

## CHAPTER 8

# SOLDIERING AND BATTLING: THE FUNCTION OF MILITARY IMAGERY IN PAUL'S LETTERS

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.  
(Rom 16:20)

A few years ago, a full-page ad caught my eye inside the front cover of the magazine *Faith Today*.<sup>1</sup> What drew me was the large background photo of what appeared to be American troops with their lethal arms, on the move in a dusty place like Iraq or Afghanistan. Overlaid was a crosshairs, and across the picture in bold letters was the word “CONQUEST.” From the small print I learned that this was the title of a conference sponsored by the Calgary-based organization, Tehillah Monday (held June 6-10, 2004). Later, when consulting the web page version of the conference, I noticed that the text of Romans 8:37 was placed over the same combat image: “in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” Further in the conference website, I found more images of military warriors, overlaid with Bible verses with military themes.<sup>2</sup>

The case I have just described illustrates one contemporary reading of Paul's military metaphors. It would be an interesting exercise—though undoubtedly complex and perhaps combative—to explore whether the crusade promoted by the conference is the sort of conquest that Paul would have endorsed, or whether he might have vilified it with equally charged imagery as representing a “different gospel” or “different Jesus.”

But more to the point, is there a parallel here between, on the one hand, Tehillah Monday's use of military images, which seemed to give rather favourable endorsement (albeit implicitly) of the American military and its mode of crusade and conquest, and, on the other hand, Paul's appropriation of warfare and soldiering imagery? That is, did Paul likewise implicitly (in his use of military imagery) give a favourable endorsement of the Roman imperial order and the military machine on which it rested, or promote the idea of combative crusade in relation to his own cultural surroundings?

In light of these issues, this essay will explore the following questions.

(1) In what contexts and for what rhetorical purposes does Paul employ military imagery? (2) What is the inspiration for Paul's use of military imagery: the military imagery of his sacred scriptures alongside its development in his apocalyptic theological heritage, the ubiquitous presence of the Roman military in his own world, the military imagery of moral discourse in Greek philosophical tradition, or all of the above? (3) Does Paul's use of military imagery suggest a favourable, antagonistic, ambivalent, or indifferent attitude toward Rome and its military machine? (4) Is the military imagery in Paul separable from, opposed to, or intrinsic to his peace-promoting ethic? Does Paul's use of military imagery (alongside related destructive imagery) subvert its peace and reconciliation rhetoric, leaving irresolvable incompatibilities, or does the military imagery clarify and even enhance the peace theme? (5) Does the military imagery, along with other apparently violent, oppressive, destructive, escapist, or exclusivist aspects of Paul's rhetoric undermine its validity or usability in the contemporary world?

Credit goes to Michel Desjardins for raising some of these questions in his book, *Peace, Violence and the New Testament*.<sup>3</sup> Desjardins (a) takes a broad perspective on violence (not limiting himself to military or lethal violence), finding not only that the New Testament occasionally accepts or endorses military violence, but also that other forms of less overt, non-physical structural and social violence pervade the New Testament; (b) suggests that there is a provocative polarity between the peace-promoting and violence-promoting aspects or potentiality of the New Testament; and (c) raises the matter of the contemporary impact or potentiality of military images or possible violent dimensions of the New Testament. His argument pertaining to Paul is that the numerous military metaphors found in Paul's writings "reflect his recognition of the importance and worth of the military—or at least his acceptance of it."<sup>4</sup>

I will not attempt of full review of this thesis, but will limit myself in the essay to the function of Paul's military imagery. In order to engage

properly with this thesis, my first task will be to review the language and texts where Paul employs military images.

## WARFARE TERMINOLOGY AND IMAGERY

The first thing to observe is the vast array of words and images for military warfare in Paul's writings,<sup>5</sup> as is the case with texts throughout Hellenistic and Near Eastern antiquity.<sup>6</sup> Some of the words Paul uses derive specifically from the setting of warfare realities. Other words that he employs with martial connotations derive from other contexts (e.g. athletic contests) or have quite broader uses besides that of military combat (e.g. business, law), but are still regularly found in Greek writings to describe warfare (both real and mythic) from Homer to Herodotus and Thucydides, and in Jewish writings from the Septuagint<sup>7</sup> to the Maccabees and Josephus. One finds, for instance, that in the Greco-Roman world the athletic and military aspects of struggle/fight and contest/battle are inseparable.<sup>8</sup>

From Paul's few letters, then, we find more than enough words to tell an engaging and gory tale of real military encounter, even though Paul never uses these words and images to describe actual warfare or to celebrate/glorify military intervention.<sup>9</sup> The military connotations of these words are not always evident in English translation. We find words in the following categories:<sup>10</sup> (1) for battling, fighting, contending, struggling, engaging in a military campaign;<sup>11</sup> (2) for soldiers or fighters (including mythic combatants);<sup>12</sup> (3) for other protagonists, including enemies, opponents and rebels, rulers, lords and authorities, and deliverers;<sup>13</sup> (4) for weapons and armour, and war preparations;<sup>14</sup> (5) for rousing the troops to battle readiness and demonstrating (war) virtues;<sup>15</sup> (6) for ritual curses upon the enemy;<sup>16</sup> (7) for tactical terms, including base of operations, stealth, orderly lines, and battle commands;<sup>17</sup> (8) for inciting fear and terror in the enemy;<sup>18</sup> (9) for features of a city siege, including fortresses, defensive ramparts, fire, tearing down, destruction and devastation;<sup>19</sup> (10) for killing, crushing, squeezing, striking down the enemy;<sup>20</sup> (11) for search and destroy mission;<sup>21</sup> (12) for conquering, delivering, bringing to submission, coming to reign, royal arrival for making a reign effective, subduing rebellion;<sup>22</sup> (13) for ruin, peril, affliction, and tribulation experienced by the devastated;<sup>23</sup> (14) for taking captives;<sup>24</sup> and (15) for executive requital, including meting out punishment on the defeated, parading captives on their way to execution, and finally crucifixion of captives.<sup>25</sup>

But much more crucial than the mere words is an assessment of the uses of these words and the imagery conveyed, and to this I now turn.

## USES OF WARFARE IMAGERY IN PAUL

The primary framework for Paul's warfare imagery is the comprehensive millenarian (or millennial, apocalyptic) script that undergirds Paul's writings and his entire life's work.<sup>26</sup> On this, Paul is heir to a cultural script widely held in diverse forms in the ancient world, evident first and foremost in creation myths, whereby the created order and political regimes come to exist through the (successive) conquest of hostile powers.<sup>27</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, for instance, the emergence of order and creation in the context of political or natural chaos (whether at the beginning of time, during chronological time, or in the future) is pictured as an exercise in divine kingship with its attendant military engagement. Accordingly, Yahweh is pre-eminently and inseparably both king and warrior. In Jewish apocalyptic thought, which brings together multiple roots, this script is taken up into the account of final re-creation, or restoration of creation, whereby the present age will finally (and imminently) give way to the age to come in which God's imperial reign of the universe will be without rival.<sup>28</sup>

In Paul's writings, this grand narrative of divine imperial conquest (and victory) comes to explicit expression from time to time, but is often evident implicitly, and never far from the surface.<sup>29</sup> At the center of this script is a theocratic vision of total world conquest over the forces of darkness, death, and injustice—powers that oppress God's originally good creation. The conflict dualism in this millennial script is multi-layered, providing a framework for discussing Paul's warfare imagery:

(1) it is cosmic-mythic, involving the on-going battle in the present order of time between God and the rebellious cosmic powers which destabilize or oppress creation;

(2) it is historical-telic (goal-directed), involving the necessary final outcome based on God's fidelity to the created order, namely, the final conquest and triumph of God through the agency of Messiah, involving the cataclysmic transformation of the present world order and ushering in the coming age of peace and justice;

(3) it is moral-anthropological, involving the battle between Error (Sin) and Justice (Righteousness), between Flesh and Spirit, within every human being;

(4) it is ecclesial-social, involving the worldly warfare of God's people, who constitute God's alternative *ekklēsia* (citizen assembly), *polis* (city-state), and *basileia* (kingdom), and whose role in the cosmic conflict is to arm themselves and battle only with the "weapons of light" (Rom 13:12), the virtues of faith, love, hope, justice, good, and prayer;

(5) it is epistemological, involving the war between worldly wisdom and divine wisdom, and especially as exercised through apostolic authority in the assembly (1 Cor 1-2; 2 Cor 10).

To put it another way: God's cosmic war of liberation is being played out in (or, military imagery is found mainly in depictions of): (a) the final conquest of Death itself, with the first assault taking place in the resurrection of Jesus; (b) the ultimate collapse of the political-economic "structures" of this age (1 Cor 2:6-8; 7:31; 15:24-28); (c) the battle for moral virtue within human beings (Rom 6-8; Col 1-3); (d) the religio-socio-political conflict with forces hostile to Messiah and still persecuting Messiah's people; and (e) the struggle for the obedience of a particular Messianic assembly, against destabilizing teachers and trends. While God's triumph over the powers is not the only root metaphor of Paul's salvific vision, it is a crucial one, if not the foundational one, alongside the themes of participating in Messiah, making right, making holy, atoning through sacrifice, redeeming, and reconciling.<sup>30</sup>

## DIVINE WARFARE: VICTORY OVER THE POWERS

While the situational fabric of Paul's writings must be acknowledged, such that not all pieces of Paul's military imagery can be neatly integrated or systematized, some coherent themes can be identified, suggesting that behind Paul's particular expressions lies a broader narrative premise of divine warfare, drawing especially on his biblical-Judaic heritage.

