

Worship Warriors Arise: Let Judah Lead!

Chuck Pierce

From the Gregorian chants of the fourth century to Wesley's hymns of the eighteenth century, there have been many variations of worship. In the twentieth century alone we spanned a full spectrum from George Beverly Shea's gospel tunes to the Vineyard's deep soaking in the presence of God to Mike Bickle's intensive 24-hour-a-day model at his International House of Prayer in Kansas City, Missouri.

As we have turned the corner into the new millennium, we are seeing another momentous shift in worship, which may be related to God's redemptive word in our time and which is pivotal in the spiritual battle both on earth and in the heavenlies. We are advancing to an intimate, strategic, warring worship.

When we hear the word "worship" many of us think of singing three or four hymns in a Sunday-morning church service. Some picture quiet times or Bible studies, a few visualize prayer. The word "warrior," on the other hand, easily evokes images of a person in the heat of combat. Perhaps we imagine Russell Crowe in the movie *Gladiator* or envision Army troops on the front lines in Afghanistan. Maybe we think of a person who battles in the loosely defined "wars" against social nemeses such as poverty, prejudice and injustice. Perhaps we recall C. Peter Wagner's call to become strategic prayer warriors. While the words "worship" and "war" are familiar, they nonetheless produce extreme and opposing emotions - seldom do we see the two work in tandem. As servants of God, we know we are to worship Him. We also know that we fight in a spiritual battle. But a close look at the Bible reveals much about God's plan for worship in war.

Lucifer's Plot

Worship is at the center of this great spiritual war. It has always been over worship, fought with worship and will be won through worship. Lucifer (also known as the devil or Satan) picked a fight with God. The Bible does not make clear exactly when this happened, but it certainly occurred before Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit and, tempted by the promise to be like God, introduced sin to the world. We know from Ezekiel 28:12-19 that in that time cherubs or angels, of which Lucifer was one, had access to the holy mountain or throne room of heaven where God is seated. Some theologians think that Lucifer actually led the angels as they worshiped the Creator. If this is true, Lucifer, whose heart was "lifted up because of his beauty," apparently decided that he no longer wanted to be a worshiper; instead, he wanted to be worshiped. His wisdom was corrupted because of his brightness. Full of pride, he was cast down, and he convinced many angels to join him in rebellion against God. Thus, the worship wars were on.

Worship and the Warrior

We usually render worship in adoration toward God and associate it with good, uplifting, even ecstatic feelings. Worship is often focused upward and can embody the qualities of holiness, reverence and awe. We see ourselves as givers and God as the recipient. Warring, on the other hand, involves taking a stand, overcoming a threat, invading territory or conquering an enemy. In war, we often view ourselves as defenders against a dangerous force or sustainers of righteousness and truth. This is true in spiritual as well as physical conflicts. In the typical scenario, worship has not been part of the battle plan; it has come only in the form of thanksgiving after a victory. In the physical or earthly realm, we tend to worship the human heroes of battle and add God as an afterthought. In spiritual conquests, the Almighty gets all of the praise, but we still see warfare and worship as two separate acts. God is calling us to bridge worship and warfare. When we read the Bible we find that God instructs us to ascend into the throne room in heaven, be clothed in His authority and descend in war. There is a sound of heaven that enables us to recognize, embrace and advance through this process. It moves us toward victory in accomplishing God's will on earth.

A Fresh Approach

God is calling us to be worship warriors! For many Christians, this is a new concept. We have come to understand how we can take authority over demons, territories and sin of all types, in the name of Jesus. We know how our prayers effect what happens not only on Earth, but also in the heavenlies. We have been good students of the principles of spiritual warfare. This is all good. But God is calling us to do more. In *The Future War of the Church*, my coauthor Rebecca Wagner Sytsema and I describe a coming battle. We show

how there will be a time of increased struggle and, ultimately, prophetic fulfillment. As we approach this future war, we need to be prepared. We must fully comprehend the place of worship. As we battle against the enemies of darkness, we need to grasp the authority God has given us. We must become worship warriors.

The Sound of Restoration and the Sound of the Throne Room

God is pursuing His people. The Spirit of the Lord is calling us to worship. God is releasing a sound from heaven that is being embraced by people all over the world. The call causes us to draw near to Him and to each other. The sound causes us to go to war. We must manifest on earth what God says in heaven. God's sound permeates from has always led the armies of God forth. I visualize it this way: God is on His throne, and Jesus is seated next to Him. Jesus is the door that we have into the Father's throne. The Word of God tells us in James 5 to submit ourselves to God, draw near to Him and then resist the devil. I believe that as we worship and submit ourselves to a holy God, we can come into intimate contact with Him. Even though we walk here on the earth in our worshipful submission, we ascend into heaven. As we individually seek God and ascend into the throne room, we can hear the sound in heaven in our spirit man on earth. God does not play favorites. Everyone can embrace this call to ascend and become a worship warrior. If we believe in Jesus, we are automatically enlisted in His army.

Let Judah Arise and Go First!

There is a great inheritance that He has for each one of us individually. He also has a corporate inheritance that He is calling the Body of Christ into that will affect each territory throughout the nations of the earth. The time is NOW to war for our inheritance. There are personal promises God wants to manifest. This is a time of the preparation and shifting of the mantle of authority for the next generation. How do we proceed?

Look at how Judges 1:1-2 relates: Now after the death of Joshua, it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, "Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?" And the LORD said, "Judah shall go up. Indeed, I have delivered the land into his hand." Judah was selected as the tribe of divine preeminence in Jacob's patriarchal blessing. Genesis 49:8-10 gives us more insight: "Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's children shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; and as a lion, who shall rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people."

Judah must go first. Praise must take its preeminence within our lives, churches, cities, states and nation. When Judah goes first, the scepter of authority is then in place for ultimate victory. This is a time that the Lion of Judah will roar louder than the lion that has sought to devour us! Judah means "praise Yahweh." In this season, a major shift is coming in the way we worship and acknowledge God corporately. The word "praise" originates from "value" and "price." "Yahweh" signifies the God of covenant. This is a time when God values our worship. Also, this is a time when we begin to value the covenant that He has allowed us to enter into with Him. What a price He paid to give us access to the throne room!

Our worship will take on great covenant significance in this time. Our worship will release great blessings into the earthly realm. The redeemed of the Lord will say so. The burning bush, "I AM," type of worship is coming into the midst of God's people. This is going to release a deliverance call across earth. Deliverers will rise up! Entire groups of people will begin to be delivered from the bondage and oppression that has kept them prostrate, and they will begin to stand before the Lord with great shouts of victory. This is a time of much confrontation. But when the confrontation of the enemy comes from intimate communion and worship, we are assured victory. This is a time when we must give Judah (our praise and worship) the freedom to experiment until we come into the sound that will bring victory into the earthly realm.

Worship Warriors Arise!

Worship warriors of every generation, young and old, connect and stand. This is the time to worship, enter boldly into the throne room, be clothed with favor and go to war. The sound is being released. Listen to it. Enter the battle. And release the harvest!

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