

The Prayer of Jabez - A Type of Christ

"And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bear him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from the evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested" I Chron. 4:9-10.

His name. Jabez: Ya'bets, Heb. *to grieve, sorrowful*. The obvious is obvious. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. . . Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. . ." Isa. 53:3a,4a. How could anyone not see the association and the likeness of Jabez with Jesus?

"And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren"

Honourable: kabed, Heb. *to be heavy, to make weighty, more grievously afflict, be grievous, be chargeable. Glorify, be made glorious, prevail, promote to honor*. It would appear that Jabez, a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," was later raised up and promoted to honor (Jabez was more honourable than his brethren.) Jesus was "honourable" in suffering: "And being in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Jesus was "honourable" in glory: "Wherefore God hath *highly exalted Him* and given Him a name that is above every name" Phil. 2:8-9. Jesus was (is) more honourable than His brethren! Consider this verse in Hebrews 1:9: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness *above thy fellows!*"

No mention of an earthly lineage. We know he had an earthly mother, but there is no mention of his father. Could it be that his birth pictures a *virgin* birth? More specifically, that of our Lord Jesus? There's more. Joseph was not the physical father of Jesus, yet even he is called the son of David! How exacting, the plan and purposes of God! The book of I Chronicles gives us a breakdown of genealogy: Adam to Noah, the sons of Japheth, the sons of Ham, the sons of Shem, from Shem to Abraham, the sons of Ishmael, the sons of Keturah, the sons of Abraham and Isaac, and the sons of Esau. Chapter two begins: "These are the sons of Israel." Then does chapter three begin: "Now these were the sons of David." We come to chapter four: "The sons of Judah." It is here that we find Jabez: being of the royal family, a "son" of David; being of the tribe of (or a son of) Judah. In Revelation 5:5 Jesus is identified: "Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David!" He was made known even unto the lowest of mankind as He walked among them. Two *blind men* recognized Him! "And when Jesus had departed thence *two blind men* followed Him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us" Matt. 9:27. A woman of *Canaan*? Surely not! "And, behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, *O Lord, Thou Son of David;*" Matt. 15:22. In Matthew chapter 20, two more blind men, crying over and over again: "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David!" How about blind Bartimaeus? "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me" Mark 10:47. How is it the blind could see, while the seeing were blind? Jabez, the most honourable of the sons of David? Does this not well portray our Lord Jesus?

"These were the sons of David." I Chron. 3:1. BUT how different they were to the

Son of David. Contrast any one of these with our blessed Lord, and what an infinite chasm lies between them. Solomon was the most reputable of them, but a greater than Solomon was born in Bethlehem, and cradled in a manger."

F. B. Meyer

"And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren." Who were his "brethren"? Why the sons of David, of course! Do you mean then, that Jabez was even more honourable than

Solomon?!! Remember what we just read: "a greater than Solomon was born in Bethlehem!!! Can it be that Jabez is a figure of our Lord Jesus?"

"And Jabez called on the God of Israel."

We would do well to go through the gospels (perhaps the Messianic Psalms also;) to bring forth and study every prayer that Jesus prayed to His Father, the "God of Israel." As I began to think on these things, I was overcome as I saw anew that every day, surely every hour in the life of our Lord, was literally *bathed in prayer!*

If we would desire to know the mind (and heart) of Christ, then let us meditate upon His prayer life!

"because I bear him with sorrow."

This we find all the way back in the garden of Eden: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy *sorrow* and thy conception; in *sorrow* thou shalt bring forth children" Gen. 3:16. Jabez' mother would bear him with sorrow. Likewise would Mary bear Jesus with sorrow; a sorrow that would not end with the birth of her Son. A cause for sorrow is found in the verse just preceding Genesis 3:16: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

"because I bear Him with sorrow."

"But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou *son of David*, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall *save his people from their sins*" Matt. 1:20-21. Save his people from their *sins*? That requires a sacrifice; the shedding of blood: "and without shedding of blood is no remission" Heb. 9:22.

"And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a *sword shall pierce through thine own soul also*. . ." Luke 2:34-35. How many times would she recall the proclamation of the angels to the shepherds: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a *Saviour*, which is Christ the Lord?" And of the wise men: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews. . .we are come to *worship* him." Or the message of the angel to Joseph: "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child *to destroy him*" Matt. 2:13. Or of the constant reports of the priests, scribes and Pharisees in their confrontations with Him and of their plots to kill Him.

John Baptist, the son of Mary's cousin Elizabeth "seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which *taketh away the sin of the world*" John 1:29. Shall not Mary's soul be pierced afresh as she hears again that which she already knows? Does she not hear the voice of Abraham as he answers Isaac: "My son, God will provide himself a *lamb* for a burnt offering?" It will happen; it must happen: but when, and where, and how? And then it does happen - the cross; He would be hanged on the tree. . .

"Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed."

Not the lower springs only, but the upper ones also; not life alone, but *life more abundantly*; not those blessings only which pertain to the body or circumstances, but those spiritual ones of the heavenlies, that are the best donation man can receive or God bestow."

