

Hebrew Words For Seeking Or Inquiring Of God

The Old Testament frequently refers to people seeking or inquiring of God. Four Hebrew words which relate to this are “sha’al”, “darash”, “baqar” and “baqash”.

“Sha’al” means “ask, inquire...”¹ or “ask, inquire...inquire of, consult”.² “Sha’al” relates primarily to asking God for specific guidance.³

“Darash” means “to seek with care, inquire”⁴ or “seek, consult, inquire of...seek deity in prayer and worship”.⁵ “Darash” can relate to seeking God’s guidance or seeking God Himself.⁶ Psalm 53:2 says: **“God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God.”**

Isaiah 55:6 states: **“Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.”**

“Baqar” means “inquire, seek”⁷ and is used in Psalm 27:4.

“Baqash” means “seek”.⁸ Forms of “baqash” are used in relation to seeking God Himself in 1 Chronicles 16:11: **“Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore!”** and in Jeremiah 29:13⁹: **“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”**

A form of “baqash” is used in 2 Samuel 21:1 in relation to David inquiring of the Lord for supernatural guidance. A similar usage is found in Amos 9:11-12.

Under the Mosaic Covenant, believers sought both the Lord and His guidance.

¹ Harris, Archer and Waltke, page 891.

² Brown, Driver and Briggs, pages 981-982.

³ Forms of the word “sha’al” are used in Numbers 27:21, Joshua 9:14, Judges 1:1, 20:18, 20:23, 1 Samuel 28:6, 30:8, 2 Samuel 2:1, 5:19, 5:23, 1 Chronicles 14:10, 14:14 and Isaiah 30:2.

⁴ Harris, Archer and Waltke, page 198.

⁵ Brown, Driver and Briggs, page 205.

⁶ Forms of the word “darash” are used in Exodus 18:15, 1 Samuel 9:9, 1 Kings 22:7, 2 Kings 3:11, 8:8, 1 Chronicles 10:14, 13:3, 16:11 (first usage), 2 Chronicles 18:4, 18:6, 18:7, Psalm 53:2, 105:4 (first usage), 119:2, Isaiah 55:6, Ezekiel 14:3, 14:7, 20:1, 20:3, 20:31 (twice), Amos 5:4 and 5:6.

⁷ Brown, Driver and Briggs, page 133.

⁸ Brown, Driver and Briggs, page 134.

⁹ Forms of the word “baqash” are used in Exodus 33:7, Deuteronomy 4:29, 1 Chronicles 16:10, 16:11 (second usage), 2 Chronicles 7:14, 11:16, 15:4, 15:15, 20:4, Psalm 24:6 (second usage), 27:4, 27:8 (2 usages), 40:16, 69:6, 70:4, 105:3, 105:4 (second usage), Proverbs 28:5, Isaiah 45:19, 51:1, 65:1, Jeremiah 29:13, 50:4, Hosea 5:6, 5:15 (first usage), Zechariah 1:6, 2:3, Zechariah 8:21, 8:22 and Malachi 3:1.