

THE



OF

Praise

PETER DOSECK

The ABCs of Praise

by

Peter Doseck

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Peter Doseck

Peter Doseck Ministries

13815 Botkins Rd

Botkins, OH 45306

937.693.3554

peterdoseck.com

contact@peterdoseck.com

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CHAPTER ONE

Praise at All Times

Two exhausted men leaned against one another while fatigue, filthy surroundings, and open wounds threatened to do them in. Their feet were bound in stocks, and their bodies were wracked with pain. Yet in the stillness of the night, first one and then the other began to pray. Their prayers soon turned into a joyful song, and the hopeless silence was filled with sounds of praise.

It was midnight, and they should have been asleep, but no one in this dark, stench-filled prison felt safe closing their eyes. It was too uncomfortable, and their injuries from the whipping post burned deep, keeping them all wide awake. While the two men sang heartfelt praise to God, the other prisoners were silent, listening to the curious sounds of joy coming from the innermost cell in the jail.

Suddenly, an earthquake hit, the likes of which no one had ever experienced before. Every door in the place swung open in an instant, and every stock and chain fell harmlessly to the ground.

The jail keeper was awakened out of his slumber, and when he saw the doors of the prison were standing wide open he drew his sword to kill himself. One of the singers cried out and stopped him, and then something amazing happened. Rather than race out of the prison to avoid sure trouble, the jail keeper

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instead ran to the heart of the dungeon looking for the heroes of our story, Paul and Silas.

“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” he asked breathlessly, trembling as he spoke. They calmly replied, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, and your house.”

In a split second a hopeless situation was completely turned around; chains were broken, prisoners were set free, and an entire household was led to salvation – all because of the voice of praise that arose in the midst of an impossible situation. (See Acts 16:16-34.)

Face the Impossible

Have you ever been in an impossible situation? Has your world seemed dark and gloomy, filled with the stench of endless trouble? Have you felt bound by circumstances beyond your control, or endured the pain of suffering brought on by another? We’ve all been there before.

Today, financial trouble threatens to do us in, just as deep wounds threatened to kill Paul and Silas. Hardship seems to be lurking around every corner, just as unknown enemies kept watch over the heroes of our story.

Men and women may not be bound by literal stocks and chains, but they are just as bound as Paul and Silas were; only not by rough iron, but by fear of the unknown, fear of failure, need, disease, unemployment, and a host of other things.

What should we do when we face impossible

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situations? I believe we should do exactly what Paul and Silas did. We should pray, and then we should break forth into joyful praise.

Praise is a word that includes all of the things you would expect it to – giving thanks, rejoicing, honoring God and telling of His virtues, recounting His goodness, and releasing unbridled joy. These are all expressions of our faith because praise is a voice and an act of faith.

The Bible is full of examples of men and women who praised God when impossible circumstances threatened to unravel their world.

Think of Abraham and how he thanked God even though his mind was bombarded with thoughts of a hopeless situation. When we thank God like he did, though fulfillment of God's will seems impossible, we resist the attack of unbelief, and we express our dependence upon God. This is true praise. (See Romans 4:16-25.)

Think of Daniel in the lion's den or of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as they were thrust into the fiery furnace. They all faced death head-on and refused to let their earthly battles deter their faith.

Consider David, pursued by King Saul and threatened on a daily basis, and yet he wrote some of the most beloved Psalms in the Bible and remained a man after God's own heart.

Remember Stephen as he was stoned, John as he lived in exile, and Mary as she watched her first-born son die a horrible death. Men and women were robbed, beaten, imprisoned, and deprived of the necessities of life, and yet the voice of praise never

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left their lips.

We may believe our circumstances are unbearable, but when we remember the cloud of witnesses who have gone before us and the things that they endured, we can resist the temptation to waver or cave-in. We can remain steadfast and strong as we keep a song of praise flowing from our lips at all times.

Be Thankful

As Christians we have so much for which we should be thankful, so much for which we should be full of praise. First and foremost we should thank God for our salvation every day. If you've lost this attitude of thankfulness, it's time to do what David did in Psalm 51:12. It's time to cry out for God to restore the joy of your salvation, and don't stop crying out until your joy is full.

People who allow their joy to be stolen become very vulnerable. They may not realize how open to trouble they are, but when men and women are no longer filled with gratitude for the gift of salvation, they are at risk in every area of their lives.

