

Joshua 15:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Baalah, and Iim, and Azem,

Analysis

Baalah, and Iim, and Azem—**Baalah** (הַלְזַבַּ, "mistress" or "lady," feminine form of Baal) indicates another former Canaanite cult site, possibly dedicated to a goddess. Like Bealoth (v. 24), this name shows Israel inheriting and transforming pagan sacred sites. **Iim** (יִמ, "ruins" or "heaps") or possibly "Iyim" suggests either ancient ruins or a place characterized by stone heaps. **Azem** (אֶזֶם, "bone" or "strong") appears in Simeon's inheritance (Joshua 19:3) and may indicate a fortified location or place of notable strength.

The retention of names like Baalah in Israel's inheritance demonstrates historical honesty—Scripture doesn't sanitize the land's pagan past but acknowledges it while showing God's redemptive transformation. What was devoted to false gods became part of the holy inheritance, illustrating the pattern throughout Scripture of God redeeming and repurposing what was corrupted by sin.

Historical Context

The transformation of Canaanite cult sites into Israelite settlements required thorough cleansing. Deuteronomy 12:2-3 commanded destroying high places, Asherah poles, carved images, and even the names of false gods. Yet place names like Baalah persisted, possibly because geographic identification required recognizable names, or perhaps showing incomplete obedience to eradication commands—a recurring theme in Judges.

Iim's identification with ruins suggests the site may have been destroyed in earlier

conflicts and later resettled. The Negev contains numerous tells (ancient mounds) representing multiple occupation periods. Communities built atop earlier ruins, creating layered settlements reflecting centuries of habitation, destruction, and rebuilding. These archaeological patterns confirm biblical narratives of conquest, settlement, and occasional destruction.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What 'Baalah' areas in your life—things formerly devoted to idolatry or sin—has God redeemed, and how can you ensure they remain consecrated to Him?
2. How does Israel's incomplete eradication of Canaanite influences (shown by retained place names and later idolatry) warn against tolerating 'small' compromises that eventually corrupt faithfulness?
3. What does God's transformation of pagan cult sites into covenant inheritance illustrate about the gospel's power to redeem what was corrupted by sin?

Interlinear Text

בַּעַלְהָ	וְעִיִּים	וְאַזֵּמִים
Baalah	and Iim	and Azem
H1173	H5864	H6107