In Paul's understanding, the "whole of creation" is under a "subjection to futility" and a "bondage to decay," through the power of "the one who put it under subjection" (Rom 8:20-21). The focal point of enslaving power in this world is the figure of "Satan," depicted as "the God of this age" (2 Cor 4:4), and in many ways equivalent to personified "Death" itself.<sup>31</sup> It is Satan/Death who (most likely) is responsible for the enslaving degradation of creation, and behind human structures and institutions when they become oppressive and enslaving.<sup>32</sup> Satan is at the apex of the present "age" or "regime/kingdom of darkness."<sup>33</sup> Closely aligned with Satan/Death is the power of Error (Sin) in the world.<sup>34</sup>

Paul's redemptive vision accordingly focuses on the imminent<sup>35</sup> and comprehensive future victory of God through the agency of Messiah in his *parousia* (Lat., *adventus*, also with military connotations), albeit inaugurated with the cross and resurrection as the initial assault on the forces of darkness. While already installed as enthroned lord of the universe through his resurrection (Rom 1:3-4; Phil 2:9), and while the reclamation work is already underway through a sort of government in exile (Phil 3:20; 1 Thess 2:12; cf. Col 1:13), the final goal of bringing

the world under complete subjection and reconciliation still lies in the future (Phil 2:10-11). In Paul's vocabulary, features of this final victory include: all things [the universe] brought under subjection to Messiah (1 Cor 15:27-28; Phil 3:20-21), that is, put under his feet (1 Cor 15:27, citing Ps 8:7); all sentient beings of the cosmos pledging allegiance to Messiah (Phil 2:10-11); all nations brought under the rule of Messiah (Rom 15:11);<sup>36</sup> the sudden destruction of those who proclaim "peace and security" (playing on Roman imperial propaganda, 1 Thess 5:2-3);<sup>37</sup> Messiah rendering ineffective<sup>38</sup> every rule, authority, and power (1 Cor 15:24); the rulers of this age rendered ineffective (1 Cor 2:6); the passing away of the structures of this world (1 Cor 7:31); all creation liberated (Rom 8:21); Satan crushed under the feet of the saints (Rom 16:20); Death, the final enemy, vanquished (1 Cor 15:23-26, 51-56; 1 Thess 4:13-18; Phil 3:20-21; Rom 5:12-21; 8:29-39);<sup>39</sup> and the final transfer of the kingdom to God, who will then be all in all, and to whom even Messiah will be ultimately subjected (1 Cor 15:27-28; that is, Messiah will not himself be a usurper, in contrast presumably to Satan and other worldly and cosmic powers).

In this world-transforming (not world-ending) cataclysm, Messiah will descend from heaven (1 Thess 4:16; Phil 3:20; Rom 11:26), will be accompanied by angelic, heavenly armies (1 Thess 3:13; 1 Cor 15:23), at the head of which will be the archangel (1 Thess 4:16, presumably Michael), will lead the battle through the trumpet call and the voice of command (1 Thess 4:16; 1 Cor 15:52),<sup>40</sup> and will meet his newly raised followers in the clouds and air (1 Thess 4:17), who will then escort him in triumphal procession.<sup>41</sup> Second Thessalonians adds the imagery of devastation by fire (2 Thess 1:7-8), retribution on the persecutors of the assembly (2 Thess 1:5-9), Messiah's slaying [ritual execution?] of the man of lawlessness "by the breath/spirit of his mouth" and defeat "at/by the manifestation/splendour of his presence" (2 Thess 2:8), and seems to assume a scenario of a procession to (or campaign against) the holy mountain Zion and the temple in order to reclaim lost territory (2 Thess 2:3-10).<sup>42</sup>

While the military imagery attached to this final redemption of creation is consistently evident, resulting in world-subjection to Messiah, one can also find the imagery of world-reconciliation in describing Messiah's final victory. Paul proclaims "the reconciliation of the world" (Rom 11:15); he asserts that God's plan through Messiah is to "reconcile the universe to himself, making peace by the blood of his cross," that is, not by conquering pacification (Col 1:20; cf. 2 Cor 5:18-19),<sup>43</sup> he explains how despite human disobedience God's mercy will ultimately conquer all disobedience, leading to the interdependent and complete salvation of

both “all Israel” and “the fullness of the nations” (Rom 11:25-32); and he proclaims that it is grace that will ultimately reign in justice, toward life for all in the age to come (Rom 5:12-21). While this reconciliation imagery could be taken as the consequence of military pacification (even the mercy of a conquering warrior), it is perhaps better to take this as an alternative, parallel paradigm for the final redemption of all creation. Indeed, there are indications that, in fact, this latter paradigm ultimately wins in Paul over the militarist version.<sup>44</sup>

What, then, is the role of the saints in this final drama, the final battle? In numerous Jewish apocalyptic texts the faithful participate in the final battle with force of arms against God’s earthly enemies, while other Jewish apocalyptic texts leave out any role for the elect, or define their synergistic contribution as martyrdom, passive resistance, or righteous virtue alone.<sup>45</sup> Paul on this matter clearly sides with the latter perspective. Paul nowhere depicts the faithful as participating with force of arms in the final battle, and their battle and weaponry in the present order of time is entirely non-militarist—a warfare of love, a ministry of reconciliation (below). As far as their role in the final drama,<sup>46</sup> Paul presents Messiah loyalists as enjoying the spoils, sharing in the Messianic reign, and assisting in the adjudication of punishment. The elect will be given, together with Messiah, all things [the universe] from God (Rom 8:32); they will “inherit the cosmos” (Rom 4:13); they will participate in the judgment of the angels and the world (1 Cor 6:2-3); they will “overwhelmingly conquer” as a result of Messiah’s agency (Rom 8:37); they will share in God’s subjection of the hostile powers under their feet (Rom 16:20); and they will enjoy the status of sharing in God’s glory and honour (Rom 8:17, 30). Precisely because they will ultimately be just co-regents with God and Messiah throughout all creation as was originally designed (Gen 1:26-31; cf. Rev 22:1-6),<sup>47</sup> all creation eagerly awaits “the revelation of the sons of God” and the “freedom” that comes through the glorious reign of the children of God (Rom 8:18-22). Just as believers await God’s Messiah (1 Thess 1:10; Phil 3:20), so also all creation awaits the liberating and benevolent rule of the children of God (Rom 8:18-21).

### **THE BATTLE WITHIN: THE WARFARE OF COSMIC ERROR (SIN) AGAINST THE HUMAN BEING**

A second major dimension of military struggle lies in Paul’s description of the moral incompetence of humanity as a successful and ongoing military campaign of Error (*hamartia*) against and within the human being. Error, personified as a kind of cosmic power, mysteriously “entered the world” (Rom 5:12-13),<sup>48</sup> and came to “reign in Death” (Rom 5:21,

that is, somehow bringing in death and working in alliance with Death). Insofar as all humans have themselves erred (sinned; Rom 1:18-3:20; 3:23; 5:12), all humanity is “under (the power of) Error” (3:8). Error thus “reigns in the death-liable<sup>49</sup> body” (Rom 6:12), “rules as lord” over human beings (Rom 6:14), and “enslaves” humanity, to keep human beings from doing the good and enacting righteousness-justice (Rom 6:17, 20; 7:25). Error operates especially in the sphere of the “Flesh,” a kind of power zone in battle against the power of the “Spirit” (Gal 5:16-17; Rom 7:4-6; 8:3-11). The operation of the “Flesh” is evident in a person’s “passions” (Rom 6:12; 7:5, 7) and “members” (Rom 7:23).

More particularly, Error has used “the commandment” (the Law) as a “base of military operations” for attacking the human being, because of its potential for arousing the passions (Rom 7:5, 7-8, 11). In so doing, Error used and corrupted that which was designed to give life (Rom 7:10), that which is “holy, righteous and good” (Rom 7:12), thereby deceiving and killing the human being (Rom 7:11). Indeed, because of Error’s work, the Law itself became an instrument that “held captive” the human (Rom 7:6; cf. 6:14-15). Error thus operated by stealth (*parakeimai*, Rom 7:21-23), using a pseudo Law to “wage a military campaign against” (*antistrateuomai*) God’s Law (Rom 7:23), thus rendering human beings both captive and enslaved to the pseudo Law of Error (Rom 7:14, 23, 25). As a result, the captives cry for their deliverance (Rom 7:24). For those in Error’s military service, the “rations-donatives”<sup>50</sup> amount to Death (Rom 6:23).