I'm not talking about running around 24 hours a day shouting, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" Surely we understand this is not what God expects, but He does expect us to have a mindset of gratefulness.

He expects that we will have actions in our lives which express our appreciation, and He expects us to freely declare His marvelous works to others whenever we have the opportunity. All of these are expressions of praise to God, and they are all

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acceptable in His sight.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 says: “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

We have to remind ourselves of certain things when we find praise has become hard to express. In order to give thanks in everything, we must go back to the beginning and remember that we were once consumed with our dependency on God, and we shuddered to think we could ever make a decision on our own. We were filled with a spirit of appreciation, and we told Him how grateful we were for every little blessing.

Too many of us have forgotten those first days when salvation became a reality, but we need to return to the state of mind we had at that joyful time. We need to give voice to the thankfulness which abides deep inside of us, and we need to freely praise our first love once again.

Be Not Weary

Galatians 6:9 says: “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

Here we come to the heart of the issue. Many people in the body of Christ have become weary. They are weary in their personal walk with the Lord, and that weariness has been translated into joylessness and faithless acts of unbelief.

When you allow weariness to overtake you, you cease to live out of your spirit, and you begin

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to live in an emotionally-driven state of mind. You will be hesitant, and you will faint when the slightest pressure is applied. You may even turn from the things you once did for Jesus and begin to toy with the idea of returning to the sin you escaped so long ago. This is dangerous.

Weary Christians are often easily deceived, easily offended, and easily moved by trouble. They believe they are in harm's way without a means of escape. Thoughts of "Why did God allow this?" consume weary Christians, causing them to derail faith's action in their lives.

Worst of all, weariness unchecked will kill praise. Weary people allow themselves to pull back from expressions of praise, worship, rejoicing, celebration, and joy. Weariness pushes them toward reason rather than faith, and toward a disappointed response rather than a voice of thanksgiving. In this state of mind failed judgment, resentment, and bitterness will soon follow.

If you find yourself weary and ungrateful today, there is a way to return to the expressions of praise you once held so dear. There is a place of restoration for you.

It begins with the cry of the psalmist in Psalm 42:5, "Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted in me? Hope in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance."

If you are troubled and disquieted in your mind, begin to speak to yourself and remind yourself of all the things you should be grateful for in Christ. Encourage yourself, and remember all of the

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wonderful things that God has done for you. (See Philemon 1:6.)

Hasn't He saved you from an eternal damnation? Hasn't He given you abundant life? Hasn't He given you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness? (See Isaiah 61:3.) Deal with your weary soul and remind yourself of what God has done for you.

Next, you need to re-establish the things you did when you first got saved. In Matthew 13:45-46, Jesus told the parable of a man who found a pearl of great price. He was so overjoyed at his discovery he sold all that he had in order to buy the pearl.

That's how we were on the day we first met Jesus. We gave up all that we had for the excitement of what we had found. The joy of our salvation produced sanctification and separation from a carnal mindset, and we gave up our connection to the world system in order to stay close to our new best friend.

Joy was the key then, and it is the key now. Without joy you will be an emotional wreck, but with joy in its rightful place you will remain steadfast and balanced, even in the hard times.

Jesus said: "Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

You can find rest for your weary soul. You can find the joy of your salvation again, but you have to make an effort to come unto Jesus. Remember, the

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Bible says: “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8).

Psalm 34:1 says: “I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth.” If you let this be your guiding, daily principle, and you let God hear you praise Him always, joy will burst forth, and you will be restored.

Ask, and it shall be given; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it will be opened. It’s up to you. (See Matthew 7:7.)

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CHAPTER TWO

Praise for Battle

The Bible tells us that old things are passed away, and all things are made new. (See 2 Corinthians 5:17.) This newness is not limited to our spiritual nature, but it also covers our thought life, the way that we live, and the things that we say.

In Christ we have a brand new covenant relationship with God by which our entire being has been changed, including our language. We still speak English, or Spanish, or Portuguese like we did before, but now our words are filled with faith and praise.

When Jesus said, “These signs shall follow them that believe ... they shall speak with new tongues” (see Mark 16:17), He was not only talking about the gift of tongues described in 1 Corinthians 12:10, but He was also referring to spiritual languages that are embedded in the heart of every believer.

