

# PRAISE COMES FIRST

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Daily devotions written by Pastor Thomas Smith

“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 1:1, 2

God’s people were faced with another critical transitional time in their history. After the death of Moses, Joshua was given the responsibility of leading them, but now Joshua was gone. Who would lead them? How would they go against their enemies? “Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?” It was commendable that the Israelites sought the Lord’s counsel at this time. There were a dozen different tribes, or families, that made up the nation, but who would lead? They needed to know God’s plan.

We also need God’s leadership for our lives. Being led by those God has ordained to guide us is safer and wiser than doing what is right in our own eyes. God’s answer was immediate and precise, “Judah shall go up.” This was not the only time God ordered that Judah lead out. What might be the significance of Judah’s going first? One answer may be found in Judah’s name. The name Judah means “praise.” This is a great lesson for us. Praise should go first. There are many disciplines and duties in the Christian life, but we are consistently reminded in the Scripture that our life of worship and devotion comes first. Before we go out to serve or go to battle, praise should lead out.

When Jesus visited the house of Mary and Martha, He taught them and us that worship precedes work. When God sent His people against the combined armies of Ammon and Moab, they were instructed to send the singers out in advance of the army. As the singers were singing and praising the Lord, God gave a great victory. In other words, PRAISE COMES FIRST. Worship is not the only thing that we do, but everything else should come after praise.

There is great power in praise. Praise is good for God. He deserves it. Praise is good for the work of God. When we lead out with praise, our focus is on God and our confidence is in Him. Praise has a way of discomfiting the enemy. Praise is good for us. We need to do it. Praise and thanksgiving can lift our spirits from discouragement and get our hearts fixed upon God.

## Let's Pray

Dear heavenly father, thank you for your word today. I pray that this devotional has blessed the person reading this and that the Holy Spirit will continue to speak to his or her heart. I ask this in Jesus name. Amen