phinehas. Moses subsequently, when warning the people from this example, notices no circumstance of it but one, which, though in the original narrative not stated, was infinitely the most important to advert to, but which none but spectators of the fact, perfectly acquainted with every individual concerned in it, could possibly feel the truth of. "Your eyes have seen what Jehovah did because of Baal-peor, for all the men that followed Baal-peor the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you. But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day" (Deu\_4:3). For Moses to have used this argument was extremely natural but if a forger had asserted this at hazard, and put it in Moses' mouth it seems very strange that it is the only circumstance he should forget to notice in the direct narrative, and the only one he should notice in his reference to it (Graves, Pentateuch, 1:4).

Baal worship prevailed much in Israel, except during Gideon's judgeship (hence called Jerubbaal, "let Baal plead"), up to Samuel's time (Jdg\_2:10-13; Jdg\_6:26-32; Jdg\_8:33; Jdg\_10:6-10). At Samuel's reproof they put away this worship (1Sa\_7:4). Solomon brought back Ashtoreth worship to please his foreign wives. Ahab, king of Israel, under Jezebel's influence (daughter of Ethbaal, priest of Baal and king of Zidon), established the worship of Baal and Asherah ("the groves"): 1Ki\_16:31-33; 1Ki\_18:19-22. Elijah successfully for a time resisted it. His influence and that of king Jehoshaphat produced its effect in the following reign and that of Jehu. It was laid aside for Jeroboam's calves, under Jehoram, Ahab's son (2Ki\_3:2), and under Jehu (2Ki\_10:28); but for the most part prevailed until the Lord in vengeance removed the ten tribes from their land (2Ki\_17:16).

Baal worship also in Judah found entrance under Ahaz (2Ch\_28:2-3), but was suppressed by Hezekiah (2Ki\_18:4). Manasseh sought to bring Judah to the same state of Baal worship as Israel had been under Ahab (2Ki\_21:3; compare Mic\_6:16). Josiah made a thorough eradication of it (2Ki\_23:4-14). A remnant of it and an effort to combine idolatry with Jehovah worship still in part survived until the final purgation of all tendency to idols was effected by the severe discipline of the Babylonian captivity (Zep\_1:4-6). The Hebrew for "Sodomites" (1Ki\_14:24; 1Ki\_15:12; 1Ki\_22:46; 2Ki\_23:7) is *qideshim*, "those consecrated" to the vilest filthiness, which constituted part of the sacred worship! Flat roofs at Jerusalem were often used as altars (Jer\_32:29).

"Standing images," or possibly pillars or obelisks (*matsebah*) were his symbols (1Ki\_14:23; 2Ki\_18:4; 2Ki\_23:14; Mic\_5:13). "Sun images" (*hammanim*; Isa\_17:8; Isa\_27:9; 2Ch\_34:4) "were on high above the altars" of Baal (Jer\_43:13); "the images of Bethshemesh," literally "the pillars (obelisks) of the house of the sun." At Tyre one title was Malqereth "King of the city." In a Maltese inscription, Melkart, lord of Tyre, is identified with "Hercules, the prince leader" of the Greeks; from *melek* "king," and *qereth* "of the city." Tyre's colonies (Carthage, etc.) honored Melkart, the god of the mother city; the name appears in Hamilcar. An inscription at Palmyra names him Baal Shemesh, owner of the sun. Philo says his title among the Phoenicians was Beelsamen (shamain), "owner of the heavens."

Plautus also in his Poenulus calls him Bal-samen. Contrast Melchizedek's title for Jehovah, "Possessor *Qoneh*; not *Baal* of heaven and earth" (Gen\_14:19). High places were chosen for Baal worship, and human victims were sometimes offered as burnt offerings (Jer\_19:5). The worshippers wore peculiar vestments (2Ki\_10:22). They gashed themselves with knives at times to move his pity (1Ki\_18:26-28). The name appears in Asdrubal ("help of Baal"), Hannibal ("grace of Baal"), Adherbaal, Ethbaal. His generating, vivifying power is symbolized by the sun (2Ki\_23:5), as Ashtoreth is by the moon, Venus, and the heavenly hosts.

**EASTON’S BIBLE DICTIONARY**

***Baal***

Lord.

(1.) The name appropriated to the principal male god of the Phoenicians. It is found in several places in the plural BAALIM (Jdg\_2:11; Jdg\_10:10; 1Ki\_18:18; Jer\_2:23; Hos\_2:17). Baal is identified with Molech (Jer\_19:5). It was known to the Israelites as Baal-peor (Num\_25:3; Deu\_4:3), was worshipped till the time of Samuel (1Sa\_7:4), and was afterwards the religion of the ten tribes in the time of Ahab (1Ki\_16:31-33; 1Ki\_18:19, 1Ki\_18:22). It prevailed also for a time in the kingdom of Judah (2Ki\_8:27; compare 2Ki\_11:18; 2Ki\_16:3; 2Ch\_28:2). till finally put an end to by the severe discipline of the Captivity (Zep\_1:4-6). The priests of Baal were in great numbers (1Ki\_18:19), and of various classes (2Ki\_10:19). Their mode of offering sacrifices is described in 1Ki\_18:25-29. The sun-god, under the general title of Baal, or “lord,” was the chief object of worship of the Canaanites. Each locality had its special Baal, and the various local Baals were summed up under the name of Baalim, or “lords.” Each Baal had a wife, who was a colourless reflection of himself.

(2.) A Benjamite, son of Jehiel, the progenitor of the Gibeonites (1Ch\_8:30; 1Ch\_9:36).

(3.) The name of a place inhabited by the Simeonites, the same probably as Baal-ath-beer (1Ch\_4:33; Jos\_19:8).