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Rise Up.....Rise Up

You may not know, but many women of Power have marched across the historical Ages.

Many thousands of years ago, in early human history, sometime after the Biblical human beginning, Eve out maneuvered Adam, and even in their joint downfall wherein Adam stood willingly and resolutely at Eve's side, only Eve was promised a male heir who would bring eventual Restoration, Salvation and Supremacy. Many of their descendants through Ham and Canaan developed matriarchal societies, some continuing to this very day.

About 1400 BC or so the Trojan war was indirectly initiated by a conflict among several powerful women vying for preeminence or preference among their patrons symbolized by what is called "The Judgement of Paris." The Trojan War had profound impact on the ancient Mediterranean World as the vanquished Trojan survivors migrated mostly to Italy, Crete and Palestine thereby spreading Greek and Hittite influence and culture around the Great Sea and also providing the early origins of the future Roman Empire. At the approximate time of the Trojan War a tribe of woman warriors, called the Amazons, arose on the north shores of the Black Sea, in modern Russia, that became famous in Legend and still the stuff of Hollywood movies; men were necessary for procreation and labor, but the women ruled. Since about 1500 BC, Egypt has occasionally been ruled or influenced by powerful women including Sobethafen, Hatshepsut, Nefertiti, and Nefertiri (several women named Nefertiri were in power alone or as wives of Rameses I and Ramses II just before and during the Hebrew Exodus). In Roman times, the Julian wives and mothers were famous for their political and economic influence particularly Livia, Augustus' wife. Pharaoh Cleopatra had enormous influence and power, not only in Egypt, but also around the Roman world through Julius Caesar and Marcus Anthony. The ancient Chinese (Chin) were said to have a woman ruler who ruled disguised as a man.

One of the early Hebrew kings was Deborah, called a Judge since her realm was regional rather than national (the first national Israeli King was Saul); Deborah was also an important general. Two books in the Biblical Old Testament are named for women, Esther and Ruth, and one book of the Biblical New Testament, Second John, is written to a woman, not identified, but thought to be Kyria. Esther is famous because of the Jewish Holiday Purim (late February to early March). Esther, a Jewess, arose out of the Persian harem about 480 BC by dint of her beauty and intellect to replace Amestris as primary Queen to Xerxes I. Esther had the political skill and power to depose the King's Prime Minister even though the Persians were at the same time carrying on a war with the Greek City States. Purim celebrates the Prime Minister's execution and the Jews deliverance, since he previously had ordered the massacre of all Jews

across the Empire on a certain date, which instead became this day of Jewish celebration and deliverance, as Xerxes and Esther, unable to countermand the order, provided armament and local police assistance to the Jews, thereby to successfully defend themselves. However, Esther later lost power as Amestris avenged herself together with her sons (this history is still debated) who either together or alone assassinated their father with Artaxerxes I, one of Amestris' and Xerxes' sons, then removing rivals to assume the Persian throne. Xerxes I was readily willing to promote other powerful women, as one of his admirals, also a general, in the Greek Wars was a woman, Artemisia.

Subsequent to the Roman Empire's prime, many powerful women have arisen across the globe. A Who's Who list would include Zenobia (3rd century Syria); St. Helena (Constantine's mother, 4th Century); Theodora (Empress of the Eastern Roman Empire in the 6th century); Olga of Kiev (Ukraine in the 9th century); Eleanor of Aquitaine (12th Century France and England); Borte Ujin (Mongolia and China in the 12th Century); St. Joan of Arc (ironically, the English, French and Catholic Church worked together for her execution; France in the 15th Century); Isabella (15th century Spain); English/Scotch Queens, the two Marys (16th century), the two Elizabeths (16th century and modern) and Victoria (19th century); Catherine the Great (Russia in the 18th century), Maria Theresa (Hapsburg Empress from Vienna in 18th century). There have been many powerful modern women rulers including but not exclusive to Empress Dowager Cixi, Indira Ghandi, Jian Quing, Margaret Thatcher, Winnie Mandela, Angela Merkle and Theresa May. We have previously written about the San Francisco Big Four and their powerful wives, but note that San Diego has recently been governed by three wealthy, intelligent and powerful woman led by Ray Kroc's widow, Joan. Marva Smalls, originally from Florence, has appeared on several Most Powerful Women in the US lists as has Lake City's Darla Moore.

The woman's suffrage movement began in the 1880s in the UK, New Zealand and Australia to later include Finland, Norway, Iceland, Sweden and then the US. The US Amendment to the Constitution ratified in 1920 gave women the right to vote across the United States. The US suffrage movement made the names Elizabeth Stanton, Susan B Anthony and Alice Paul famous and household words. The first female US House member was Jeannette Rankin (1917, Montana), the first female US Senator was Rebecca Latimer Felton (1922, Georgia) and the first female US Governor was Nellie Davis Tayloe Ross (1924, Wyoming). In the 2018 US elections, many women were elected to Congress. Ironically, the Great Lakes Iroquois Nations encouraged women voters ever since the 1600s and probably even before then (just no Europeans present to observe). By 1954 the United Nations passed a universal women's suffrage Resolution.

At the American Medical Association, where I assist in some internal politics, Nancy Dickey served as the first woman President in 1998 (going on to become the President of the Texas A and M Health Sciences Center), followed later as AMA President by Nancy Nielsen (New York), Ardis Hoven (Kentucky), Barbara McAneny (New Mexico), incoming Patrice Harris (Georgia), and next Susan Bailey (Texas.)

Nikki Haley of Indian Sikh origin was the first female governor of South Carolina (2011) elected with significant campaign assistance from Alaska's first female governor, Sarah Palin. Florence County Council was served recently by Jennie O'Bryan and Florence City Council by Octavia Williams-Blake, and later with other women members of the City Council. McCleod Regional Medical Center, probably one of, along with Francis Marion University, Florence's wealthiest and most powerful local institutions, both have several important women in leadership. Florence County Economic Development has been led by important women including Trisha Caulder and Jill Lewis. Several international businesses located in Florence have had women leadership, some locally, including Ruiz Foods, DuPont, GE, NanYa Fibers, Beneteau and ESAB.

Women have arisen, indeed.