

בְּעַל-בְּרִית

from [Baal](#) and [berith](#) [covenant]

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بريث

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Berith (god)

Baal-berith (“Baal of the Covenant”) and **El-berith** (“El of the Covenant”) are two gods, or one god, worshiped in Shechem, in ancient Israel.^[1] *Berith* probably appears also in Ugaritic texts (second millennium BCE) as *brt*, in connection with Baal,^[1] and perhaps as **Beruth** in Sanchuniathon's work.

Judges (8:33, 9:4, and 9:46) is the only Biblical book that mentions Baal-berith and El-berith. It is not clear whether they are separate forms of the gods Ba'al and El or are actually one god. Scholars suppose that he or they may have been (a) fertility and vegetation god(s), based on Judges 9:27. Also unclear is what covenant or covenants are referred to by the name *Berith*. In Judges 9:28 some of the Shechemites are called “men of Hamor”; this is compared to “sons of Hamor”, which in the ancient Middle East referred to people who had entered into a covenant sealed by the sacrifice of a *hamor*, an ass.^[1] 'Children/sons of Hamor' itself appears in Genesis 33:19 and Joshua 24:32, in both of which, as in Judges 9:28, Hamor is called the father of Shechem. Genesis 34 features a man named *Hamor* who ruled in the area of Shechem (Gen. 33:18) and had a son named *Shechem*.

Rabbinic tradition equates Baal-berith with Beelzebub, the god of Philistine Ekron.^[2]

In his euhemeristic account of the Phoenician deities, Sanchuniathon says that a certain Elioun, called also “the Most High”, and a female named *Beruth* dwelt in the neighbourhood of Byblos, on the coast of present-day Lebanon. They had two children—a male called Epigeus/Autochthon/Sky and a daughter called Earth. Because of the latter pair's beauty, the sky and the earth, respectively, were named after them. According to Sanchuniathon it is from Sky and Earth that El and various other deities are born, though ancient texts refer to El as creator of heaven and earth. A relationship with Hebrew *berit* 'covenant' or with the city of Beirut have both been suggested for *Beruth*. The Hittite theogony knows of a primal god named Alalu who fathered Sky (and possibly Earth) and who was overthrown by his son Sky, who was in turn overthrown by his (Sky's) son Kumarbi. A similar tradition seems to be at the basis of Sanchuniathon's account.

1 See also

- Baal-berith

2 References

- [1] van der Toorn, K.; Becking, Bob; van der Horst, Pieter Willem (1999). *Dictionary of deities and demons in the Bible DDD*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. pp. 141–144. ISBN 978-90-04-11119-6.
- [2] “JewishEncyclopedia.com - BAAL-BERITH”. Retrieved 2010-04-06.

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Baal-berith

“berith” redirects here. For other uses, see [berith](#) (disambiguation).

Baal-Berith was the god of the [Canaanite](#) city, who later came to be viewed as the demon *Baalberith* by Christian demonology. According to the [Book of Judges](#), his temple was destroyed when [Abimelech](#) quelled the rising of his subjects.^{[1][2]} The name denotes a form of Ba'al-worship prevailing in Israel, according to the [Book of Judges](#),^[3] and particularly in [Shechem](#). The term “Ba'al” is shown by the equivalent “El-berith” to mean “the God of the Covenant.” The 'Covenant' (Hebrew: *Berith*) to which this refers may refer to treaties such as one with the Canaanitic league of which Shechem was the head, or the covenant between Israel and the people of Shechem.^[4] The term is considered by some to be too abstract to have been occasioned by a single set of conditions. Moreover, the temple of the god in Shechem implies a permanent establishment. Probably the name and the cult were widespread and ancient (see [Baalim](#)), though it is mentioned only in connection with the affairs of Shechem.

1 In Rabbinical Literature

The idol Baalberith, which the Jews worshipped after the death of [Gideon](#), was identical, according to the Rabbis, with [Baal-zebub](#), “the ba'al of flies,” the god of [Ekron](#) ([II Kings](#) i. 2). He was worshipped in the shape of a fly; and Jewish tradition states that so addicted were the Jews to his cult that they would carry an image of him in their pockets, producing it, and kissing it from time to time. Baal-zebub is called Baal-berith because such Jews might be said to make a covenant (Hebrew: “Berit”) of devotion with the idol, being unwilling to part with it for a single moment ([Shab.](#) 83b; comp. also [Sanh.](#) 63b). According to another conception, Baal-berith was an obscene article of idolatrous worship, possibly a simulacrum [priapi](#) ([Yer. Shab.](#) ix. 11d; 'Ab. [Zarah](#) iii. 43a). This is evidently based on the later significance of the word “berit,” meaning [circumcision](#).

2 Baalberith in Christian demonology

Baalberith was the chief secretary of Hell, head of its public archives, and the demon who tempted men to blas-

phemy and murder. When seated among the princes of Hell, he was usually seen as a pontiff. He tells things of the past, present and future with true answers; he can also turn all metals into gold, give dignities to men and confirm them. He was also quite a voluble sort: according to the *Admirable History* written by [Father Sebastien Michaelis](#) in 1612, Baalberith once possessed a nun in [Aix-en-Provence](#). In the process of the exorcism, Baalberith volunteered not only his own name and the names of all the other demons possessing her, but the names of the saints who would be most effective in opposing them.

3 References

- [1] [Judges 9:4](#)
- [2] [Judges 9:46](#)
- [3] [Judges 8:33](#)
- [4] [Genesis 34](#)

4 Further reading


- J.C. DeMoor, בעל, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, hrsg. G.J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, Bd. 1, Col. 706-718.
- S. L. MacGregor Mathers, A. Crowley, [The Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon the King](#) (1904). 1995 reprint: ISBN 0-87728-847-X.
- “Berith - Goetia, the Lesser Key of Solomon the King: Lemegeton.” [DeliriumsRealm.com - Demonology, Fallen Angels, and the Philosophy of Good and Evil.](#) 30 Apr. 2009 <<http://www.deliriumsrealm.com/delirium/articleview.asp?Post=120>>.

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