



GIRLS WITH SWORDS

HOW TO CARRY YOUR CROSS
LIKE A HERO



LISA BEVERE

FOREWORD BY JOHN BEVERE

“Women, take up your swords! Girls with Swords will give you new strength as you prepare to fight your battles armed with the truth of God.”

—PASTOR CRAIG AND AMY GROESCHEL, LifeChurch.tv

Praise for
Girls with Swords

“Women, take up your swords! This book will give you new strength as you prepare to fight your battles armed with the truth of God. Get ready to be challenged and inspired by *Girls with Swords*.”

—CRAIG and AMY GROESCHEL, pastors of LifeChurch.tv,
Edmond, OK

“Lisa Bevere is one of God’s most powerful voices for this time in our history. Her heart is for the King and his kingdom and to teach God’s daughters how to rise up and live out our destiny.”

—SHEILA WALSH, author of *God Loves Broken People*
and core speaker for Women of Faith

“Lisa Bevere has inspired women all over the globe with her passion to serve Christ and fight to expand his kingdom. In *Girls with Swords* you will be challenged to join the ranks of Christians who are already moving forward in their faith. Don’t be taken out of the fight! Stand firm and experience spiritual victory.”

—PASTOR STEVEN and HOLLY FURTICK, Elevation Church,
Charlotte, NC

“*Girls with Swords* is a prophetic declaration for our time, calling God’s daughters to skillfully wield the sword of his Word. Lisa Bevere has a God mandate to unveil our strength in bringing healing, righteousness, and restoration to our world. Read this book with fair warning: you are about to engage in a powerfully courageous life!”

—CHRISTINE CAINE, author of *Undaunted* and cofounder
of the A21 Campaign

“*Girls with Swords* is prophetic, biblical, instructive, insightful, and challenging! This is no sweet, girly pep talk; this is powerful stuff for both women and men. We’re excited about this book and the potential impact for the church around the globe.”

—JUDAH and CHELSEA SMITH, pastors of the City Church,
Kirkland, WA

“As you read *Girls with Swords*, you’ll be empowered to face your challenges with boldness and learn to live like a hero.”

—ROBERT and DEBBIE MORRIS, pastors of Gateway Church,
Dallas/Fort Worth, TX, and coauthors of *The Blessed Marriage*

“We are living at an amazing time in history; there is so much pain, suffering, and heartbreak on the planet today—and at the same time such a great opportunity to bring change and be a part of the solution. In her own unique style, Lisa Bevere encourages the King’s daughters to understand that we are part of an epic battle and that we need to be prepared. This is not the time to draw back! Read *Girls with Swords* and join the growing company of women who are rising strong on the earth!”

—HOLLY WAGNER, founder of GodChicks
and author of *WarriorChicks*

“In *Girls with Swords*, Lisa Bevere once again draws out the hero within and encourages us to become all God has created us to be. Her zeal to see the church united and wielding the Word of God is inspiring and alive. No matter where you are in life, this message will empower you to ‘re-forged your sword’ and bravely face daily battles with courage and truth.”

—STOVALL and KERRI WEEMS, pastors of Celebration Church,
Jacksonville, FL

“Our friend Lisa Bevere is an amazing woman, an articulate author, and a powerful advocate for women around the world. Lisa truly understands that women face extraordinary challenges in today’s world, but, more importantly, she understands that women hold a special place in God’s plan. In *Girls with Swords*, Lisa helps women recognize that God has armed them with his Word and made them to be heroes and that through wisdom, prayer, and the power of Jesus Christ, they can overcome this dangerous world and triumph over every injustice. This is an important book that every woman, regardless of age, nationality, or faith, should read.”

—JOEL and VICTORIA OSTEEN, pastors of Lakewood Church,
Houston, TX

“‘God’s word is a God sword.’ I love this analogy. Through forging scintillating concepts and analogies in this book, Lisa has managed to excel at spreading enthusiasm for having ‘an intuitive awareness of our opponent’s next move.’”

—DR. CAROLINE LEAF, cognitive neuroscientist and
communication pathologist and author of *Who Switched
Off My Brain?*

“With a passionate heart and a sharp mind, Lisa Bevere invites each of us to take up a sword of faith and live courageously in the kingdom of God. Each page of this great new book bears witness to Lisa’s powerful teaching ministry and reminds us that the battle ultimately belongs to the Lord.”

