

Chapter 1

WOMEN WARRIORS UNVEILED

THE YEAR WAS 1429, AND A YOUNG AND UNEDUCATED peasant girl dressed in knight's armor rode on a white horse. She was followed by an army of men whom she was leading into battle, with the purpose of regaining control of a town which was being held under siege by an enemy nation. She held a white banner in her hands, and her words of encouragement to the soldiers resounded in the air: "Courage! Do not fall back: in a little, the place will be yours. Watch! When you see the wind blow my banner against the bulwark, you shall take it! In, in, the place is yours." ¹ The soldiers fought all day and received the victory promised them as evening drew to a close.

This young warrior woman was Joan of Arc, and she was instrumental in the first significant victory for the French people at that time. Her actions ultimately changed the course of the nation. But how could an unlearned girl have been used to rally and lead troops into war? Joan of Arc claimed to have received visitations and messages from angelic beings from the time she was just thirteen years old. These messengers proclaimed to her that God Himself was calling her to be His instrument to vindicate her nation and restore their rightful king to the throne.

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When Joan reached the age of about seventeen, she felt led by God to approach France's king in hiding. She boldly traveled to him through enemy territory, determined to obey her Lord. She proclaimed: "I do not fear their soldiers; my way lies open. If there are soldiers on the road, I have my Lord with me, who will make a road for me to reach the Dauphin [the rightful king]. I was born for this."² Thus, one woman, obeying a calling from her Lord Jesus, defied the political, social, and church structure of the day and changed the course of history in the process.

Joan of Arc dared to believe that an individual could hear words of destiny from God Himself, and in little more than a year's time, she helped to rally troops for war, crown a king, and restore hope to a broken country. The Catholic Church, however, was outraged at her audacity to claim that she could hear from God for herself, and, as a result, she was imprisoned and put on trial for heresy. During her trial, which was, to say the very least, unjust and politically staged, Joan of Arc displayed great courage, wisdom, and boldness in her answers, shattering all preconceived ideas of what an uneducated peasant woman was capable of.

Joan was ultimately condemned to be burned at the stake for heresy, and her final recorded words were these: "I pray you, go to the nearest church, and bring me the cross, and hold it up level with my eyes until I am dead. I would have the cross on which God hung be ever before my eyes while life lasts in me."³ Then, as she

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was dying in the flames, she was said to have called out, "Jesus. Jesus!"⁴

Joan of Arc lived between 1412 and 1431, nearly six hundred years ago now, and yet her legacy continues to intrigue and inspire us today. She is one of the many women whom God chose through the course of history to impact nations. Although she never killed anyone herself and often wept at the sight of the bloodshed of war, she did lead physical armies into battle. I do not believe that our Lord is calling us into a physical battle today, but the life of this godly woman can inspire and empower us in this hour. Her testimony demolishes the argument that God cannot use women in warfare.

When interrogated about her decision to leave her village and embrace her destiny, Joan said, "It pleased God thus to act through a simple maid in order to turn back the king's enemies."⁵ I believe these words ring true as a prophetic statement for the warrior women God is calling today. Does it not again please our God to use simple women, women like you and me, to turn back His enemies?

The circumstances in which we find ourselves today bear much similarity to the state of France in the time of Joan of Arc. It was a torn and divided nation. A king was on the throne who was not the legal heir, half the nation was in league with the enemy (England), and those who supported the true heir to the throne were weak and afraid to act. Enemy forces had sown fear and intimidation into French society, paralyzing those who possessed true authority. It was in this hopeless state that

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God raised up His champion of the hour, a young girl of no influence or importance, whose only weapon was her obedience to the voice of her heavenly King, Jesus.

How very like the situation in which we find ourselves today! Our world is under the power of an enemy king (Satan) who has established himself as lord over the nations through deception and theft. This king seeks to influence people in many high positions of society in order to control the minds and thought patterns of whole nations.

At the same time, the church, made up of those who are true to the rightful King, Jesus, remains in fear and unbelief, not daring to oppose this usurper of the throne. It is for this reason that our Lord needs obedient and willing messengers who will arise, proclaiming the truth of the Gospel, and restoring hope and courage to the soldiers of God's army, causing them to stand up and fight and proclaim the King of all Kings as the rightful Ruler of the nations of this world. Could it not be that you and I are called to be part of the answer that is so desperately needed?