F. B. Meyer

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"

John 10:10. Did Jabez pray for abundant life? Was his prayer answered? Our Lord came to provide *abundant life*. Did he possess it? If the answer is no, then how could He give to others that which He himself did not possess?

"and enlarge my coast."

Enlarge his coast, his territory, his domain? At the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry we see him baptized of John; the descending of the Spirit upon him; and the next day "two disciples heard Him speak and they followed him." From two disciples to twelve: then thousands came to hear Him teach. His ministry spread to other towns and lands; from Judah to Samaria; even the Greek [Gentile] would be included within the boundaries of His "coast." In light of this, let us look at John 14:12. "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." Greater: *meizon*, larger, or *meizoteros*, still larger. After our Lord's ascension they would enlarge, continue to "enlarge His coasts!" Did not Christ, at the very moment of His ascension, tell them to "Go into *all the world* and preach the gospel to *every creature*?" In other words, "I'm leaving with you the task of 'enlarging' my coasts!" Was it perchance that on the day of Pentecost "there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, *out of every nation under heaven*?" That the multitude *came together*; and every man *heard them speak in his own language*? Is it too much to suppose that many, if not most, of these fellows were saved - and returned as missionaries to their own lands; thus *enlarging the coasts of our Lord*? Shall I pray, Enlarge *my coast*? I feel more constrained to pray: O Lord God of Israel, enlarge HIS coast!

"and enlarge my coast." The only other place this phrase is found is in Deuteronomy chapter 19: "And if the Lord thy God *enlarge thy coast*, as he has *sworn unto thy fathers*, and to give thee the land which he *promised* to give to thy fathers; *If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them*, which I command thee this day, to love the Lord thy God, and to walk ever in his ways. . . ." In chapter 11 we find almost the same wording plus an additional promise: "Then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the utmost sea shall *your coast be*." The learned Ainsworth observed that the Jewish writers themselves own that, the condition not being performed, the *promise of enlarging their coast was never fulfilled*." Matthew Henry. The promise made to Abraham and the fathers remains unfulfilled. But it *must* come to pass! But how? "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the *fathers* by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath *appointed heir of all things*. . ." Heb. 1:1,2. Who, may we ask, has fulfilled the law and all the commandments that the promise made to Abraham might be fulfilled? What saith the scriptures? "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" Gen. 26:4. The seed is Christ! It is He who is appointed heir of all things! Want more confirmation? "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to *seeds*, as of many; but as of *one*. And to thy seed, which is *Christ*" Gal. 3:16. And just how is He to *bless the nations*? Well, redeeming them and imparting to them eternal life should do for starters! So^{3/4}to whom does the land of Palestine belong? To Jesus Christ. He alone fulfilled the Father's commandments, He is the seed of Abraham to whom the promise was intended.

"and enlarge my coast." For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. . . He is before all things, and by him all things consist." Col. 1:16-17. "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool" Isa. 66:1, Acts 7:48.

"That thine hand might be with me."

"Ye though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou

art *with me*; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." I know, it's the 23rd Psalm. But Psalm 22 graphically speaks of Christ's suffering on the cross. Psalm 24 reveals Him as the resurrected Christ, and of the "coming in" of the *King of Glory!* Between the two, Jesus would lay down his life; He would commit Himself to the Father. "Father, into Thy *hands* I commend my spirit: And having said thus, He gave up the ghost" Luke 23: 46. Try looking at Psalm 23 through the eyes of the Lord Jesus; the Father as His Shepherd; then He as ours. Is He not the Lamb of God, and we in turn, His sheep?

"that thou wouldst keep me from the evil."

There is only one other place where this phraseology is to be found. It is in our Lord's prayer of intercession before going to Gethsemane. "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst *keep them from the evil*" John 17: 15. Is it not peculiar that only Jabez and Jesus used this terminology?

What did Jabez *not* pray; what is absent from his prayer? "Oh God, because of the sorrow and affliction I face: just take me out of this world!" Moses, Elijah, and Jonah prayed to be "taken out" but their prayer was not granted! "I *pray not* that thou shouldst take them out of the world." Our prayer might be, "Lord, may I be exempt from the world and its evil," but He might rather equip and enable us to be found *victorious* in the face of it!

"Keep them from the author of evil, and from evil itself; from sin, from the power and snares of the Devil, from destruction, until their course is run. Satan is the author; the world is the bait; sin is the hook. Keep them from the Devil that they may not come under his power; from the world, that they may not be deceived by its allurements. . . Thus the Lord again teaches us here how to pray: not to be delivered from the world, but from its evil."

A. W. Pink

"And God granted him that which he requested."

A man of prayer. Further, a man whose prayer was in agreement with the will of God. "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" John 5: 30. At the raising of Lazarus: "And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I *knew* that thou hearest me *always*. . ." John 11: 41-42. Again, we see Jabez - and we see Jesus.