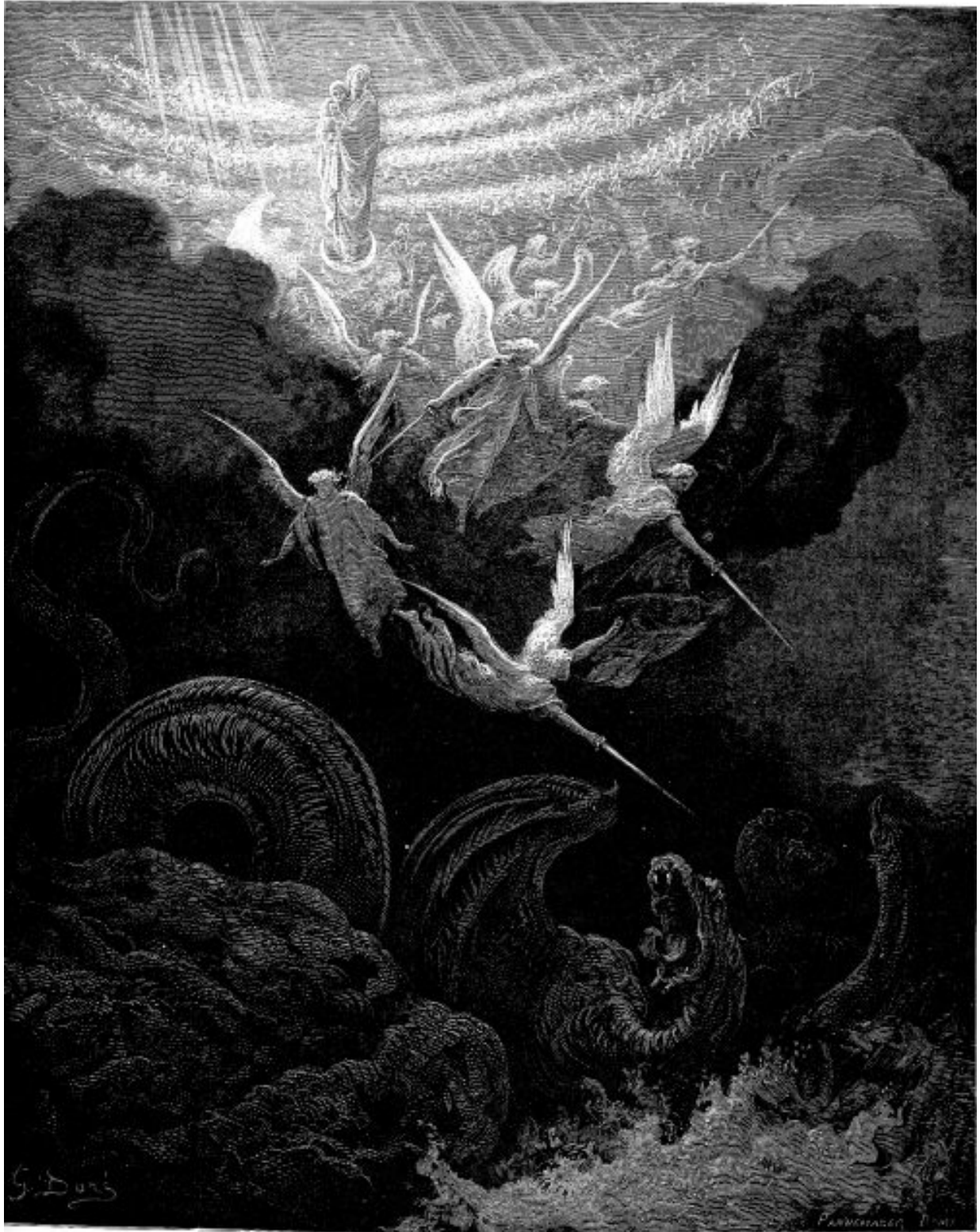


"The Crowned Virgin: A Vision of John" by *Gustave Doré*



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Rev 12:1-3 ... a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: ... and pained to be delivered. ...and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, ...

