

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

A second genealogy of Judah, vv. 1-23. The account of Jabez, 1 Chronicles 4:9, 1 Chronicles 4:10. The genealogy of Simeon, 1 Chronicles 4:24-27. Their cities, 1 Chronicles 4:28-31. Their villages, and where situated, 1 Chronicles 4:32, 1 Chronicles 4:33. The heads of families, 1 Chronicles 4:34-38. Where they settled; and what was their occupation, 1 Chronicles 4:39-43.

Verse 1

The sons of Judah - A genealogy of this tribe has already been given in the second chapter. It is here introduced again, with some variations. Probably there were different copies in the public registers; and the writer of this book, finding that this second one contained some remarkable particulars, thought proper to insert it in this place: and no reader will regret the insertion, when he carefully considers the matter.

Verse 3

These were of the father of Etam - And these are the rabbins (doctors) living at Etam, Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash. - T.

Verse 7

And Ethnan - After this word we should, with the Targum, read Coz, whose posterity is mentioned in the next verse. Coz was probably the same as Kenaz.

Verse 8

The son of Harum - Jabez should be mentioned at the end of this verse, else he is as a consequent without an antecedent.

Verse 9

And Jabez was more honorable - This whole account is variously understood by some of the principal versions. I shall subjoin a translation of each.

Septuagint. -

And Igabes was more glorious than his brethren; and his mother called his name Igabes, saying, I have brought thee forth as Gabes. And Igabes invoked the God of Israel, saying, If in blessing thou wilt bless me, and enlarge my borders, and thy hand be with me, and wilt give me understanding not to depress me: and God brought about all that he requested.

Syriac. -

And one of these was dear to his father and to his mother; and he called his name (ainai), My Eye. And he said to him, In blessing may the Lord bless thee, and enlarge thy boundary; and may his hand be with thee; and may he preserve thee from evil, that it may not rule over thee; and may he give to thee whatsoever thou shalt request of him!

Arabic. -

And this one (Hastahar or Harum) was beloved of his father and his mother: and they called his name (aina), My Eye; and they said unto him, May the Lord bless thee, and multiply thy people, and may his hand be present with thee, because thou wast born in Beth-lehem!

These two latter versions seem to have copied each other, and the Vulgate is nearly, like ours, a literal rendering of the Hebrew; but the Chaldee is widely different from all the rest: -

Chaldee. -

And Jabets also, he is Othniel, honorable and skilled in the law beyond his brethren, whose mother called his name Jabets, because she had borne him with sorrow. And Jabets prayed to the God of Israel, saying, O that in blessing thou wouldest bless me with children, and enlarge my borders with disciples; and that thy hand may be with me in business, that thou mayest make me like to my companions, that evil concupiscence may the less grieve me! And the Lord granted that which he prayed for.

Of this honorable person we know nothing but what is here mentioned, nor does the name occur in any other part of Scripture except in 1 Chronicles 2:55, where it appears to be the name of a place, but is understood by the Chaldee to be the name of a person, as here. Though I have noticed this particularly in the note on that place, yet I think it right to add the Chaldee here, that all that concerns this worthy person may be seen at one view: -

1 Chronicles 2:55: â€œThe families of the Rechabites, the son of Eliezer, the son of Moses, the disciples of Jabets; he was Othniel, the son of Kenaz. And he was called Jabets,  $\text{x}^{\text{TM}}\text{x}\text{c}\text{x}'\text{x}\text{y}$  (Yabets), because in his counsel [ $\text{x}'\text{x}\text{c}\text{x}^{\text{TM}}\text{x};\text{x}^{\text{a}}\text{x}^{\text{TM}}\text{x}$ ] (beqtsatih), from  $\text{x}^{\text{TM}}\text{x}\text{c}\text{x}\text{y}$  (yaats), he counselled, advised, etc.] he instituted a school for disciples. They were called Tirathim,  $\text{x}^{\text{a}}\text{x}'\text{x}\text{c}\text{x}^{\text{a}}\text{x}^{\text{TM}}\text{x}$ , because in their hymns their voices were like trumpets, [from  $\text{x}'\text{x}\text{c}$  (ra), to sound like a trumpet; see Numbers 10:9; 2 Chronicles 13:12 ], and Shimathim,  $\text{x}\text{c}\text{x}\text{z}\text{x}\text{c}\text{x}^{\text{a}}\text{x}^{\text{TM}}\text{x}$ , because in hearing, they lifted up their faces, i.e. in prayer, [from  $\text{x}\text{c}\text{x}\text{z}\text{x}\text{c}$  (shama), he heard, hearkened], and Suchathim,  $\text{x}\text{c}\text{x}\text{x}\text{x}\text{x}^{\text{a}}\text{x}^{\text{TM}}\text{x}$ , because they were overshadowed with the spirit of prophecy, [from  $\text{x}\text{c}\text{x}\text{s}$  (sach), a tabernacle, or extended covering].â€œ For farther particulars, see at the end of this chapter, 1 Chronicles 4:43 (note).

