

*He hath showed strength with his arm;  
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts  
He hath put down the mighty from their thrones,  
and hath exalted the humble and meek. Luke 1:51-52*

People of God, Christmas is time of comfort and joy. Amid the cold of winter when half spent was the night, there was born a Savior to show God's love aright. The Angels came to the lowly shepherds on fair Bethlehem's plains, and proclaimed that this night under the starry host of Heaven, was born to them in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. O ye heights of Heaven adore him, Angel hosts his praises sing; Powers, Dominions bow before Him, and extol our God and King.

With his star in the Heavens, the long awaited promise of the rise of the woman's conquering seed, is he who comes to bruise in us the serpents head. Fear not, then said that angel, "Let nothing you afright; This day is born a Savior of a pure Virgin bright. To free all those who trust in Him from Satan's power and might. O tidings of Comfort and Joy.

And so as we contemplate this babe who lies in a manger, we do understand that he will sit on David's throne. Not with worldly pomp and joy, He came on earth for sin to atone, and Satan to destroy.

This little babe, so few days old, is come to rifle Satan's fold. All hell doth at his presence quake, though he himself for cold doth shake; for in this weak unarmed wise, the gates of hell he will surprise.

People of God, our sacred hymns tell us that Christmas is about Christ coming into the world to crush the serpents head, to defeat the devil, and destroy the gates of hell. And so, we shall discuss at length this theme today, giving our attention to one particular passage in Mary's Magnificat that we might not consider all that Magnificent. But as we do consider it in greater light, we shall come to understand why the Son of God

appeared to us on Christmas day, and why in fact that is for us of great comfort and joy.

Mary was told by the Angel she would give birth to the Son of God. After this, Mary went to see her cousin Elizabeth, who was at that time 6 months pregnant with John the Baptist. When they met the baby John leapt in his mother's womb for joy at the presence of the unborn Savior in Mary's womb. And Elizabeth said, "*Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.*"

What was the promise that was spoken to Mary that she was awaiting the fulfillment of, and which by believing in made her blessed?

It was what Gabriel told her: that she would give birth to the Son of God, and that the Lord would give to him the throne of his father David and he would reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there would be no end.

So Mary believed that the promise would be fulfilled that her unborn Son would be the long awaited King of Israel.

It is therefore a reflection upon this truth that Mary then sings her Magnificat. She says in v. 51 and 52:

*He hath showed strength with his arm;  
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts  
He hath put down the mighty from their thrones,  
and hath exalted the humble and meek.*

When Mary says *He hath showed strength with his arm and He hath scattered the proud*, she is making a direct reference to Psalm 89:9-10 – "*You rule the raging of the sea, when its waves rise you still them. You crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm.*"

Who is Rahab? Rahab, the word literally means Proud. So Mary says, God *showed strength with his arm, he scattered the Proud, he scattered Rahab, with his mighty arm.*

In Scripture, Rahab is the sea serpent, or the dragon, as we know, and he stands for the infernal foe and enemy of God's people. Rahab the Proud Dragon is none other than the Devil. But Rahab the dragon also stands as the symbol of all Satanically inspired, earthly rebellious pagan cultures and rulers who also war against God's people.

And so we see that Egypt is frequently referred to as Rahab, and also Nebuchadnezzar and Babylonian culture is also referred to as a dragon.

Now interestingly, all throughout the ancient near east, and in many other ancient cultures of the world, there are ancient myths and stories about their god fighting and killing a sea serpent of the deep, the Chaos Monster, in order for that God to gain ascendancy to become the highest of the gods.

There is an Ugurtic Myth that the storm god Hadad-Baal killed Lotan the Sea serpent, which apparently has connections with the Biblical Leviathan. There was also the Babylonian god Marduk who defeated the sea serpent Tiamat. There was also the Mesopotamian story of the hero god Ninurta fighting the dragon Asag. There was even a form of this myth found among the Greeks, when Zeus slayed Typhon, and when Apollo fought Python. There is also the Norse myth when Thor slayed Jörmungandr - the Midgard serpent.

These were all mythic stories about the hero god slaying this primeval sea serpent and dragon, and through this cosmic battle and victory this is how the gods attained rule and order over the chaos monster of the deep, but it is also the key to how that god came to rule over the other gods and become the supreme God of the pantheon. *He hath scattered the Proud Rahab, with his mighty arm.*

This story of the slaying of the sea serpent and dragon was so widespread and adopted into so many ancient cultures that it would be weird if we did not encounter it in the Bible. Now, the story of the slaying of the sea serpent in order for God to become the God of gods is actually how Isaiah retells the story of the Exodus, it is told in terms of God defeating Rahab, the sea serpent. Isa. 51:9-10 says,

*“Awake, awake, put on strength, O Arm of the LORD;  
Awake as in the days of old, the generations of long ago.  
Was it not you who cut Rahab to pieces,  
who pierced the dragon?  
Was it not you who dried up the sea,  
the waters of the great deep,  
who made the depths of the sea a way  
for the redeemed to pass over?”*

So in the Exodus Yahweh destroys and overthrows all the Egyptian gods in the ten plagues and delivers his people out of Egypt through the Red Sea. But Isaiah specifically retells that event in terms of God slaying Rahab the ancient sea dragon. And in terms of how Israel and their neighbors knew that their God was the real God and the gods of the Nations were not, they have the Exodus story to appeal to, a real life story in actual recorded history when Yahweh slew Rahab, when he brought his people out of Egypt and killed Pharaoh and his army and destroyed the nation of Egypt.

