



CHRIST CONNECTIONS MINISTRY

Bible Name Dictionary

Bible Name: **Babel**

Language: **Hebrew**

Pronunciation: **baw-bel'**

Meaning: The name ‘Babel’ means ‘Confusion.’ It is derived from the Hebrew root word ‘Balal’ meaning ‘to mix’, ‘to mingle’, ‘to confuse’ or ‘to confound’ (used only in the sense of a paronomasia).

*** What is a Paronomasia? ***

A ‘paronomasia’ is a figure of speech (also referred to as a pun) that deliberately exploits confusion between similar-sounding words for humorous or rhetorical effect. It’s used as a form of word play.

*** Here’s an example of a paronomasia: “Do you want some cheese to go with your whine?” ***
(The obvious paronomasia in this question is the word ‘whine’.)

What does all of this mean? The Hebrew root word ‘Balal’ (or ‘confusion’) is used only as a secondary meaning to the name ‘Babel.’ Its use purely denotes the presence of a paronomasia (i.e., word play).

*** Here’s how the paronomasia works! ***

The place is named ‘Babel’ because the Lord confused (i.e., ‘balal’) the language of all the earth there. ‘Babel’ itself does not actually mean ‘confusion’; it sounds enough like ‘Balal’ for the paronomasia.

*** What is the primary meaning behind the name ‘Babel’? ***

The name ‘Babel’ actually means ‘The Gate of God.’ It is derived from two ancient Akkadian root words. The first is ‘Bab’ meaning ‘gate.’ The second root word is ‘Ilu’ meaning ‘the deity’ (or God).

*** Hence... the Akkadian word ‘Babilu’ means: ‘The Gate of God.’ ***

On another note... The word ‘Balal’ primarily denotes a ritualistic term used of mixing oil into the flour (or meal) of the cereal offering until every particle of flour was mingled (or anointed) with oil.

*** Hence... the word ‘Balal’ has much to do with the process of anointing with fresh oil. ***

Please note: ‘Babel’ is synonymous with the name ‘Babylon.’