It is in the cosmic battle against Error in the world that the past effects of the victory via the cross and resurrection, and the proleptic effects of the future victory are expressly realized (Rom 6:1-8:14; Gal 1:4; cf. Col 2:9-3:10). In the argument of Romans, the captives who cry for their deliverance (Rom 7:24) find liberation in the work of God’s Messiah (8:2). Since the Law was rendered impotent to truly give life and justice, God through Messiah’s death ironically destroyed, by consigning to condemnation, the power of Error in human life (8:3). Insofar as the old human has been co-crucified with Christ, the body ruled by Error is rendered ineffective<sup>51</sup> (Rom 6:6; cf. Gal 2:20). Through the obedient agency of Messiah all the way to death, Grace instead of Error rules over those who follow Messiah’s pattern of loyalty (Rom 6:14). The human being has been liberated from (the power of) Error, and becomes enslaved to God (Rom 6:22). Similarly, the human formerly held captive by the Law, is now released<sup>52</sup> from it (7:6). In the latter part of Romans 8, the battle extends to that of the community in a hostile world, framed in terms of the ultimate victory of God over the powers within the present order of creation (8:18-39; below). Similarly, in Galatians 1:4 Paul asserts

that through the salvific act of Messiah, the believer has already been delivered from the present evil age. Colossians extends this notion to involve the “disarming” of the rulers and authorities, “making a public spectacle” of them, and “parading them in triumph” by means of the cross, thereby cancelling the effect and power of trespass in the world (Col 2:8-15).

The hortatory claim follows the indicative declaration: Messiah loyalists must therefore not submit themselves to Error’s rival reign (Rom 6:12), but instead offer their “members [limbs] as weapons of justice-righteousness” (6:13; cf. 8:5-14; Col 2:9-3:14). Indeed, since those in Messiah have experienced the crucifixion of the Flesh along with its passions, the faithful are invited to “keep in military line in the (power zone of the) Spirit” (Gal 5:24-25). Ethics is thus a kind of battle virtue (see below). A similar use of military imagery in Paul’s environment is that of the struggle/battle of reason and the virtues against the passions, a motif evident in Plato, Stoic philosophy, 4 Maccabees, and Philo.<sup>53</sup>

## APOSTOLIC AND SAINTLY STRUGGLE IN THE WORLD

A third arena in which Paul employs military language pertains to the conflict with earthly forces hostile to Messiah’s assembly and to Paul as Messiah’s envoy. The dimensions of this conflict can be labeled religious, social, and political, although for Paul the moral and the cosmic dimensions (above) would also be closely related. Paul refers to this encounter as involving a “struggle” (*agōn*, Phil 1:30; 1 Thess 2:2) and “battle” (*machē*, 2 Cor 7:5), referring to the experiences of the persecuted and suffering congregations at Philippi<sup>54</sup> and Thessalonica<sup>55</sup> at the hands of the Roman elite, and to his own detention and violent treatment by the Roman imperial authorities in Philippi,<sup>56</sup> Thessalonica,<sup>57</sup> and probably Ephesus.<sup>58</sup> In the wake of a recent detention and torture in Ephesus, Paul poignantly and ironically likens himself to being dragged with a group of captives in a Roman victory procession (a “triumph”) on their way to ritual execution (2 Cor 2:14-16). In these contexts especially, Paul highlights the identity of Messiah’s faithful as constituting (and being transferred into) God’s alternative city-state (*polis*, Phil 1:27; 3:20) and kingdom (*basileia*, 1 Thess 2:12-13; Col 1:11-13), whose founding and regulating “constitution” is the gospel itself.<sup>59</sup>

Indeed, Paul likens the Messianic assembly in Philippi to a city-state under siege, and thus exhorted to “strive” in the battle in unified array and to avoid succumbing to any acts of terror by adversaries (Phil 1:27-30),<sup>60</sup> while supported by the promise of ultimate victory (1:28), by the mutual consolation, love, and compassion that comes from Christ (2:1), and by the defensive guard maintained by “the God of peace” (4:7).

And precisely in these contexts of harassment and persecution, Paul refers to those who are his “fellow-athletes in the struggle” for the gospel (Phil 1:27; 4:3) and to his “fellow-soldiers” (Phil 2:25; Phil 1:2). The latter term appears to refer pre-eminently to those who have risked their lives in the cause of Messiah and who deserve medals of honour (e.g. Phil 2:29-30).

But engagement in the battle/struggle is not just for the saintly few. In these very situations of distress, Paul invites *all* the faithful to engage in battle, and *only* by means of the virtues.<sup>61</sup> In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Paul adapts the divine warrior imagery of Isaiah 59:17, and applies it to the community of the faithful: “put on the breastplate of fidelity and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.” Paul elsewhere claims to take up “the weapons of justice-righteousness, in the right hand and the left,” specifically identifying the virtues of purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, love, and truth, operating through the Holy Spirit and the power of God (2 Cor 6:6-7). Paul exhorts all the faithful to take up “the weapons of justice-righteousness” (Rom 6:13), the “weapons of light” (Rom 13:12), while taking off the vices of the night and “clothing yourselves with the Lord Jesus Messiah” (Rom 13:14). Thus, enacting the virtues of Messiah is tantamount to “keeping in battle line” (Gal 5:25; Phil 3:16). Resisting the forces of evil, the faithful are to “conquer” through the weapons of “good” (Rom 12:21; cf. Rom 8:28, 37), specifically including measures of love, peace-making, and nonretaliation—blessing persecutors while refusing to curse (Rom 12:12-21; 1 Thess 3:12; 5:15; cf. Phil 4:5). Finally, the loyal are invited to engage the conflict by “contending” also in prayer (Rom 15:30; Col 4:12).<sup>62</sup>

While this imagery is drawn especially from Paul’s scriptural heritage (e.g. Isaiah 59; Wisdom of Solomon 5), such that in effect Paul democratizes and pacifies the divine warrior motif,<sup>63</sup> a parallel can also be found in Cynic philosophy: the virtues are one’s impregnable fortress, and the disreputable philosopher’s clothes of rags (as exemplified by Odysseus) are the very and only weapons of virtue.<sup>64</sup> Crucially for Paul, the faithful participate synergistically in the struggle alongside Messiah, and not at all by force of arms. They wage warfare according to the norms of the city-state and kingdom to whose jurisdiction they have been transferred.

## **APOSTOLIC PREROGATIVE IN THE ASSEMBLY: BATTLE FOR GOD’S WISDOM**

Paul reserves his most elaborate use of military imagery (2 Cor 10:1-18) for his attack against the intellectual, sophistic insubordination of the Corinthian congregation, and especially their slavish submission

(2 Cor 11:4, 19-21) to rival sages and apostles, whom Paul accuses of introducing a “different gospel,” “different spirit,” “different Jesus” (2 Cor 11:4), and on whom he renders a damning curse (11:15). While the focus is on intellectual confrontation (10:5; 11:3, 6, 19), the text is mostly apologetic and polemical,<sup>65</sup> with little substantive debate apart from Paul’s contention that at issue is the very heart of the gospel. As a result it is very difficult to discern what the real issues were all about, what was indeed “different” about their gospel.

The core warfare text (2 Cor 10:3-6) is embedded in a polemically charged context, and the social setting and rhetorical purposes of this text must be carefully considered. Paul’s relationship with some members of the Corinthian congregation appears to have been strained from the very beginning of Paul’s work in Corinth. An open conflict between Paul and some members of the Corinthian assembly had been brewing for a while, and in an earlier letter Paul had sought to shame the social and intellectual elite of the congregation for their arrogant wisdom and wealth. Paul claimed that God would destroy their worldly wisdom by God’s folly, and their status and power by God’s weakness (1 Cor 1:17-2:16; cf. 1:5; 3:18-20; 4:8, 18-20).<sup>66</sup> Also somewhere in the interlude between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians is an apparent public shaming of Paul in Corinth, a return ultimatum from Paul, and an apparent resolution through the mediational work of Titus (2 Cor 1:23-2:11; 7:5-16).

Most recently, Paul has been accused by some detractors of being combatively “bold”<sup>67</sup> in his prior letters<sup>68</sup> when away from them, that his prior letters are excessively “weighty and powerful” (also with combative connotations), and designed “to frighten” (2 Cor 10:1-2, 9-10).<sup>69</sup> Meanwhile, he is charged with having a demeaning or servile bodily presence and a disdainful and unskilled oratorical speech (2 Cor 10:1, 10; 11:6-7). Moreover, he is apparently charged with overextending himself (as a sort of territorial conquest) into their “jurisdiction” (2 Cor 10:13-16; 11:12), faulted for insulting them and taking them in through deceit by refusing to accept their financial patronage (2 Cor 11:7-11; 12:13-18; cf. 1 Cor 9:1-27), and accused of desiring “to be lord over their loyalty” (2 Cor 1:24).

Paul’s return argument in 2 Corinthians 10-13 can be schematized as follows, primarily as a response to charges made against him:

(1) Whereas he has a reputation as being “timid” in person, and “bold” when away (10:1) . . .

- he begs that he may not be forced (by their disobedience) into being “bold in his coming” (as in warfare,<sup>70</sup> when he arrives soon;

10:2a). With these same themes—his ironic nothingness, like that of Christ, and the warning of his potential boldness upon his arrival (by which some might not be “spared”)—Paul concludes and encloses the whole unit (12:11; 12:19–13:2; 13:10).

