

God at War

Gregory A. Boyd



Gregory A. Boyd is President of Christus Victor Ministries, Senior Pastor of Woodland Hills

Church (Maplewood, MN) and adjunct Professor of Theology at Bethel College (St. Paul, MN). He has authored and co-authored 18 books, including *The Jesus Legend* and *Letters From a Skeptic*.

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The Old Testament clearly assumes that something profoundly sinister has entered God's good creation and now perpetually threatens the world. Not all is well in creation, whether it is portrayed as Leviathan, Rahab, Yamm, Behemoth, hostile waters or a wayward rebellious god (e.g., "prince of Persia," Chemosh, *satan*); or portrayed as a battle that took place before the creation of this world or as something taking place in the present. At a fundamental level, the Old Testament presents something askew in creation and, to this extent, its worldview overlaps with the general Near Eastern worldview. But the cosmic warfare dimension of the Old Testament worldview is radically unique among Near Eastern peoples in the way it is played out. This uniqueness has center stage throughout the Old Testament.

Unlike all other warfare worldviews, the Old Testament repeatedly stresses the absolute supremacy of one God over all others and maintains, unequivocally, that this one God is never threatened by His enemies. This emphasis is a solid foundation for everything else the Lord subsequently reveals to humankind. Biblical authors never abandon this foundational monotheistic conviction, but its relation to the warfare motif changes significantly as we move into the New Testament. Here the reality of warfare shares center stage with the supremacy of God. Almost everything that Jesus and the early church are about is colored by the central conviction that the world is caught in the crossfire of a cosmic battle between the Lord and His angelic army and Satan and his demonic army.

Transformation During the Intertestamental Period

The period between the Old and New Testaments significantly transformed the Jewish worldview. From the time of the Exodus, the Jews had closely associated the truthfulness of their belief in Yahweh's supremacy with their political successes. His lordship over Israel and over the entire world was, for them, most clearly evidenced by the fact that they had won, and preserved, independent status as a nation. It caused a crisis of faith for them when they were taken into captivity and oppressed by heathen kings. This seemed to imply that Yahweh was not, in fact, the sovereign Lord over the whole earth.

There was, however, another way to explain it. As long as there was hope that Israel someday would regain its independence, their national misfortunes could be interpreted as

the result of their own temporary infidelity to Yahweh. In this way, their misfortunes were not an indictment of Yahweh's supremacy, but rather an indictment of themselves. The people believed that when they, as a nation, repented of their sin and turned back to the Lord, He would prove faithful and give them back the Promised Land.¹

This chastisement theology began to wear thin, however, after several hundred years of painful oppression under pagan authorities. And when the oppression turned into overt bloody persecution under Antiochus IV, many Jews abandoned this theology. Increasingly, Jews in the second and third centuries B.C. began to believe that what was happening to them could not be all their own fault. It followed, then, that it could not all be due to Yahweh's disciplining will. But if it was not God's will that brought about the disasters they were experiencing, whose will was it? To answer this question, some Jews of this period turned with fresh urgency to the warfare motifs found throughout their Scriptures.

If ever there was a time when it seemed that the raging seas, Leviathan, Satan and demons were having their way with Israel, and with the entire world, this was it. It is not surprising to find, in this oppressive, painful environment, an intensification of the warfare themes of the Hebrew Bible. The conviction that the cosmos is populated with good and evil spiritual beings—and that the earth is caught in the crossfire of their conflict—became centrally important for many Jews. So, too, the apocalyptic hope that Yahweh would soon vanquish Leviathan (or some parallel cosmic figure) and all its cohorts grew in intensity during this intertestamental period.

This intensification of Old Testament themes—this expansion and centralization of the Old Testament ideas about the lesser gods and Yahweh's conflicts with them—constitutes what has come to be called the apocalyptic worldview. If we are to understand the New Testament properly, we must read it against the backdrop of this worldview. The apocalyptic authors intensified the relatively minor Old Testament concept of Yahweh engaging in battle against opposing forces to preserve order in the world. Yahweh must now do battle against these same forces to

actually rescue the world. Writing from their own intense experience of evil, the Jews came to the remarkable conclusion that, in a significant sense, the battle between Yahweh and opposing hostile forces for the world had been lost, at least temporarily, by Yahweh. Yet they were certain that Yahweh would ultimately (and soon) reclaim His cosmos, vanquish His foes and reinstate Himself on His rightful throne. In this ultimate eschatological sense, Yahweh could yet be considered Lord over the whole creation. But in this "present age," their conviction was that, as James Kallas describes it, "Satan had stolen the world," and the creation had gone "berserk."²

In this "modified dualism," as William F. Albright appropriately labels it,³ the highest mediating agent of Yahweh has gone bad, abused his incredible God-given authority, taken the entire world hostage, and set himself up as the illegitimate god of the present age. This spells disaster for the cosmos.⁴ Fundamentally, it means that the mediating angelic authority structure—one that Yahweh set up at creation—has gone bad at the very top. Because of this, everything underneath this highest authority, both in the heavens and on earth, has been adversely affected. Vast multitudes of powerful angels—having been given authority over various aspects of creation or over lesser angels—can now use this authority to wage war against God and against His people.

