

# Judah Goes First

When you have group activities, one of the first decisions you have to make is: who goes first.

You may select someone at random (they will not want to go first).

You can pick a number and see who gets the closest.

Choose who has the next birthday coming up.

Youngest to oldest. Oldest to youngest.

You have lots of options...but if it's something you place a great deal of importance on...you may base your decision on some sort of strategy.

When I play in a golf scramble, for both the drives and the putts, I'm often nominated to go first. Why? I'm not great, not terrible. On a drive I'm not going to set a distance record but hopefully I can hit it straight and get a safe shot so others can try to rip one. On putts, I'm not great at reading the line but as long as I don't hit it too hard I can show those behind me how it's going to roll, maybe I make it or maybe I help them by giving them a better look.

It's a strategic selection on who goes first, because we want to do our best, and hopefully win!

In a military battle, the commanding officers strategize to decide who goes first. Only they aren't playing a game, it's not about winning a trophy, it's about winning a war.

Church we are at war...not with men, but with a real enemy...satan. Jesus is our commanding officer, and He has a strategy about who goes first.

If we look back at the children of Israel...when they went to battle, we see who God says is to go first.

## **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 be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?"

2 And the Lord said, "Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand."

There were twelve tribes of Israel. And out of those twelve, God says **Judah Goes First**.

Why would Judah get to go first? They weren't the biggest tribe. They weren't the most skilled. But they were chosen by God to go first.

And they weren't just chosen to go first in battle. In Numbers 2, we see they were chosen to go first when Israel moved.

Judah means “praise”. And praise goes first. Praise should always be your first move...in every aspect of life, and especially in battle.

What the Lord was saying by telling Judah to take the lead role is that Praise always leads us into the things of God!

I don't know about you but I want to be led into the things God has planned for me in every season, in every aspect, in every valley, on every mountain...give me Jesus!

“Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand.”

God had given the land to all the tribes of Israel. It belonged to all of them. But only ONE could go first...He said Judah Goes First because **I have delivered the land into his hand.**

The land belonged to all of them, but Judah was the one with the access to go and claim it.

When we take a group of men to the Iron Sharpens Iron Men's Conference. We can take 12 guys and pay for their admission. Now each of those men has a wrist band available to them. But I am the one that can pick them up. It says “Tim Caraway” on the envelope. Do they all belong to me? Nope, but I'm the one with the “power” to get them.

God delivered the land into the hand of Judah. Hand = strength, power.

See Praise has a certain kind of power that isn't found anywhere else. The battle that God has already one, the victory that is ours in Christ, is accessed through the power of PRAISE.

**Psalms 145:2-3 (NKJV)**

Every day I will bless You,  
And I will praise Your name forever and ever.  
Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;  
And His greatness is unsearchable.

Praise - halal - it means to shine, to boast, to make into a fool, to act like a madman

See you gotta be a little crazy to praise...because when life gets tough, when you are facing a foe that's much bigger than you, when the odds are against you, for your first move...to be to thank Jesus for the victory...not only will those around you think you're a fool...but so will the devil.

I remember Susan telling me about when she had cancer, a lady at work came up to her and said “you're a Christian aren't you?” and Susan said “well yes I am!” and the lady said “I've been watching you to see how you would handle this situation”

I'm guessing there was a reason for this...maybe she seemed like a fool or a little crazy because she was still praising Jesus. And the world took notice...and so did that cancer that is gone today!

But listen up...this is when it's time to shine. This is when it's time to show that He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

This is when it's time to believe what God says and not what you see.

I always told my kids that when it comes down to it, and someone is trying to harm you and you can't get away, act crazy because no one wants to fight a crazy person. Hey...it's biblical...sort of!

There was a time when David, after being anointed to be king, was on the run from King Saul who was trying to kill him. David comes to this town, and he is recognized as the people sing and dance saying:

'Saul has slain his thousands,  
And David his ten thousands'?"

And because David was afraid of what would happen to him if they knew who he was, he began to act insane. So they let him go...

**1 Samuel 21:13 (NKJV)**

So he changed his behavior before them, pretended madness in their hands, scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva fall down on his beard.

Now I'm not advocating that you literally act insane...but what you need to grab from that is that David's circumstances needed to change so he changed his behavior.

And when you don't feel like praising...you have to change your behavior. You don't fear the reaper, you don't fear the people or the illness, or the situation...you praise...and it might look a little insane!