(2) Whereas some claim that he is “walking according to the flesh” (10:2b). . .<sup>71</sup>

- he admits that while he indeed “walks *in* the flesh,” he certainly does not “wage war *according to* the flesh” (10:3), turning the tables on the charge.<sup>72</sup> He proceeds then to describe the manner of his alternative warfare which has as its goal the assembly’s full submission (10:4–6). The battle imagery includes: the display of (military) courage (10:1–2), the incitement of terror (10:9), protracted campaign (10:3–4), battle readiness (10:6), siege against fortresses and raised ramparts (10:4–5), special weapons (10:4), taking of captives (10:5), demand of total surrender and submission (10:6), and punishment of rebels (10:6). The battle, he says, is not “worldly/physical” (lit., “according to the flesh,” *kata sarka*),<sup>73</sup> but against any rationality (*logismos*) or arrogant obstacle (lit. raised rampart; *hypsoma epairomenon*), or thought (*noēma*) that is contrary to God’s knowledge (*gnosis*). Moreover, the intellectual battle is against any insubordination outside submissive obedience to Christ (10:4–6). The imagery is so sharp that Paul seems to describe himself as the military field commander in the Messianic war.<sup>74</sup>

- he claims that the disparagement against him shows that they “see things according to the face” (that is, they see only the surface of things; 10:7a).<sup>75</sup>

(3) Whereas his rivals are claiming to have a special relationship to Christ (10:7b). . .

- he claims that he is no less “of Christ” (10:7c).
- he cannot be shamed (because it is with legitimate foundation) by his boast in the authority (*exousia*) given to him by the Lord to build up and not tear down the assembly (10:8; cf. 13:10).

(4) Whereas some claim that his (combatively) “weighty and forceful” letters are merely attempts to frighten, and that he is really a pushover in person (in *parousia*, 10:9–10). . .

- he warns that (this time) he will be in action upon arrival<sup>76</sup> as he is in word while away (10:11).

(5) Whereas some are commending themselves by inappropriate comparisons and thus display their lack of wisdom (10:12) . . .

- he refuses to be put in the same class of comparison and will not boast without foundation (“without measure,” 10:12).
- he will boast in the “measure of jurisdiction” granted him from God, to “reach out as far as” them (using an image of territorial acquisition; 10:13). Quite apart from overreaching into someone else’s territory (as some claim he is), he “overtook” them (as in territorial acquisition)<sup>77</sup> with the gospel of Christ, and so in effect has first claim on the territory (10:14). He refuses to boast excessively in work done by others (as his rivals are doing), but does hope that as their loyalty increases his jurisdiction will be enhanced among them, so that he can preach the gospel in regions even beyond them (10:15-18).

He comments further: he is jealous for them, as a father betrothing his daughter to a husband; he is fearful that they are being deceived; and he charges that they are displaying slavish submission to late-coming pretenders who preach a different gospel (11:1-4).

(6) Whereas some put on airs as “super-apostles” (11:5) . . .

- he is in no way inferior to them. While he may be untrained in rhetoric, he excels in wisdom (11:6).

He digresses to admit that what he is doing (by way of self-defence) is entirely foolish, but claims ironically that they have already made him a fool anyway (11:1).

(7) Whereas some claim that Paul has debased himself by working for his own livelihood (11:7) . . .

- no one in the regions of Achaia (Greece) can stop this boast of his—that he has not been a “burden” to any patron (11:8-11).<sup>78</sup> Indeed, he will continue this practice in order “to undercut the base of operations of those wishing a base of operations”—that in their boast they might be found to have the same claim as Paul (11:12). The rivals are then described as “disguised agents of Satan” and condemned (11:13-15).

Paul digresses again to explain that no one should take him as a fool, and that he is only engaged in this foolish boast—in a way the Lord never would—because they have put him in the role of fool (11:16-17).

(8) Whereas many are boasting “according to the flesh” (10:18a) . . .

- he too will boast (10:18b), but will boast only in his weaknesses, in favour of the power that comes from Christ (10:19-12:10).

Thereupon Paul makes his final defense of his credentials and appeal for their loyalty (12:11-19), repeating his warning that they need to prepare themselves ahead of his arrival (12:20-13:9), in light of his authority given by the Lord for their upbuilding not their tearing down (13:10).

What this brief review indicates is that Paul’s self-acknowledged warfare against opposing (sophistic) thought structures (1) is seen as a subset of his apostolic authority (*exousia*) as designed ultimately to build up, not to tear down (10:8; 13:10),<sup>79</sup> (2) is appropriate to his territorial jurisdiction in the proclamation of the gospel (10:13-16), (3) is designed to “undercut the base of operations” of his Corinthian detractors and rivals (11:12), (4) has primarily a verbal and intellectual character (10:5, 14, 16), (5) has as its aim the extension of loyalty and obedience to Lord Messiah Jesus (a theo-political claim; 10:6, 15; 13:5; cf. 1:24), and (6) has as its ultimate *modus operandi* the ironic power and victory of those who are the despised, unrefined, lowly, and weak nothings (10:1; 11:7, 21, 25-33; 12:5-10, 11; 13:3-4, 9; cf. 1 Cor 1:26-29; 4:8-13)—that is, the prototype is Messiah Jesus himself (13:3-4).<sup>80</sup>

The imagery of Paul’s warfare rhetoric in this text comes from no particular source or tradition. (a) The overarching script of God’s war of liberation in the cosmos offers the core framework. Indeed, the divine warfare framework is apparent especially in the way Paul caricatures his ecclesial adversaries as “disguised messengers of Satan,” and subject to a curse of doom (2 Cor 11:12-15). Moreover, in the same letter, Paul presents Satan as the source of deceptive “thoughts” (*noēmata*; 2 Cor 2:11; 11:3),<sup>81</sup> that which his own ministry must also conquer (10:5).<sup>82</sup> Just as the divine warrior of his Hebrew Scriptures can wage war against the elect community, here too the battle is for the integrity of the assembly as Paul understands it.<sup>83</sup> (b) A particular text from the Septuagint has perhaps given special inspiration: “A wise man assaults fortified cities, and destroys (*katheilen*)<sup>84</sup> the fortification (*ochyrōma*)<sup>85</sup> on which the impious have confidence”<sup>86</sup> (Prov 21:22 LXX). (c) The imagery of siegecraft in its various aspects was commonly known in the ancient world, and easily amenable to metaphorical application. (d) Moral

philosophers had appropriated battle imagery into the ethical quest. Stoics emphasized reason and the virtues as a person's inner fortification. Philo similarly asserted that the faculty of reason must wage war against the insubordinate, sophistic assault by the passions. Cynic philosophers had adapted the notion of the soul as a fortified city and the virtues as weapons, specifically to refer to the prototypical and unflattering Odysseus whose clothes of rags (virtues) were his only weapons. While A. Malherbe argues that Paul here intends a parallel between himself and Odysseus, more explicitly Paul makes the parallel between his own contemptible weakness and that of Christ.<sup>87</sup> Finally, (e) Corinth was renowned for its physical fortifications, the subject of regular disdain by the Spartans.<sup>88</sup> Paul perhaps also plays on this tradition.

## REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

How, then, do we explain the pervasive warfare vocabulary and imagery in Paul's letters? Is it inherently problematic? Does it indicate some kind of morbid fascination or dysfunctional preoccupation with martial culture itself? Quite the contrary, Paul's use of military imagery reflects first his own Scriptural heritage,<sup>89</sup> alongside its mediation through Jewish apocalyptic thought. But it also echoes ancient cultural conventions more generally. As observed above, military imagery is also evident in the Greek ethical rhetoric and theory of Plato, the Stoics, and Cynics.

Paul's imagery displays particular resonances with Persian Zoroastrian conceptions. Similarly to Paul, military imagery is central to Zoroastrianism in its understanding of the ongoing battles between the forces of good and evil in the present order of time, in its drama of the final victory by Ahura Mazda and the forces of good ushering in the age to come, and in the exhortation to spiritual-ethical militancy. The faithful have a responsibility to act synergistically with God to help usher in the age of good and justice.<sup>90</sup> And to this day, the most important Zoroastrian badge is the "kusti" girdle of three cords that an adherent wears from the time of formal initiation into the faith. It is ceremonially donned every day in a prayer ritual, symbolizing the binding of oneself with the weapons of virtue—its three cords representing the three-fold ethic of good thoughts, good words and good actions—in the hopes for the defeat of the enemies of good, and in hopes for the final end of all warfare.<sup>91</sup> In accordance with the theme of spiritual-ethical militancy in Zoroastrianism,<sup>92</sup> "symbolically, the faithful are girding themselves as soldiers for Ahura Mazda."<sup>93</sup>

Additionally, it must simply be recognized that ancient language use in general was far more concretely metaphorical (along with most traditional/indigenous languages) than literally descriptive or

symbolically abstract, in comparison with modern Western languages.<sup>94</sup> Thus, for instance, while we might say “undermine the opportunity” (RSV) or “contradict the claims” (CEB), Paul says “undercut the base of operations” of rivals (2 Cor 11:12). (And most of us do not recognize that “strategy” and “polemic” in English are derived from Greek military terms.)<sup>95</sup> Moreover, to expect Paul to have completely eschewed any military analogy is to judge ancient speech by the standards of modern liberal polite society, to which Paul does not obviously measure up. The use of military metaphors does not make the speech nor the speaker inherently violent. Similarly, to deconstruct the command “to love our enemies” because it may insidiously invite us to have enemies would be a similar misreading. To deprive Paul of his military vocabulary would render his theology and his ethics vacuous.