As we noted earlier, Psalm 68:11-12 speaks prophetically of an army of women being released to proclaim the Word, or message, of God and bring defeat to the camp of the enemy:

The Lord gives the command;

*The women who proclaim the good tidings are a great
host:*

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*"Kings of armies flee, they flee,
And she who remains at home will divide the spoil!"*

NASB

This "great host," or army, will speak with such authority that even enemy kings will be turned away in fear.

Some Bible translations have failed to record that it is a host of "women" who will proclaim these good tidings, despite the fact that the Hebrew verb used here carries a feminine form, rather than the more common masculine. This may be because the idea of an army of women is, and long has been, a very foreign concept to most. The army of women being released under the directive of their God will definitely have the benefit of an element of surprise. Who would have thought that God would use women to defeat His enemies?

Ed Silvoso discussed this phenomenon in his book *Women, God's Secret Weapon*. He wrote: "The Scriptures tell us that the day is fast approaching when God will lift women up and release masses of them into ministry. Psalm 68:11 declares that at a strategic time God will give a command, and a company of women who proclaim the good news will defeat His enemies. An all-female army will bring this about, and it will be a surprise victory."⁶

Cindy Jacobs also discussed this idea in her book *Women of Destiny*. She wrote, in her commentary on these verses, "Psalm 68:11 is a prophetic message for the great army of women who are arising in the land. 'The Lord gives the word of power: the women who bear *and* publish [the news] are a great host' (AMP). According to

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Dr. Gary Greig, this passage and Isaiah 40:9-10 both refer to God raising up an army of women evangelists in the last days, since both refer to the Lord appearing in glory to bring judgment on the earth and to restore His people in the land of Israel. The verb forms in both passages are in the feminine, and not the usual masculine form of the verbs in question.”⁷

God has something planned that we have never seen before, and the army He is raising up will walk in such power that *“kings and armies flee in haste.”* Even the housewives remaining at home will receive plunder from this war. Those of us who may not be able to engage in the frontline battle will still receive a reward. I believe that in the days ahead, as God not only calls, but also empowers us as warriors, we will be able to say, with Joan of Arc, “I was born for this.”

We must not believe that this will occur through our own power or capabilities. Joan of Arc was often seen praying and weeping before God, asking for His help to accomplish that which she was called to do. In the same way, we will be constantly dependent upon God’s power and not our own. It may very well be in our moments of greatest anguish that the power of God will be unleashed from within us.

Even the great apostle Paul struggled with this issue of human weakness. He had a thorn in his side, and it taunted him and caused him great pain. On three different occasions he asked the Lord to remove it, but the answer he received was this: *“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness”* (2 Corinthians

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12:9). You may feel that there are areas in your life that cause you great grief, and are a source of weakness, yet these need not hinder you in your calling as a warrior. Surrendered to the Lord, these may be the very weapons which will be used to crush the head of the enemy.

The whole concept of a woman warrior may be totally foreign to you, as it is to many. *Warrior* is not the stereotypical description we usually hear regarding the female gender. Instead, we are often associated with characteristics such as gentleness, compassion, nurturing, and love. Nevertheless, God is challenging us to discover that there is so much more to us, as His girls. We are made in His image, and one of the names He calls Himself is Lord of Hosts, which means that He's the leader of a great army. Our God is a warrior and, as His daughters, so are we.

Moses and Miriam described God in this way:

*"The LORD is a warrior;
the LORD is his name."*

Exodus 15:3

This was after God had defeated the Egyptian army, one of the most powerful armies of the time. And the Old Testament is filled with other examples of God leading His people into battle against their enemies so that they could receive their proper inheritance. Because He was a warrior, so were they.

The description the Bible gives of the way in which Jesus will return to this earth should leave no doubt in our minds that we follow a fierce and determined warrior God:

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I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.

Revelation 19:11-15

This is a far cry from the vulnerable baby Jesus came as, when He first made His appearance on earth. I believe God is wanting us to identify with Him, not only as a lamb, but also as a lion, to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given.

The clearest example we have in Scripture of a warrior woman is Deborah. She was a judge over the Israelites and also a prophetess, and yet she was a woman just like us. She had feelings, needs, and fears, but most of all she had a destiny. She arose in Israel as a mother at a time when few were willing or had the strength to fight. Understanding the times, she saw the needs among God's people and arose to face them—not in her own strength, but in the power of her God.

When we read Deborah's song, sung after a great victory over enemy troops, we are given an insight into the attitudes of her heart. This woman did not glory in her

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own successes but revealed an attitude of honor and support for the princes of God, stating:

*“My heart is with Israel’s princes,
with the willing volunteers among the people.”*

Judges 5:9

In her song, Deborah addressed the need for action in regard to the situation that existed at that time. Her position as a warrior was simply a response to that need. In the very same way, this spirit of willingness and desire for the good of God’s people will permeate the warrior women who will now begin to arise.

