

The MANTRA *of* JABEZ

Upturned Table Parody Series

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The
MANTRA

Break on Through to the Other Side

of JABEZ

DOUGLAS M. JONES
WITH DOUGLAS M. JONES

Douglas M. Jones III, *The Mantra of Jabez*

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Scripture quotations in this publication are taken from the *Holy Bible: King James Version*.

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PREFACE

Dear Newbie,

I want to teach you how to chant a daring mantra that, unlike burdensome traditional prayers, God always has to answer. It is brief, which is really nifty for modern evangelical attention spans—only one sentence with four parts. You can even shorten it more if you remove all the consonants. Just hum the vowels. It's tucked away in a silly part of the Bible, but I believe it contains an automatic formula for favor with God.

This mantra has radically changed what I expect from God and what I experience every day by His power. In fact, thousands of believers who are humming it are seeing wonderfully short-term things happen on a regular basis.

Will you join me for a personal exploration of the mantra of Jabez? Anyone can hop on. It doesn't demand anything of you, just mouthing some words.

LITTLE MANTRA, GIANT SCORE

Jabez called on the God of Israel

The little book you're holding is about what happens when bored, sentimental Evangelicals decide to reach for a whiz-bang life, like that on MTV—flash, flash, flash—which, as it turns out, is exactly the kind God promises.

My own story starts in a kitchen with yellow counters, rectangular drawer fronts, a white refrigerator, AC electricity, and Texas-sized raindrops pelting transparent windows. It was my senior year at one of those liberating seminaries that teach you to minister quickly and to delight in short-term thinking because we have no future on earth.

I was thinking about what would come next. Where would I throw my training? As I stood there in that yellow-countered kitchen with the rectangular drawer fronts, I thought of the challenge I'd heard from the seminary

chaplain earlier that week. “Want a bigger vision for your life?” he had asked. “Then sign up to be a *kipper* for God.” A kipper, as the chaplain explained it, was a small fish, smoked and salted, that is kept in a dark, vacuum-sealed tin. He took as his text the briefest of Bible biographies:



A kipper is not to be confused with a gipper. “Win one for the kipper” would have produced an entirely different president.

“And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren” (1 Chronicles 4:9). It turns out that Jabez wanted to be a kipper for God, a man vacuum-preserved from outside temptations who was instantly ready to be eaten but not satisfying anyone’s hunger. End of verse. End of Bible story.

Lord, I think I want to be a kipper for you, I prayed as I looked out that square window with those Texas-sized raindrops smacking and smacking it.

But I was puzzled. *What exactly did Jabez do to rise above the rest?* Sure the text says that he was more *honorable* than his brothers, but that can’t be it. Examining that would require me to think about covenants and Mosaic law and all those nasty commandments that David goes

on so long about in Psalm 119. It can't be based on Jabez's virtue; that sounds like works-righteousness. Yick.

Something in the words of the prayer itself had to explain the mystery. It had to. Of course, somewhere it says that "the effectual fervent prayer of a *righteous* man avails much," but think of the long, boring time involved in cultivating biblical virtues like righteousness. We're saved by faith alone after all, and that's quick like a Dodge commercial. The rapture may happen any moment too. An easier evangelical answer must be found.

I bent over my Bible, and reading the prayer over and over and over and over, I searched with all my individualistic heart for the future God had for modern people who didn't have decades to cultivate honor.

The next morning, I chanted Jabez's mantra word for word.

And the next.

And the next.

And a gobble more nexts.

Thirty years later, I haven't stopped. Though I affirm to you that I've never chanted it on a street corner.

In the pages of this little book (whose price the publisher has conveniently set at \$9.99, really not at all \$10.00, but the more direct and forthright \$9.99), I want to introduce you to the amazing truths of Jabez's mantra and prepare you to turn the faucet of God's blessing just like that <finger-snapping sound>.

Just ask the man who had no future.

THE PRODIGY OF A BORING LIST

Someone once said that there is really very little difference between differing people—but that little difference is the same difference. I have no idea what that means either, but it reminds me of Jabez.

You can think of him as the Prodigy of Genealogy or the Bible's Little Big Man or God's Quiet Kipper or Hoss on *Bonanza*. You'll find him in one of the most boring sections of the Bible, you know, all those yammer-yammer-yammer genealogies of Hebrew names that mean nothing and are hard to get your lips around. Talk about boring! Boy, I don't know what God was thinking here. *Perez, Hezron, and Carmi, and Hur, and Shobal*. . . I'd certainly forgive you if you suddenly considered putting

this book aside and reaching for your TV remote—flash, flash, flash.

In the midst of all this meaningless genealogical covenantal history and antithesis stuff, a real story that even modern Evangelicals can understand breaks through.