This is not to say that every word, analogy, or expression in Paul is to be exonerated, and that military language is to be used plentifully or indiscriminately today. Paul’s socially binary or militarily combative conquest language is most certainly amenable to misappropriation, and the pervasive military paradigms found throughout contemporary life (not simply in language) must also be carefully unveiled and evaluated. But the fault for this cannot be ascribed simply to Paul.

Paul’s rhetoric in 2 Corinthians in particular is certainly disturbing and requires careful assessment, but not simply because he used military analogies for his engagement with the Corinthians (imagery which was balanced and modified by plenty of softer, inviting language). More troubling, rather, is his use of unilateral apostolic authority (as a sort of commander in Messiah’s war), which could easily become a legitimating paradigm for the abuse of church leadership today. No matter how high the stakes in the perceived threat to the gospel (a frequent point of exoneration in the commentaries, a classic utilitarian argument), nor how he had been on the defence long enough and had to go on the attack, Paul’s apostolic behaviour in slandering his rivals as “messengers of Satan” and as worthy of the curse of “destruction” cannot be condoned, especially when measured against his own standards of behaviour (Rom 12:14; 1 Cor 4:12-13). Even Paul himself realizes how wrong-headed the tirade was (11:1, 16-17; 12:6, 11), and his speech in Philippians 1:15-18 offers a corrective internal to the Pauline corpus.<sup>96</sup>

What about the apparent disjunction between peace and warfare themes in Paul’s theology and persuasion? Indeed, in the rhetoric of God’s cosmic warfare and of saintly struggle in the world, images of peace and images of warfare are closely intertwined.<sup>97</sup> But crucially in Paul, only the virtues are valid weapons of war. As A. Harnack puts it: “the military element is neutralized.”<sup>98</sup> But equally significant, Paul only

knows of an embattled peace: the battle imagery is inseparable from and intrinsic to the vision of cosmic peace, and to the ethic of peace and nonretaliation. For Paul there seems to be no peace without justice (in its various dimensions, including the transformation of the individual to just character and virtue). It is noteworthy, then, that insofar as there is a pacifism to be found from Paul's letters, it must be an agonistic pacifism—a pacifism that is not withdrawn or passive, but thoroughly engaged in struggle.<sup>99</sup>

But it might be argued that the warfare imagery ultimately subverts a peace-ethic in Paul, or a Christian ethic attentive to Paul. For instance, it could be argued that it permits or encourages crusader violence, promotes inside/outside social dualisms, makes God violent, or legitimizes violence in God's name. But on the other side, it should be noted that Paul's warfare perspective, by which justice ultimately prevails, (a) provides the psychological space to "let go" as one subjected to injustice, while not fully letting go of claims to justice, and (b) expresses the judicial side to the divine character, against a domesticated God of self-actualization and niceness. Moreover, (c) the discomfort with violent images of God's requital of the unjust may simply reflect a social location of privilege and comfort.

Quite the contrary, the potentiality of Paul's rhetoric for supporting nonviolent movements of liberation must be recognized. The mythic tradition of divine warfare in Israel's sacred texts, while reaching back to roots in the Ancient Near Eastern creation mythology, is rooted in the liberation event from enslavement and oppression, and includes such permutations that include God's warfare against oppression and injustice within the nation itself, and the notion that God's warfare ultimately means the destruction of war and war machinery. And the millennial permutation (in Jewish apocalyptic) to which Paul is more directly indebted has its roots in a particular episode of foreign domination and functioned as a form of resistance. Paul's theology itself is a form of resistance to powers of domination.<sup>100</sup>

What about the argument that Paul's particular use of martial imagery reflects a favourable attitude toward the Roman military, or military activity in general? The first thing to say is that when Roman warfare or military is indeed referenced (directly or indirectly), in the overwhelming number of cases Messiah's community is on the receiving end, not on the benefitting side: the apostles are dragged in an imperial military parade (2 Cor 2:14-16); Messiah is crucified by the imperial rulers (1 Cor 2:6-8); Messiah's people are slaughtered by the imperial "sword" (Rom 8:35-36); the imperial system is coded as the persecuting "dogs, evil-doers, and butchery" (Phil 3:2, drawing on Ps 22:12-16). Only in one case is the

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imperial sword offered as God's judicial agent (Rom 13:1-7), and in its rhetorical context, precisely (among other reasons) as a warning against seditious insurrection by those who have yet to be convinced by Messiah's warfare of love (Rom 12:9-21). On the other hand, Paul envisions that even the Roman imperium will be "rendered ineffective" when Christ's reign becomes supreme in the world (1 Cor 2:6-8), and he claims that its arrogant claims to bring "peace and security" throughout the world will be the occasion for its final destruction (1 Thess 5:2-3). And the couple of incidental allusions to military practice (1 Cor 9:7; 14:8) also do not suggest that Paul endorsed actual military operations sympathetically.

To close: Paul's cosmic conquest vision and saintly warfare rhetoric has inspired (but cannot be blamed as having caused) quite divergent responses: from (a) radical revolutionary politics for social transformation in places like the Philippines; to (b) right-wing politics in places like Canada toward the exclusion of persons on the basis of sexual orientation from the broader social contract, let alone from membership in the holy community; to (c) global imperial domination or belligerent nationalism (both past and present), wherein the best soldier is assumed to be the good Christian; but also to (d) an agonistic pacifism of active, nonviolent struggle toward a vision of restorative justice and a just peace. While in inner Christian discourse I find the last to be the most authentic reading of Paul (even among options I have not mentioned), I also find it imperative to be attentive to both the liberating and the oppressing, both the peace-promoting and the violence-promoting potential of the apostle's rhetoric.

(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

28. For instance, 1 Corinthians, which has been described as “one great fugue around the single word *pan* [all],” in Taubes, *Political Theology*, 1. Paul’s internationalism and his emphasis on corporate unity relative to Corinthian congregationalism, localism, and individualism is evident from the outset (e.g. 1:2, 9; 4:6-7, 17; 7:17; 11:16; 12:1-13; 16:1-4, 15, 19). Romans 15:7-33 (the “collection,” cf. Gal 2:10; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8-9) is also a crucial text for Paul’s vision of a globally united church.

29. This also suggests that we can never rest content with a retreat to any so-called tradition-based rationality and its attendant identitarianism, by which one implicitly posits that you must be “X” to understand and justify “X-ness.”

30. E.g. D. Durnbaugh, “Believers Church,” *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online* (1987; <<http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/B4458.html>> accessed 10 June 2008).

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1. *Faith Today*, March/April 22/2 (2004): 2. *Faith Today* is the publication of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

2. As cited on the web-site, [www.tmconference.com](http://www.tmconference.com) [no longer posted]: Ps 45:4 (“In your majesty, ride out to victory, defending truth, humility, and justice. Go forth to perform awe-inspiring deeds.”); Heb 12:4 (“You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”); Joel 3:9 (“Proclaim among the nations: Prepare for War! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack.”).

3. Michel Desjardins, *Peace, Violence and the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

4. Desjardins, *Peace, Violence and the New Testament*, 82.

5. E.g. Desjardins, *Peace, Violence and the New Testament*, 63-65; David Williams, *Paul’s Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody: Hendricksen, 1999), ch. 10, “Warfare and Soldiering,” 211-44; Raymond Collins, *The Power of Images in Paul* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), 36-38, 62-63, 107, 133, 172, 169-72 and passim (see index). W. Swartley (“War and Peace in the New Testament,” *ANRW* II.26.3: 2315) rightly correlates the war and peace images in Paul, but minimizes the frequency and diversity of military language and images. Similarly, O. Bauernfeind, “*strateuomai*,” *TDNT* VII, 708-710, suggests that the *strateuomai* (fighting, battling) word group is “not really at home” in the vocabulary of Paul.

6. A. Malherbe, “Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War,” *Harvard Theological Review* 76 (1983): 143-73.

7. The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, abbreviated LXX, dating to the second century BCE.

8. See Victor C. Pfitzer, *Paul and the Agon Motif* (Leiden: Brill, 1967); Martin Brändl, *Der Agon bei Paulus: Herkunft und Profil paulinischer Agon metaphorik* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006). Particularly relevant is the use of *athlēsis* (striving, contending) and *agōn* (struggle) to describe military struggle and

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resistance in Josephus and the Maccabees.

9. While Paul's use of this imagery is mainly analogical, metaphorical, or mythic, exceptional cases where concrete historical violence is described include: his own violent persecution of church (Gal 1:13, 23), the crucifixion of Jesus by the rulers (1 Cor 2:6-8), the "sword" of physical persecution by the Roman imperial order (Rom 8:35-36), or the judicial "sword" of the imperial regime (Rom 13:4).

10. This listing below is a maximalist list, including many places where military imagery or allusion is likely, but not certain.

