



# CHRIST CONNECTIONS MINISTRY

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Bible Name Dictionary

Bible Name: **Caleb**

Language: **Hebrew**

Pronunciation: **kaw-labe'**

Name Type: **Person**

**Meaning:** The name 'Caleb' means 'Dog'. It is derived from the Hebrew root word 'Keleb' meaning 'to yelp' (the Hebrew equivalent of a dog's woof!). This name is somewhat mysterious in the sense that dogs are always seen in the Bible as negative, vile, aggressive, worthless creatures; and yet, one of the most trustworthy men in all the Old Testament is celebrated by this mysterious name. Today, we would look upon a dog as a faithful creature, obedient and completely lovable, but in ancient Israel dogs were seen as unclean, vile and completely worthless. The Jewish people didn't share our love for man's best friend. In fact, dogs were so hated that even male prostitutes were referred to as dogs. In New Testament times, gentiles were often referred to as dogs by the Jewish people, so perhaps the name 'Caleb' is used in a similar fashion to denote a gentile, as used in Matt. 15.26. Another possibility exists, one that is heavily favored by us, where the name 'Caleb' means 'All-Heart' or 'Whole-Hearted'. It is entirely possible that the name 'Caleb' is derived from two separate Hebrew words. The first is the Hebrew particle 'Ke' meaning 'Like' or 'As if', and the second is the Hebrew noun 'Leb' meaning 'Heart' or 'Understanding'. This would serve to portray the dog in an extremely positive light by the Jewish people. How so? It's as if the hated dog of old, the negative one, now possesses the positive human traits of understanding, compassion and faithfulness. Within this we have a story of conversion.