It wasn't that all the angels had fallen, but in the minds of these writers, a great many of them had. Demons—sometimes portrayed as mutant offspring of the Nephilim, but other times portrayed as fallen angels themselves—could now freely infest this satanically governed world and work all manner of evil within it. What was to have been a godly council of heaven and a godly army for the Lord had turned itself into a fierce rebel battalion which fought against God, in large part by terrorizing the earth and holding its inhabitants captive. For these apocalypticists, it was no wonder that Yahweh's lordship was not manifested in Israel's political fortune. Nor was it any great mystery why God's people now were undergoing such vicious persecution. Indeed, to these writers, it was no surprise that the entire creation looked

like a diabolical war zone. In their view, this is precisely what it was.

Jesus' View of the Satanic Army

Most contemporary New Testament scholars believe it is primarily against this apocalyptic background that we are to understand the ministry of Jesus and the early church.⁵ Jesus' teaching, His exorcisms, His healings and other miracles, as well as His work on the cross, all remain, to some extent, incoherent and unrelated to one another until we interpret them within this apocalyptic context—until we interpret them as acts of war. When this hermeneutical step is made, the ministry of Jesus forms a coherent whole.

Satan's Rule

As in apocalyptic thought, the assumption that Satan has illegitimately seized the world and thus now exercises a controlling influence over it, undergirds Jesus' entire ministry. Three times the Jesus of John's Gospel refers to Satan as "the prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; and 16:11). Here He uses the word *archōn* which customarily was used to denote "the highest official in a city or a region in the Greco-Roman world."⁶ Jesus is saying that, concerning powers that rule over the cosmos, this evil ruler is the highest.

When Satan claims that he can give all "authority" and "glory" of "all the kingdoms of the world" to whomever he wants because it all belongs to him, Jesus does not dispute him (Luke 4:5-6). Instead, He assumes that much to be true. Jesus concurs with the apocalyptic worldview of His day—in agreement with John, Paul and the rest of the New Testament—and believes the entire world is "under the power of the evil one" (1 Jn 5:19) and Satan is "the god of this world" (2 Cor 4:4) and "the ruler of the power of the air" (Eph 2:2). Jesus, therefore, concedes Satan's rulership of the earth. He will not, however, get back this worldwide kingdom by giving in to Satan's temptation and worshipping this illegitimate tyrant (Luke 4:7-8).⁷

In keeping with the apocalyptic thought of His day, Jesus sees the evil tyrant as mediating and expanding his authority over the world through multitudes of demons that form a

vast army under him. Indeed, compared to the apocalyptic views of His day, Jesus somewhat intensifies this conviction. When He is accused of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub (another name for Satan), He responds by telling His hostile audience, "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand" (Mark 3:24).⁸ This builds upon their shared assumption that the demonic kingdom is unified under one "prince" (*archōn*) who is Satan (Mark 3:22; Matt 9:34; 12:24; Luke 11:15). He makes the point that this kingdom of evil, like any kingdom, cannot survive by working at cross-purposes with itself.

Jesus adds that one cannot make significant headway in taking back the "property" of this "kingdom" unless one first "ties up the strong man" who oversees the whole operation (Mark 3:27). This, Luke adds, can be done only when "one stronger than he attacks him and

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overpowers him" and thus "takes away his armor in which he trusted" and then "divides his plunder" (Luke 11:22). This is what Jesus came to do. His whole ministry was about overpowering the "fully armed" strong man who guarded "his property" (Luke 11:21), namely, God's people and ultimately the entire earth. Far from illustrating how Satan's kingdom works against itself, Jesus' success in casting out demons reveals that His whole ministry was about "tying up the strong man."⁹ This entire episode illustrates Jesus' assumption that Satan and demons form a unified kingdom. They are, as John Newport puts it, a "tight-knit lethal organization" that has a singular focus under a single general, Satan.¹⁰

