

## Vine W E “Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words”

### **BELIAL** (1100)

There are two views as to the primary meaning of this word. The ordinary one is that it signifies worthlessness (from *beli-ya'al*, “no profit”) or wickedness, and that the secondary meaning is destruction. Another view is that the primary meaning is the abode of the dead (either from *beli-ya'al*, no coming up, or from the root *bāla'*, swallow up), hence, hopeless ruin, and the secondary meaning, extreme wickedness. In the Old Testament, the word, in the sense of “worthlessness” or “wickedness,” is mostly used with another noun, for example, “daughter of Belial” (1 Samuel 1:16); “man” (1 Samuel 25:25; 2 Samuel 16:7; 20: 1; Proverbs 16:27); “heart” (Deuteronomy 15:9, margin); “witness” (Proverbs 19:28); “person” (Proverbs 6: 12; R.V.. “worthless person”); “children” or “sons” (Deuteronomy 13: 13 KJV; R.V. “base”; also in Judges 19:22; 20:13; 1 Samuel 2:12; 10:27; 25:17; 2 Samuel 23:6; 1 Kings 21:10, 13; 2 Chronicles 13:7); “men” (1 Samuel 30:22). The general meaning is thus “sinners of deepest dye.”

In the sense of “destruction” the word is found five times: 2 Samuel 22:5; Psalms 18:4 R.V. “[floods of] ungodliness” (some render it “perdition”), in parallelism with “death” and “Sheol”; Psalms 41:8, “an evil disease”; Nahum 1:11 R.V. “[that counseled] wickedness” (some render it “hopeless ruin”); 1:15 R.V. “the wicked one” (or “the destroyer”). This meaning is borne out by the New Testament use of the word as a name of Satan (2 Corinthians 6:15).