—BETH and MATT REDMAN, author and worship leader,
United Kingdom

“*Girls with Swords* is a brilliant display of Lisa Bevere’s God-given ability to encourage and equip women to be restored, retooled, and repositioned

to take their place in this epic battle and defeat the enemy who has intentionally targeted women throughout history.”

—CHRIS and JOY HILL, pastors of the Potter’s House,
Denver, CO

“We have been privileged to feature Lisa Bevere frequently on our *LIFE Today* telecast. Through years of international ministry—including Asia, where she joined with our missions team to help women victimized by human trafficking—she has become well aware of the battles that can only be won with the sword of God’s Word. Her message will help inspire and prepare women, in particular, for spiritual warfare.”

—JAMES and BETTY ROBISON, LIFE Outreach International

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LISA BEVERE

FOREWORD BY JOHN BEVERE



WATERBROOK
PRESS

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GIRLS WITH SWORDS

PUBLISHED BY WATERBROOK PRESS

12265 Oracle Boulevard, Suite 200

Colorado Springs, Colorado 80921

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The “Fencing Facts” are taken from Nick Evangelista, *The Inner Game of Fencing: Excellence in Form, Technique, Strategy, and Spirit* (Lincolnwood, IL: Masters Press, 2000).

Trade Paperback ISBN: 978-0-307-45782-0

Hardcover ISBN 978-0-307-45781-3

eBook ISBN 978-0-307-45783-7

Copyright © 2013 by Lisa Bevere

Sword illustrations by Allan Nygren

Cover design by Kristopher K. Orr; photography by Mike Heath/Magnus Creative

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Published in the United States by WaterBrook Multnomah, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Random House LLC, New York, a Penguin Random House Company.

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The Library of Congress cataloged the hardcover edition as follows:

Bevere, Lisa.

Girls with swords : how to carry your cross like a hero / Lisa Bevere. — First Edition.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-307-45781-3 — ISBN 978-0-307-45783-7 (electronic)

1. Christian women—Religious life. 2. Spiritual warfare. I. Title.

BV4527.B4943 2013

248.8'43—dc23

2012044356

Printed in the United States of America

2014—First Trade Paperback Edition

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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*To all my sword sisters who are ready to raise their voices
and brandish their crosses.*

*You are the daughters of a valiant, virtuous Warrior
whose eternal, creative word in your mouth
is a living, invincible sword in your hand.
You have been entrusted with a weapon without rival
in a time like no other.
Wield it with skillful finesse, gracious insight,
and in triumphant love, and strike sure.*

“From now on people are my swords.”

—Zechariah 9:13 (MSG)

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FOREWORD

It's one thing to own a sword; it's quite another thing to know how to use it.

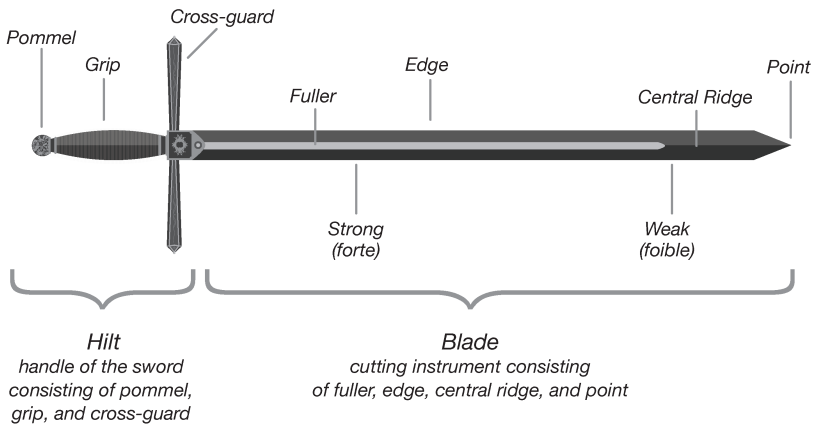
Every child of God has been entrusted with a sword—the sword of the Spirit. We're warriors commissioned to wield the most powerful weapon in the universe. Our Lord and role model, Jesus Christ, is the Sword of the Spirit made flesh. Two millennia ago he wielded this sword and changed the world. With this same sword he will one day subdue the nations. But for now he charges each of us: “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21, NKJV).

