

The Dragon

Revelation 12

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I once read about two Tibetan boys who decided to go for a walk in 1941 — they wanted to see the world. They wandered over the mountains into Soviet territory where they were conscripted by the Soviet army. They were then captured by the German army and conscripted into their auxiliary service.

Then they were captured by the Americans, and the Americans could not figure out who they were, because they did not speak German or Russian. The Americans called in an expert in Asiatic languages who understood what they were saying and heard their incredible story.

The shocked Americans asked the boys, “Do you two have any questions?” They only had one: “Why were all those people trying to kill each other?”

Can you imagine the horrors they saw?

The world at war?

The Holocaust?

And they didn't know why . . . no comprehension.

It kind of reminds me of April 20, 1999, Hitler's birthday, and the Columbine massacre . . . people in shock everywhere . . . everyone asking, “Why were those boys trying to kill everybody?” Now they're asking, “Who's to blame? Who's to hate?”

It kind of reminds me of us. We say things like this: “I thought Jesus was the Sweet Rose of Sharon. I thought He was the Prince of Peace who *cared* for His little lambs. But I'm getting shot at!”

J. R. R. Tolkien wrote this: “It does not do to leave a live dragon out of your calculations, if you live near him.”

Revelation 12:1: *And 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; she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery.*

Last week we preached that that woman is the people of God in anguish to give birth to Christ in history and in us.

And another portent appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads. 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 bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth; she brought forth 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, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. 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.

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 brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

"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.

"Rejoice then, O heaven and you that dwell therein! 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!"

And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had borne the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.

“Time, times, and half a time” is 3 1/2 years, 1,260 days. It’s the length of Jesus’ earthly ministry. It’s also Daniel’s time of the end. I believe it’s the time we are in *now*. “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 brethren has been thrown down”

The Devil pursues the woman in the wilderness . . .

Verse 15: The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon had poured from his mouth.

Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus.

That’s us! And we’re at war. And it does not do to leave a live dragon out of your calculations, especially if you live near him.

We are at war. And that changes things.

My father was a 2nd Lieutenant in World War II. He trained Infantry troops at Camp Roberts before finally being shipped out to the Philippines. I remember hearing him talk several times, when I was a kid in the 70's, about how they kept him state-side time and time again, because he was a good teacher and trainer of the troops. He used to just *ache* . . . *ache* . . . to go to war. (Several of his friends had already died.)

That seemed *so odd* to me, because I grew up during Vietnam. And people weren't exactly sure, it seemed, *why* we were at war. There was a whole lot of debate about who exactly the dragon was. But World War II and Hitler . . . people were just *longing* to slay that dragon. Now we call them "Our Finest Generation" — the "Sons of Glory."

I love to hear my Dad's stories of World War II, especially when he finds another old guy like John Lowell, and they sit down and share stories of the war. They do it in great cheer. *Old dragon slayers.*

I love to hear my Dad's stories . . . or at least *most* of them. One particular evening in the war, after a day of training troops, the story was that a soldier came into my father's barracks. He said:

I've had it! I'm sick of this place, and I'm sick of you. Do you realize that last night I couldn't sleep because I had leg cramps? You are too demanding! You had us marching at 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00! Don't get me wrong, I like hiking and I like camping, but we have entirely *inadequate* restroom facilities. You don't appreciate *me*, and you don't appreciate *my needs!*

I've been reading a book on boundaries, and I think you have some very serious boundary issues of your own. I need *my* time, *my* space; I have *my* boundaries! I signed up for this war because I heard that Bob Hope entertained the troops, and I haven't heard Bob Hope once! And I don't like the songs we're singing!

I don't like the music, I don't like the program, I don't like *you*, I don't like the give-give-give-give, and frankly I think that you're kind of a Borderline Passive-Aggressive Personality Disorder anyway. *You make me nervous!* And if something doesn't change, I'm out of here!

