

Soul Sisters 9 – The Women of Revelation



Jan Richardson, *Clothed with the Sun*

*But I have this against you: you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet and is teaching and beguiling my servants to practise fornication and to eat food sacrificed to idols. ²¹I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her fornication. **Revelation 2: 20-21***

*A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. ... And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was snatched away and taken to God and to his throne; **Revelation 12:1,5-6***

*And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication... **Revelation 17:3-4***

*Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure' - for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. **Revelation 19:6-8***

There are four female images portrayed in the apocalyptic Revelation of John: (1) the prophet Jezebel; (2) the great whore; (3) the woman in labour; and (4) the bride. Like everything in Revelation these are extreme metaphors – they are either Evil or Good; of God or not of God; part of the unfolding salvation or part of the destruction. There are 2 of each, the prophetess Jezebel and the great whore are bad because they refuse to obey the commands of a male deity or are unashamed of their sexuality. The mother and the bride are courageous, beautiful and pure, but they have little self-determination. Kim Vidal, in her book *Moon Under her Feet*, suggests that these extremes leave readers (especially women) feeling confused and divided. We need all four to speak to us in order to invite real women into the experience of a new creation proclaimed by John.

What can we learn from our Soul Sisters in Revelation? Perhaps to embrace the whole of our human experience, and to learn from the “shadowed” parts, rather than harshly rejecting them.

Questions for Reflection: What parts of your emotional life have you suppressed because society has told you they are bad or harmful? Your anger? Sexuality? Competitiveness? What could those emotions or attitudes teach you today?

Prayer: O Creator God and Mother Earth; you show us life in all its varieties and you called it good – the light and the dark, life and death, weakness and strength. Help us to keep our hearts and minds open to our own human nature, to accept and then to transform, for our own wellbeing, and the wellbeing of others, we pray. Amen