There is a generation of daughters (and sons) rising up to show the magnificent power of our King. These warriors will bring change to their world by skillfully wielding the sword they've been entrusted with. God has given my wife, Lisa, a powerful message that will train the daughters (and sons) of God to use what they already possess to bring change to their sphere of influence.

I've had the privilege of being married to this great woman of God for more than thirty years. I've witnessed her transformation from a scared, timid church attendee who hid from confrontation to a valiant and splendid warrior-daughter of our King. It's a real privilege to know and work with such a lady. I learn so much from what God teaches her.

I know that this book will train you to use what you already possess. Don't be someone who merely owns a sword. Be a skillful warrior who brings change to your world.

—John Bevere, best-selling author and speaker



Fencing Terms

Croisé: A parry and riposte made in a single flowing motion. It blocks an attack, diverts it with leverage, and hits without ever letting go of the blade.

En garde: A defensive attitude but also an offensive one. It is, in effect, a position of readiness.

Feint: A bluff that attempts to elicit a response from your opponent by causing him to think you are going to attack when you are not.

Lunge: An offensive movement designed to deliver a hit.

Parry: A defensive deflection of your opponent's blade.

Riposte: A counterattack following a successful parry.

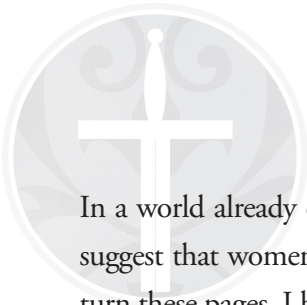
PART ONE

CH O S E N

You Are a Target

Christianity is a battle, not a dream.

—Wendell Phillips



In a world already overrun by violence, you may wonder why I would suggest that women of all ages take up arms and join the fight. As you turn these pages, I hope you will discover the many reasons why there is no neutral territory. We do not live *by* the violence of a sword, but the time has come to live *by* the power of one.

The first reason you need a sword is that, whether you realize it or not, you are part of an epic battle, and God does not want his daughters unarmed or caught unaware.

The poignant need for addressing these issues head-on was brought home in an unexpected way. It was early June in the summer of 2010, and I had just returned home from traveling and speaking in five different countries in the short span of four weeks. Mind you, these were not nations clustered together, so traveling meant crossing date lines, exchanging night for day, and bouncing between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

Overcome by a persistent strain of jet lag, I was wandering a bit dazed through my second evening home when I realized I was alone with my youngest son, Arden. As I approached him, he patted the sofa and

invited me to join him in watching a movie. Thrilled to have a chance to perhaps cuddle with my son, I settled myself in as close as possible and asked, “What are we watching?”

“*The Terminator*,” he answered.

Okay, before you react, stay with me. I am not endorsing the movie, nor am I suggesting that you watch it. I saw an edited TV version, and even then it was eighties awful! But amid the ridiculous hair, disjointed music, and bad acting, I found something valuable I want to share here, because it perfectly sets up the *why* behind the journey of this book.

In case you’re not familiar with *The Terminator*, allow me to paint a vastly shortened version of the movie for you. It is the story of Sarah Connor, a moped-riding waitress who is living a boring, mundane life in the hope that one day love will find her. Every twenty-four hours plays out pretty much the same. By day she serves pie and coffee; by night she hopes that one of her blind dates will turn into Prince Charming. By day she works, and by night she waits.

This predictable 1980s pattern is radically interrupted when a robotic assassin from her future shows up. Our hero, Sarah, first learns she might be at risk when she is taking a break at work and realizes a number of women who share her first and last name have turned up dead.

Apparently the terminator, a.k.a. Arnold Schwarzenegger—actor, former governor of California, and ex-husband of Maria Shriver—has time traveled, and anyone bearing the name Sarah Connor is his target. There seems to be no way this cyborg assassin can possibly fail. Not only does he possess the strength and processing capabilities of a robot, but he also is loaded down with the latest in automatic weapons. In addition to all this technology, he has in his possession what would have been the height of eighties data, a sheet torn from the white pages, which supplies him with the phone numbers and addresses of all the Sarah Connors who reside in his target area. As the futuristic termina-

tor systematically works his way down the list of Sarahs, our heroine becomes a bit concerned.