WONDER WOMAN

April - 1999

REVELATION: “... *and I saw a great wonder in heaven...*”

With age I am less amused by, and more amazed by female communication and interaction. For the most part the subject is discussed by males even otherwise serious males more with amusement than with insight. John sees a “*wonder in heaven, a woman...*” I am now convinced that this revelation is more for our instruction than for our amusement, particularly where the church is concerned. For all the references to a “*new man*” and the “*full measure of the stature of Christ,*” the church in her highest revelation comes to us more as a woman than a man.

If we are ever going to see the church from God's perspective, aside from “*fixing out eyes on Jesus,*” we need to take another look at women, and less for aesthetic reasons than for lessons in human interaction and intimacy. In short, for those who have eyes to see, women are a window on “... *a great wonder in heaven...*”

By now it has become clear that males are task oriented and females are relationship oriented. Clearly, “...*she has chosen the better part.*” But, the downside is, because she is so relational, she is more vulnerable to deep relational wounding, than her male counterpart. Because of their task orientation, and in order to “get on with it,” men get over wounded relationships easier than women do.

This is not to say that men don't get wounded in relationship to others, but their vulnerability is different. Their vulnerability has to do with the preeminence and vulnerability of the male ego. It seems to me that Women are much more confrontational in their communication. They will easily wade into subjects that men find very threatening. They will “get in your face” seemingly without giving it a second thought. Again, male conversation has more to do with tasks than relationships. From a male perspective, the content of female conversation seems unimportant, perhaps even illogical, and maybe so, but, I think from a female perspective, the content does not have to be important, or even logical, it is the interaction, the relationship, the intimacy, that matters.

With some time off recently, I had the opportunity to watch at length, and with much repetition, the coverage of the war in the Balkans. On the fourth day of

watching, former Congresswoman, Pat Schroeder was interviewed along with the ambassador from Macedonia, also a female. The interaction between the two was heart warming to watch, particularly the reaction, of the ambassador to the words of encouragement coming from Pat Schroeder. I should also say that, after watching days of dumb questions, inane observations, and contentious attitudes, on the part of the media, Schroeder's comments and insights were both profound and succinct.

This interview stood out in another very important way. Watching so intently for such a length of time also revealed something else. The females who were interviewed and interviewing were clearly trying to look like men in their style, and posturing. For me, it was very unbecoming. The ambassador in the Schroeder interview began in the same posture, but bathed in the encouragement of Schroeder, turned back into a woman. The transformation was wonderful to behold. I couldn't help but be struck by the thought that God is not after women who behave like men so much as men who behave like women, at least in their relationship to others.

In Revelation, Chapter 12, we read: *“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”*

During our time away, Carleen and I also stopped by a bookstore. The sign out front read, “Giant Book Sale.” While browsing inside, I came across a little illustrated book, a sort of commentary on the book of Revelation. It seemed to suggest that “the woman” has been removed from the scene while the dragon, through man, the wrong man, runs roughshod over everything for 1,260 days, whatever that means. It is clear, however, that this is not the reign of the right man, but the wrong man. In any case, by the time we get to the end of Chapter 13, there are two males and one female. Ultimately the “*man child*” will rule, but for the present, it appears that the crowns are on the beast, an unredeemed, and unredeeming man.

The church for now is more an auditorium for male ego gratification than it is a sanctuary in time and space for divine relationship. Or, in the words of Liza Doolittle, “Words, words, words, we get words all day through first from them now from you, is that all you blighters can do?” Seventeen hundred years of show business ought to be enough. When Jesus demonstrated what it was to be a servant, it wasn't by preaching at His disciples. Male preaching for the most part has preempted the time during which the church is gathered, and might otherwise be getting to know itself, and the Christ who is her source, and life. To be truly cleansing, “... *the washing of water by the word*” needs to be interactive, it needs to be conversational. “*What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has...*”

Males want to do things, their own things. Females want to be related, “*Your desire will be for your husband...*” To see the church from God's perspective, we must first see a woman. When we look at the church as it is in the present, about all we can see is a man, and he doesn't look much like Jesus, not even Jesus in the flesh. The Book of Revelation, not only reveals, Jesus, but in some sense, indicates what it's going to take to get the wrong man off the throne, “... *the removal of what can be shaken*”

Jay Ferris