It is because of this assumption that Jesus refers to the "devil and his angels," implying that fallen angels belong to Satan (Matt 25:41). And for the same reason, Jesus sees demonic activity as, by extension, the activity of Satan himself (e.g., Luke 13:11-16; cf. Acts 10:38; 2 Cor 12:7) and judges everything done against

demons as also done against Satan himself.¹¹ When His seventy disciples return to Him after a successful ministry of driving out demons, Jesus proclaims that He sees “Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning” (Luke 10:17-18).¹² The “strong man” and his household clearly stand or fall together. They together form a single, relatively organized army, unified in its singular purpose of hindering God’s work and bringing evil and misery to His people. The head of this army, and thus the ultimate principle of all evil, is Satan.¹³

The Pervasive Influence of Satan’s Army

As the Gospels portray it, this demonic, alien army is vast in number and global in influence.¹⁴ The sheer number of possessions recorded in the Gospels, the large number of multiple possessions, and the many allusions to vast numbers of people who were possessed, reveal the belief that “the number of evil spirits [was] indefinitely large.”¹⁵ The world is understood to be saturated with demons whose destructive influence is all-pervasive. Everything about Jesus’ ministry tells us that He judged everything not in keeping with the Creator’s all-good design as, directly or indirectly, the result of this invading presence. Jesus never once appeals to a mysterious divine will to explain why a person is sick, maimed or deceased.¹⁶ In every instance, He comes against such things as the by-products of a creation that has gone berserk through the evil influence of a satanic army. Many times, he attributes sicknesses to direct demonic involvement.¹⁷

Jesus diagnoses a woman “with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years” as one whom “Satan bound” (Luke 13:11,16). Far from trying to discern some secret, sovereign, divine blueprint behind her grotesque deformity, He treats her as a casualty of war. The one ultimately responsible for her affliction, Jesus claims, was the captain of the opposing battalion himself. In sharp contrast to our typical modern Western approach, James Kallas poignantly expresses Jesus’ approach to such matters. “We see polio or crippling and we piously shake our heads and cluck all the trite absurdities of a non-thinking people by saying ‘it is the will of God...hard to understand...providence writes a long sentence, we have to wait to get

to heaven to read the answer’...Jesus looked at this and in crystal clear terms called it the work of the devil, and not the will of God.”¹⁸

As difficult as Kallas’ assessment may be to accept, from a strictly scriptural perspective, he is surely correct. In the minds of the disciples, such things as back deformities and diseases were, as Raymond Brown argues, “directly inflicted by Satan.” So for them, to be “saved” was not simply about “spiritual regeneration” but also about being delivered from the evil grasp of sickness, from the dominion of Satan.¹⁹

Further, as Brown and others also make clear, Jesus and the Gospel authors sometimes referred to the diseases people had as “scourgings” or “whippings” (*mastix*, Mark 3:10; 5:29,34; Luke 7:21).²⁰ The only other times ancient authors used this term to describe physical maladies were to refer to afflictions sent by God upon people.²¹ In these particular instances, God was punishing people with a scourging. But this clearly cannot be its meaning here, since Jesus sets people free from this scourging.

For example, after the woman who had been bleeding for twelve years touched his cloak, Jesus says to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your scourging [*mastix*]” (Mark 5:34).²² Jesus was certainly not freeing this woman from a God-intended twelve-year whipping. But whose whipping is Jesus freeing her from? In the total context of Jesus’ ministry, the only other possibility is that he understood himself to be setting this woman (and all like her) free from the whippings of “the strong man,” Satan.

Although Jesus never endorses the apocalyptic tendency to speculate about the names, ranks and functions of various fallen angels, He does go as far as rebuking a deaf and mute spirit (Mark 9:25). Luke describes another exorcism as the driving out of “a demon that was mute” (Luke 11:14).²³ Apparently, there are various kinds of demons within Satan’s army with differing functions in afflicting people.

Jesus and the Kingdom of God

It is crucial for us to recognize that Jesus’ view about the rule of Satan and the pervasive influence of his army is not simply a marginal piece of first-century apocalyptic thought

that He happened to embrace. Rather, it is the driving force behind everything Jesus says and does. In fact, Jesus' concept of "the kingdom of God" is centered on these views. For Jesus, the kingdom of God means abolishing the kingdom of Satan.

