

1.) WHAT IS PRAISE?

The Heart Of Praise & Worship Series

I. THE ESSENCE OF PRAISE

A. Praise is not a difficult concept to understand, because it's a part of our everyday lives. Spiritually speaking, it is something we direct toward God or something we express to others about God.

1. *praise = to commend; to applaud; to express approval or admiration of; to extol in words or in song; to magnify; to glorify*

B. God is worthy to be praised solely for who He is.

C. One distinctive of praise concerns its extroverted nature. It is characterized by celebration and exhilaration and is expressed through singing, shouting, speaking forth, playing of musical instruments, dancing, and other external forms.

1. When we merely contemplate the wonders of God, we have not yet entered into praise. Meditation is not praise. Praise begins with a mind that is set upon God, but then those thoughts must be put into action in order to qualify as praise.

Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; (Psalms 66:8)

...You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" (Isaiah 40:9)

2. There are both vocal and non-vocal forms of praise, but whatever the form, praise is demonstrated – others are aware that praise is taking place.

D. We will never grow and mature in our expressions of praise until we are willing to praise in a manner pleasing to the Lord – the way *He* wants us to praise, not in accordance with our own feelings and desires. The Scriptures clearly show us the various ways God expects us to praise.

E. Many times praise is a function of the will. We must will and determine to praise the Lord, even when we don't feel like it. Praise is not contingent upon our feelings – it is based upon God's greatness, and that never changes!

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. (Psalms 103:1)

5 Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and 6 my God... (Psalms 42:5-6)

II. JUDAH AND PRAISE

- A. Leah gave the name “Judah” to the fourth son she bore Jacob. “Judah” is literally translated “praise.”

She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "This time I will praise the LORD." So she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children. (Genesis 29:35)

- B. Since Judah means praise, there are some valuable lessons we can learn about praise by studying the occurrences of the word “Judah” in the Scripture.

1. God makes His sanctuary among the praisers.

Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel his dominion. (Psalms 114:2)

- a. Notice the distinction made between Israel and Judah. All of Israel is God’s dominion, but He sets up His sanctuary in Judah – in the company of praisers!

2. God is great in His church today, but He is known in a special way by those living a life of praise.

In Judah God is known; his name is great in Israel. (Psalms 76:1)

3. God is restoring praise today as never before. He has purposed to raise up a praising church in these last days, and nothing will hinder Him!

...who says of Jerusalem, 'It shall be inhabited,' of the towns of Judah, 'They shall be built,' and of their ruins, 'I will restore them,' (Isaiah 44:26)

The LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem. (Zechariah 2:12)

4. We could say that praise is God’s scepter...

...Judah my scepter. (Psalms 108:8)

- a. Remember the story of Queen Esther? Because of Esther’s beauty, Xerxes held out his golden scepter to her to show her he loved and accepted her and was inviting her into his chamber (Esther 2:17, 5:2).

- b. When God sees us in the beauty of His praises He raises His scepter to us and bids us come into His chamber.