

## WHO IS YOUR HERO?

David Hillson, Hope Church, Sunday 15 August 2010

### INTRODUCTION

Read I Chronicles 4:1-8, 9-10, 11ff

Bright gem in dark setting - contrast for highlight, to draw attention

Jabez is my hero - a real person, in context of his families and ancestors

### WHO WAS HE?

Nothing else known about Jabez except these two verses (although 2:55 may suggest that his family were scribes as there was a town named after him)

Who was he? See verse 9

He was "more honourable than his brothers"

But his mother named him Jabez which means "pain, grief, sorrow" – WHY?  
She says the reason was because she bore him in pain.

Confused? How was he "more honourable than his brothers"? And why is this linked with how his mother named him after a painful childbirth?

"honourable" in Hebrew = *kabed*. Wrong translation??

Literally means "heavy" - sometimes used to mean dull or stupid, or sometimes used to mean weight of honour, glory, riches - but maybe here it has the literal meaning?

Was he simply a big baby? Makes sense - this is why his mother named him "sorrow - he gave her pain during childbirth - big babies hurt!

Note that she said "because I bore him in pain" (Hebrew word *otseb* = physical pain) - where have you heard that phrase before?

A direct quote from Genesis 3:16 "in pain you shall bring forth children" (uses same word *otseb*) – did his mother see Jabez as an example of the curse?

In Hebrew, name = character

Jabez = constant reminder "You're a pain"

Imagine growing up with a name that means "Pain"!

[Need to be careful how you name your children! and what you say to them when they are growing up. Words have power to bless or curse]

## HIS REACTION

Poor Jabez! But how did he react. Did he give up and accept his destiny? Accept how others described and characterised him? No - he called out to God, out of his pain and rejection... see verse 10.

What was the prayer of Jabez? Much for us to learn from how he reacted to his circumstances. Let's look at each phrase in his prayer...

"Oh" - two Hebrew words for Oh - one ordinary, but this is the other one.

Intense word of passion - *im* - crying out - please, how long, if only, why????

Used elsewhere e.g. Habakkuk 1:2, Psalm 13:1-2, Psalm 6:3

How long Lord?

This really mattered to Jabez, not just a light prayer, but a cry of passion.

He prayed for three things from God : provision, presence, protection

## PROVISION

"that you would bless me"

- Not prepared to live under the curse
- Asked for blessing instead, called on God's grace and mercy

"and enlarge my border" - Hebrew *gebul* means twisted cord used for a boundary to enclose territory and keep others out, but also a restricting or restraining rope holding you in

- Not prepared to be held in - not satisfied with what he had
- Enlarge - Hebrew *rabah* is to increase, multiply, heap up, bring abundance, grow. He asked God to "Give me more" - ambitious for blessing - or desperate?
- Jabez recognised his borders and limitations - but wasn't prepared to be held in, wanted much more. Holy frustration and dissatisfaction - More Lord!!

## PRESENCE

"that your hand might be with me"

There are two Hebrew words for hand:

*koph* = closed hand, fist (not used here)

*yad* = open hand = blessing, generosity, power, direction, authority (used here)

Jabez knew the importance of God's presence

Like Moses, Exodus 33:14-15, God said "My presence will go with you." Moses replied "If you won't come with us, we aren't going anywhere!"

## PROTECTION

"keep me from harm" - a general word for evil, includes physical and moral, emotional and spiritual

- If I'm to stretch beyond my current borders, I'll need your protection
- Lord's prayer, Matthew 6:13, literally "Do not lead us into temptation unless you also deliver us from the evil one."

"...so that it will not hurt me" - here he uses the word *atsab* meaning to cut or carve - don't let me be wounded - the root word of how his mother described his birth (*otseb*).

- He asks specifically to be delivered from the curse of his childhood
- The enemy's purpose was to wound him permanently, to make the curse personal. Jabez saw this, and begged God to deliver him from the personal threat of evil in his life.

Note possible alternative translation "...so that I may not cause pain"

- He asks not to perpetuate or transfer his challenges to others

## GOD'S RESPONSE

The most thrilling phrase in this passage - "God granted what he asked"

God's grace is released by our requests. God was hurting with Jabez, wanting him to be free - but waited for him to ask.

Matthew 7:7 \_ Ask and you will receive

John 14:13-14 - Whatever you ask in my name I will do it

James 4:2 - You don't have because you don't ask

God delights to answer the cries of the hurting - he is a redeemer!

## WHAT HAPPENED NEXT???

What was the result when God granted what Jabez asked?

He received God's blessing, his border was enlarged, God was with him, God kept him from harm and he was not hurt (and did not hurt others).

But we never hear of Jabez again! He was just another anonymous person released from the curse into a life-changing destiny by the power and grace and kindness of God.

## CONCLUSION

How about us? Are we like Jabez, living under the disapproval or curse of others, characterised by pain and sorrow?

Are we content to live in our pain, accept our limitations, nurse our grudges and frustrations, allow others to confine us by their opinions of us?

Or will we be like Jabez and cry out to God for more?

- Where is our "Oh..."?
- Do we have a passion for more of God, or are we satisfied with what we have?

Despite our past, or what other people think, we should be like Jabez :

- Dare to ask for God's blessing, call out for grace & mercy
- Think BIG! New borders, moving into the richness of God's provision
- Depend on God's open hand of blessing, and his presence with us
- Seek his protection to keep us from being wounded (or wounding others)

Life hurts. Many of us are wounded by our past - maybe by what others have said about us over many years.

Will we roll over and give up?

Or like Jabez, cry out to God for more?

If we do, God will hear and answer!!