11. *machē*, battle, fight, 2 Cor 7:5 [cf. deutero-Pauline 2 Tim 2:23; Tit 3:9; for *machaomai*, 2 Tim 2:24]; *thēriomacheō*, battle beasts, 1 Cor 15:32; *antikeimai*, be lined up in combat, be in opposition, Gal 5:17; 2 Thess 2:4; *agōn*, struggle, contest, Phil 1:30; 1 Thess 2:2; Col 2:1 [1 Tim 6:2; 2 Tim 4:7]; *agōnizomai*, contend, battle, Col 1:29; 4:12; 1 Cor 9:15 [1 Tim 4:10; 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7]; *synagōnizomai*, Rom 15:30; *synathleō*, strive together, Phil 1:27; 4:3; [*athleō*, 2 Tim 2:5]; *polemos*, battle, war, 1 Cor 14:8; *strateia*, military campaign, 2 Cor 10:4 [1 Tim 1:18]; *strateuō*, serve in war, engage in war, 1 Cor 9:7; 2 Cor 10:3 [1 Tim 1:18; 2 Tim 2:4]; *antistrateuō*, to make war against, Rom 7:23; [*stratologēō*, commander, 2 Tim 2:4; *palē*, struggle, Eph 6:12].

12. *systratiōtēs*, fellow soldier, Phil 2:25; Phlm 2; *tis strateuetai*, someone going to war, 1 Cor 9:7; [*stratiōtēs*, 2 Tim 2:3-4]; *angeloi*, as angelic warriors, Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 6:3; 2 Cor 12:17; 2 Thess 1:7; *archangelos*, archangel, 1 Thess 4:16; *hagioi*, saints as heavenly warriors, 1 Thess 3:13; *opsōnion*, wages paid to a soldier, donatives, Rom 6:23.

13. *echthros*, enemy, Rom 12:20; 1 Cor 15:25, 26; 2 Thess 3:15; *antikeimenos*, adversary, 1 Cor 16:9; Phil 1:28; 2 Thess 2:4 [1 Tim 1:10; 5:14]; *anthistēmi*, to rebel, resist, Rom 13:2; *antitassomenos*, rebel, Rom 13:2; *archontes*, rulers, Rom 13:3; 1 Cor 2, 6, 8; *kyrios*, lord, passim; *exousiai*, authorities, Rom 13:1, 2; 1 Cor 15:24; *dynameis*, powers, Rom 8:38; *rhyomemos*, deliverer, Rom 11:26; 1 Thess 1:10; *sōtēr*, deliverer, Phil 3:20.

14. *machaira*, sword, Rom 8:35; 13:4 [Eph 6:17]; *hopla*, battle attire/weapons, 2 Cor 6:7; 10:4; Rom 6:13; 13:12; [*panoplia*, whole body armour, Eph 6:11, 13]; *thōrax*, breastplate, 1 Thess 5:8 [Eph 6:14]; *perikephalaia*, helmet, 1 Thess 5:8 [Eph 6:17]; [*perizōnymmi*, "girding on" belt/armour, Eph 6:14; *endymoi*, "enrobe" with arms, Eph 6:14; *thyreōs*, shield, Eph 6:16; *belos*, missile, Eph 6:16]; *en hetoimō echontes*, making [battle] readiness, 2 Cor 10:6; *tis paraskeuasetai eis polemon*, someone getting ready for battle, 1 Cor 14:8.

15. The words for "virtue" in Greek (*aretē*, valour; Phil 4:9) and Latin (*virtus*, manliness, valour) originally derive from the context of warfare. Also: *andrizomai*, be manly, courageous, 1 Cor 16:13; *krataiōō*, be strong, 1 Cor 16:13; [*kratēs*, strength, Eph 6:10; *ischys*, might, Eph 6:10]; *stēkete en tē pistei*, stand [firm] in loyalty, 1 Cor 16:13; Phil 1:27; 4:1; Gal 5:1; 1 Thess 3:8; 2 Thess 2:15 [Eph 6:14]; *nēphō*, be sober, 1 Thess 5:6, 8; *grēgoreō*, be watchful, 1 Cor 16:13; 1 Thess 5:6; cf. Rom 13:12; [*agrypneō*, be alert, Eph 6:18; cf. *agrypnia*, sleeplessness as battle virtue, 2 Cor 6:5; 11:27]; *proskartereō*, perseverance, Rom 12:12; Col 4:12; [*proskarterēsis*, Eph 6:18]; *mē ptyresthai*, not frightened, Phil 1:28; *tharrō*, be bold, courageous, 2 Cor 10:1-2; [*anthistemi*, withstand, stand against, Eph 6:11].

16. *kataraomai*, Rom 12:14; *anathema*, 1 Cor 16:22; Gal 1:8-9. The ritual cursing of enemies was a regular pattern of ancient warfare.

17. *parakeimai*, lie beside [in stealth], Rom 7:21; *aphormē*, base of operations, Rom 7:8, 11; Gal 5:13; *ekkoptein tēn aphormēn*, undercut a base of operations, 2 Cor 11:12; *enkoptō*, set a roadblock, 1 Thess 2:18; *salpigx*, trumpet, 1 Thess 4:16; 1 Cor 14:8; 15:52; *kata taxin*, in proper battle array, 1 Cor 14:40; *taxis kai stereōma*, good order and firmness, Col 2:5; *tagmata*, ranks, 1 Cor 15:23; *stoicheō*, walk/keep in (battle) line, Gal 6:16; Phil 3:16; *keleusma*, word of command, 1 Thess 5:16; *phōnē tou archangelou*, sound/voice of the archangel, 1 Thess 5:16.

18. *ekphobein*, causing fear/terror, 2 Cor 10:9; cf. *ptyresthai*, become afraid, Phil 1:28; *phobos*, fear/terror, Rom 13:4.

19. *kathairō*, tear down, 2 Cor 10:4; *kathairēsis*, tearing down, 2 Cor 10:4, 8; 13:10; *methistēmi*, *methistanō*, remove, transfer, Col 1:13; 1 Cor 13:2; *ochyrōma*, stronghold/fortress, 2 Cor 10:4; *hypsōma epairomenon*, raised obstacle [defensive rampart], 2 Cor 10:5; *phroureō*, guard, hold at bay, Phil 4:7; *katargeō*, make null, render idle, destroy, 1 Cor 1:28; 2:6; 15:24, 26; Rom 6:6; 2 Thess 2:8, in parallel with *anaireō*, to slay; *apollymi*, destroy, 1 Cor 1:19; Rom 14:15; be destroyed, 1 Cor 8:11; 10:9; *apōleia*, destruction, Phil 1:28; 3:19; Rom 9:22; 2 Thess 2:3 [1 Tim 6:9]; *olethros* [ollymi], destruction, 1 Cor 5:5; 1 Thess 5:3; 2 Thess 1:9 [1 Tim 6:9]; *phtheirō*, corrupt/destroy, 1 Cor 3:17; *portheō kath' hyperbolēn*, devastate with excess, Gal 1:13, 23; *en puri phlogos*, with flaming fire, 2 Thess 1:8.

20. *syntribō*, crush, Rom 16:20; *diōkō*, pursue, Gal 1:13, 23; cf. Rom 12:14; 1 Cor 4:12; *apokteinō*, kill, Rom 7:11; 8:36; 1 Thess 2:15; *bareō*, crush, 2 Cor 1:8; *kataballō*, strike down, 2 Cor 4:9; *anaireō*, take away/kill, 2 Thess 2:8.

21. *diōkō kai portheō*, pursue and devastate, Gal 1:13, 23.

22. *nikaō*, conquer, Rom 12:21; *hypernikaō*, supremely conquer, Rom 8:37; *nikos*, victory, 1 Cor 15:54, 55, 57; *hypotassō*, bring to submission, Phil 3:21; Rom 8:20; 1 Cor 15:27-28; *hypakoē* vs. *parakoē*, submission vs. insubordination, 2 Cor 10:6; cf. *katergazesthai*. . . *eis hypakoēn ethnoōn*, unto the submission of the nations, Rom 15:18; *zygos douleias*, yoke of slavery, Gal 5:1; every knee bend and every tongue swear allegiance, Phil 2:9-11; *sōtēria*, deliverance, Rom 13:11; Phil 1:28; 1 Thess 5:9; *sōzō*, to deliver, save, Rom 5:9 [from "wrath"; cf. 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9]; *exaireō*, deliver, Gal 1:4; *rhyomai*, deliver, Rom 7:24; 11:26; 2 Cor 1:10; Col 1:13; 1 Thess 1:10; 2 Thess 3:2; *basileuō*, reign, make reign effective, 1 Cor 15:25; Rom 5:17; 6:12; 1 Cor 4:8; 15:25; *parousia*, as royal "arrival" [*adventus*] for judgment and deliverance, 1 Thess 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 1 Cor 15:2; to put enemies under foot, 1 Cor 15:26; *syllaō*, plundering, strip arms from a slain foe, 2 Cor 11:7-8; *sylogōgēō*, carry off spoils of war, Col 2:8.

23. *apōleia*, Rom 9:22; Phil 1:28; 3:19; 2 Thess 2:3; *apollymenoi*, perishing, 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; 4:3; 2 Thess 2:10; receive *orgē*, "wrath," 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Rom 9:22; *stenochōrēō*, be squeezed, crushed, 2 Cor 4:8; *stenochōria*, squeezing; *thlipsis*, pressure, tribulation; *diōgmos*, persecution, *kindynos*, peril, Rom 8:35; *hybrizomai*, be mistreated [violently], 1 Thess 2:2.