And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, because I bore him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, “Oh that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Your hand might be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!” And God granted him that which he requested. (1 Chronicles 4:9–10)

It’s as if the historian stops in middrone to highlight Jabez. But what was the *secret* to the enduring reputation of Jabez? You can Skim-Thru-the-Bible from front to back, as I have taught millions to do, and you won’t find any more info about Jabez than in this prayer, assuming we’re still agreeing to set aside that “honor” thingy:

- Things started badly for an unknown guy.
- He chanted an unusual, one sentence mantra.
- Great things happened automatically.

Clearly, then, by good and necessary seminary inference, the great outcome can be traced to Jabez's little mantra. Obviously something about these little letters and symbols changed Jabez's life and left a permanent mark on the history books of Israel. Here is that prayer nicely centered for you:

Oh that You would bless me indeed,
and enlarge my territory,
and that Your hand might be with me,
and that You would keep me from evil.

These mantra markings may look unremarkable, but just under the surface of each lies a really giant paradigm breaker. Remember those words, *paradigm breaker*. Keep saying them over and over, because though you may read the exposition of each line in the following chapters and think, "jeeppers, that's painfully trivial after thirty years of

meditating on those verses,” remember to keep saying, *paradigm breaker, paradigm breaker, paradigm breaker.*

In the pages to come, I want to show you just how dramatically each of Jabez’s requests can automatically release something miraculous in your life, no matter how shallow and immature your walk is, or even if you watch too much TV, are petty with your spouse, send your kids to public schools, and think *Left Behind* is brilliant literature.

LIVING BEYOND CHASTISEMENT

What I have to share with you has been opening up God’s mighty work for many years. Recently, I was in Dallas to teach on the Jabez blessing to an audience of 9,000. Did you see that number? That’s like, I dunno, a Mormon sorta number.

Anyway, over lunch, a man said to me, “I’ve been chanting the Jabez mantra for ten years.” Across the table, a friend said he’d been chanting it for fifteen years. Another said twenty years. I told them, “Friends,



Remember to keep saying, paradigm breaker but be careful not to pronounce the “g” or else you’ll make some people giggle in their palms.

I've been chanting Jabez for more than *half my life!*" Note that exclamation mark. "But I swear I've never done it on a street corner." A nasty little shouting match started up, and then it quickly turned to wrestling, and, of course, we scattered all of our jello all over the floor. By the end we were all shouting the mantra at each other.

But the point is that because you're reading this



The purpose of these little side quotes is to provide a summary for those who struggle with reading a whole booklet.

booklet, I believe you share my desire for a more whiz-bang life without pain. When you stand before God to give your final accounting, you want to hear "You just didn't get it, did you?" I mean, "Well done."

Think of it this way: instead of begging for a cup of water near the river's edge, you chant the little mantra with the giant score and get pulled under by the current. Or, maybe, you jump in but just skim along the surface for a very long time. Yeah, that's it. That's what God wants.

The Upturned Table Parody Series

The “upturned table” in our series name points back to Christ’s anger with the merchants in the temple. Our parody series isn’t as concerned with money in the Temple as it is with the what modern Evangelicals spend on abject silliness. Now you can’t say that sort of thing or publish parodies without someone pointing out that you’re no genius yourself. And we don’t claim to be. First, we see our parodies as sermons to ourselves first of all. For we too are responsible for the lame state of popular Evangelicalism today, even those of us who are from more classical Protestant backgrounds. We, too, exhibit some of the targets of our own barbs. Second, we also don’t claim to sit aloof, all clean and wise, looking down on others’ silliness. We are a part of the evangelical community ourselves. These are our brothers who write these things; they represent us too. We have no doubts about their sincerity and good-hearted goals and wonderful characters, but we all must do light-years better.

The first response from many who love the books we aim to skewer is to be “wounded” and “offended,” but that is the tiresome refuge of every little god who thinks blasphemy restrictions apply to him (oooh, notice the evil gender violation there). We all need to grow up and take the heat. But what about all those for whom these “precious” books have meant so much? One answer is that medieval folks could say the same thing about their relics. Relics made people feel warm and fuzzy too, but they were evidence of sickness.

Christian reality is a rich and fascinating blend of truth, beauty, and goodness. It is an exuberant love of life and light and celebration. Even with some of the glorious heights of Christian culture reached in prior eras, the Church still hasn’t truly begun to plumb the magnificence of the Triune God. We’re only scratching the surface, all the while non-Christian visions are perennially addicted to death. In order to mature, Evangelicals need to move beyond the bumper sticker shallowness of the past four decades and long for true wisdom. Parodying our silliness is one small nudge in that direction. *To whom much is given, much is expected.*