

The Power of Praise

Word Definitions:

Praise –

- **halal** (H1984) – to celebrate, to make a show, be clamorously foolish, to rave, be as a madman
- **yadah** (H3034) – to revere, worship, to be thankful, make confession
- **tehillah** (H8416) – to laud, laudation, a hymn, song of praise
- **zamar** (H2167) – to celebrate with music and song - to play with the fingers (eg musical instrument)
- **shabach** (H7623) – to address loudly, loud, triumphant
- **doxa** (G1391) – to glory, honour, worship
- **ainos** (G136) – to praise, tell a story
- **epainos** (G1868) – laudation, to commend
- **humneo** (G5214) – to sing, celebrate, a song or hymn

Rejoice –

- **samach** (H8055) – to be glad, merry, joyful, to be full of glee
- **sus** (H7797) – to be bright and cheerful
- **ranan** (H7442) – shout out for joy, cry out, sing aloud
- **alaz** (H5937) – to jump for joy, to exult, to triumph
- **alats** (H5970) – to jump for joy, to exult, to triumph
- **giyl** (H1523) – to spin around (with emotion), be glad and joyful
- **chairo** (G5463) – to be full of cheer
- **sugchairo** (G4796) – to congratulate, celebration
- **agalliao** (G21) – jump for joy, exult, with exceeding joy
- **euphraineo** (G2165) – to be in a good frame of mind, be glad
- **kauchaomai** (G2744) – to vaunt, boast, glory

Habbakuk 3.17-19

Everything was going wrong! It was not as it was supposed to have been. Pestilence (destroying plague, pestilence) had blighted the land (v5), and they were in a time of trouble (adversity, anguish, distress) (v16) so that:

- **Fig tree had no blossom** – no blossom means no buds and no chance of fruit, figs were in wide use in the land, providing food and medicine
- **No fruit on the vines** – no grapes, no wine. Wine was an everyday substance used for drinking, medicine and social events. It also formed part of the offerings for God.
- **Labour of the olive failed** – Israel's greatest trading crop, used for oil. No work as many were employed in the pressing of oil.
- **Fields yielded no food** – the fields were unproductive, no wheat corn or grains – no bread. No grazing for cattle.
- **Flock was cut off from the fold** – *cut off* is often used to denote death. No meat, no offerings, no work for the shepherds.
- **No herd in the stalls** – used in all manner of ways - for transportation, carrying loads, ploughing, as meat, offerings.

The prophet determined in the midst of all this trouble that he was still going to praise the Lord.

“Yet..” - even though these things happen

“I will **rejoice** [*alaz*]..” - rejoice in triumph; prim root means 'to jump for joy'

“I will **joy** [*giyl*] in the God of my salvation” - to be glad and rejoice, literally 'to spin around'

The result for the prophet praising God was:

“The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills.” (v19)

His choosing to praise God meant that He was putting his trust in God who was his strength and shield

Listen to the Amplified:

“The Lord God is my Strength, my personal bravery, and my invincible army; He makes my feet like hinds' feet and will make me to walk [not to stand still in terror, but to walk] and make [spiritual] progress upon my high places [of trouble, suffering, or responsibility]!”

When things are against us we can make one of two choices, either grumble and complain about it all; or else rise up in praise and give God thanks.

Jesus told His disciples to rejoice and jump for joy in times of persecution and trouble - “Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice [chairo] in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven” Luke 6.22-23

What happens when we praise?

“But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises [tehillah] of Israel” (Psalm 22.3, AV)

When you praise, you bring God into the situation. He dwells among the praises of His people. The word *inhabitest* means to dwell, remain; in it's truest sense means to sit (as judge and ruler, 'enthroned' NKJV)

When you bring God onto the scene through praise, victory and blessing come with Him.

“Our fathers trusted in You; They trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; They trusted in You, and were not ashamed.” (Psalm 22.4-5)

cry out – call upon, often out of suffering (for help), but literally means to make proclamation, call together to an assembly. The cry does not necessarily have to be negative – it could be a cry or proclamation of praise (we will see this a little later in Isaiah 12.6)

There are many references in the psalms and elsewhere that show us God's blessing, victory and deliverance follow those who release praise to Him.

Let us briefly look at some real examples from the Bible, where God's people put this into practice:

Jehoshaphat – 2 Chronicles 20

The enemy was coming out after Jehoshaphat. The Moabites in allegiance with the Ammonites had conspired to come and attack.

- Jehoshaphat set himself to seek the Lord (v3). He wanted to hear God's instructions
- Position yourselves (v17) – they did not have to fight in this battle but they did have to do something. They had to position themselves in battle array against the enemy.
- (v21) He sends in the singers and musicians ahead to the front of the battle line – those that would sing and praise the Lord.

