

JABEZ - AND HIS PRAYER

I Chronicles 4:9, 10

1. The verses of the text contain all that the Bible says about Jabez.
 - a. They are found in what is usually regarded as dry genealogical records.
 - b. But certainly no thoughtful person would call these verses dry.
2. But even if these records do not furnish as interesting reading matter as do other parts of the Bible it is evident that they should not be skipped.
 - a. For in making his way through these uninviting chronicles of births and deaths, the reader does not know what treasure he may light upon.
 - b. These words of the text are a fine example of this idea.
 - c. Such experience is like finding a flower in the desert; a treasure hidden in the sand; or a star peeping through the dark storm clouds.

I. PREFACE

OBSERVE, JABEZ THE MAN.

- A. We do not know who Jabez was, except that in 4:1 we see this list was the descendants of Judah.
 1. This brief history of Jabez is both interesting and stimulating.
 2. From the occurrence of the same name in ch. 2:55, it has been assumed that Jabez was the founder of the schools or colleges of the scribes.
- B. Observe His Name.
 1. Scripture names are often significant.
 2. This was given to him by his mother, in token, and memory of the sorrow in which she bore her son.
 3. Just what these circumstances were, we're not told.
 - a. His father may have passed away before he was born, leaving his widowed mother lonely and sad as she thought of the new cares and responsibilities which come upon her as she attempted to rear her fatherless child.
 - b. It may have been that the family was in deep poverty, and she saw no way to provide for an additional helpless child.
 - c. Or again, it may have been that the mother of Jabez was subject to unusual suffering and peril in giving birth to him.
 - (1. Consider Rachel. Gen. 35:16-18.
 - (2. She may have thought she might have to leave this innocent babe in the cold and stormy world and for that reason she called him Jabez, "because," she said, "I bear him with sorrow."

- C. Jabez, A Man of Prayer.
1. Of the man Jabez, we have only this brief account. He is known only by his prayer. Yet, the prayer reveals to us an amazing revelation about his character.
 2. We see a man who believes in and practices prayer. We are impressed by the determined and earnest directness of the prayer.
 3. It serves us as a good model prayer.
- D. When we examine the tone of the prayer, we see a humble Jabez.
1. He has a deep sense of personal helplessness, and a trembling fear of responsibility.
- E. The prayer reveals that Jabez was intelligent and thoughtful.
1. He had formed a sensible estimate of life. To him life was work, duties, responsibilities, cares, and trust.
 2. And for it all he recognized the need of a guiding and upholding hand.

II PRAYER

LET'S OBSERVE HIS PRAYER

We see his prayer was to the God of Israel.

1. The God of his father, the God of the covenant.
2. Though not in his address, we are told that he called on the God of Israel.
3. An example for us to address our prayer to the One supreme God, not to a false notion of God. (Vs. prayer as only psychological help)

1. (First) A Prayer with a **PURPOSE**

It was a Prayer for Blessings.

"Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed."

1. This is his request for spiritual benefits. "Bless me indeed!" The real blessings of greater importance are spiritual. And we know he means these here because in the next petition he asks for temporal blessings.
 - a. Some are not blessings "indeed". Israel asked for a king!
2. He beseeches the favor and mercy of God. This indicated a religious character on his part.
 - a. He does not pray for the material gains first. Matthew 6:33

2. (Second) It was a Prayer for **PROSPERITY**.

"And enlarge my border."

1. Jabez was ambitious, but in the right attitude.
 - a. Some think that perhaps he had not conquered all his inheritance from the enemy.

