

A dramatic scene from a fantasy story. In the center, a man with a shaved head and a dark, textured tunic with a high collar is shown in profile, facing right. He has a menacing expression with his mouth open, showing teeth. He is looking at a large, horned demon. The demon has a dark, scaly body, large curved horns, and a face with glowing red eyes and a wide, toothy grin. The background is a fiery, orange and yellow glow with dark, swirling patterns, suggesting a hellish or volcanic environment. The overall tone is dark and intense.

THE
BULLY
AND THE
BLUFFER

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*How God Exposes the Serpent's
Power: Biblical Battles,
Underdogs, and Deliverance*

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Preface

This book is an exploration of a common Biblical motif: Satan as the bully and the bluffer — a tempter, accuser, and deceiver — and Jehovah’s repeated pattern of exposing and overturning that power through unlikely people and dramatic acts of deliverance. It gathers passages where Jesus and the apostles cast out demons and brought healing, surveys Old Testament stories where underdogs triumph, considers the idea of “serpent seed” as a moral and theological image rather than a tidy genealogical list, and offers tales, metaphors, and poetic reflections for spiritual insight and practical courage.

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Chapter 1 — Introduction: The Bully and the Bluffer

Across Scripture, evil often appears not as a clean, fearless force but as a braggart that tries to intimidate, distort, and deceive — a bully and a bluffer. Biblical language sometimes personifies this as the “devil,” “tempter,” “accuser,” or, metaphorically, “the serpent.” That image captures two consistent features:

- Bully: aggressive oppression and threat (e.g., rulers, tyrants, demonic torment).
- Bluffer: deception, lying, false promises, intimidation by bluff (temptation, false prophecy, slander).

God’s character in Scripture responds not to braggadocio but to faith, courage, and humility. The patterns to watch: God often works through the weak, the few, and the faithful to expose bullies and confound bluffers.

Chapter 2 — Jesus vs. the Tempter: Key Gospel Exorcisms and Healings

Jesus’ earthly ministry repeatedly exposed spiritual oppression and confronted demonic powers. Below are central episodes (each with verse references in Appendix A):

- The Temptation in the Wilderness (Matthew 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13): Jesus resists the devil’s threefold bluff — power, provision, and glory — by quoting Scripture and refusing the bully’s offers.
- Authority over unclean spirits in synagogues (Mark 1:21–28; Luke 4:33–37): Jesus rebukes an unclean spirit publicly, showing authority that astonishes onlookers.
- Healing and casting out at Capernaum and throughout Galilee (Mark 1:32–34; Matthew 8:16–17): crowds brought the oppressed and demonized and Jesus delivered them.
- The Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1–20; Luke 8:26–39; Matthew 8:28–34): “Legion” is confronted and released; demons flee into pigs — a vivid case of

demonic who's-who disarmed.

- The healing and deliverance of the boy with an unclean spirit (Mark 9:14–29; Matthew 17:14–21; Luke 9:37–43): Jesus rebukes unbelief and the spirit; demonstrates that persistent faith and prayer are keys to deliverance.

- Encounters showing Jesus casting out demons and healing the oppressed throughout the Synoptics (e.g., Matthew 9:32–34; Matthew 12:22–29; Luke 11:14–23). Jesus' healings and exorcisms are typically framed as signs of the kingdom arriving: sickness and demonic oppression lose their legal power under his lordship.

The Gospels present many instances where Jesus' authority over demons and disease is explicit. His method varies — direct rebuke, teaching that exposes deception, prayer, and demonstrating compassion — but the outcome is liberation.

Chapter 3 — The New Testament Church: Deliverance after Pentecost

After Jesus' ascension, the same authority is demonstrated in the early church.

- Acts records many deliverances:
- Philip casts out unclean spirits and heals (Acts 8:6–8).
- Peter and John heal the lame man at the temple

gate (Acts 3:1–10); people healed and saved (Acts 5:12–16).

- Paul casts a spirit of divination from a slave girl (Acts 16:16–18).
- Extraordinary healings and deliverances through prayer and the apostles' ministry (Acts 19:11–12; Acts 28:8–9).
- Paul's letters instruct believers to resist the devil (e.g., James 4:7; Ephesians 6:10–18) and to expect spiritual opposition but also spiritual authority (Mark 16:17 is an early tradition echoed by apostles).

The pattern: deliverance works by Jesus' delegated authority, faith, prayer, and God's power working through ordinary people.

Chapter 4 — The Old Testament Underdogs: When God Turned the Tide

The Old Testament rarely frames evil in the same possession language as the Gospels, but it is full of narratives where oppressive powers — kings, armies, and false prophets — act as bullies and bluffers. Jehovah repeatedly sides with the underdog.

Key examples:

- Moses and the Exodus (Exodus 1–15): Israel oppressed by Pharaoh; God's signs and the Red Sea

deliver his people, humbling the bully-king.

- Gideon (Judges 6–7): A fearful farmer becomes a judge; God reduces his army to 300 to show the victory is divine, not military.
- David vs. Goliath (1 Samuel 17): A shepherd boy defeats the Philistine giant — God’s name is vindicated through the underdog.
- Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18): One man confronts 450 prophets; God answers by fire.
- Jehoshaphat’s deliverance (2 Chronicles 20): Faced with a vast alliance, Judah prays; God causes enemies to destroy themselves.
- Esther (Esther 4–8): A vulnerable Jewish woman in a foreign court exposes Haman’s plot and saves her people.
- Daniel and his companions (Daniel 3; 6): The three in the furnace and Daniel in the lions’ den — faithful underdogs preserved.
- Joshua and the fall of Jericho (Joshua 6): A small band follows God’s strange strategy and the city falls — divine intervention confounds military logic.
- The Babylonian overthrow of oppressive regimes (e.g., Jeremiah’s prophecies) and God’s eventual vindication of his people in historical reversals.