Christians do not speak like the world does. While we lived in sin our words were overflowing with doubt, hopelessness, discouragement, and death, but now we speak faith-filled words based on the unchanging source of life, the Word of God.

We express ourselves like Abraham did while he awaited his promised son. Abraham is the father of faith, so we can model our conversation after his, speaking things that be not as though they are. We

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can follow his persistent example by giving glory to God for promises yet unseen. (See Romans 4:17-20.)

Praise is the voice of faith. It is the inward-to-outward expression of what you truly believe. You can give lip service to something a thousand times and still not believe it, but when you allow it to pour forth from your heart in genuine praise, now you've got something you can build on.

In reality, redemption is all about you, but Christianity is all about Christ. You need to make loving, praising, and serving Jesus your number one desire, your ultimate goal, and your only reason for living. Make it all about Him, and He will make it all about you.

Supernatural Strength

Romans 4:20 says: "He (Abraham) staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." Notice he was "strong in faith" when he gave glory to God. Praise not only gave expression to Abraham's faith, but it also produced strength in him beyond his human capacity.

Psalms 8:2 says: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings You have ordained strength because of Your enemies, that You might still the enemy and the avenger." Jesus interpreted this verse for us in Matthew 21:16 when He said: "Yea, have you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings You have perfected praise?"

Notice that Jesus used the words "perfected

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praise” where the psalmist used the words “ordained strength”. This shows us that they are one and the same. Praise and strength are fused together by God. He ordained the language of praise and gave it the capacity to produce a supernatural strength that will overcome and still every adversary in your life. You can literally quiet your storms using praise.

To still the avenger is more than just shutting him up; it’s putting a stop to him altogether. Praise makes the enemy hit the brakes and end his assault. It’s like putting him in a jail cell and throwing away the key. He no longer exercises authority over you, and he cannot win.

The devil knows how this works. He also knows his only shot at defeating you is to drain your strength by targeting your praise life. He knows he must shut down your active voice of praise in order for him to stand a chance.

So, he will try to get you to murmur instead of singing “hallelujah”. He will try to convince you to lie down and worry instead of shouting unto God with the voice of triumph.

Boxers use this strategy when they play “rope-a-dope” (leaning against the rope and tricking the opponent into wearing himself out throwing useless punches). Sometimes we wear ourselves out by murmuring and worrying instead of relying on the strength of praise to do the work for us.

Don’t let the devil gain an advantage over you this way. Don’t let him drain your God-ordained strength. Don’t murmur and worry instead of singing and shouting the victory. Don’t give the devil the

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satisfaction of making you weak.

Your enemies are God's enemies. You may think God has no enemies, but in truth anything that opposes you is an enemy of God. Lack is His enemy, sickness is His enemy, depression is His enemy, and surely loss and death are His enemies. You must stay strong with active praise, and then you will prevail against every enemy of God in your life.

Mighty Weapons

1 Corinthians 1:26-27 says: "For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."

The world puts no stock in spiritual things. They think faith is foolishness, and we are fools for believing, but we know God uses words of faith to release us from the captivity of unrighteousness and to cleanse us from the stain of sin. We know simple words of faith release the promises of God into our lives, transforming us into holy vessels ready for the Master's use.

Praise, like faith, appears to the world to be mere words, but we know praise is a mighty weapon. It is the voice of faith, and it demands surrender of every enemy force. It sustains us, and it provides all that we need to cross the threshold of God's promised outcome.

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Psalm 149:5-9 says: “Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all His saints. Praise ye the Lord.”

Notice the two weapons of war: praise and a two-edged sword. What is this sword? It is the Word of God, which is known as the sword of the Spirit. When you couple the Word of God with praise, you have an unbeatable combination. Praise is the expression of faith in the Word, and the Word provides faith to continue to praise. Together, they form an unending circle.

The “judgment written” also refers to the Word, the written promises, and the impending judgment of evil.

In court, a judge makes a sovereign decree. The accused cannot stop it, though in our system we do allow for an appeal. In God’s sovereign courtroom there is no appeal for the devil. Once your praise expresses your faith in God’s Word (His sovereign decree), the promise will come to pass.

When you offer up songs of praise and act on the truth of the Word, you stop the enemy from executing his will in your life. All the kings of the earth - the principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places – will have no right or power to overturn

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or ignore the decree. They must fall. They must bow. They must relinquish their hold on you.