After work she returns to the apartment she shares with a friend only to learn via an answering machine that yet another blind date has canceled, so Sarah heads out to a club. That way, if the threat is real, she will be able to hide in a crowd. It isn't long until the terminator is on her trail, and after a brief visit to her apartment, Arnold shows up at the club with guns blazing and begins wreaking mayhem. Chaos, bloodshed, and screaming displace bad dance moves as everyone scrambles to escape. But wait, there is yet another player in this dark drama.

You see, at the same time that her assassin from the future shows up, her protector from the future makes his presence known while extending to Sarah this compelling invitation: "Come with me if you want to live."

With the choice so obvious, it doesn't take Sarah long to decide: she wants to live. Sarah runs from the bar and jumps in a car with a total stranger, and the two of them try to escape. But the terminator assassin is relentless. A high-speed chase ensues. Bullets shatter the car windows and frazzle Sarah's nerves. No matter where they go or what they do, they just can't seem to shake her futuristic assailant.

This mild-mannered waitress and wannabe girlfriend has no idea why this epic battle rages around her. As bullets fly and cars crash, her protector begins to tell her *who she is*. He explains that in the future she is a legend and that an entire army wages war equipped with the foresight and strategies she recorded and passed on to her son. In the future she is part of a heroic fight against the enemy of all humanity.

Sarah just can't buy that she is a player in this absurd story and is confident there has been a case of mistaken identity. There is no reason for her to be viewed as a threat in the present or the future! In an attempt to bring clarity and some sanity, Sarah counters the claim of her protector from the future. She isn't a hero...she is just a waitress! She doesn't even

have a boyfriend, so certainly there's no son! This nightmare is all a grave mistake; she's been confused with someone else!

But her guardian insists that she is, in fact, Sarah Connor the hero and that his mission is to equip and protect her. Understandably overwhelmed and suddenly undone, Sarah yells out, "I didn't do anything!"

To which her guardian counters, "No, but you will!"

At that moment, sitting with my son on the couch, I was arrested. This line from decades past, "No, but you will!" crashed into my present with the realization that our enemy often knows who we are before we discover who we are. And it is high time we each realize the two things Sarah learned that night. Lovely One,

1. You are a target.
2. You might be a hero.

I say *might be* because the choice is ultimately yours.

A Target

First let's address the idea of you as a target.

If you are a Christian, you are the target of Satan, the enemy of our souls and the Prince of Darkness. There's no choice about this standing. There is a very real, highly structured force of darkness in this earth that wrestles against all who represent God's light and life.

So it is important you know what it means to be a target.

Words that express the meaning of *target* in this context include *aim*, *goal*, *objective*, *focus*, *end*, and *intention*.

Satan has made it his aim to distract you from *who you really are* and *what the purpose of your life truly is*. It is his focused objective to lure you off the path of strength, life, and authority and onto a course of intentional destruction.

To move forward with this idea of being a hero, I need you to grasp

a new and perhaps somewhat foreign perspective, one that is far more serious than a story line from a movie. For truly a dark and murderous enemy has already realized who you are. He knows your potential and is systematically trying to undermine your future. I believe that *the attacks on your life have much more to do with who you might be in the future than who you have been in the past.*

You see, like the assassin from the future in *The Terminator*, the enemy has your name. Don't let this frighten you. Take a deep breath and realize you are alive with purpose. Don't get paranoid or take this profiling personally, because it is not. The attack is against one and all. For the enemy of our souls, it is not personal; it is just good business.

No one launches a large-scale, systematic assault against something that's not considered a threat. Your name is the same as mine: Christian. This designation is more than an assignment to a religious group; it means "anointed one." You are a beloved, royal daughter of the Most High God. The enemy's approach may look different with each of us, but he will do all that is within his power to hinder or bend your growth to his purposes and distract you from your heavenly destiny. There are no isolated and insulated daughters who can completely escape his attacks. And don't imagine that your current age or your financial or marital status exempts you.

This is not about you. This is not about me. And to be quite honest, it is not even our battle. This battle belongs to the Lord. We are his weapons of light in a world of darkness.

The whole course of human history may depend on a change of heart in one solitary and even humble individual... For it is in the solitary mind and soul of the individual that the battle between good and evil is waged and ultimately won or lost.

—M. SCOTT PECK

Women as Warriors

The fact that you are a female makes you a more specific target and the worthy recipient of Satan's enmity.