Of course that didn't happen in World War II. We were being shot at! And everybody knew we had a war to fight. It was a fight that we would fight unto death against the dragon, if need be. *Of course* that didn't happen in World War II. It happened in church.

My father trained troops in our nation's army, and my father trained troops in The Kingdom's Army, the Church. Growing up in the Church, stuff like that was commonplace. To an objective observer it might just have appeared that the Church had not included the live Dragon in their calculations.

Sometimes I worry that *we* have not included the live Dragon in *our* calculations.

You need to hear me: You are directly accountable to God, not me, for your time and your giving and the boundaries He has placed upon your life. And our church will not run without your opinions regarding church budgets, building programs, and music styles. However, sometimes I think that we do kind of forget that we're in a *war*.

When we sing worship songs, we're going to war!
When we pray, we're going to war!
When we give, we're going to war!
When we serve dinner downtown, we're going to war!
When we marry, have kids, and invite our neighbors to church, we're going to war!

And that changes things.

You pray more,
 and give more,
 and sing louder,
 and complain less.

Hear me well. I think that we pastors may be the worst of all. Perhaps we have forgotten to include the live Dragon in our calculations, forgotten that we are at war, and forgotten against whom we battle.

In verse 8 we read that the Dragon is the old serpent, that old serpent that tempted Adam and Eve and would one day be crushed by the seed of the woman . . . “the old serpent, who is called the Devil.” Devil means “slanderer” or “accuser.” He is also called Satan, which means “adversary” or “enemy.” Satan is a created angelic or spirit being who is in thorough rebellion against God. Jesus said, “There is no truth in Him” (John 8).

But in John 1 we read, “There is a light that enlightens all men.” All men have some truth shining in them. Satan has *no truth* in Him . . . thorough in his darkness and rebellion.

In verse 9 we read that he deceives the whole world. Jesus said, “He is a murderer and the father of lies . . . he lies according to his nature” (John 8:44). I read somewhere that the chief punishment of the liar is not so much that he is not believed, but that he *cannot* believe.

Satan does not believe. In the words of John, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not understood, comprehended, or overcome it” (John 1:5). For as Tolkien writes, “He weighs all things in the niceties of his malice.” He does not see truth, and he does not comprehend love. He is the liar entirely trapped in his own lies.

And Satan *is not* the equal opposite of God. He is not the “dark side of the force.” Evil does not have an independent existence. It is always corrupted good.

You can never tell a lie unless there's a truth to tell the lie about. I believe Satan is a negation and a corruption, truly the faceless man. And when he manifests, I suspect he has no face. And if he has a face, he has to steal it from somewhere. He is a thief, a liar, an adversary, and an accuser.

In the Old Testament Satan appears in the throne room of God, and he accuses the children of Adam. Satan knows the *law* . . . but not love. He calls God to God's own justice, but not for the same reason.

God is just because He is love.
Satan is a legalist because he is malice.

That's where Satan's great power lay. Hebrews 2:14 reveals that Satan had the power of death. If God's law declared death, somehow Satan could satiate his lust for destruction. Satan was then free to destroy.

Yet in Hebrews 2 we also learn that Jesus took our flesh and blood and died that He might "destroy him that has the power of death." — Destroy the destroyer.

Now Satan is thrown down in an absolute rage. Why? Because God has done what is truly inconceivable and incomprehensible to Satan. He has acted in absolute and perfect sacrificial love, what Satan cannot comprehend because he has chosen not to: that God would die for us.

So what Satan thought was his greatest victory—destroying that Messiah, the prophet Jesus—turned out to be his greatest defeat, his own destruction. For God was in Christ that day, reconciling the world to Himself, that their trespasses would not be counted against them.

So Satan goes to the throne room to accuse the sons of Adam. He looks at the throne and what does he see? —

That man he destroyed on the cross.
He sees the second Adam.
He sees the very Lamb that he slaughtered on the throne.