The Real Enemy

Just as God fights through you, the adversary fights through the world system. In other words, persecution comes not only by demonic powers, but by people used by demonic powers. You must remember that you are not warring against the people, but you are warring against the evil powers behind them.

You can execute vengeance upon the adversary of your soul, even while you have mercy on the people being used by him. It's a fine line to walk, but we must walk it carefully because Jesus told us to love our enemies, to pray for them, and to heap coals upon their heads (not a term of violence, but of offering comfort as when someone puts hot coals in a bed on a cold night).

You execute judgment on your true enemies, the principalities and powers, by keeping praise in your mouth at all times. Think back to our opening story where Paul and Silas were in chains in a cold, dark prison. When they praised God in the midst of this trial, they actually reversed the curse, and they turned the chains upon their true enemy. They had nothing against the jailer, but they forcefully bound the principalities and powers pitted against them.

In the darkest hour, in the inmost confined space, Paul and Silas did what was foolish in the eyes of men. They lifted their voices to praise God, and

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when they did God not only stilled the voice of the adversary, but He shackled him in his own rough iron, and then God violently shook the foundation of the very place the adversary sought to hold.

God inhabits the praises of His people (see Psalm 22:3). He intervenes and holds court for us in the midst of a fiery furnace, or in the middle of a cold, dark dungeon. Wherever we are, He is there with us. And when we know He is with us, we can rest assured that He is well able to break us free from every binding force.

The Seed of Joy

Praise is a mighty, mighty weapon, and its seed is joy. Truly, joy is not joy unless it is expressed, just as love is not love unless it is given away.

James 1:2 tells us to count it all joy when we are faced with the trials of life. This seems like a strange commandment, to be joyful when your world is turned upside down. It makes perfect sense, though, when you understand the principle behind the command.

Joy is not an expression of happiness about the situation you are in, but it is an expression of your deep-seated faith in God that tells you everything will be all right despite what your eyes can see, what your ears can hear, and what your mind can understand.

Joy permeates your born again spirit, and when you give voice to joy, praise bursts forth from your innermost being. The result is a strength the enemy cannot withstand. Your joyful response will turn

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back the attack of the enemy. It will knock him down and send him tumbling backward wondering what hit him.

Silence in tribulation is the worst enemy of faith. Problems tend to put a lock on your lips, but you should never allow your silence to last. Be still for a moment to remind yourself that He is God, but then shout as loud as you can the Bible promise that pertains to your situation.

Keep shouting until a song bursts forth from your heart and you begin to experience the supernatural strength God has waiting for you on the other side of your joyful outburst. Rise up and declare through praise that faith in God is your victory!

Joyful praise requires revelation, and revelation is the discovery of what will happen in the end if you will obey God. “Give and it shall be given” is a revelation of the doctrine of the turn-around. It tells you to do that which seems unnatural, because it is the very thing needed to cause your situation to reverse for you.

Revelation can be as small as a tiny glimmer in the beginning, a mere flash of light at the end of a long tunnel. It will seem insignificant to the world, but it will be enough to see you through. Praise will cause the light to grow bigger and bigger until it finally engulfs the tunnel and overflows into your entire situation.

I encourage you to praise when the world is crying, and the ordained strength of praise will rise up to sustain you. Sing when tears are falling, and you will discover the peace that passes all understanding.

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Shout when your throat is dry and thirsty, and you will soon have rivers of living water flooding your soul.

Joyful praise sees the end from the beginning, and it acts as if the end is already here. It shouts for that which is unseen, rejoices for that which is unheard, and sings for that which is beyond human reasoning.

It's time to let the light in, let revelation come, let praise strengthen and sustain you, and let the voice of faith pour out of you today!

CHAPTER THREE

Praise Completely

Praise involves the total man. First, it requires a revelation in the human spirit, which comes from the Word of God. We can only praise what we know from personal experience, so it makes sense for you to dig deep in the Word to find more knowledge of God, more intimate discovery of His personality, His attributes, His character, and His love. All of these will give you more to praise Him for.

Revelation of the Word leads to the praise participation of the soul (which is the will, the intellect, and emotions.) Every word of praise embraces the soul of man, and it is filled with some type of emotion. It is impossible to express ourselves effectively without passionate feeling. This is how you know what is in the heart of a man, by the expressive outpouring that comes from him in praise.