24. *aichmalōtezō*, Rom 7:23; 2 Cor 10:5 [2 Tim 3:6]; *synaichmalōtos*, fellow captive, Phlm 23; Rom 16:7; Col 4:10; cf. *desmios*, prisoner, bound captive, Phlm 1, 9 [Eph 3:1; 4:1; cf. *aichmalōsia*, *aichmalōteuō*, captives, take captives, Eph 4:8]; *phroureō*, guard, hold in custody, 2 Cor 11:32; Gal 3:23; *synkleiō*, confining, Rom

11:32.

25. *ekdikos*, vindication, vengeance, 1 Thess 4:6; Rom 13:4; *ekdikeō*, Rom 12:19; 2 Cor 10:6; [*ekdikēsis*, 2 Thess 1:8]; execute “wrath,” 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Rom 1:18; 12:19; 13:4-5; *thriambeuō*, parade in triumph, 2 Cor 2:14; Col 2:15; *stauros*, cross, 1 Cor 1:17, 18; Gal 5:11; 6:12, 14; *stauroō*, execute on a cross, Rom 6:12, 14; 1 Cor 1:23; 2:2, 8; 2 Cor 13:14.

26. See notably Ernst Käsemann, “The Beginnings of Christian Theology,” in *New Testament Questions of Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 82-107 (“apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology,” p. 102); J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); Douglas Campbell, *The Quest for Paul’s Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2005).

27. Peter W. Macky, *St. Paul’s Cosmic War Myth: A Military Version of the Gospel* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), esp. ch. 2, The Lord as Man of War: Military Symbolism in the Hebrew Theological Tradition; Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976).

28. See John J. Collins, “Early Jewish Apocalypticism,” *ABD* I, 282-88; Norman R. C. Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

29. For an attempt to reconstruct the broader narrative, see Macky, *Paul’s Cosmic War Myth*, 55-218; he incorporates deutero-Pauline material (Col; 2 Thess; Eph) into his analysis.

30. For the various metaphors of salvation in Paul, see Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 256-71.

31. Macky, *Paul’s Cosmic War Myth*, 54-116.

32. The manifestation of the dark powers in the present order of time is evident in expressions such as: “Satan hindered [set a roadblock against] us” (1 Thess 2:18, alluding to the Roman imperial authorities); “the tempter had tempted you” (1 Thess 3:5); “the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers” (2 Cor 4:4); “the rulers of this age crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Cor 2:6-8); active “messengers/agents of Satan” (2 Cor 11:14-15; 12:7). Human institutions or persons can, it seems, either be under the thrall of Satan, or operate as ministers of God (Rom 13:4-5); the “rulers” and “powers,” whether cosmic or historical, are not categorically evil (cf. Col 1:16). Satan as destroyer of nature and of physical life/health is evident in such texts as 1 Cor 5:5; 10:10; 2 Cor 12:7; and probably Rom 8:20-22. Satan as the tempter/tester of moral evil is apparent in 1 Thess 3:5; 1 Cor 7:5.

33. For the imagery of darkness, see Rom 13:12; Col 1:13. For the expression “this age” or “this world,” see 2 Cor 4:4; Gal 1:4; 1 Cor 2:6-8; 7:31. For the contrasting imagery of (the regime of) “light” or “the day,” see Rom 13:11-14; 1 Thess 5:8.

34. See below, and n. 48.

35. E.g. 1 Cor 7:26, 29, 31; 10:11; Rom 13:11-14; Phil 4:5.

36. A compelling case can be made that Paul also envisions some kind of renewal of corporeal Israel in the land (but without any connection to the modern secular state of Israel, and just as with traditional orthodox Jewish Messianic expectation). See Mark Reasoner, “On Earth, Not in Heaven: Paul’s

Scriptures and the Political Salvation of Israel in Romans 9-11," (paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, November 18, 2006, Washington, D.C.; available online at <http://www.thepaulpage.com/on-earth-not-in-heaven-pauls-scriptures-and-the-political-salvation-of-israel-in-romans-9-%E2%80%93-11/>, accessed May 29, 2012).

37. K. Wengst, *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ*, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 77-78; H. Koester, "Imperial Ideology and Paul's Eschatology in 1 Thessalonians," in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. R. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 158-66; Collins, *Power of Images*, 32-33.

38. The ambiguity in regard to the final destiny of the "powers" is evident in Paul's choice of verbs (*katargeō*, esp. in 1 Cor 1:28; 2:6; 15:24, 26). This verb literally denotes "make idle/fallow, render ineffective, deactivate, bring to nothing, nullify" and by extension "bring to submission, remove, give up, discharge from, remove, take away," and in some cases "abolish, destroy." This last, stronger sense is evident when Paul uses this verb as a parallel to "crucify" (Rom 6:6) or to "slay" (2 Thess 2:8). But Paul's meaning in this eschatological text is more likely "to bring to submission, to render ineffective," in the sense of "putting under one's feet," not the stronger sense "to destroy," as in most modern English translations.

39. See Martinus C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death: Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988).

40. For Paul's interest in this military "command" structure, see also 1 Cor 14:8.

41. Daniel G. Reid, "Triumph," in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, eds. G. F. Hawthorne and R. P. Martin (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 946-54.

42. *Ibid.*, 952.

43. Cf. Eph 1:10, 20-22; 3:10.

44. See Chapter 7.

45. Gordon Zerbe, "'Pacifism' and 'Passive Resistance' in Apocalyptic Writings: A Critical Evaluation," in *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Craig A. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 65-95.

46. For their "battle" in the present order of time, see below.

47. The active synergy of the faithful alongside God is also expressed in Rom 8:28 – "We know that together with those who love God, he [God, or the Spirit] co-works [Gk. *synergei*] all things [either: "all experiences," or "the universe"] toward the good, together with those called for this very purpose." For another synergy text, see Phil 2:12-13.

48. Paul nowhere defines precisely the relationship between Error and Satan, and thus the relationship between the battle against Error and the battle against Satan and oppressive cosmic powers. Since Paul in some places links Satan with human sinfulness (1 Cor 7:5; 2 Cor 2:11; 1 Thess 3:5; cf. Eph 2:2) it would follow that Error may be pictured as some sort of subversive agent of Satan, even though its origins remain a mystery. But on the other hand, the subversive spirit of Error is merely the flip side of the proclivity of human beings to err (Rom 5:12); Paul would never put Error solely on the side of a cosmic force that absolves human beings of liability.

## Citizenship

49. “Mortal” in Greek is literally “death-liable” (*thnētos*), deriving from “death” (*thanatos*). Thus “death-liable body” (Rom 6:12) is equivalent to “body of death” (Rom 7:25).

50. For this particular meaning of *opsōnia*, usually translated generically as “wages,” see Williams, *Paul’s Metaphors*, 224–25. For a positive analogy of soldiers’ pay, see 1 Cor 9:7.

51. Using *katargeō*. See above, n. 38.

52. Lit. “removed from its power,” using the passive of *katargeō*; see above, n. 38.

53. See Malherbe, “Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War,” 144–65; Collins, *Power of Images*, 36–38.

54. Phil 1:27–2:1; 2:12–13; 4:5–7; later in Macedonia, 2 Cor 7:5.

55. 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; 3:1–8.

56. 1 Thess 2:1; cf. Acts 16:11–40.

57. 1 Thess 2:1, 18; cf. Acts 17:1–9.

58. 1 Cor 4:8–13; 15:30–32; 16:9; Phil 1:7; 1:12–26, 30; 2:17, 23–24; 3:2, 19; 2 Cor 1:8–11; 2:14–17; 4:7–12; 6:4–10; 11:23–28; 12:10; perhaps also Col 1:24, 29; 2:1; 4:10, 12, 18; Phlm 1, 9, 13; cf. the retrospective in Rom 5:1–5; 8:17–39. For the arguments in favour of the Ephesian setting for Philippians, and for the “dogs, evil-doers, and butchery” (3:2–3) as a coded reference to Roman power and culture, see my forthcoming *Philippians* (Believers Church Bible Commentary; Herald Press).

59. For the notion of the gospel as the “constitution” of the Messianic polity, see also Collins, *Power of Images*, 53–56.

60. For the military connotations of Paul’s rhetoric in Phil 1:27–30, see T. C. Geoffrion, *The Rhetorical Purpose and the Political and Military Character of Philippians: A Call to Stand Firm* (Lampeter: Mellen Biblical Press, 1993); Joseph A. Marchal, “Military Images in Philippians 1–2: A Feminist Rhetorical Analysis of Scholarship, Philippians, and Current Contexts,” in *Her Master’s Tools? Feminist and Postcolonial Engagement of Historical-Critical Discourse*, eds. C. Vander Stichele and Todd Penner (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 265–86; Collins, *Power of Images*, 53–56.

61. The very word for “virtue” (*arête*) is originally a military term, denoting “valour.” See above, n. 15.

62. See also Eph 6:10–20.

63. Thomas Yoder Neufeld, *Put on the Armour of God: The Divine Warrior from Isaiah to Ephesians* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 73–93.

