

1 CHRONICLES 4:9-10 -- JABEZ'S PRAYER

1Ch 4:9-10 "Now Jabez (Ya'btz) was more honorable (kabad) than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." [10] And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested."

Jabez's Prayer - 1Ch 4:9-10 Now Jabez (Ya'btz) was more honorable (kabad) than his brothers,

- This man **Jabez** is one of the more interesting briefly-mentioned people of the Old Testament. We only know of him from this text, and from the town of scribes that may have been named after him or associated with him (1 Chronicles 2:55 *And the families of the scribes who dwelt at Jabez were the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and the Suchathites. These were the Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab*) **The families** - "The families of the Rechabites, the sons of Eliezer the son of Misco, the disciple of Jabez; he was Othniel, the son of Kenaz. And he was called Jabez, because in his council he instituted a school of disciples; they were called Tirathim, because in their hymns their voice was like trumpets; and Shimathim, because in hearing they lifted up their faces, i.e., in prayer; and Suchathim, because they were overshadowed by the Spirit of prophecy. (Clarke)
- "While through these genealogies, and indeed through all the history, we are occupied with those connected with government and the procession of events leading to universal issues, it is refreshing to be halted by the story of **one man who took his need directly to God and obtained the answer of God's grace.**"
- The Targum adds, "and wiser in the law than his brethren;" or he might be a man of great wealth and riches, or of great strength and courage, all which make a man honorable; **or he may be so called, because a praying man, as follows, a man of devotion and religion, a man of God,**

and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain."

- **His mother called his name Jabez:** This name is associated with pain or sorrow. For some reason, probably surrounding the circumstances of his birth, his mother named him this. Because of the strong importance of the idea of a *name* in ancient Hebrew culture, this idea of *pain* was heavy with and upon Jabez - perhaps especially in his growing up.

[10] And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying,

- Jabez was honored, and we know little more of him than that he was a man of prayer and that his prayer was answered. **One way to gain honor in the Kingdom of God is through prayer**, instead of through ambition and achievement. *Jas 4:2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. Jer. 33:3; 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.' Mt. 7:7. 'Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*

Jabez had four basic requests in his prayer.

#1 - "Oh, that You would bless me indeed,

- First, Jabez prayed to be blessed **indeed**. There are many who are blessed, but they are not **blessed indeed**. That is, they have something that is in one sense a blessings (such as family, salvation, wealth, fame, health, security), but yet because of fundamental dissatisfaction in their life, they are not **blessed indeed**.
- Even worse, sometimes blessings turn out to be a curse to us in that we make an idol of the blessing. In this, we see the great wisdom of Jabez's prayer.
- In the same way, many things that are outwardly curses end up being blessings **indeed** to us.

#2 - and enlarge my territory,

- Jabez prayed for enlarged **territory**. Jabez may have *called on the God of Israel* "when he was undertaking some great and dangerous service," in particular the conquest of the land of Canaan. Therefore, when he prayed "**enlarge my territory**," it was to "drive out these wicked and cursed Canaanites, whom thou hast commanded us to root out, and therefore I justly beg and expect thy blessing in the execution of Your command."

- Adam Clarke quotes a Chaldean translation of this prayer, with the line: *and enlarge my borders with disciples*. This, together with the scribal city associated with his name, indicates (but does not prove) that Jabez's desire for more territory was not only to displace the wicked, but also to advance the cause of godliness through the multiplication of disciples.

#3 - that Your hand would be with me,

- Jabez asked that the **hand** of God would be **with** him. "The 'hand of the Lord' is a biblical term for God's power and presence in the lives of His people (see Joshua and *Isaiah 59:1* – "*the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save*)."
- The phrase *the hand of the LORD* is used many times in the Old Testament, and often in a negative sense - that is, in the sense of God's hand being *against* someone in judgment. Here Jabez prayed that the **hand** of the LORD would be **with** him.
- In *Psalms 77:10*, the Psalmist wrote: *I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High*. Here Jabez prayed in advance for something to remember later - to see the **hand** of God **with** him now.

#4 - -and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!"

- Jabez asked to be kept from **evil** and that he would **not cause pain**. Some other translations render this with the idea that **pain** Jabez did not want to cause was his own. "He used this expression in allusion to his name, which signifies *grief*; Lord, let me not have that grief which my name implies, and which my sin deserves."
- In this Jabez recognized the evil in this world, no doubt because he had lived through much pain in his life.
- In this Jabez recognized that he needed God to keep him from evil.
- In this Jabez recognized that the hand of God to bless us can transform the evil and pain of life.

So God granted him what he requested."

- This, of course, is **the measure of effective prayer - that it is answered from heaven** (allowing that "No" or "Wait" can also be an answer). Yet when we are close to the heart of God and pray for the things important to Him and His kingdom, **we expect that our prayers will be granted** (*1 John 5:14*).
- "Reader, imitate the conduct of this worthy Israelite that you may be a partaker of his blessings." (Clarke)

SUMMARY:

- **How is your prayer life? Are you experiencing victory and prosperity? The pathway to prosperity is prayer. Pray. And pray more and then pray still more!**
- **We all know that prayer is vital! Because we know that, there is a tendency to think we're doing it. If a stopwatch was on you praying this past week, how much time would it show of you actually spending time in prayer?**
- **God loved us no matter whether we're praying or not, but the blessings He is waiting to pour out upon you, your ministry, your marriage, your family and your friends can only be released through prayer.**
- **James O. Fraser, missionary to the Lisu Tribes said, "the more prayer; the more blessings!"**
- **Is your life characterized by being a "person of prayer"?**

Pass me not, O gentle Savior!

Pass me not, O gentle Savior, Hear my humble cry; While on others Thou art calling, Do not pass me by.

- *Refrain: Savior, Savior, Hear my humble cry,*
- *While on others Thou art calling, Do not pass me by.*

Thou the spring of all my comfort, More than life to me, Whom have I on earth beside Thee, Whom in Heav'n but Thee.

- *Refrain: Savior, Savior, Hear my humble cry,*
- *While on others Thou art calling, Do not pass me by. (2x)*