Verse 7 says that Michael fought the Dragon, as prophesied in Daniel 12. In verse 11 it says we (or they) conquer, but it's all by the victory of the Lamb.

Never forget that all this revelation of victory is the scroll unwrapped by a bleeding Lamb on the throne. Satan looks, and he not only sees that Lamb resurrected on the throne, but he sees everyone throughout time who has trusted Him. For He bore their destruction on His cross. For all time all who trust Him were with Him in His death and now are with Him forever in His resurrection — an eternal communion of life, they with Him, and He with them, in every moment ("chronos") of their life.

Born in their anguish,
Crucified and resurrected forever,
Easter now applied to every moment;
Eternity invading temporality,
God's "kairos" invading all "chronos,"
Eternal life *now*.

Revelation 14:6: "This is an eternal gospel." Revelation 13:8: "The lamb was slain from the foundation of the world" — beyond time. Yet I believe that Satan is a creature of time, like us. So he didn't see it coming. He did not and *would* not.

When Jesus lifted His head in John 12 and said, "Now is this world judged, now is the ruler of this world cast out," Satan didn't have a *clue*. And so as he destroyed Jesus on the cross, he destroyed himself and all his works for all time. And this was "the plan from the fullness of time to unite all things in Christ," and Satan flipped the switch that shone the light.

Jesus always wins.

The love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord *always conquers*, every where and every when. Even when He dies, *especially* when He dies, He conquers.

The loud voice cries, "Rejoice then, O heaven . . . ! 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!"

Satan doesn't know the truth, for the truth is Jesus. He doesn't *commune* with truth, but he knows his time is short. And he knows Jesus always wins. In fact, he is now sentenced to watch the victory of Jesus unwrapped in all space and time, even through us.

He knows Jesus always wins.

I used to wonder, "Then why does he still fight? What's his plan?" Satan has no plan (like God does). Oh, he has *plans*, and he has *schemes*, and he has *wiles*, but they all serve and feed his childish rage.

As Lewis puts it:

[A] creature . . . inside out—it's heart on the surface and its shallowness at the heart. On the surface, great designs and an antagonism to Heaven which involved the fate of worlds: but deep within, when every veil had been pierced, was there, after all, nothing but a black puerility, an aimless empty spitefulness content to sate itself with the tiniest cruelties? . . . [He] is the horrible co-existence of a subtle and incessant intellectual activity with an incapacity to understand anything. . . . mere Christianity commits every Christian to believing that "the Devil is (in the long run) an ass."

And so he rages in complete and "hole-hearted" childish, evil fury. And if he could, right now, he would destroy us all on the spot. But he can't, for he has been disarmed.

Paul wrote in Colossians that when Christ died on the cross He disarmed the principalities and powers. They cannot accuse before God, so they have no grounds for destruction. Satan can only operate within the bounds of God's redemptive love and purposes through the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ our Lord. Yet verse 17 says he still makes war. How can he?

Verse 13 says he pursues the woman, the people of God. The woman is given the two wings of the great eagle, but the serpent pours a river of water from his mouth after the woman. What *is* that that comes out of the serpent's mouth?

Lies,
slander,
accusations.

I hope you realize that we live in a river of lies. The river threatens to sweep the woman and the church away, but the earth opens its mouth and swallows the river.

I'm not sure what all that means, but have you ever been weighed down by all the lies? Wondering if God even exists and if God even cares about you? If He's even there at all? You're trapped in your own fears, and you go for a walk in the woods or stand on the top of a 14,000-foot peak, and what happens? The wounded earth itself begins to swallow the river. And creation, even subjected to futility, proclaims the glory of God.

What comes from the Dragon's mouth? Lies and accusations. So if he can no longer accuse you in the heavens, he will accuse you on earth. Accusations to divide the people of God and make us cower in fear. Accusations like this: that you are *so* wicked and you are *so* sinful, surely God couldn't love you. Surely He couldn't forgive *that*. So maybe we had just better be afraid of him and each other. We had better save ourselves, guard ourselves, sew some fig leaves together and hide out of fear . . . cover the anguish.

