

Parable of the Sower

Lesson 1

1 Chronicles 4:9-10; Luke 8:15; Colossians 2:1-3; 2 Peter 1:3-4

July 16, 2023

Good Ground Part 2

INTRODUCTION

Jabez, like hundreds of other descendants of Judah, is mentioned only once in the Bible. Unlike those hundreds, Jabez is considered so exceptional that an explanatory paragraph is devoted to him amid the monotonous listing of names in several chapters of First Chronicles. The content of this paragraph is historical, and it is significant: Jabez prayed to the God of Israel, and his prayer was answered.

What connection does this paragraph in the Old Testament have with this lesson, “Parable of the Sower: Good Ground,” which has its source from Jesus? “Ground” refers to earth or soil, but it also means “basis.” Faith is the basis of the parables concerning the sowing of seed; it was the faith of Jabez that caused God to answer his prayer.

The remaining scriptural references in Luke, Colossians and 1 Peter disclose additional modes of, and reasons for, expressing faith that Christians need to employ.

Memory verse: “Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, ‘I gave birth to him in pain.’ Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, ‘Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.’ And God granted his request.”

—1 Chronicles 4:9-10

Pray, and read the passages listed above. What questions or observations do you have about them?

OBSERVATION: What does the passage say?

1. Only one detail is given of Jabez's character: he was honorable. Whether God judged him on this trait or not, to what extent did He answer Jabez's prayer? (1 Chronicles 4:10)
2. What are the characteristics of seed cast upon good soil? (Luke 8:15)
3. Paul had not known the people in the church in Colossae before writing Colossians. Nevertheless, he cared deeply for them and wanted them to accomplish what exceptional goal? (Colossians 2:2a)
4. What is the "mystery" cited by Paul in Colossians 2:2b-3?
5. Peter (2 Peter 1:3) declares that God's "divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life". What is the result of God's promises? (2 Peter 1:4b)

3. Peter (2 Peter 1:3) refers to a “godly life”. What does it mean to be godly or to strive for godliness?
(1 Timothy 3:6, 11, 4:7-8; 2 Timothy 3:2-5; Titus 1:1)

4. What is “divine nature” as cited in 2 Peter 1:4?
(John 14:16-17; Acts 2:4; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13)

APPLICATION: How do the passages apply to your life?

1. Does Jabez’s requests of God seem extravagant? Should we alter our own prayers so that we are not being excessive with our appeals? Why or why not? Consider that Jesus says in John 16:23, “my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”

2. Was there a time in your life when you considered “being godly” as prudish—perhaps as a teenager before your heart and mind were sufficiently mature to accept truth? What, specifically, did you find prudish, and how did it affect your behavior then? What about now?

3. Paul’s concern for, and commitment to, the churches in Colossae and Laodicea “and for all who have not met me personally” (Colossians 2:1) is the epitome of Christian love, which Jesus wanted all to experience. Compose a prayer for such love to fill our lives.