#### Verse 12

These are the men of Rechah - â€œThese are the men of the great Sanhedrin.â€œ - T.

#### Verse 15

Caleb the son of Jephunneh - We have already met with this eminent person in Numbers 13:6, Numbers 13:30; Numbers 14:24, and elsewhere; and seen his courageous piety and inflexible integrity. The Targum says here, â€œThey called him Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, because he had purged his soul from the counsel of the spies.

#### Verse 18

And his wife Jehudijah - The Targum considers the names in this verse as epithets of Moses:

â€œAnd his wife Jehuditha educated Moses after she had drawn him out of the water: and she called his name Jered, because he caused the manna to descend upon Israel; and Prince Gedor, because he restored the desolations of Israel; Heber also, because he joined Israel to their heavenly Father; and Prince Socho, because he overshadowed Israel with his righteousness, and Jekuthiel, because the Israelites waited on the God of heaven in his time, forty years in the desert; and prince Zanoah, because God, on his account, had passed by the sins of Israel. These names Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh, called him by the spirit of prophecy, for she became a proselyte; and Mered took her to himself to wife: he is Caleb, and was so called because he opposed the counsel of the spies.â€œ - T. A similar explanation is given by Jarchi.

#### Verse 21

That wrought fine linen - â€œOf the family of those who worked in fine flax to make garments for kings and priests.â€œ - T.

#### Verse 22

And Joash, and Saraph - â€œAnd the prophets and scribes which sprang from the seed of Joshua, and the Gibeonites, whose office it was to serve in the house of the sanctuary, because they had lied to the princes of Israel; also Joash, who is the same as Mahlon; and Saraph, who is the same as Chilion, who took wives of the daughters of Moab and Boaz, the chief of the wise men of the college of Bethlehem, and of those who existed in former days.â€œ - T.

#### Verse 23

These were the potters - â€œThese are the disciples of the law, for whose sake the world was created; who preside in judgment, and establish the world; and they build and perfect the fallen down house of Israel: they dwelt there with the Shechinah of the King of the world, in the study of the law and the intercalation or months, and determining the commencement of years and festivals: and they computed the times from heaven in the days of Ruth, the mother of kingdoms, to the days of Solomon the king.â€œ - T. I am afraid this paraphrase gives us as little light as the text itself, which speaks of potters, and those who dwelt among plants and hedges. They were probably brickmakers; perhaps potters also, who had their dwelling in low grounds, and fabricated the clay into pots and bricks that was digged up in forming fences in the king's domains.

#### Verse 24

The sons of Simeon - This genealogy is very different from that given in Genesis 46:10, and Numbers 26:12. This may be occasioned by the same person having several names, one list taking one name, another list some other, and so on: to reconcile is impossible; to attempt it, useless.

#### Verse 27

Neither did all their family multiply - In Numbers 1:23 the number of all the families of Simeon was fifty-nine thousand three hundred; and that of Judah was, Numbers 1:27, not less than seventy-four thousand six hundred. When the next census was made, Num. 26, the tribe of Judah amounted to seventy-six thousand five hundred, an increase of one thousand nine hundred; while the tribe of Simeon amounted only to twenty-two

thousand two hundred, a decrease of thirty-seven thousand one hundred. It was at that time the smallest tribe in Israel.

#### Verse 31

These were their cities unto the reign of David - It appears that David took some of the cities of the Simeonites, and added them to Judah; Ziklag for instance, 1 Samuel 27:6.

As the tribe of Simeon had withdrawn their allegiance from the house of David, the kings of Judah extended their domination as far as possible into the territories of that tribe, so that they were obliged to seek pasture for their flocks at Gedor, and in the mountains of Seir, as we find 1 Chronicles 4:39-42.

#### Verse 40

They of Ham had dwelt there of old - These were probably either Philistines or Egyptians, who dwelt at Gedor, which was situated in the environs of Joppa and Samnia.

Those whom the five hundred Simeonites expelled from Seir were Amalekites, 1 Chronicles 4:43.

