

**Bibliography:** ■ Knoppers, G., *I Chronicles: 1–9* (Anchor Bible 12; New York 2003). [Esp. 377]

## 2. The Benjaminite

The name Baal is also given to a Benjaminite, son of Jeiel, of Gibeon (1 Chr 8:30) and relative of Saul (1 Chr 9:36). Of the two genealogies of Saul, the one in 8:29–40 has a non-sequitur: there is no connection between Jeiel, his sons, and the family of Ner, the grandfather of Saul. The connection is made explicit in 9:36, where Ner is a brother of Baal and father of Kish, Saul's father. Knoppers suggests that the name has fallen out of MT due to haplography and is correctly present in 9:36.

That Saul had a great-uncle who had a Baal name, according to 1 Chr 9:36, is interesting considering some Saulides possessed such names: Merib-baal/Mephibosheth and Ishbaal/Ish-bosheth, names which the Chronicler has restored from the Deuteronomist's alteration of Baal to *bāšet* ("shame"), for apologetic purposes (cf. 2 Sam 2–4 and 1 Chr 8:33 and 9:39).

**Bibliography:** ■ Knoppers, G., *I Chronicles: 1–9* (Anchor Bible 12; New York 2003). [Esp. 478]

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## 3. Baal I of Tyre

Baal I (reigned ca. 680–660 BCE) is attested in the inscriptions of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. Esarhaddon granted him two cities, Ma'rubbu and Šarriptu (Sarepta), following the Assyrian conquest of Sidon in 677 BCE (Borger 1956: 48–49 [Nin. A ii.65–iii.19]). Baal paid tribute and assisted Esarhaddon's construction works in Assyria (Borger 1956: 59–61 [Nin. A v.40–vi.1]). A fragmentary treaty document between Esarhaddon and Baal (Parpola et al.: Text 5) reflects Assyrian supervision over the political and commercial policies of Tyre at that time. In 671 BCE, Baal rebelled against Assyria, relying on Tarqu (Taharqa) of Egypt (Borger 1956: 89 [AsBbE: 7–8, and 112; Frt. F: 12–14]). Esarhaddon besieged Tyre and annexed its continental territory to Assyria. Baal apparently submitted and in 667 BCE followed Ashurbanipal as a vassal in the latter's Egyptian campaign (Borger 1996: 18–20, 212 [Prisma C ii.37–67]). Later, however (ca. 662 BCE), Baal again rebelled against Assyria (Borger 1996: 28, 216 [Prisma A ii.49–62, etc.]). Ashurbanipal put the island of Tyre under siege, and Baal surrendered, handing over hostages and tribute.

## 4. Baal II of Tyre

Baal II (reigned ca. 573–564 BCE) is referred to by Josephus as having reigned for 10 years following Ithobal (Ethbaal III), during whose reign Nebuchadnezzar II besieged Tyre (Ag. Ap. 1.156–57; cf. Ant. 10.228; Ezek 29:17–20).

**Bibliography:** ■ Borger, R., *Die Inschriften Assarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien* (AfO.B 9; Graz 1956). ■ Borger, R., *Beiträge*

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## Baal (Place)

According to 1 Chr 4:33, Baal (MT *Ba'al*; LXX *Βααλ*) is a town within the territory of Simeon. The name is perhaps a corruption of *Ba'ālat Bē'ēr* (Josh 19:8).

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## Baal of Peor

→ Baal-Peor

## Baal Shem Tov (Besht)

Israel ben Eliezer (ca. 1698–1760), better known as "Baal Shem Tov" (meaning "Master of the Good Name"), was a charismatic teacher of a Jewish mystical path of ecstatic devotion who inspired a revivalist movement later called Hasidism. While there is very little extant written material reliably assigned to the Baal Shem Tov, both the traditions handed down by family members and disciples and, in particular, the many quotations found in the works of his student Rabbi Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye provide a stable and consistent portrait of his spiritual approach and mode of biblical interpretation. This portrayal is especially evident since Jacob Joseph's own writings are prolix and labyrinthine, while the Baal Shem Tov citations are invariably short and epigrammatic. His scriptural readings and rabbinic interpretations come as illuminative flashes, aphoristic bursts which typically involve rephrasing, reparsing, and shifting of cadences. A central ideal is integration of all aspects of the self, including those perceived to be undesirable, into a spirituality that caps but does not replace the physical. In this vein, Eccl 9:10 is read to mean "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your mindful awareness." Non-dualism is achieved when the person simultaneously manifests thought and deed, mind and action, spirit and body, linking but not collapsing the various states. Inhabiting the linkage engenders a kind of apotheosis which channels blessing and unlocks power. Closely related to this conception is the Baal Shem Tov's understanding of Prov 3:6, "In all your ways acknowledge Him," heard as a call not to recognize God merely in all aspects of life, but in all levels of one's being: holistically integrating one's corporeal and spiritual sides, so that their respective yearnings are satisfied

not just serially or even in tandem, but in a mindful embrace of their totality, an inhabitation of the unified Self.