I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring. (Genesis 3:15)

Enmity is deep-rooted hatred and irreconcilable hostility. This describes a breach so profound that with each passing generation, Satan's hostility and hatred deepen as he runs out of time and the urgency increases. Never has his attack against women and children been more wicked, obvious, and widespread.

Undeniable evidence of this is found in the conservative estimate that fifty million women are presently missing from the earth. What do I mean by *missing*? These daughters are gone. Never to be found.

The major reason for their disappearance is the targeted practice of gendercide. Genocide is slaughter of a racial, national, political, or cultural group; gendercide is slaughter based on gender. In her recent book *Unnatural Selection*, author Mara Hvistendahl cites statistics that show this outrage: maybe more than 160 million baby girls in Asia alone never drew breath because their birth was preempted by abortion.¹

In countries such as China, India, and Pakistan, and the continent of Africa, being a daughter puts your life in danger. It could mean you will be abused, sold, neglected, or the victim of an honor killing.

Lovely One, do not think you are safe just because you do not live in a developing nation. Numbers don't lie. Your birth location just means you will be targeted in a different way. The enemy assassin will come at you from another angle, and I believe he is already working hard to distract you so you will never give birth to God's plan for your life.

I do not share these things to frighten you. I want you to know the weight of your moment in history. As a daughter of this age, you are a target. The hero factor is your choice. If you fail to see this for what it is, you will take these attacks against your gender or faith personally and therefore respond on a personal level. But this is way bigger than any one of us. There is no way you can or should fight this battle on your own. This conflict will require heavenly strategy and support. Even though it begins with our individual response, that alone will never be enough. We have to be individually armed with the eternal and trained to work in the company of others.

As horrible as the numbers are, they only hint of a greater darkness. It is time you lift your eyes and lend your voice to what heaven would want to speak into this void. The story line is set. On one side a relentlessly cruel enemy is perpetually bent on your destruction, and on the other side a magnificent prince of unfailing love is equally determined that you realize all he created you to be. Jesus, our Prince of Heaven, will always love you. His love is never ending and more unrelenting than the enmity of your assassin. The role you choose to play in this battle is what is in question. Will you be an unarmed civilian, victim, prisoner of war, or hero?

As you form your decision, please know this: there is no safe middle ground. It is just a matter of time before you must join one side or the other. It is always better to predetermine your position with decisive intention rather than have it chosen for you by passive default. Remember, God *chose you before he even created the earth.*

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when

you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:11–14)

From what I understand, by the end of the story it all becomes pretty simple. There is hot or cold, strong or weak, engaged or disengaged, soldier or traitor, free or captive, and hero or victim.

I know these choices are very black and white, for they are meant to echo the urgency of our current position as women. I am not implying that you are under an immediate threat of gendercide. But I am underscoring the desperate need for our constructive, proactive response. This is not the time for you to remain unaware and unarmed, and thus the purpose for this book.

As I was writing, I reviewed C. S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters*, which is fictional correspondence between a junior demon and his overseer as they try to ensnare a young man. The brilliance behind this book is that it grants a window into the enemy's perspective and how he twists and perverts truth to get us to turn on God.

In one section the demons are gloating about their ability to distort the women's role: "All is summed up in the prayer which a young female human is said to have uttered recently: 'Oh God, make me a normal twentieth-century girl!' Thanks to our labours, this will mean increasingly, 'Make me a minx, a moron, and a parasite.'" ²²

I want to weep at the prophetic irony of this 1942 publication, for it truly captures the posture of far too many of the daughters of our time. As I read this quote, four words stood out: "normal," "minx," "moron," and "parasite."

First, let's address the issue of normal. When you were born again, you left normal behind. This doesn't mean you became weird or abnor-

mal; it just means you were stripped of what is average and common when you were covered in his righteousness. You may live in this earthly time period, but you are ultimately a daughter of eternity.

Next, there is the term *minx*, a largely unfamiliar term in our day that means a seductress or wanton woman. Some synonyms for *minx* are *tramp*, *whore*, *bimbo*, and *slut*. Sadly, these very words are woven into our culture's twenty-first-century songs.

The term *moron* was first introduced in the early nineteen hundreds to describe someone with the IQ of an eight- to twelve-year-old. In the context of C. S. Lewis's quote, this would mean a generation of daughters who refuse to grow up and transition from the whims of a girl to the wisdom of a woman.