We will not rise up in order to seek glory for ourselves or to denounce the role of men in God’s army. Instead, we will take our place beside His princes, so that together with them we can fight against the enemies of our God and see victory.

We were never meant to fight alone. The name *Barak* (the commander of Israel’s army in Deborah’s time) and also the name of Deborah’s husband (*Lappidoth*) meant “light” or “the shining one.” I believe that as Deborah arose to go into battle, the men around her also shone, as they were meant to.

In the very beginning of time, God called Adam and Eve because together they represented His perfect plan and reflected His image. Man is not complete without the woman, and woman is not complete without the man. In the last-day battle which is coming, we will rise as a

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united force, men and women together, working in perfect unity.

Deborah was a prophetess, meaning that she heard from God and was then able to communicate His heart and wisdom to His people. The Bible states that the people of Israel came to Deborah to have their disputes settled, for God had endowed her with wisdom, discernment, and the ability to resolve conflict. She thus worked to bring peace and justice among her own people, but she was also not afraid to go out to war against God's enemies.

In the recorded history of the judges, known by that very name, it seems apparent that Deborah had never planned to go out to the battle herself. She had simply given the word of the Lord to Barak, the commander of the army, but Barak asked her to accompany him and his troops to war, as he did not want to fight alone.

It has been said by some that Barak was worn out from years of fighting, and that may or may not have been the case, but whatever the reason, he did invite Deborah to go along, and it proved to be a wise move on his part. How many men in the church today have faithfully stood in their positions, fighting for the welfare of the children of God, and are now battle-weary as a result? In fact, many are exhausted, disillusioned, and on the verge of burnout. They have been faithful and deserve honor, but when only a small portion of the body turns out to fight, is it any wonder that those who do the fighting are weary beyond words?

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God Himself has said that it is not good for man to be alone:

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Genesis 2:18

The Hebrew word for *helper* in this passage is the same one used when God was to break in and save His people, so our help is real. It is time for warrior women to be released among the armies of God, to strengthen, complement, and encourage our men, so that together we can lead the church of the living God to victory. Just as Deborah was needed in her time, I believe some Deborahs are needed today.

Deborah is described in Scripture not only as a judge and a warrior, but also as a mother in Israel. I believe that these particular qualities are inherent in all women—an ability to discern, a yearning to nurture and bring justice, and a fierce resolution to defend family or other areas of authority or responsibility. Deborah was the lioness of the kingdom, and we need some more lionesses today.

Throughout recorded history, going forth to war and fighting has been considered primarily a man's task, but there have been times (in the absence of qualified men or when a woman's village or family was in imminent danger) when women have taken up the fight. I feel confident that all of us who are mothers will agree: When it comes to our children, no matter what our personal-

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ity or fears, if they are being attacked in any way, an unrelenting urge to protect them and remove the threat instinctively surfaces in us. For those who don't yet have children, it may be that when an area of your work, marriage, friendships, or calling is being threatened, a fighting spirit suddenly arises within you. God, our Creator, has placed that instinct within each of us.

The name *Deborah* actually means "honeybee." In a real hive of honeybees, there is a queen, and the rest are drones or workers. Interestingly enough, it is only the females who have stingers, and when the hive is attacked or is in danger from any source, these female bees swarm and go on the offensive. Most of the time their tasks are much less dramatic: looking after the young, keeping the hive clean, and, when they are older, flying around looking for the pollen needed to make honey. But when they need to be warriors, instinct takes over.

Without the honeybee, the earth around us would be desolate and bereft of fruit, vegetables, and flowers. It may be one of the smallest among God's creatures, but the function and purpose of the honeybee is vitally intertwined with the survival of mankind. Interestingly, as this book goes to press, there is a worldwide crisis concerning the honeybee, as whole swarms have been mysteriously dying off.

It was in 2005 that beekeepers in the United States started reporting a drastic reduction in their bee numbers, and in 2006, whole colonies started dying off, a phenomenon that became known as colony collapse disorder. There are numerous theories as to the causes

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of it, such as change in climate, disease, or the use of chemicals, but no one really knows for sure why it is happening. I believe this is a prophetic sign for us.