- (v22) As they began to praise, God comes onto the scene and the victory is assured. Note how the victory did not come until they began to praise.

When the enemy comes against us, too often we say 'just let God deal with it' – Yes He will but we have to position ourselves and praise Him. There's tremendous power available when we praise.

Israelites vs Men of Gibeah/Benjamin

In Judges 20 we read that the Israelites wanted to go out to battle against their brethren of the tribe of Benjamin (because of the Gibeah incident) so they inquired of the Lord.

The Benjaminites were skilled fighters – able to use a sling shot expertly

“Among all this people *were* seven hundred select men *who were* left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair's *breadth* and not miss” Judges 20.16

So the Israelites inquired of the Lord

“Then the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God to inquire of God. They said, "Which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin?" The LORD said, "Judah first!” Judges 20.18

Judah first – this is significant for our theme. Judah was the first tribe to go up against the Benjaminites. Judah was also the first tribe to move during their wandering in the wilderness when the pillar of cloud moved

Judah is 'praise' -

“And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah.” Genesis 29.35

Judah is 'yehudah' a word derived from *yadah*.

The tribe of praise went first – this was one of Israel's most bloodiest battles between themselves, the Benjaminites were eventually defeated.

Jesus came from the tribe of Judah – we are to put Him first and the battle will be won

David – Psalm 108

Wave after wave of attacks were coming against David – the Philistines, the Moabites, Syrians, Ammonites and the Amalekites (2 Samuel 8)

Yet in the midst of these attacks he could pen a song of praise to God which starts:

“I will praise [*yadah*] You, O LORD, among the peoples, And I will sing praises [*zamar*] to You among the nations” and finishes “through God we shall do valiantly, it is He that treads down our enemies” (Psalm 108.3,13)

David learned the secret of praise, when you bring God into the situation through praise, you end up triumphant.

Paul & Silas – Acts 16.23-26

In Philippi Paul & Silas were locked up in prison for preaching and ministering.

- They were beaten and fastened to the stocks.
- At midnight they were praying and singing praises [*humneo*] to God – their chains fell off and God wrought a mighty victory.

At the sound of praise God came into that prison cell, loosing their shackles and chains, shaking the foundations of the prison house so that all the doors flung open

Joshua – Joshua 6

Joshua and his armies marched around the fortified city of Jericho thirteen times. Once a day for 6 days and seven times on the 7th day.

At the end of the final circuit, when the trumpets sounded, the great shout [*H8643, teruah*] of joyful praise caused the walls to fall down and they won the victory that day.

“So the people shouted when *the priests* blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout [*teruah*], that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.” Joshua 6.20

teruah - this word for shout means ‘an acclamation of joy, a high joyful sound, rejoicing, a jubilee’

The book of Isaiah records a song of praise to God, which would be sung at a time when the people of God needed deliverance.

Isaiah 12.6

“(1) And in that day you will say: "O LORD, I will praise [*yadah*] You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. (2) Behold, God *is* my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For YAH, the LORD, *is* my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.' (3) Therefore with joy [*sason*] you will draw water From the wells of salvation. (4) And in that day you will say: "Praise [*yadah*] the LORD, call upon His name; Declare His deeds among the peoples, Make mention that His name is exalted. (5) Sing to the LORD, For He has done excellent things; This *is* known in all the earth. (6) Cry out and shout [*ranan*], O inhabitant of Zion, For great *is* the Holy One of Israel in your midst!" ”

Look at some of the words contained in this song – words that talk about or mean praise: praise – joy – shout – song – call upon – declare – make mention – exalted – sing – cry out

(vs2) the Lord is my strength and song - the **joy** of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8.10)

(vs3) Joy [*sason*] from **SUS** meaning rejoice, to be bright and cheerful. The reward is water from the wells of salvation [*yeshuah*]

(vs4) Praise the Lord - Praise [*halal*] Lord [*jah*] - Hallel **u** jah. Let's raise our hallelujah's

(vs6) Cry out and shout [*ranan*] – the great (and mighty) Lord God in the midst.

Praise brings the great and mighty God into any situation - it draws on the delivering power of Jesus.

Hebrews 13.15

“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise [*ainesis*] to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name.”

The writer to the Hebrews says we should offer to God the sacrifice of praise – a sacrifice costs us something, it’s an offering, we offer up our praise.

It’s easy to praise God when all is going well. It’s not so easy when everything is going wrong.

The sacrifice of praise is the fruit of our lips – It’s an uttered expression or song, it comes from the overflow of our heart. It must be vocalised – the Greek word *ainesis* comes from **G136 ainos** meaning ‘to tell a story’. That testimony of praise will bring us through and gain us the victory and deliverance.

There’s great power in praise!