Kallas argues that "this world [in Jesus' view] was a demon-infested world in need of liberation, and the advance of God's sovereignty was in direct proportion to the rout of the demons... Exorcism of demons was the central thrust of the message and activity of Jesus."²⁴ Gustaf Wingren writes that "when Jesus heals the sick and drives out evil spirits, Satan's dominion is departing and

accomplished (Matt 6:10; Luke 11:2).²⁷ They understand that the only way the kingdom of God will be brought about is by overthrowing the illegitimate kingdom now in place. In this sense, one might say that the New Testament authors, like the apocalyptic authors of their day, held to a "limited dualism."²⁸

If the terms the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of Satan" are correlative concepts in the New Testament, the former can be understood to be expanding only as the latter is diminishing. This is precisely the reason healings and exorcisms played such a central role in Jesus' ministry. "If it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons," Jesus says, "then the kingdom of God has come to you" (Luke 11:20). To accomplish the one was to accomplish the other. Susan Garrett correctly summarizes this point when she says, "every healing, exorcism, or raising of the dead is a loss for Satan and a gain for God."²⁹ James Kallas writes that "the arrival of the Kingdom is simultaneous with, dependent upon, and manifested in the routing of demons."³⁰

For Jesus, healings and exorcisms clearly did not merely *symbolize* the kingdom of God, they *were* the kingdom of God.³¹ Warring against Satan and building the kingdom of God are, for Jesus, one and the same activity.³²

The Gospels' correlation of Jesus' pronouncements about the Kingdom and His demonstrations of the Kingdom is one of the many ways that Jesus' warfare conception of the kingdom of God is illustrated. Some examples of this recurring phenomenon pertain to the thematic beginnings of Jesus' ministry in Mark and Luke and make the point clear. In the opening of Mark's Gospel, Jesus begins His ministry by announcing that "the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15). This is the complete content of what Mark tells us about Jesus' preaching. But everything that follows informs us, by illustration, what this kingdom preaching means.

After calling His disciples (vv. 16-20), Jesus amazes the people with the authority of His teaching (vv. 21-22). Immediately a man demonized by an unclean spirit cries out, "What have you to do with *us*, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?"

The "kingdom of God" refers to nothing other than His ministry and the ministry He gave to His disciples, of setting up God's rule where Satan's rule previously had been.

God's kingdom is coming (Matt 12:22-29). All Christ's activity is therefore a conflict with the Devil (Acts 10:38). God's Son took flesh and became man that He might overthrow the power of the devil, and bring his works to nought (Heb 2:14f; 1 Jn 3:8).²⁵

As Jesus uses the term, the "kingdom of God" refers to nothing other than His ministry, and the ministry He gave to His disciples, of setting up God's rule where Satan's rule previously had been. If the "kingdom of God" is the central concept of Jesus' ministry and teaching, as all scholars recognize, then the "kingdom of Satan" is, as a corollary concept, central as well.²⁶

The Kingdom as a Warfare Concept

While no orthodox first-century Jew or Christian ever doubted that there existed only one Creator—or that this Creator would reign supreme in the eschaton—the New Testament authors also never doubted that the Creator's will was not the only will being carried out in this present world. Both human and angelic wills oppose God, and He must fight against them. The kingdom of God, therefore, is something that the New Testament authors pray for, not something they consider already

The first-person plural here perhaps indicates that the demon is speaking on behalf of the entire army of which he is a part. But he continues in the singular, “I know who you are, the Holy One of God” (vv. 23-24). In contrast to all earthly players in Mark’s narrative, those in the demonic kingdom know who Jesus is and have suspicions about what it is He has come to earth to do (vv. 34; 3:11).³³

Jesus has come to “destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn 3:8), and the demons know this means their destruction. He rebukes the demon, telling him to “be silent” (Mark 1:25), literally, “be strangled” (*phimoō*). After Jesus strangles the demon with His divine authority, the demon throws the man to the ground and leaves him with a shriek (v. 26). Mark then notes that the people were again “amazed” at this “new teaching” and new “authority” (v. 27). The two, we see, go hand in hand.³⁴

Mark follows this with a record of Jesus’ healing of Peter’s mother-in-law’s fever (vv.

30-31). Jesus assumes this to be demonically induced in a Lukan parallel (Luke 4:38-39). That very evening, “the whole city” brought “all who were sick or possessed with demons” and Jesus “cured many” and “cast out many demons” (Mark 1:32-34). The kingdom of God was indeed near.

Next in Mark’s account, Jesus tells his disciples that he wants to go into other villages and “proclaim the message there also” (v. 38). This he proceeds to do, and Mark summarizes his activity by noting, “He went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons” (v. 39). Jesus then heals a man of leprosy (vv. 40-45), followed immediately by an account of Jesus healing a paralytic on the sabbath (2:1-12). After a brief interlude, we find Jesus again healing people, setting crowds of people free from the “scourges” of the enemy (3:10) and driving out evil spirits (3:11-12).³⁵ Several verses later we

To Inaugurate His Kingdom: His Deeds, Death and Resurrection

N. T. Wright

The kingdom of God has been a flag of convenience under which all sorts of ships have sailed.