These narratives show God regularly defeating bullies by unusual means, often to teach reliance on Him and to expose the bluff of false power.

Chapter 5 — “Serpent Seed”: Biblical Use, Interpretations, and Caution

The phrase “sons of the devil” occurs explicitly in the New Testament — notably Jesus’ words in John 8:44 about people who “belong to their father, the devil” (KJV/ESV paraphrase). That image has been interpreted three main ways:

- **Metaphorical/moral:** Certain people act in the character of the devil (lying, murderous, oppositional), so they are “of” his nature.
- **Spiritual:** Demonic allegiance or influence explains repeated opposition.
- **Genealogical (less common and controversial):** A literal “serpent seed” line — an interpretation not supported uniformly across Christian traditions and often historically misapplied.

Caution: The Bible’s language about “seed” and “fatherhood” is often theological and moral, not a biological family tree. The safest and most responsible reading recognizes the image as a way to name moral character and spiritual relationship (e.g., faithfulness to God vs. indebtedness to lies and violence).

Chapter 6 — Tales and Fables: Bullies and Bluffers

Stories both biblical and classical teach the same lessons.

Biblical narratives as parables:

- David and Goliath — the smallhearted bully undone by a righteous underdog.
- Jonah — the prophet resists God, tries to bluff by fleeing, is humbled, and later calls an empire to repentance.
- The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9–14) — spiritual arrogance (a kind of bluff) is exposed; humility stands justified.

Secular fables that mirror biblical truth:

- The Boy Who Cried Wolf — the bluffer loses credibility and trust.
- The Wolf and the Lamb — an archetype of the bully who invents excuses to devour the weak.
- The Lion and the Mouse — the underdog can contribute to the strong; mercy frustrates brute force.
- Aesop and other moral tales show how tricksters and bullies rely on appearance and fear; when exposed, their power collapses.

These tales reinforce the biblical pattern that bluffing depends on unexposed fear; once light, truth, and faithful action appear, the bluff collapses.

Chapter 7 — Poetic Meanings and Metaphors — Reading Scripture as Spiritual Strategy

Metaphors to hold in the mind:

- Serpent: deceiver who promises knowledge but brings death (Genesis 3; John 8:44).
- Giant: a concrete representation of fear and injustice (1 Samuel 17).
- Furnace/lion's den: the trial that tests faith and proves God's fidelity (Daniel).
- Red Sea: transition from slavery to freedom by way of divine deliverance (Exodus 14).

Spiritual strategy:

- Name the bully: identify fear, falsehood, oppression.
- Resist and trust: Scripture models resisting Satan (James 4:7) and trusting God's deliverance.
- Use truth and prayer: Jesus rebuked with Scripture; the early church prayed and acted in Jesus' name.
- Celebrate underdogs: God often chooses the weak to accomplish his purposes so that glory is his alone (1 Corinthians 1:26–29).

Chapter 8 — Practical Application

- **Personal:** When you face bullying (fear, persistent temptation, unjust accusation), follow the Biblical pattern: confess, resist, pray, and stand in community. Remember Christ's authority over the forces that oppress.
- **Corporate:** Communities should resist spiritual and moral bullies with truth, justice, and mercy — exposing deception and protecting the vulnerable.
- **Pastoral:** Leaders should teach that deliverance often comes through small acts of faith and the consistent use of Scripture and prayer.

Appendix A — Key Gospel and New Testament Passages (select list)

Gospels (examples)

- Matthew 4:1–11 (temptation)
- Matthew 8:16–17; 9:32–33; 12:22–29; 17:14–21
- Mark 1:21–28; 1:32–34; 3:11–12; 5:1–20; 9:14–29
- Luke 4:33–37; 7:21; 8:26–39; 11:14–23; 9:37–43
- John 8:44 (Jesus' words about the devil as father of those who lie)

Acts and Epistles

- Acts 3:1–10 (healing of lame man)

- Acts 5:12–16; Acts 8:6–8; Acts 16:16–18; Acts 19:11–12; Acts 28:8–9
- Ephesians 6:10–18 (spiritual warfare)
- James 4:7 (resist the devil)

Appendix B — OT Stories of Underdogs and Deliverance (select list)

- Exodus 1–15 (Moses, the Exodus, Red Sea)
- Judges 6–7 (Gideon)
- 1 Samuel 17 (David and Goliath)
- 1 Kings 18 (Elijah on Carmel)
- 2 Chronicles 20 (Jehoshaphat)
- Esther (whole book)
- Daniel 3 and 6 (fiery furnace; lions’ den)
- Joshua 6 (Jericho)

Appendix C — Short Meditations & Prayers

1. A prayer when the bully threatens:

“Lord, expose the lies that terrify me. Grant me the courage to stand when you call me, and the faith to trust your deliverance.”

2. A brief meditation on humility and power:

“God’s strength is perfected in my weakness. Let me be small enough for you to make great.”

Conclusion

The Bible portrays the devil as a bully and bluffer who thrives on lies, threats, and intimidation. But Scripture's great storyline is God's repeated refusal to leave the bully unchallenged. Through unexpected leaders, humble servants, prophetic confrontation, miracles, and the person of Jesus — who rebuked both sickness and the tempter — God repeatedly exposes the bluff and vindicates the weak.

If this book were to have a single, practical word it would be: do not be seduced by appearances. Bullies shout; bluffers promise what they cannot keep. Faith, humility, prayer, and truth are the weapons God uses to unmask them and to lead underdogs into victory.

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