

Research: I Chron. 4:9, 10 Prayer of Jabez

9And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow.

“Jabez—was, as many think, the son of Coz, or Kenaz, and is here eulogized for his sincere and fervent piety, as well, perhaps, as for some public and patriotic works which he performed. The Jewish writers affirm that he was an eminent doctor in the law, whose reputation drew so many scribes around him that a town was called by his name (1Ch 2:55); and to the piety of his character this passage bears ample testimony” Jamieson-Faussett Brown)

“In this chapter we have a further account of Judah, the most numerous and most famous of all the tribes; also an account of Simeon. The most remarkable person in this chapter is Jabez. We are not told upon what account Jabez was more honourable than his brethren; but we find that he was a praying man” (Matthew Henry).

The Prayer of Jabez

10And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.

“The way to be truly great, is to seek to do God's will, and to pray earnestly. Here is the prayer he made. Jabez prayed to the living and true God, who alone can hear and answer prayer; and, in prayer he regarded him as a God in covenant with his people. He does not express his promise, but leaves it to be understood; he was afraid to promise in his own strength, and resolved to devote himself entirely to God. Lord, if thou wilt bless me and keep me, do what thou wilt with me; I will be at thy command and disposal forever. As the text reads it, this was the language of a most ardent and affectionate desire, Oh, that thou wouldest bless me! Four things Jabez prayed for. 1. That God would bless him indeed. Spiritual blessings are the best blessings: God's blessings are real things, and produce real effects. 2. That He would enlarge his coast. That God would enlarge our hearts, and so enlarge our portion in himself, and in the heavenly Canaan, ought to be our desire and prayer. 3. That God's hand might be with him. God's hand with us, to lead us, protect us, strengthen us, and to work all our works in us and for us, is a hand all-sufficient for us. 4. That he would keep him from evil, the evil of sin, the evil of trouble, all the evil designs of his enemies, that they might not hurt, nor make him a Jabez indeed, a man of sorrow. God granted that which he requested. God is ever ready to hear prayer: his ear is not now heavy” (Matthew Henry).

“*Jabez called on the God of Israel* — The living and true God, who alone can hear and answer prayer: and in prayer he had an eye to him as the God of Israel, a God in covenant with his people, the God with whom Jacob wrestled and prevailed, and was thence called Israel. *Saying,*

O that thou wouldst bless me indeed! — He did not say in what respect he desired God to bless him, but leaves that to God, giving him, as it were, a blank paper, that he might write what he pleased. Spiritual blessings are the best blessings, and those are blessed indeed, who are blessed with them. God’s blessings are real things, and produce real effects. We can but *wish* a blessing: he *commands* it. *And enlarge my coast* — Prosper my endeavors for the increase of what has fallen to my lot: drive out these Canaanites, whom thou hast commanded us to root out; and therefore I justly beg and expect thy blessing in the execution of thy command. *That thy hand might be with me* — The prayer of Moses for this tribe of Judah was, that his own *hands might be sufficient for him*; but Jabez expects not that, unless he have God’s hand with him, and the presence of his power. God’s hand with us to lead, protect, strengthen us, and to work all our works in and for us, is indeed a hand sufficient for us, yea, all-sufficient. *And keep me from evil* — The evil of sin, the evil of trouble; all the evil designs of my enemies, and all disastrous events” (Benson Commentary).