Look at the eyes of one praising, and you will likely see tears of joy, the grimace of repentance, or the shining countenance of blissful satisfaction. What you won't see is a blank expression.

Ultimately, praise springs forth in physical expression, which requires the participation of your body. Just look at Psalm 150:1-6 for evidence:

“Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary: praise Him in the firmament of His power. Praise Him for His mighty acts: praise Him according to

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His excellent greatness. Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet: praise Him with the psaltery and harp. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance: praise Him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise Him upon the loud cymbals: praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that has breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.”

From this scripture we learn that it is impossible to praise God without some outward expression, either from our own bodies or from musical instruments. We can praise God in the dance, by clapping, kneeling, leaping, with tears, with instruments, with songs of praise, and with our very breath.

If you can't play an instrument you can move your feet, raise your hands, sing loudly, or bow before Him. It comes down to a decision based on your revelation of the Word and the transformation of your mind. This spiritual renovation allows you to be pushed to a new level in praise so that people can see there is faith on the inside of you.

Let Go!

What do you suppose people thought when King David danced with all his might in the city streets to express his joy upon the return of the Ark of the Covenant? (See 2 Samuel 6:12-23.) Some probably thought he was crazy, but they knew he loved his God more than he loved his pride. It's time for us to do the same.

When you are willing to let go of your pride and let your praise flow freely, you will touch others

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around you who are downcast. In other words, you can stir people up when you allow God to stir you up. Iron sharpens iron, and in this case the sparks will create a new fire in someone who needs it very much.

It would be nice if we adults would have the faith of a child. Little children simply do what comes naturally. If they feel like dancing, they dance. If they feel like singing, they sing. If they feel like shouting, they shout.

If only we could be so free. If only we could throw off our reservations about what other people think of us so easily.

We dance at weddings. We celebrate at birthday parties. We shout at sporting events, and we go crazy when our team wins a championship. So why are we content to stand idle in the presence of the Lord? We shouldn't be. If the Bible tells us to dance before the Lord (and it does), we should simply humble ourselves and do what God asks.

Just be careful that you don't swing the pendulum too far the other way and become mechanical in your praise. Don't ever think, "Oh, it's time to lift my hands" or "It's time to dance." Wouldn't it be better if you lost yourself in praise and lifted your hands when no one else did? Wouldn't it be better if you danced like David danced rather than waited for it to be time to move?

I believe supernatural manifestations will result from our praise if we will be obedient to our spirits rather than to our flesh. If we will live inward out, instead of outward in, praise will become a free-flowing fountain in our homes and churches, and

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God's Spirit will be with us in great power wherever we go.

The Battle is Not Yours

The account of King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:1-30 reveals a number of powerful secrets about praise. Let me tell the back story first to set the stage

King Jehoshaphat began his reign in Judah after his father Asa died, and he restored the land to its former prosperity by doing several things. Jehoshaphat first strengthened and fortified his cities with military force. He then sent princes and Levites to teach the people the law of God, something his father had neglected to do. He also tore down all of the high places where Baal worship had taken place during Asa's reign.

More important than any of this, the Bible says King Jehoshaphat was courageous in the ways of the Lord, he sought God, and he walked in His ways. As a result God gave him great favor, riches, and honor.

Things went so well for Jehoshaphat, his enemies actually brought him gifts. The Philistines and Arabs in surrounding kingdoms offered him silver, abundant flocks, and tribute money. Jehoshaphat continued to build his army, and fear fell on all of his neighbors.

Over time Jehoshaphat did what most Christians do. He relaxed his zeal a little, and he eventually made an alliance with Israel (since at this time the kingdom was still split between north and south). This alliance led to a terrible mistake. Against the advice of a true prophet, the two kings followed the

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counsel of some false prophets, and they went to battle when they shouldn't have.

In the battle Jehoshaphat found himself running for his life, and the king of Israel was mortally wounded. Jehoshaphat made it back home safely, but he was shaken. When he returned to Judah he was immediately rebuked by another prophet for his misstep.

The prophet said, "Should you help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon you from before the Lord. Nevertheless there are good things found in you, in that you have taken away the groves out of the land, and have prepared your heart to seek God." (See 2 Chronicles 19:2-3.)