Don't look in the stable.
Don't go to the Hill of the Skull.
Play it safe.

If your legs are cramping, you had better sit down. If the facilities aren't the best, maybe you had better turn back. If it's taking a whole lot of effort, maybe you had better not *give* any more. In short, maybe you shouldn't fight.

The river is a propaganda campaign to get us, the Church Militant, to surrender to an unarmed man.

Jesus wins. But do not give Satan any ground to feast on your fear, guilt, or shame. *Do not* surrender. Christ calls you to war in order to proclaim and exhibit His eternal victory in every moment of space and time. And it *is* a war. He wasn't joking. It is a fight. "In this world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer! He has overcome the world." Good cheer? In war? *Yes*.

In Perelandra by C. S. Lewis, Ransom the hero battles the “un-man,” the faceless man—Satan. And Lewis writes:

Then an experience that perhaps no good man can ever have in our world, came over him—a torrent of perfectly unmixed and lawful hatred. . . . It is perhaps difficult to understand why this filled Ransom not with horror but with a kind of joy. The joy came from finding at last what hatred was made for. As a boy with an axe rejoices on finding a tree . . . so he rejoiced in the perfect congruity between his emotion and its object.

Never hate a human being, for they are the prize to be captured with sacrificial love. But Satan *is your enemy!*

He longs to drink the blood and drink the flesh of the children of Adam. He craves the terror of your children. He delights in death, genocide, rape, and torture. He feeds his passions with the death of 6 million Jews, tens of millions of Russians, countless millions of Bosnians, Rwandans, and Sudanese, and tens of millions of babies aborted every year in your own back yard. And, oh yeah, this too: He feeds on any shame that you carry with that statistic.

He *is* evil. And I abhor him. I worked really hard on this message, because I long to stick a knife in his bloodless gut and twist. The knife is the Word of God.

Christian, you were born to be a warrior, and this *is* your war. At last you know who your enemy truly is, so slay the Dragon in the joy of the Lord, and *do not fear!* In Christ you’ve already won.

Watch out for arrogance. Watch out for lust for power. Those things are of the Dragon. But Christ has conquered, and this is the joy: He is in you. His victory is in you. Heaven is upon you. (Luke 10:20: “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”)

In verse 14 the woman is given the two wings of the great eagle. I remember that when I read this months ago I prayed, “God, this whole thing is cool, but who is this great eagle?” The next morning I got a call from someone in this room. She said,

Peter, you wouldn’t believe what I saw last week in church! Someone told me I should tell you this. During worship I looked out the widows and suddenly I saw this *immense eagle!* It’s wings were stretched out over the mountains, and it was looking at us screeching. At first I thought it was angry screeching, but it was His intense holiness. It was the Lord.

Its beak was open, and I heard it shriek these words: “Church of the Living God, I give you all power and dominion to accomplish my will on earth as it is in heaven. Take hold of what I give you. Let Christ be your banner and song.” Then it quoted the Song of Solomon: “His banner over you is love.”

In Exodus God tells the Israelites that he “bore them up on eagles’ wings.” My friends, we are given those eagles’ wings—authority. The loud voice in heaven cries, “They

conquered [overcame] by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony, loving not their lives even unto death. . . . Rejoice, O heavens!” *Rejoice*. And Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is upon you.”

We conquer when we claim and believe the blood of the Lamb in our own lives and share it with others . . . even, and especially, unto death.

That blood is . . .
 grace, and
 mercy, and
 the sweet love of God to us.

To us it’s sweet, but to the Dragon it’s the knife twisted in his bloodless gut . . . *poison*. It’s the blood of the Lamb on the throne, declaring the Dragon has *no* grounds for destruction and he himself is destroyed. His time is short.

The blood of the Lamb is spread through the word of your testimony, that is, the story of the life of Jesus and His blood in you.