And, lastly, *parasite* describes a person who lives by the support and advantage of another without giving anything truly useful in return. This is the very antithesis of what a daughter of God should represent! We are to live in support of others and grant opportunity to the disadvantaged and not take advantage of others. But look at the covers of women's magazines that line the checkout areas at our grocery stores. Aging would appear to be a disease, while fleeting youth and blatant immaturity are celebrated. Sexual prowess trumps true intimacy, and we are encouraged to live in flagrant extravagance, grabbing all we can in the process. How far we have fallen.

Normal has not served us well, and it is obvious our enemy knows we were made for something more. Who will we allow to form our prayers? The pressure of our circumstances cannot shape our prayers. Our culture cannot be trusted to give us the right words. Our prayers must be structured by heaven. The Creator of heaven and earth is the architect and author of our lives. It is time for the daughters of this twenty-first century to echo heaven's words. Perhaps the longing within you is larger than you know how to put into words and thus the very reason you need a sword.

I believe that in one way or another you long to be an extraordinary, heroic daughter of the eternal Most High God who behaves virtuously, matures brilliantly, and lives with the intent of enhancing the lives of others.

One of the purposes of this book is to help you construct the type of bold, faith-filled prayers (swords) that will specifically address your moment in history.

Old Tactics

Now is not the time to draw back in fear. It is a time when we must rise up and flourish in love. When I became a Christian, I learned that God

Now is not the time to draw back in fear. It is a time when we must rise up and flourish in love.

actually had a plan for my life. It wasn't merely that I had a new destination in the afterlife. I learned my life mattered now. I had been purchased at great expense, and my life was no longer my own to squander. God wanted me to become all he had created me to be.

Becoming who God created you to be is both your best offense and your best defense against the enemy's strategy. He obviously didn't stop you from drawing breath. It is now time to keep him from stifling the spiritual seed God planted inside you. When the enemy oppresses, it is always because he fears what we might become. Remember, oppressors are shrewd, but more often than not they are also afraid. On some level they fear the very ones they seek to oppress. They fear your strength will put them at risk.

“Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and

escape from the land.” Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. *But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel.* (Exodus 1:10–12, emphasis added)

When Pharaoh’s oppressive tactics failed to diminish the strength of the Israelites, he turned to more decisive measures: genocide and infanticide. So these are not new tactics of the enemy; they have a cruel and ancient history. The Bible records two accounts of infant genocide. The first is found in the book of Exodus when the king of Egypt issued this decree to the Hebrew midwives:

When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live. (1:16)

It is important to note that Pharaoh ordered the death of infant males right before the time of Moses’s birth. Was there a sense that the time had come for the birth of a hero? Did the enemy fear a potential uprising? Pharaoh adopted a sweeping, systematic approach to eliminate the chance of both. However, history shows how this large-scale assault failed to stop the birth of the male child Moses. In a twist of fate, he was actually raised in the safety of Pharaoh’s house as a son of Egypt.

After Moses discovered who he was and what he was created to do, God used a wilderness to remake him into the deliverer who led the Israelites to freedom following three hundred years of Egyptian bondage. Although Pharaoh had murdered a generation of sons (an army),

God counteracted by raising up a leader to deliver his people and fiercely fighting on their behalf.

The next time in Scripture that the enemy employed infant male gendercide was at the time of Jesus's birth. When the wise men did not report back to Herod, he ordered that all the Hebrew boys age two and under be killed.

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

“A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be comforted, *because they are no more.*”
(Matthew 2:16–18, emphasis added)

What haunting words...*because they are no more.* In these two biblical accounts, enraged earthly kings blatantly slaughtered the infant sons they feared carried the potential of destiny. I believe we are again on the threshold of a release from oppression and captivity, but this time it is the girls, not the boys, who are targeted in his attack against all.

Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.
(Revelation 12:17)

Notice the similarities in the motivations of the frightened earthly kings and Satan, the frightened dragon. Both are afraid of being disempowered, both are furious, and both war against a people and their offspring.

All who have not fallen victim still have a chance to choose the path of a hero. The goal of this book is to see you armed and empowered, because as we grow in strength, our God Most High rises up against the enemy.



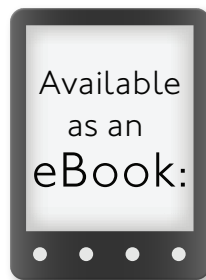
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