#### Verse 43

They smote the rest of the Amalekites - Those who had escaped in the war which Saul made against them, (see 1 Samuel 14:48), and from David, who had attacked them afterwards, 2 Samuel 8:12.

The expedition of the Simeonites mentioned here, against Gedor and Seir, was in the days of Hezekiah; and, as Calmet conjectures, near about the time of the captivity of the ten tribes, when the remnant of Simeon would feel themselves obliged to retire more southward, into Arabia Petraea, for fear of the Jews. These may be probable conjectures. - See Calmet.

There are several things in the account of Jabez that are very instructive: -

1.He appears to have been a child brought into the world with great difficulty, at the risk of his own life and that of his mother. So much seems to be implied in, she bare him with sorrow, i.e., with peculiar sorrow and danger.

2.To perpetuate the merciful interposition of God in her own and her son's behalf, she gave him a name that must have recalled to her and his remembrance the danger to which both their lives were exposed, and from which they could not have been extricated but by the especial help of God. She called his name Jabez, etc.

3.He was brought up in the fear of God; he was no idolater; he worshipped the God of Israel, and he showed the sincerity of his faith by frequent and earnest prayer.

4.His prayer was at once both enlightened and pious. He had piety towards God, and therefore he trusted in him: he knew that he was the fountain of all good, and therefore he sought all necessities both for body and soul from him. He prayed to the God of Israel.

5.Both the matter and manner of his prayer were excellent. His heart was deeply impressed with its wants, and therefore he was earnest and fervent; O that thou wouldest bless me indeed;  $\times\bullet\bullet\ \times'\times\tilde{\times}\ \times^a\times'\times''\times\rangle\times\ \times^{TM}$  (im barech tebarecheni);  $\hat{\alpha}\hat{\alpha}\hat{\alpha}$  that in blessing thou wouldest bless me!  $\hat{\alpha}\hat{\alpha}$  Let me live under thy benediction! Do thou diligently and frequently bless me!

6.He prays for the things necessary for the body as well as for the soul: And enlarge my coasts - grant me as much territory as may support my family. Let the means of living be adequate to the demands of life; let me have the necessities, conveniences, and, as far as they may be safely intrusted with me, the comforts of life! O that thou wouldest enlarge my coasts!

7.He is conscious that without the continual support of God he must fail; and therefore he prays to be upheld by his power: That thy hand might be with me! May I ever walk with thee, and ever feel the hand of thy power to support and cover me in all the trials, dangers, and difficulties of life; and the hand of thy providence to supply all my wants in reference to both worlds!

8.He dreads both sin and suffering, and therefore prays against both: O that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! Sin and misery are in every step of the journey of life; keep me from sin, that I grieve thee not; and keep me from sin, that I render not myself miserable! We can never offend God without injuring ourselves; he that sins must suffer. Thorns and scorpions are everywhere in the way to perdition; and he that walks in it must be torn and stung. He alone is happy who walks in the ways of God. Keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me.

9.Prayers that have a right aim will have a right answer; Jabez did not pray in vain, for God granted him that which he requested. He was continually blessed; his family was increased; the hand of God was upon him for good. He was saved from sin, and saved from the pangs and sufferings of a guilty conscience.

10.If we take up the character and conduct of Jabez in the view given by the Chaldee, we shall not only see him as a pious and careful man, deeply interested in behalf of himself and his family, but we shall see him as a benevolent man, laboring for the welfare of others, and especially for the religious instruction of youth. He founded schools, in which the young and rising generation were taught useful knowledge, and especially the

knowledge of God. He had disciples, which were divided into three classes, who distinguished themselves by their fervor in the worship of God, by their docility in obediently hearing and treasuring up the advices and instructions of their teachers, and by their deep piety to God in bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit. The spirit of prophecy, that is, of prayer and supplication, rested upon them.

11. He did not do these things merely as a duty he owed to God and his fellows, but from the abundance of a generous and loving heart: In his counsel he erected a school of disciples. God had blessed him with temporal things, and he secures their continuance by devoting them to his service; he honors God with his substance, and God honors him with his especial blessing and approbation.

12. On these accounts he was more honorable than his brethren. He was of the same stock and the same lineage; he had neither nobility of birth, nor was distinguished by earthly titles; in all these respects he was on a level with his brethren: but God tells us that he was more honorable than them all; and why? because he prayed, because he served his Maker, and because he lived to do good among men; therefore he received the honor that cometh from God. Reader, imitate the conduct of this worthy Israelite, that thou mayest be a partaker of his blessings.

The things added by the Targumist might have been derived from authentic tradition.