- b. Some think this means the area or scope of his work and service for the Lord. "Lord help me to do a greater work for thee"
 - 2. His ambition was not covetous where he let his desires crush everything that is good and ignore God and the way that is right.
 - a. But he prays to God to help him extend his possessions, to increase his wealth, and to advance in influence.
 - 3. We should pray freely to God about our plans and ask him to bless us. a. To pray to God about our common human affairs is the best way we can be assured of winning them and keeping the right spirit toward whatever we may attain.
 - 4. We don't know if he was a husbandman, a warrior, a ruler, or a scribe. We don't know whether he was praying for increased authority or territory. But it's fitting, that we ask the Lord to enlarge the field of our activities. We may ask the Lord to make us a blessings.
 - a. To those in spiritual darkness. Matt. 5:14-16; Acts 13:47; 26:18
 - b. To the needy. James 1: 27
 - c. To the weak. Gal. 6:2; I Cor. 8:13
 - d. To all men. Gal. 6:10
- 3. **(Third) It was a Prayer for POWER** or Strength.
"That thy hand might be with me."
 - 1. He knew that on his own, he could not succeed. This prayer reveals to us the humility of Jabez.
 - 2. Whether it be the enlargement of his border, or a' struggle against the evil one, Jabez knew that he needed the Lord with him.
 - 3. The same principle applies to us. We must have the Lord with us in whatever we do. (Song: "Be With Me Lord.") '
- 4. **(Fourth) It was a Prayer for PROTECTION**
"And that thou wouldest keep me from evil."
 - 1. It was a prayer for victory over evil.
 - 2. Whether the evil be temporal opponents representing temptation to sin.
 - a. Temptation to channel his ambition in a wicked way.
 - b. Or it may include the temptations of the Devil to engage him in other sins as well.
 - 3. But how suitable his prayer is for us all.
 - a. In Jesus' model prayer for us disciples, he says, "Led us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."
 - b. I Cor. 10:13; Rom. 12:21
- 5 **(Fifth) It was a prayer for a PAINLESS life.** – Freedom from Sorrow.
"that it may not be to my sorrow." (Notice resemblance to his name)
 - 1. If he should be overcome of sin that would cause him grief.
 - 2. And likewise, if he should have a disaster to befall him and take all his material

- possessions, it would cause him grief.
3. It is a prayer that covers about everything, and yet it is a very brief, one verse.

III. POSTSCRIPT

LET'S OBSERVE THE ANSWER TO HIS PRAYER.

- A . The petition was large, but it was offered to a God who is pleased of its magnitude, and glad that Jabez was not leaving God out of any phase of his life.
- B. "And God granted him that which he requested"
 1. It is not said that God held anything back, but gave him freely.
 2. How please God must have been with this man.
 3. The Bible teaches that God always hears the prayers of his children when they pray in accordance with his will.
 - a. I John 5:14,15
 - b. Psalm 84:11 "For the Lord is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."
- C . We observe the honor Jabez had among men.
"And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren."
 1. No doubt at all, but that this honor was his because he was a God-fearing man.
 2. Whether these "brethren" is limited to meaning his blood brothers or the community of Israel we don't know for sure.
 - a. It is not a verse that is speaking ill of the honor of these brethren, it simply says that Jabez was more honorable than they.
 3. The Lord honors those who honor him.
 4. Jabez acknowledged God as the source of his prosperity, and God rewarded him to a position of authority and esteem in his family and among his country men.
- D. We notice that Jabez prayed to have freedom from sorrow, and God granted him his requests, so Jabez must have been a happy man.
 1. In spite of his name, and the sorrow surrounding the circumstances of his birth, he was a happy man.
 2. He had:
 - a. Success in life.
 - b. Evil kept from him,
 - c. And God's blessings sanctifying his success.

IV. LESSONS WE MAY LEARN

- A. That which has an unpromising beginning may stand among the best.
1. Such was the case of Jabez.
Such was the case of Abraham Lincoln.
Such can be our case, even if everything seems dead set against us.
 2. How little the mother of Jabez imagined that the child of her sorrow would have so honorable a career!
- B. That it is right to ask God for material blessings in hope of obtaining them.
1. We must have the right attitude toward God.
 2. We must recognize our dependance upon Him, and acknowledge him as the giver of all good things.
 3. We are to pray for daily bread, and that God's hand be with us. Matthew 6:33
- C. That God is never served in vain.
1. God granted Jabez that which he requested. It was a good request.
 2. God has ways of blessing us of which we have never thought when we are on our knees.
 3. But if we ask we shall receive - if we ask not... (Matt. 7 : 7 , 8 ; 21:22) If we don't receive it in the way we ask, we will receive it in His better way.

- Windell Gann 3/87