Job 26:11-14 also makes reference to God slaying the serpent Rahab.

*The pillars of heaven tremble and are astounded at his rebuke.  
By his power he stilled the sea;  
by his understanding he shattered Rahab.  
By his wind the heavens were made fair;  
his hand pierced the fleeing serpent.  
Behold, these are but the outskirts of his ways,*

*and how small a whisper do we hear of him!  
But the thunder of his power who can understand?"*

Now one of the interesting things about Job is that it explicitly never mentions anything Israelitish in his whole book, and so the reference here to God slaying Rahab is probably more reflective on that ancient mythological belief of the primeval battle of God vs the great Sea Monster who is seen as defeating the dragon through his thunder bolts.

German Theologian Franz Delitzsch says in his commentary on this passage in Job:

*"Without doubt, Rahab denotes a demoniacal monster, like the demons that shall be destroyed at the end of the world, one which is called by the Persians akomano, Evil Thought, another, taromaiti, Pride."*

*God scatters the proud with his mighty arm.*

The Exodus is also spoken of as salvation from the sea serpent and dragon Leviathan. Ps. 74:12-14 says:

*Yet God my King is from old,  
Working salvation in the midst of the earth.  
You divided the sea by your might;  
You broke the heads of the sea monsters on the waters.  
You crushed the heads of Leviathan;  
You gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.*

Thus in provisional fulfillment of the promise made in Eden, the dragons head was crushed when God saved His people from Egypt. Of course, the head-wound healed, and the dragon (accompanied by the Dragon-State in his image) kept coming back to plague and persecute the Seed of the Woman. This happens again and again throughout the OT, which records for us numerous provisional head-crushings of the Dragon.

Sisera has his head crushed by a tent peg from Jael (Jud. 4:21; 5:26-27); Abimelech had a millstone dropped on his head by a certain woman (Jud. 9:50-57);

When the Ark of the Covenant came into the temple of Dagon in the statue of Dagon fell over and was seen bowing down to the Ark. When the Philistines set the image back up it fell over again and this time his head broke off (1 Sam. 5:1-5);

When David kills Goliath, he is specifically described as wearing scales, like a serpent, and David chops off his head (1 Sam. 17:49-51);

The worthless man Sheba who was in rebellion against King David had his head cut off by a wise woman who then threw his head over the wall to Joab in order to prevent her city from being destroyed (1 Sam. 20:21-22);

Thus when remembering the past deliverances of Israel, Habakkuk says:

*“You went out for the salvation of your people,  
for the salvation of your anointed;  
You crushed the head of the house of the wicked.”* (Hab. 3:13)

In terms of this head crushing of the dragon, the prophets looked forward to the coming definitive defeat of the Dragon in the anointed One, the Christ. Isaiah saw Israel was a pregnant woman, writhing and crying out in labor pains, waiting for the deliver to be born in Isa. 26:17-21. And then we read in the very next verse these words:

*“In that day the LORD with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.”*

So we see the promise of the serpent being destroyed at the beginning of the world, the seed of the woman will crush the head of the seed of the serpent. We see the Serpent being destroyed at the Exodus when God destroyed the gods of Egypt and delivered his people from Satanic enslavement. That is referred to as God slaying Rahab. We also see other Satanically inspired people in the Bible get their heads crushed in provisional fulfillment of the promise made about the seed of the woman; and we see an image of Rahab the Proud and Leviathan being destroyed on the last day, after the woman gives birth to the redeemer.

This story line of the woman who is in labor being pursued by the dragon is thus given to us in symbolic imagery in Rev. 12, where the woman is delivered from harm, and the dragon is defeated.

*And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. <sup>2</sup>She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. <sup>3</sup>And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. <sup>4</sup>His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. <sup>5</sup>She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, <sup>6</sup>and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.*

*<sup>7</sup>Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, <sup>8</sup>but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. <sup>9</sup>And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. <sup>10</sup>And I heard a loud voice in*

heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. <sup>11</sup> And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. <sup>12</sup> Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

There is a corresponding passage which takes place on earth, that mirrors the devil being thrown down from heaven to earth in Revelation 12. The earthly manifestation of that is actually found in John 12, when Jesus says, "Now is the judgment (or more accurately, the restoration) of the world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to myself."

