

'The Prayer of Jabez' by Bruce Wilkinson

THE 'Religious Fad' book of 2000

In my September 2001 **'News From The Front'** I wrote in the introduction –

"Once more we are on the eve of another 'winter's work' and of one thing we can be assured – there will be no respite or 'hibernation' from spiritual deception and error. Our enemy is one 'lion' who thrives on activity. As you read this newsletter you will see that God's faithful people are swimming against an ever swelling, fast flowing river of error-ridden, false Christianity and professed spirituality. The false prophets of a soon coming 'mighty revival' continue to parade before the churches their latest sure-fire methods that will guarantee 'success and growth' whether these be 'Alpha', 'Jabez', 'Relics', 'Transformations', 'User-friendliness' or 'Health and Wealth'. Sadly the reality is that large numbers are being attracted to these watered down, unscriptural, often pagan infiltrated 'gospel' presentations."

Then later in that newsletter itself I wrote the following –

"The Prayer of Jabez": This book, published last year, has seen a steady increase in sales and according to a claim made on a USA radio programme in March of this year **it sold one million copies in February 2001 alone**. It was written by Bruce Wilkinson who founded 'Walk Thru the Bible Ministries' based in Atlanta. Mr Wilkinson has authored other books and has spoken in questionable surroundings such as 'Promise Keepers' and 'Campus Crusade For Christ'. The title is based on the Old Testament portion found in 1 Chronicles 4:9-10.

As a ministry we have read two reviews of this book and both reviews have sounded alarm bells where the theological conclusions drawn by Mr Wilkinson are concerned.

The first report states –'Bruce Wilkinson has taken a rather obscure passage out of the Old Testament and generated a tremendous amount of unsupportable information. The tragedy is that millions of people are reading this little book and are assuming it to be biblically accurate...Wilkinson's failure is in taking a passage of Scripture and developing it beyond its **Scriptural intent**' [Review by Pastor Rocky Wyatt – Youth Pastor, Countryside Bible Church, near Dallas]

The second report states –'Wilkinson claimed that two weeks of praying the prayer of Jabez would change your life...The key is that Jabez stumbled upon the right formula for asking things of God...Wilkinson's emphasis is on Jabez finding the correct method instead of on God and His Sovereignty...The real tragedy of Bruce Wilkinson's book will be the carnage created as desperate souls follow his advice and pray Jabez's prayer for a month and yet see no change or see things getting worse around them...The clear implication is that a failed prayer equals failed faith'[Review by Biblical Discernment Ministries]

Now, at this point in this article you're perhaps saying to yourself – **'why is Cecil dredging up something he wrote about a book that was a best-seller back in the early 2000's?'** Well the reality is that the popularity and acceptance of 'false teaching' can ebb and flow with the passing of time. I know from experience that any 'false teaching' can suddenly and unexpectedly flare up and begin to 'flow' once more. The Todd Bentley 'revival' fiasco in Lakeland, Florida back in 2008 was a brief (thankfully) reappearance of 'Toronto Blessing-style' activity and as a result individuals associated with that from the 1990's suddenly reappeared from 'out of the woodwork'

As we read earlier, this little book **'The Prayer of Jabez'**, sold millions of copies worldwide and could presently be nestling on countless bookshelves in millions of homes, just waiting to fall into the hands of a new and unsuspecting and perhaps ill-prepared generation of professing Christians.

So, with that real possibility in mind, let me now add **a few extra helpful resources** that may serve to protect anyone who may happen upon this book by giving genuine biblical guidance on its lack of value and trustworthiness (as I believe the case to be).

First of all an excellent spoken review of the book was done by Phil Johnson, an elder in John MacArthur's 'Grace Community Church', and you can listen to this on –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdBYXHFFAWg>

Then secondly, Pastor Gary Gilley who is mentioned by Phil Johnson has a number of printed items that should also prove to be helpful.

Phil Johnson mentioned a short book by Gary Gilley called **'I just wanted more land'** and it can be purchased via the following link <http://www.svchapel.org/bookstore> (scroll down the page for details of the book)

Also, an article that can be read online is called **'Will the real church please stand up?'** and whilst it only makes a passing reference to **'The Prayer of Jabez'** book the general principles set forth by Gary Gilley should be helpful and applicable. The link for this is <http://www.svchapel.org/resources/articles/21-church-trends/514-will-the-real-church-please-stand-up>

CONCLUDING THOUGHT

A disturbing thought is that this book was written by someone regarded by many as a sound bible expositor and commentator and yet what he advocated in his book was more akin to methods and theology advocated by the heretical 'false prophets' of the 'Word of Faith' movement.

Phil Johnson cited a portion in the book where an imaginary Mr Jones is given a guided tour of heaven and there he sees boxes of 'unclaimed/unprayed for' blessings.

That's not the first time I have come across such a claim. In the May 1999: issue 10: edition of **VANGUARD** (a magazine that was issued by 'conservative Pentecostal apologists') there was an article (by Neil Richardson) on some of the teachings of **Roberts Liardon** and here are some excerpts from that article - based mostly on information gleaned from a video featuring **Roberts Liardon** called **'Are you really ready for the Promised Land?'**–

'Roberts Liardon is one of the prophetic and apostolic leaders of a new (claimed) move of the Holy Spirit in the world today... He claims that he has had a personal tour of heaven given by Jesus who, according to him, is 5' 11" with sandy brown hair... In heaven, according to Liardon there is a building full of spare body parts UNCLAIMED by people who do not have the faith for their healing... Roberts Liardon takes his name from the great Word-Faith heretic and huckster, Oral Roberts... Liardon's web site reveals that he actively supports the ministries of some of the biggest heretics this century has seen... A. A. Allen... William Branham... Jack Coe... John Alexander Dowie... Kathryn Kuhlman... Benny Hinn... Aimee Semple McPherson... What is also apparent is that with these *people* come their false teaching and bizarre behaviours'

This **'Prayer of Jabez'** book could prove to be spiritually a very dangerous book if it happened to fall into the hands of an immature professing Christian lacking biblical discernment and so I hope this article may in such cases prove to be of real help.

Cecil Andrews – 'Take Heed' Ministries – 9 July 2014