Never before has there been such a worldwide focus on and understanding of the importance of the honeybee. In this hour, the world is desperately crying out for the honeybee to arise as never before. Without the bee in its proper function, humans will grow weak, lacking the plants needed to nourish them, and the earth will be bereft of beauty and variety. The balance of earth's ecosystem is reliant upon this tiny creature thriving. Statistics from the US Department of Agriculture show that one third of the human diet comes both directly and indirectly from insect-pollinated plants, and honeybees account for eighty percent of this pollination.

I believe the very same thing is true in the church of God. At present, we are weakened and do not fully represent His power and glory as we were destined to do. The spirit of Deborah, the bee, must be released today to bring about pollination in the body of Christ and allow for the proper fruits, vegetables, and flowers to be grown for our nourishment and pleasure. I believe that Deborah lived in a prophetic anointing, the same prophetic anointing God wants to pour out over His girls in this hour.

There have been many thousands of women who have fought for the Lord throughout the years, and there is a baton ready to be passed on in this final part of the relay race of the ages. Are we willing to take up the torch and run with the anointing, in the fear of our God?

This is not about us and how strong and gifted we

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are; it is about God's timing, His desires, and His plans. Our part in this is to be willing to let Him transform and use us. It's not about personality or how brave or bold we may feel. If you were to meet me, you would probably be surprised. I'm not so scary, not so fierce, not really the warring type at all. I actually don't like conflict very much and prefer to do whatever is necessary to keep the peace.

In fact, I've always been pretty shy, and for a large part of my life, I was intensely bound up in fear. You name it and I've been afraid of it—especially people. Fear of man bound me so tightly that it has been a violent, bloody, and painful battle to get free from it. In some areas, I am still fighting. I have really felt like Gideon at times. I've asked the Lord, "How can You use *me*, so weak and afraid?" But God has been supernaturally moving in my life, transforming me and unveiling the hidden warrior within. Obedience is the key. If God says go, we go. I'm not much in myself, but in my God I am a powerful warrior, and when it comes to fighting in prayer, yes, I am fierce.

The warrior God wants to awaken within us is nothing less than the Spirit of God Himself. When we know the Father, we know the Warrior. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives inside of us. Our God is the Almighty, the Alpha and Omega. When He roars, His enemies scatter. We will not fight or overcome the enemy in our own authority but, rather, in the name of Jesus.

Women of God, it's time for us to stop looking at ourselves—our weaknesses and our strengths. Both are rooted in pride and self. Maybe you, like me, have struggled with believing that God could ever use you. You feel so wound-

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ed, weak, and afraid that just getting through the day is more than you can handle at times. Or maybe you've fallen into the other ditch, where you've hidden yourself behind your own cleverness and capabilities. You control your surroundings in order to protect yourself, so much so that God cannot break in. You have learned to fight and survive, but always in your own strength. Precious woman of God, let go and let God. It has never been about us, and it never will be.

None of us have what it takes to follow God by ourselves; it is all a gift of grace. Jesus is the Beginning and End of our qualifications and abilities. We were all unqualified and weak children, desperately in need of a Savior. When we understand this, we can then embrace our new identity, that of a true princess of royal blood and an heir to the kingdom of God. In Him, we are powerful, bound by love, and called to a life of destiny and meaning. If we are to rise up and fight in this hour, we must throw off our shackles of inferiority (and also of superiority) and arise in the spirit of true humility, fighting under the command and in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe that the times we are living in are sober and serious, yet they are full of suspense and glory. We do not know the day or the hour that Jesus will return, but the times tell us that His return is drawing ever closer. The church of God is living on the threshold of something so fantastic, so dramatic, that it is, as yet, hard for us to fathom.

Daniel, Joel, and John were among those who were given a glimpse into the future, and, as they all foresaw, the sons and daughters of God are about to be released as never

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before, to walk in the glory and light of the Lord. In these last days, there will be many great battles, because the enemy knows his time is running short, and his final fury is being unleashed against the bride of Christ.

In times of war and battle, it is an army, and not civilians, who are called upon to fight. Therefore, God must raise up His church to be an army made up of His sons and daughters. Joel was given a vision of this army, so awesome and so unrelenting:

*Like dawn spreading across the mountains
a large and mighty army comes,
such as never was of old
nor ever will be in ages to come.
Before them fire devours,
behind them a flame blazes.
Before them the land is like the garden of Eden,
behind them, a desert waste—
nothing escapes them.
They have the appearance of horses;
they gallop along like cavalry.
With a noise like that of chariots
they leap over the mountaintops,
like a crackling fire consuming stubble,
like a mighty army drawn up for battle. Joel 2:2-5*

Women of God, we have a place in this army. Are we willing to surrender and take our place?

Warrior Women, Arise!