64. Malherbe, “Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War,” 156–72.

65. The word is especially apt here, deriving from the Greek word *polemos*, “battle.”

66. At the end of the letter Paul threatens with a curse anyone who is unwilling to demonstrate “love for the Lord” (1 Cor 16:21).

67. The verb *tharreō* (to be bold, courageous, confident) has strong athletic and military connotations. See for instance Plato’s remarks in the mouth of his Athenian hero: “And does not this fear, besides saving us in many other important respects, prove more effective than anything else in ensuring for us victory (*nikē*) and security (*sōtēria*) in war (*polemos*)? For victory is, in fact, ensured

by two things, of which the one is boldness/confidence (*tharsos*) towards enemies, the other, fear of the shame of cowardice in the eyes of friends." (*Laws* 647b; cf. *Phaedrus* 239d).

68. Paul's first letter was a sharp demand that the congregation engage in disciplinary action against certain members (1 Cor 5:9-13). The second letter (1 Corinthians) begins with a sharp shaming of the sophistic elite of the congregation (1:10-4:21) that ends with an ultimatum ("What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?" 4:21), and includes sharp admonition along the way, while concluding with the warning of a curse if anyone wavers in their "love for the Lord" (16:22). The third letter was written in response to an aborted "painful visit" by Paul (2:1), when Paul was in some way personally insulted or wronged (2:5-11; 7:12). In the letter, Paul demands that the offending party be punished by the majority, as a demonstration of their loyalty (2 Cor 1:23-2:11; 7:7-13).

69. Paul concedes that his previous letter did indeed "cause pain," even though it was motivated out of love, and designed to assure their zeal for the gospel (2 Cor 2:2-4; 6:11-13; 7:2-4, 8). He even declares that he specifically did not thereby seek "to lord it over their loyalty" (1:24), delaying a potentially punitive visit out of a desire to "spare" them (1:23).

70. Paul seems to play on the image of an imperial *adventus*. In 10:2 and 10:11 Paul uses the participle form ("coming") of the noun *parousia* (used in 10:10), which could have military connotations (as explicitly in 1 Thess 4:15).

71. This phrase is subject to considerable debate. Some commentators suggest that it refers to Paul's general unrefined rhetoric along with his low social status (cf. 2 Cor 5:12; 10:7), his unimpressive credentials in visions and ecstasy, or his lack of real spiritual authority when in person. Others suggest that it refers to his insincerity, duplicity (2 Cor 12:16-17), vacillation, adaptability, or expedient/opportunistic practice (see 2 Cor 1:7 in light of 1:12-14; 5:16a).

72. That is, he admits that he shares in the general weakness that attends to being human, but then asserts that he acts much more potently than someone who merely "does not walk according to the flesh," that is, has some kind of greater spiritual or sophistic credentials, because he is one who "does not wage war according to the flesh." Mere "walking" has been escalated into waging war, a warfare so much more powerful than any merely human, physical warfare, and a divine warfare more potent than sophistic defenses can bear.

73. The weapons used are not "according to the flesh" (*kata sarka*), apparently a reference to some slander against himself that he himself acts "according to the flesh" (*kata sarka*; 1:17; 11:18), but "powerful by God" (10:4; cf. 13:3, 4).

74. V. P. Furnish, *2 Corinthians* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1984), 463, citing H. Windisch.

75. The same image occurred in 2 Cor 5:12: "so you can answer those who boast in the face, and not in the heart."

76. Again, playing on the possible military connotations of *parousia*.

77. LSJ, s.v. *phthanō*. The verb has a dual connotation: "to come first" and "to overtake." For the latter meaning, see 1 Thess 2:16.

78. For the importance of this boast to Paul, see also 1 Cor 9:15-18.

79. But notice the contrasting disclaimer in 2 Cor 1:24, that Paul is not

seeking to “be lord over their loyalty.” Note also the threat of “destruction” on any leader who “destroys” the community as “God’s temple” by fostering divisions (1 Cor 3:17).

80. Contra Malherbe (“Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War,” 166–73), who argues that Odysseus is the main analogous prototype in 2 Cor 10:1–6.

81. Cf. 2 Cor 4:4, in relation to 3:12–4:3.

82. Similar use of *noēma* is found in 2 Cor 3:14; 4:4, again closely tied to Satan. On the other hand, “the peace of God” is what will “guard” thoughts (*noēmata*) in Messiah Jesus (Phil 4:7).

83. That is, it is not simply for apostolic authority itself. Most certainly, however, Paul’s jealousy as a parent for a church that he has helped to birth is patently obvious (1 Cor 4:14–21; 6:11–13; 7:2–4; 10:13–15; 11:1; 12:14–15).

84. The same verb appears in 2 Cor 10:4, and the noun form (*kathairesis*) of the verb occurs in 2 Cor 10:4, 8, 10.

85. The same word appears in 2 Cor 10:4.

86. The same verb is found in 2 Cor 10:7, and the noun form in 10:2.

87. For discussion and references, see Malherbe, “Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War,” 144–65.

88. *Ibid.*, 173.

89. E.g. A. Harnack, *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries*, trans. D. M. Gracie (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 35–36.

90. E.g. Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 17–29, 31–33, 39–43.

91. See [www.avesta.org/ritual/ritualk.htm](http://www.avesta.org/ritual/ritualk.htm) [accessed 28 March 2012].

92. E.g. Farhang Mehr, *The Zoroastrian Tradition: An Introduction to the Ancient Wisdom of Zarathustra* (Rockport: Shaftesbury, Dorest, 1991), 69.

93. Mary Fisher, *Living Religions*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2011), 238.

94. Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (Toronto: Academic Press Canada, 1982), 3–30. Following the schema of Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668–1744), who sketched the evolution of language use from the poetic, the heroic/noble, to the vulgar, Frye periodizes Western language use into the phases of the hieroglyphic/poetic, hieratic/allegorical, and demotic/descriptive.

95. Thus, we might also ask how literally/realistically Paul understood the cosmic war to be unfolding? In the cases of (a) Paul’s intellectual battle for God’s knowledge, and (b) weapons of virtues as the only armaments in the struggle against “the powers” or against concrete earthly social structures or individuals, the metaphorical dimension is clearly apparent. As for the battle of Grace over Error, it is certainly mythic-poetic in character, but not intended to be any less real. When it comes to engagement with “the powers,” one can observe that Paul is not concerned to precisely define their ontological nature, but to highlight their functional manifestation in the human or earthly arena. It would follow then that the liberation/conquest imagery should also be taken without excessive literalism, but without considering the struggle to be any less real. The imagery of heavenly/angelic armies thus should be understood in the same mythic-poetic

framework. For further discussion on this last issue, embracing “true myth” over against “literalism” or “allegory,” see Macky, *Paul’s Cosmic War Myth*, 219-58.

96. See Chapter 10. Perhaps Paul’s polemic reflects something in the human psyche, or at least the pattern of many cultural traditions, that actions and words toward the perceived traitor are often more brutal than those toward the enemy, especially when one is in a defensive position.

97. W. Swartley, “War and Peace in the New Testament,” *ANRW* II.26.3: 2314-15.

98. Harnack, *Militia Christi*, 36.

99. See further Gordon Zerbe, “Peace and Justice in the Bible,” in *Peace and Justice: Essays from the Fourth Shi’i Muslim Mennonite Christian Dialogue*, eds. H. Huebner and M. Legenhausen (Winnipeg: CMU Press, 2011), 124-43.

100. See for instance Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).

## Chapter 9

1. For the thesis that this opening phrase functions as the thesis statement for all of Rom 12:9-21, see Walter Wilson, *Love without Pretense: Romans 12:9-21 and Hellenistic-Jewish Wisdom Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991), 150-52.

2. The “you” is somewhat dubious textually, omitted in several key manuscripts; see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 528. Arguably the “you” is implied in any case.

3. *makrothymēō*, literally “be macro-passioned,” is often translated as being longsuffering, forbearing, or patient. In the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament), this term regularly translates the Hebrew idiom “slow to anger” (e.g. Exod 34:6; Num 14:18; Psalm 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Prov 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11). We might say, “long-fused.”

4. See also 1 Pet 2:18-25; Eph 6:5-9.

5. The plural form of the cognate noun *anochē* (used in Rom 2:4; 3:26) could be used for a truce or armistice. See LSJ.

6. For this meaning of *parakalein* here, see BAGD, s.v. “parakaleō,” #5. This meaning is also evident in 2 Cor 2:7, used synonymously with *charizesthai* (“forgiving”); 2 Macc 13:23; Luke 15:28; Acts 16:39.

7. For other references to being at peace in Paul that refer particularly to relations within the community, see Rom 14:17, 19; 1 Cor 7:15; 2 Cor 13:11; cf. Col 3:15.

8. For *charizomai* in the sense of “forgive,” see also 2 Cor 12:13; Col 2:13.

9. “Ethic” here is used in its colloquial, nonphilosophical sense as “a set of moral principles and values.” “Nonretaliation” and “peace” are the best general terms for summarizing the substance of these exhortations, without prejudging their specific interpretation. I deliberately avoid the term “love of enemy” as a descriptive term, since the language of “loving enemies” is not found in Paul’s letters and since it already assumes a certain interpretation of the texts.