Praise is a time of giving thanks to God in the action of celebration. But to those who don't understand it...it looks like insanity.

But when Praise Goes First...it has the power to lead you into the land that God has given you! He gives it to the power of praise!

**Judges 1:3-4 (NKJV)**

So Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me to my allotted territory, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory." And Simeon went with him. 4 Then Judah went up, and the Lord delivered the

Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they killed ten thousand men at Bezek.

Judah...Praise...goes first. But he said to his brother Simeon “come with me and I’ll come with you” Judah and Simeon go together...

You know what Simeon means? Guys, you can’t make this stuff up...this is how amazing our God is...Judah means “Praise” and Simeon means “heard”.

Judah says to Simeon, come with me and I’ll come with you...where? To our allotted territories.

That is the key to victory..that your PRAISE is HEARD.  
IF YOU PRAISE YOU WILL BE HEARD.

Think of a group of little kids, one kid is getting picked on. Now the others know that his dad is near...but they can’t see him. They assume he’s far enough away that they can do what they want. Now if that first little boy lets out a yell for daddy...those bullies are gonna hear it too...and they will usually run before daddy even shows up. Because they know he’s on the move once that cry goes out...and when he gets there...boy are they in trouble.

This is praise...it will be heard...by Jesus, by the enemy, by the people, by the back pain, by the cancer, by the depression, by the fatigue, by anything you can name...

And when Praise goes out from a child of God...Daddy’s coming.

**Romans 8:15 (CSB)**

For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father!”

Praise isn’t just a cry for help...it’s your celebration of Jesus and who He is and what He has done, when it is heard...that is when you get to walk into your allotted territory.

If it’s allotted for you, it’s set aside for you. It has your name on it. But Praise is the key...

Judah Goes First. ALWAYS.

**Genesis 49:10 (NKJV)**

The scepter shall not depart from Judah,  
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,  
Until Shiloh comes;  
And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.

Scepter symbolizes God’s rule

Shiloh - He whose it is

God's rule, God's power, God's authority will not depart from PRAISE until He whose it is comes! Until Jesus comes!

**Matthew 28:18 (NKJV)**

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Jesus died on a cross for you and for me...you pay the price for our sin...you offer us new life in Him. And God raised Him from the dead as He overcame hell, death, and the grave...defeating the enemy who has authority right now on this earth...

We're in phase 1 of the restoration plan...those who accept Jesus as Lord and Savior...THEY are redeemed from the curse...and freed from satan's rule. Everyone else still lives under the rule of the enemy.

But Jesus has authority...and He's given it to us. That WE can advance His kingdom on the earth. That WE can defeat the enemy. That WE, the body of Christ, can do all the things that He's told us to do.

He's delivered the land into the hands of PRAISE. And where there is praise, there is His presence...

**Psalms 22:3 (NKJV)**

But You are holy,  
Enthroned in the praises of Israel.

The Holy Spirit REMAINS in the midst of praise. It's where He sits down, kicks off His shoes, gets comfortable...in praise.

Praise Goes First.

Today you may feel like you're on the run. Like the enemy is in pursuit and has driven you to a dark place. A place where you feel like hiding. A place where you feel alone. A place where you don't FEEL very victorious.

I want to show you a time when David was in that place...

**1 Samuel 22:5 (NKJV)**

Now the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go to the land of Judah." So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.

A prophet has one job...to speak on behalf of God. To speak only what God says. Only what is true. Only what is holy. Only what is for you from God.

And when David was in this difficult place and David was on the run from someone who wanted to kill him.

GOD SAID "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go to the land of Judah."

This Hebrew word for stronghold means *net, prey, snare*...the stronghold is a place where you can get stuck...it's a net, a snare, a trap...it's a place where you become the prey of the enemy and it may seem like there's no way out...

But God told David...do not stay there. Do not remain there. Do not abide or live there.

DEPART. GO to the land of Judah...GO TO PRAISE!

When Paul and Silas were imprisoned, chained to the wall, nowhere to go, it would have been easy to stay there, physically there was nothing they could do...so they lifted their voice in PRAISE. And the walls began to shake. And the doors flew open and the chains fell off!

They refused to stay...they departed their situation and went to the land of Praise!

It's time today to shake some walls. It's time today to break some chains!

Lift your hands. Stomp your feet. Act a little crazy. Because Jesus is awesome in power and glory and has already won the victory...and it's been given over to PRAISE!