

Behold Your King Who Crushes the Enemy

Christmas Eve 2015

François Hollande, The French President, was sitting in his office when his telephone rang.

"Hallo, Mr. Hollande!" a heavily accented voice said. "This is Paddy down at the Harp Pub and Inn in County Clare, Ireland. I am ringing to inform you that we are officially declaring war on you!"

"Well, Paddy," Hollande replied, "This is indeed important news! How big is your army?"

"Right now," says Paddy, after a moment's calculation, "there is meself, me cousin Sean, me next door neighbour Seamus, and the entire darts team from the pub. That makes eight!"

Hollande paused. "I must tell you, Paddy that I have 100,000 men in my army waiting to move on my command."

"Begoora!" says Paddy. "I'll have to ring you back."

Sure enough, the next day, Paddy calls again. "Mr.Hollande, the war is still on. We have managed to get us some infantry equipment!"

"And what equipment would that be Paddy?" Hollande asks.

"Well, we have two combines, a bulldozer, and Murphy's farm tractor."

Hollande sighs amused. "I must tell you, Paddy, that I have 6,000 tanks and 5,000 armored personnel carriers. Also, I have increased my army to 150,000 since we last spoke."

"Saints preserve us!" says Paddy. "I'll have to get back to you."

Sure enough, Paddy rings again the next day. "Mr. Hollande, the war is still on! We have managed to get ourselves airborne! We have modified Jackie McLaughlin's ultra-light with a couple of shotguns in the cockpit, and four boys from the Shamrock have joined us as well!"

Hollande was silent for a minute and then cleared his throat. "I must tell you, Paddy, that I have 100 bombers and 200 fighter planes. My military bases are surrounded by laser-guided, surface-to-air missile sites. And since we last spoke, I have increased my army to 200,000!"

"Houl yer horses" says Paddy, "I will have to ring you back." Sure enough, Paddy calls again the next day. "Top o' the mornin', Mr. Hollande! I am sorry to inform you that we have had to call off the war."

"Really? I am sorry to hear that," says Hollande. "Why the sudden change of heart?"

"Well," says Paddy, "Me and the lads had a long chat after my last call, and we decided there is no way we can feed 200,000 prisoners.

Thousands of years ago God declared war on Satan.

"I am declaring war between you and the Woman, between your offspring and hers.

He'll wound your head, you'll wound his heel" (Gen. 3:15).

For centuries God kept announcing this impending war.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be upon his shoulder." (Isaiah 9:6)

With the coming of Jesus to earth the war God declared on Satan began.

And at the moment of declaration the odds of victory appeared ludicrous.

With Jesus' birth Satan must have sneered at God's zealousness.

"You are going to defeat me with a Baby?"

"I'll have Him for breakfast.

"He won't live long enough to take His first breath.

"I remember Your prophecies,

"Talk to me again when You have a serious threat.

"When You are ready to send Your hosts maybe then we can negotiate.

"Why should I tremble over the birth of a child?"

"I have owned every child that has been born since You created.
There isn't a child born that I haven't twisted to my will.
The good that they want to do, they just can't do it.
I'm the one who thwarts that.
The wrong that they don't want to do, they do it anyway.
I'm the one who inspires that.
They all see how wretched and miserable they are.
They try to deliver themselves but I have them captive.
They are mine.
And this Child, He'll be mine too!
"What's one more baby?
Your great declaration of war is no credible threat to me.
"Let Jesus come, and I will have Him exterminated."

And Jesus was born, as the Scriptures foretold.

And the battle began in a stable.

There was more than farm stock present at the manger when Jesus was born.

There was a creature stirring ready to end the war before it could even begin.

"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." (Rev. 12:4b, 5)

Satan was ready for war.

He had already swept a third of the angels from heaven.

They were ready to follow him into battle.

The Child didn't stand a chance.

But this Jesus was like no child Satan had ever seen before.

A loud voice from heaven declared from the war zone, **"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."** (Revelation 12:10-11).

"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." (Rev. 12:17).

But there was something different about Jesus.

Through Jesus, God **"has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,"** (Colossians 1:13).

Through Jesus we were delivered from Satan's imprisonment.

"And you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before Him." (Colossians 1:21-22)

How could Jesus bring that deliverance?

That is the mystery that baffled Satan.

Jesus was mysteriously unique among all children.

He was given birth by a virgin.

"In Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross." (Colossians 1:19-20)

Jesus fully shared two natures.

He was fully God and wholly man.

He was 100 percent human and 100 percent divine.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:1, 14)

This is profound because it is utterly without precedent or parallel.

This was a once-in-eternity-event.

Jesus' birth should provoke us to gasp in amazement.

God became a man, the incarnation, Emmanuel, God is with us.

Jesus went into the battle on our behalf because He could.

John reduces this intense battle into half of a verse.

"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8b).

That is the good news for this world, for me, for you.

"Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:24b-25a)

Put your faith in Him, in the Christ, in Emmanuel, God is with us. Jesus did not come to take prisoners.

He came to proclaim release to the captives.

He came to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

That is what we celebrate tonight and each day of the year.

"He was supreme in the beginning and - leading the resurrection parade - He is supreme in the end." (Colossians 1:18)