The massacre at Columbine High School shocked the world. It should not have surprised us. We’re in a war. We argue about who to hate and who our enemy is . . . a house divided . . . but we know who our enemy is. It’s not Eric Harris, it’s not Dylan Klebold, it’s not Adolph Hitler, it’s not Marilyn Manson . . . not the parents, not the Jefferson County Sheriff, not some legislation sitting in some courthouse somewhere. Our enemy is the Dragon. And we *know* how to fight him.

At one point Eric Harris grabbed Rachel Scott by the hair. She was already shot twice in the leg. Harris held her up and said, “Do you believe in God?” She said, “You know I do.” He pointed his gun at her head and said, “Then go be with him.” And he shot her.

Was that the Dragon’s victory?
 Was the cross the Dragon’s victory?

Months later Rachel’s backpack was returned to her parents. One of the killer’s bullets was in the backpack where it had stopped after passing through her body and hitting her journal. Her journal was her record of her walk with Christ. It was the “word of her testimony.” It contained the normal kind of high school girl stuff but with a whole lot of faith in the blood of the Lamb.

I’m sure Rachel wasn’t perfect, but she did do things like this: for her school talent show, she performed a mime called “Watch the Lamb.” (I know the song; *I think it’s kind of sappy*.) Her friend performed it at her funeral, which was broadcast around the world on CNN.

Incredibly, in her journal it’s clear that she had come to know she would die that year. You can read about it in the best-selling book Rachel’s Tears, written by her parents.

A man who saw her funeral on CNN dreamed of her and called her father the next day saying he had had only a few dreams like this in his life, and he was sure it was from God. What he saw was Rachel's eyes weeping. Tears were dropping from her eyes, and they were watering something that he couldn't see. He asked, "Do you know what that means?"

Her father had no clue; he thought the guy was strange . . . until he looked in Rachel's journal. There he found a picture that she had drawn. Up in the corner were her eyes, and thirteen tears were falling down and watering a rose. There were thirteen victims. And Jesus is the Rose of Sharon

And He was born in anguish at Columbine High. And He conquered the Dragon at Columbine High. And He conquered the Dragon from the foundation of the world.

And what seems like Satan's greatest victories are his greatest defeats. They are the place where Jesus exhibits His conquest of sacrificial love.

And as for Rachel, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, she was changed. I suspect she found herself at a great banquet. I suspect she's sitting there still. I imagine she's sharing war stories with Jesus . . . in *great cheer!* They are both old Dragon-slayers.

The name "Rachel" means "little lamb." His blood flowed in her veins. My daughter wants to be like Rachel Scott—a Dragon-slayer. It is a gift to you when the One on the throne says to you, "Sweetheart, slay the Dragon."

On the night He was betrayed, He took bread and broke it, and He said, "This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way after supper, having given thanks, He took the cup and said, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood shed for the forgiveness of sins. As often as you drink of it you proclaim my death until I come again. And I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until I drink it with you in my father's kingdom. Do this in remembrance of me."

I'm not speaking in metaphors. Come to the table and slay the Dragon. "In Jesus' name, thank You, Father. Amen."

If you are thinking, "What got into Peter? He seems almost *mad.*" You see, I wasn't just preaching to *you*. I was preaching at "principalities and powers and the world rulers of

this present darkness.” Did you know that Scripture even says that’s part of our job? But when I talk to you, I’m to talk with 100 percent sacrificial love.

I think that what the Lord would say to you if you’ve never been to this table before is, “Oh, sweetheart, you came to my table!” And if you came in faith, He *is in you*. He is.

But I can’t lie to you. You’ve just joined the battle. And sometimes the battle is tough. We have a Prayer Team that would be happy to set up an appointment to pray with you.

Satan uses all kinds of strategies with his demons, and it’s all just lies and accusations. But listen closely to me. If you came to this table, *do not fear*. Yes, life hurts at times. Crosses hurt. But do not fear. For Christ *has* overcome the world, and he *has* overcome the evil one, and “greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.”