The spiritual life must involve pleasure. Job 19:26, "I would behold God while still in my flesh," is read to mean that corporeal life, including sexuality, is emblematic for spiritual life. "Just as in physical union, one cannot have a child except if one has intercourse with an erect ['living'] member, with desire and joy, so it is with spiritual union, with words of Torah and prayer. When one engages in them with a living body, with joy and pleasure, then the words bear fruit ..."

As Gershom Scholem has pointed out, the Baal Shem Tov had an astonishing ability to imbue simple words with fresh significance and surprising resonances. For example, he would routinely take the Hebrew word for the numeral one, *'ehad*, and recontextualize it from an ordinary number into a charged signifier of mystical unity. With this trope, the wide-ranging diversity of the Torah's teachings could be traced back to an essential unity. The teacher/interpreter, however, must himself be rooted in that unity; an individual of divided spirit will only see fragmentation and divisiveness. By contrast, a teacher in touch with the One can discover and unleash endlessly positive implications and repercussions.

An important theme is the sublimation of evil and its transformation into good. Exod 14:10, "Pharaoh drew near," is understood as "Pharaoh drew us near [to God]." Pharaoh's pursuit of the Israelites at the exodus thus moved them to prayer ("and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord"). By extension, any apparent menace can become a spur to closeness to God. Similarly, a slight shift of cadence in Ps 34:15, "Depart from evil, and do good," yields "transform the evil into good."

Ps 92:10, "all evildoers shall be scattered," is a recurrent trope in the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov, used to describe the sublimation of evil, achieved in two stages. Since all evil is illusion, rectification happens through an act of revisioning. Recognizing the positive aspect of evil elevates it, bringing it back to the light. Then follows the dissipation of one's initial puzzlement and incomprehension. The illusion – the "evildoers," or more literally the "workers of iniquity" – are not so much destroyed as "scattered," that is, dissipated. The positive spark is returned, restored to the good, while the "negative" aspect, the illusion itself, dissolves to transparency.

Governing all biblical interpretation, indeed all religious activity, is the goal of *devequt*, ecstatic communion with the divine, understood as entry into the pronounced letters of the Hebrew alphabet, as the practitioner creates a "sonic Ark" from his vocal articulation of sacred texts.

For the Baal Shem Tov, the spiritual integrity of the interpreter is more important than intellec-

tual skill or knowledge of the canon. Every word of the Torah can be taken in a positive or negative aspect, and the true teacher is charged with the mandate of bringing the letters and words to the side of good and blessing, comprehending the text in the most beneficent way. The interpreter is active, performative: his understanding shapes the text, the words, the very letters – which are living personalities – and brings them home.

The Baal Shem Tov powerfully influenced all Hasidic exegesis, which further developed the insights and tropes he introduced. More fundamentally, he emboldened subsequent Hasidic masters to expound scripture with fluidity and suppleness, against the grain, prizing the *aperçu* that defamiliarized, startled, and ultimately led to a new awakening.

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Nehemia Polen

## Baalah

The city Baalah (MT *Ba'ālā*; LXX *Βααλ*, *Βαλα*), named in Josh 15:9 [*Ba'ālā*], 60 [*Qiryat Ba'al*] and in 1 Chr 13:6 is identified with Kiriath Jearim in northwestern Judah. In this view, Baalah does not mean "lady," and it is not named for an unidentified goddess. Rather, the form is feminine because the term for city (*qiryā*) is feminine; the name is shorthand for "the city of Baal" (that is, *qiryat ba'al*). Eusebius, in fact, identifies a town called "Baal" with "Kiriathiareim, the city of Iareim, of the tribe of Judah" (*Onomasticon*). Noth suggested that the identification of Baalah with Kiriath Jearim is not original, but was so identified in order to create an artificial western border of Benjamin and to leave space for the tribal allotment of Dan. Kallai, however, rejects this proposal and accepts that the identification of Baalah with Kiriath Jearim as original.

Simons has identified the Baalah of Josh 15:9 with Baalath in 1 Kgs 9:18, although he suggests that the identification with Baalath-beer in the Negeb (Josh 19:8) is also possible. Kallai, however, does not associate Baalath with either Baalath-beer or Kiriath-Jearim, but with a northern Danite Baalath (v. 44).

There is another Baalah which occurs as part of the town list of southern Judah (Josh 15:29), within the tribal allotment of Simeon. This Negebite town may be the same as Balah (Josh 19:3) and Bilhah (1 Chr 4:29).

Baalah was the last stop of the ark of the covenant after being in Philistine hands in 1 Sam 7:1–