

1 Chronicles 4:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren (וַיְהִי יַעֲבֶז בֶּן־נֶחֱבָד מֵאֶחָיו)—יַעֲבֶז (Yabetz) means 'he causes pain,' reflecting his mother's difficult labor. Yet despite an ominous name, Jabez achieved נֶחֱבָד (nikhbad, 'honored,' 'weighty,' 'glorious'). His mother's naming him 'pain' could have defined his identity, but his prayer (v. 10) reveals faith that transcended circumstances. The statement 'more honourable' suggests righteous reputation, not mere prominence.

Jabez models refusing to accept limiting labels others impose. Rather than accepting 'pain' as identity, he sought God's blessing, enlarged borders, divine presence, and protection from evil. His prayer became Israel's model for seeking God's favor—not passively accepting fate but actively pursuing God's purposes through petition. Christ teaches similar boldness: 'Ask, and it shall be given you' (Matthew 7:7).

Historical Context

Jabez appears abruptly in Judahite genealogies without lineage context, suggesting his fame derived from character rather than ancestry. The Chronicler highlights exceptional individuals (like Jabez) amid genealogical lists, demonstrating personal faithfulness matters more than pedigree. The town Jabez (1 Chronicles 2:55) may have been named after him.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What negative labels or painful circumstances has your past imposed that God wants to transcend through faith like Jabez?
2. How does Jabez's prayer challenge you to pursue God's blessing and enlarged influence rather than accepting limited expectations?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּהְיֶה יַעֲבֹז	וְנִכְבֵּד דַּ	מֵאָחָיו	וּמִאִמּוֹ			
H1961	H3258	H3513	H251			
And Jabez	was more honourable	than his brethren	and his mother			
			H517			
קָרָא הַ	שְׁמוֹ וַ	יַעֲבֹז	לֵאמֹר רַ	כִּי	יֵלְדֹתַי	בְּעֹצֹב:
H7121	H8034	H3258	H559	H3588	H3205	H6090
called	his name	And Jabez	saying	Because I bare	him with sorrow	

Additional Cross-References

Acts 17:11 (Parallel theme): These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Genesis 34:19 (Parallel theme): And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father.

1 Samuel 4:21 (Parallel theme): And she named the child I-chabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.

Genesis 3:16 (Parallel theme): Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

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