So in the name of Jesus, do not fear. Slay the Dragon. Amen.

Further Reading

“Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out”

-John 12:31

“ . . . concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. . . .”

-John 16:11

The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

-Luke 10:17-20

And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.

-Colossians 2:13-15

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.

-Hebrews 2:14-16

I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

-I John 2:14b

Who or what it is that the Lamb has conquered is not expressed (cf. 3:21) (though it is probable that we should see the defeat of Satan by Michael, depicted in 12:7-9, as a symbol of the Lamb's victory). The object of conquest is left undefined in chapter 5 so that the victory should be boundless in its scope. All that is opposed to God's rule, we are to understand, has been defeated by the Lamb. . . . The continuing and ultimate victory of God over evil which the rest of Revelation describes is no more than the working-out of the decisive victory of the Lamb on the cross.

-Richard Bauckham, The Theology of the Book of Revelation

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.

-Zechariah 3:1-2

“Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. . . .”

-John 8:43-44

And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

-John 1:5

Well, let folly be our cloak, a veil before the eyes of the Enemy! For he is very wise, and weighs all things to a nicety in the scales of his malice. But the only measure that he knows is desire, desire for power; and so he judges

all hearts. Into his heart the thought will not enter that any will refuse it, that having the Ring we may seek to destroy it. If we seek this, we shall put him out of reckoning.

-J. R. R. Tolkien, The Fellowship of the Ring

The darkness knows neither the light nor itself; only the light know itself and the darkness also.

-George McDonald, Lilith

Then an experience that perhaps no good man can ever have in our world came over him--a torrent of perfectly unmixed and lawful hatred. The energy of hating, never before felt without some guilt, without some dim knowledge that he was failing fully to distinguish the sinner from the sin, rose into his arms and legs til he felt that they were pillars of burning blood. What was before him appeared no longer a creature of corrupted will. It was corruption itself to which will was attached only as an instrument. Ages ago it had been a Person: but the ruins of personality now survived in it only as weapons at the disposal of furious self-exiled negation. It is perhaps difficult to understand why this filled Ransom not with horror but with a kind of joy. The joy came from finding at last what hatred was made for. As a boy with an axe rejoices on finding a tree, or a boy with a box of coloured chalks rejoices on finding a pile of perfectly white paper, so he rejoiced in the perfect congruity between his emotion and its object.

-C. S. Lewis, Perelandra

What chilled and . . . cowed him was the union of malice with something nearly childish. For temptation, for blasphemy, for a whole battery of horrors, he was in some sort prepared: but hardly for this petty, indefatigable nagging as of a nasty little boy at a preparatory school. Indeed no imagined horror could have surpassed the sense which grew within him as the slow hours passed, that this creature was, by all human standards, inside out—it's heart on the surface and its shallowness at the heart. On the surface, great designs and an antagonism to Heaven which involved the fate of worlds: but deep within, when every veil had been pierced, was there, after all, nothing but a black puerility, an aimless empty spitefulness content to sate itself with the tiniest cruelties, as love does not disdain the smallest kindness?

-C. S. Lewis, Perelandra

We know from his [Milton's] prose works that he believed everything detestable to be, in the long run, also ridiculous; and mere Christianity commits every Christian to believing that "the Devil is (in the long run) an ass." . . . What we see in Satan is the horrible co-existence of a subtle and incessant intellectual activity with an incapacity to understand anything. This doom he has brought upon himself; in order to avoid seeing one thing he has, almost voluntarily, incapacitated himself from seeing at all. And thus, throughout the poem, all his torments come, in a sense, at his own bidding, and the Divine judgement might have been expressed in the words "thy will be done." He says "Evil be thou my good" (which includes "Nonsense be thou my sense") and his prayer is granted.

-C. S. Lewis, Preface to Paradise Lost

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

-James 4:7