This opened the door for the famous story in chapter 20 where Jehoshaphat discovered God's mercy and grace in abundance for him and his people.

Three enemy armies had decided to come against Jehoshaphat, evidently discerning the timing may be right for them to prevail. When men came to Jehoshaphat to warn him of the approaching hoards, the king was afraid. He immediately set himself to seek the Lord, and he called a fast in the entire land.

Jehoshaphat stood before the people in the house of the Lord, and he cried out to God asking, "Are You not God in Heaven? And do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the heathen? And in Your hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand You?"

Of course he knew the answer to the questions, but apparently he needed to hear himself say the words anyway. He needed to remind himself of who

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God was.

In verse 12 Jehoshaphat came to the heart of the matter when he said, “We have no might against this great company that comes against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon You.”

There it was - a humble admission that he had messed up. He had let things slip in his spiritual walk and in the kingdom of Judah so that his once well-armed nation was now trembling and unprepared for war.

We’ve all been in this position before - unprepared, afraid, and having no idea what to do. Perhaps the next time we find ourselves in such a place we will do what Jehoshaphat did, and then we might see the results he saw just a few verses later.

After the prayer, the Spirit of God came on a man in the congregation, and God said, “Hearken, all Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you king Jehoshaphat, thus says the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.

“Tomorrow go down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and you shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. You shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you.”

Jehoshaphat bowed to the ground, and the congregation followed his lead. They worshipped God in humility, and then they stood up to praise

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Him with a loud voice. Notice they were not worried about what anyone thought about them. They were so overjoyed by this gracious response from God, they forgot about themselves, and they reacted with emotional, passionate praise.

The next day they got up early, and they prepared to do as God has instructed. Jehoshaphat stood before the people and said, “Hear me, O Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe His prophets, so shall you prosper.”

Then the king wisely consulted with the people, and he appointed singers to go before the army to shout, “Praise the Lord; for His mercy endures forever!” This may seem odd to you, but to the people of Judah it seemed perfectly logical.

So, the praisers went first, and when they began to shout and praise God the Bible says, “the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.”

There was such confusion among the enemy soldiers, they began to kill one another until they were utterly destroyed. When the people of Judah came to the place where they could watch the battle from above, all they could see were dead bodies far and wide. No one escaped; not one soldier.

Like a good king, Jehoshaphat sent the people to partake of the spoil, and it took them three days to carry away all of the jewels and riches from among the dead. After such a resounding defeat of their enemies, they gathered together on the fourth day,

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and there they praised the Lord again. They returned home with great joy, and they rejoiced for what God had done for them in His mercy and goodness.

The Bible says, “They came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the Lord. And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel. So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about.”

Unleash the Power

This is the story of an amazing defeat of an enemy too big for Jehoshaphat to handle, and yet he handled it with grace and dignity. This can be your story, too. If you want to defeat your enemies, you need to praise God with the same faith and fervor as the people of Judah did. You need to send your praise to the battle first, and trust God to fight for you.

After all, Malachi 3:6 says, “For I am the Lord, I change not.” God is the same now as He was then, and He is prepared to fight your battles for you if you are prepared to seek Him, unleash the power of unlimited praise, and follow His Word.

When it came time for the men of Judah to face their enemies, they did not sharpen their swords or hone their spears, but they began to worship God. They praised Him until they realized there was great power in the praise of a believer, and they discovered they were engaged in spiritual warfare, not in a carnal battle. With that revelation came victory.

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There is unlimited power in the praise of a believer, but often we have allowed the devil to steal it. We have allowed him to steal our praise in the name of formality and religion, and we have allowed our foolish pride to strip us of our rightful heritage. The time has come for us to reverse our course.

David said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1). Why was he glad? Because he knew he could show his gratitude to God, express his faith, and let it all out in the presence of the Lord.

We must let God be God, but we must also let the believer be the believer - one who shouts, sings, bows, dances, rejoices, praises, and worships God without shame, fear, or reservation.

It's time for the people of God to seek Him, to walk in His ways, and to praise Him completely with all of their heart, mind, and soul. It's time to release radical praise and to worship from the innermost depths of their being.

There should be no boundaries left in our hearts and minds, but we should be free to express the wonderful deeds of our God so that all may hear, all may see, and all may know that He lives!