

Introduction

I pray that we understand why it's so important to face and go into any challenge with the weapon of praise. But also, to have a greater understanding of the significance of the tribe of Judah and their being God's prime choice to send into battle first.

Judges 1:1-7 (NKJV) *Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So, Simeon went with him. And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men. And they found Adonibezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. But Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.*

Adoni-Bezek, according to Judges, had removed the large toes and thumbs of kings he subjugated to render them harmless as warriors, so they could no longer wield weapons or run. Israel failed to obey God's command to kill this king and decided that they would perform an act of retaliatory justice.

Instead of killing this ungodly king, they cut off his thumbs and big toes as he had done to other kings, thus rendering him unable to fight, and not a threat.

Judges 1:1-2 (NKJV) *Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand.*

Judges 20:18 (KJV) *And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up first.*

We can see in the scripture that when the people asked God what they needed or who should have gone first God always said, send Judah first. Go in with praise! Send the tribe that knows the type of worship God loves. Whatever God loves, He loves it because it benefits you.

7 benefits to praising God.¹

1. Praise lifts your spirit.

Psalm 42:5-6 says: "Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God! Now I am deeply discouraged, but I will remember you" (NLT).

2. Praise helps you sense God's presence.

God is always present whether you sense it or not. Sometimes we don't feel his presence, but that's because we've moved away from him. He hasn't.

3. Praise enlarges your perception of God.

The Bible tells us this in Psalm 69:30: "I will praise the name of God with song and magnify Him with thanksgiving" (AMP).

4. Praise reveals solutions we can't see.

Ps 73:16-17 says, "I tried to understand all this, but it was too hard for me to see until I went to the Temple of God. Then I understood what will happen to them" (NCV).

5. Praise helps us remember God's blessing.

Thank God! Pray to him by name! Tell everyone you meet what he has done! Sing him songs, belt out hymns, translate his wonders into music! ... Remember the world of wonders he has made, his miracles, and the verdicts he's rendered". (Psalm 105:1, 5)

6. Praise enlists God's protection.

When you praise God for an answer to your prayer before it happens, that's faith—and that's when God begins to fight for you.

7. Praise breaks chains and opens doors.

Who Was Judah?

"Judah said to his brothers, 'What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.' His brothers agreed." - **Genesis 37:26-27 (NIV)**

What Does Judah Mean?

- Judah means to praise, and specifically to praise with uplifted hands.
- The name Judah is close to the Hebrew word for praise which is **Yadah**. When you offer **Yadah**, you are praising God with extended or raised hands.
- When hands are raised, it usually signals two things:
 1. Praise and adoration
 2. Surrender
- This is one form of praise that God loves, so when you think of Judah, think of lifted hands.

¹ (Rick Warren / <https://pastors.com/7-benefits-of-praising-god/>)

The Tribe of Judah

- It's possible that the most important fact about the tribe of Judah is **the one who would come through the tribe of Judah.**
- Yes, David was a king, and Solomon was a king, but this heritage eventually led to Jesus. Jesus' earthly lineage flowed through the tribe of Judah.
- **Jacob prophesied this in Genesis.**
Genesis 49:8-12 (NIV) "Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you. You are a lion's cub, Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him? The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his. He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk." -
- One of the things you will notice in this prophecy is that Jacob mentions that the scepter will not depart from Judah, and he refers to Judah as a lion.
- Jacob predicted that there would be a king who would come from Judah who would rule and never give up his throne.
- We know that king to be Jesus, also known as the lion of the tribe of Judah.

David's lineage:

- Throughout their history in the Promised Land, the children of Israel struggled with conflict among the tribes. The disunity went back all the way to the patriarch Jacob, who presided over a house divided. The sons of Leah and the sons of Rachel had their share of contention even in Jacob's lifetime (Genesis 37:1-11).
- The half-brothers being enemies continued in the time of the judges. Benjamin (one of Rachel's tribes) took up arms against the other tribes (Judges 20). Israel's first king, Saul, was of the tribe of Benjamin. When David was crowned king—David was from the tribe of Judah (one of Leah's tribes)—the Benjamites rebelled (2 Samuel 2-3). After a long war (2 Samuel 3:1), David succeeded in uniting all twelve tribes (5:1-5).

So, David has this lineage, family traits, from the tribe of Judah as a Dread Warrior, a killer. But he was also a musician, a worshipper, and a song writer.

- He comes from a lineage that:
 1. Goes into battles praising God.
 2. Is as savage in battle as they are eloquent in worship.
 3. Exercises mercy.

The effects of praise.

- Praise releases faith.
- Praise is the voice of faith, and faith is the key to victory and as praise becomes the confession of our mouth our faith is released.
- Praise creates a stirring on the inside, it primes faith and changes atmospheres.
- God has anointed praise, proclamation, and declaration as weapons of spiritual war.

There is a lesson attached to sending Judah first.

- It is as if God is saying when you walk into battle, go in with lifted hands, offering praise to me and surrendering the outcome to my hands. When you do that, there is an assurance that you will have victory.
- That's why David says in **Psalms 34:1** *I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*
- I grew up around elders in the church I attended that would add "Bless the Lord", "Praise God" and "Hallelujah" in almost every sentence and conversation.
 - *"I didn't get the job, but maybe God has something better for me, Praise God!"*
 - *"We were approved for the business loan, Bless God!"*
 - *"It didn't turn out as we'd hoped, but praise God anyhow".*
 - *"They are saying that it's terminal, but God is good, God is faithful".*
 - *"My child isn't serving the Lord yet, but I will praise you anyway!"*
- **I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth.**
- Pastor Tim, and then Jesse last week, both shared the importance of understanding how Jesus is our Dread Champion.
- The Lion of Judah, a Root of Jesse, Son of David and He's the Son of Man.
- Jeremiah indicates God as his dread champion (Hebrew word "aryts"), **meaning awe-inspiring, terror-striking, awesome, terrifying, ruthless, mighty, warrior that is feared or dreaded by His enemies.**
- As children of the King of kings, we too are to be dreaded by our enemy.
- I am going in with praise, but I'll finish the enemy with the sword of the Spirit! We have already overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.
- The Word of God. The tribe of Judah is the lineage we've been engrafted into. Jesus is the ultimate Dread Champion and because He is, so are we. The Lion of Judah dwells within us.
- Before you do anything, send Judah first. First, begin to praise God.