The Lord Jesus sees that the restoration and judgment of the world will happen when the Ruler of the world is cast out, which takes place when Christ is lifted up from the Earth on the cross. And both John and Revelation refer to this as woman giving birth. John says to his disciples in John 16 in reference to his coming death and resurrection – *You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow, because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a man has been born into the world.*"

Mary says, *He hath showed strength with his arm he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts – Truly, the Proud Devil, that old serpent Rahab and Leviathan, exalted himself in the imagination of his heart and thought he would overthrow Heaven and become like God. But God scattered the proud serpent, and he cast him down to the Earth by Jesus Christ in his great humiliation and death on the cross.*

*He hath put down the mighty from their thrones,  
and hath exalted the humble and meek.*

God, through the Archangel Michael through down the mighty Serpent, the Devil from His throne in the Heavens, along with his evil spirits and demons, and He has exalted in his place the Humble Lord Jesus,

*who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup>And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup>Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*  
(Phil. 2:6-11)

Mary makes reference to all this when she said in the Magnificat:

*He hath showed strength with his arm;  
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.  
He hath put down the mighty from the thrones,  
And hath exalted the humble and meek.*

So God slays and scatters the ancient dragon Rahab, whose name means Proud, and he cuts him into pieces with His mighty arm, his strong sword, and he scatters the pieces of his carcass in to the sea. He casts down the dragon from his throne, and exalts His Son over the dragon and his devils.

This is what God does to demonstrate that Jesus Christ is the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the King of kings, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. And so, when the Mary contemplates that her Son is going to be the fulfillment of all those prophecies from the Scriptures, and the fulfillment and reality of those ancient myths, she knows that her son is going to conquer the dragon in order to become lifted up above the gods.

Therefore she treasured up these truths in her heart: Knowing that God would save his people by the strength of His arm, she looked upon the tiny arms of her son and saw by faith that the devils strength and power would be brought to nothing when her sons arms would one day be stretched out on the hard wood of the cross.

And when she looked upon his tiny feet she saw with the eyes of faith that those tiny feet would tread upon the serpent's neck and crush his head, and save our race, when they would be pierced through with a nail.

Mary did know that her baby boy was going to have his heel bruised, and his hands pierced in order to crush the head of the serpent. She knew her son would have to fight that battle attain the victory by dying on the cross. Only there on the cross would the Christmas story come to its fulness. There on the cross would he cast the ancient dragon down from his place in heaven, where he accuses the brethren day and night, and he would be exalted over the ruler of the world to become our great Mediator and Lord.

So take comfort and Joy people of God, for though the Devil has been cast down from his place in Heaven and is moving about the earth like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour, you are to remain steadfast and immoveable in your faith in Christ who is the High King of Heaven and the Lord of lords.

For you conquer that dragon and crush his head under your feet the same way the saints of old did when they were likewise persecuted by the Dragon's wicked culture and evil rulers: They have conquered him by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

The dragon is furious that he has not killed Jesus, but has himself been defeated and de-throned from his place in the heavens. So he sends the Satanically inspired rulers of the world to do his bidding for him. He fills

their hearts and minds with hatred toward us, because the Devil hates Christ. He cannot kill Christ himself, so he tries to kill him by killing us. He cannot kill the Head, so He kills the Body in hopes that he can kill the head. This is his tactic from the beginning, when he attacked the body of Adam, his wife, and in that way caused our race to fall. But our Lord has already won the victory, and He cannot lose.

The serpent tried again when he sought to attack Mary and Baby Jesus, but they were warned in a dream to flee from evil Herod by going down to Egypt, so that the Scripture could be fulfilled, out of Egypt I called my Son.

And so let this be a warning to you People of God, and a reminder of God's provision. Our Lord Jesus warns that the dragon comes to make war upon us, the rest of the offspring of the woman, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. This evil dragon, this foe which is mystically Egypt and Babylon and Sodom, which is a Proud Culture of Rebellion against the ways of God, is always fighting against the Lord and His people. And this Ancient Serpent of Old wants nothing less to destroy us with these satanic deceptions and powers and the ungodly wickedness of the culture around us, the despair of totalitarianism, and heresies and false teachings in the church.

So we look around and we see the church in the condition in which it is in, deceived on all sides, and on almost every branch of it poisoned fruit to be eaten by the nations. False teachers abound, totalitarianism encroaching, and true Christians being silenced. This is all the Devil's tactic to get you to lose heart. But take heart people of God. Do not lose heart! We exist in the same kinds of conditions that our spiritual ancestors have, and we must do that same hard things they did in order to keep their souls preserved from the evil one. We must come out of her, wicked Babylon and Egypt, and Sodom, the Satanically inspired culture of death that surrounds us, and we must cling to the Son. Because only in the Lord Jesus Christ is their salvation from the wrath of God.

In Christ we have the hopes of the serpents head being crushed in us, In Christ we are freed from Satan' power and might. In Christ the Proud Devil is scattered, and he is cast down from his throne in our hearts. Though the Devil wage war against us out there in the world, we know that he is in the darkness. But Jesus Christ is the Light of the World, and the darkness cannot conquer the Light, and he has shone in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God which is in the face of Jesus Christ.

So take comfort, People of God. Rejoice O Heavens and You who dwell in them in Christ. And fear not, for I bring unto you good news which shall be for all people. For unto us is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And the reason the Son of God appeared to us, was to destroy the works of the Devil.

Merry Christmas.