Some used the phrase as cover for pursuing business of their own—programs of moral, social, or political improvement or upheaval, agendas of the left and the right, of the well-meaning but muddled and of the less well-meaning but all too clear. Many who went this route treated the Gospels as though they were simply stories about Jesus going around helping people as best he could, with the unfortunate sequel of his untimely death.

And many other Christians, seeing this shallow and confused exegesis and application, reacted angrily against what is called

kingdom theology as though it were simply an outdated and shallow corporate version of faddish self-help moralism.

But when we reintegrate what should never have been separated—the kingdom-inaugurating public work of Jesus and his redemptive death and resurrection—we find that the Gospels tell a different story. It isn’t just a story of some splendid and exciting social work with an unhappy conclusion, nor is it just a story of an atoning death with an extended introduction.

It is something much bigger than the sum of those two diminished perspectives. It is the story of God’s kingdom being launched on earth as in heaven, generating a new state of affairs in which the

power of evil has been decisively defeated, the new creation has been decisively launched, and Jesus’ followers have been commissioned and equipped to put that victory and that inaugurated new world into practice.

Atonement, redemption, and salvation are what happen on the way because engaging in this work demands that people themselves be rescued from the powers that enslave the world in order that they can be rescuers in return.

To put it another way, if you want to help inaugurate God’s kingdom, you must follow in the way of the cross, and if you want to benefit from Jesus’ saving death, you must become part of his kingdom purpose.

N.T. Wright is the Bishop of Durham for the Church of England. For 20 years he taught New Testament studies at Cambridge, McGill, and Oxford Universities. He has written many books, including *Simply Christian*, *The New Testament and the People of God* and *Jesus and the Victory of God*. From *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* by N.T. Wright, 2008. Used by permission of HarperCollins, New York, NY.

have Mark's account of the Beelzebul controversy, in which Jesus presents himself as the one who has come to tie up "the strong man" by the power of God (3:20-30). And we are not yet out of Mark's third chapter!

This is what the kingdom of God means. The point is hard to miss. Whatever else the rule of God is about, it is about vanquishing the rule of Satan, and thus about setting people free from demons and from the ungodly infirmities they inflict on people.

Both Matthew's and Luke's accounts of Jesus' ministry begin, quite appropriately, with Jesus confronting the devil in the desert. The cosmic war that has raged throughout the ages is now centered on one person—Jesus.³⁶ Jesus withstands each temptation, including Satan's offer of all the kingdoms of the world, and defeated, the devil finally leaves Him (Luke 4:1-13). Unlike all other humans, Jesus did not become "a slave to sin" (John 8:34) and thus come under Satan's power. He declares in John that "the ruler of this world has no power over Me; but I do as the Father has commanded Me" (14:30-31; cf. 8:29). One stronger than "the strong man" has finally arrived. It is Jesus who has gotten hold of the devil. And having now defeated him in His own life, Jesus can set out to defeat him on behalf of the entire cosmos.

Jesus launches His mission in Luke from His own hometown. As in Mark, but in a somewhat expanded manner, He begins by announcing that the kingdom of God has arrived in His own person. He stands up in the synagogue and reads from Isaiah that "the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19). After a moment of awkward silence, Jesus adds, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (v. 21). When He is driven out of town (vv. 22-30), we begin to see concretely what this proclamation of the kingdom means. As in Mark, Jesus immediately confronts a

demon-possessed man in a Capernaum synagogue. The man cries out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?" (v. 34) and Jesus strangles the demon, setting the "prisoner" of Satan free (v. 35). With this exorcism, Jesus shows His application of the Isaiah passage to Himself and clearly demonstrates the freedom that was prophesied.

Jesus then proceeds to "rebuke" a demonic fever (v. 39), heal multitudes of sick people (v. 40) and cast out multitudes of shrieking demons (v. 41). Shortly thereafter, He heals a man of leprosy (5:12-16), a paralytic (5:17-26)

Under the victorious authority of Christ, the Church is called to engage and overthrow evil powers just as Jesus had done. Indeed, when the Church does this through the Spirit it is still Jesus Himself who is doing it.

and a man with a withered hand (6:1-10). As Clinton Arnold argues, the point is that the prisoners who are to be set free are "trapped in the bondage and oppression of Satan's kingdom."³⁷ What the kingdom of God means, therefore, is that the hostile alien kingdom of demonic captivity, oppression, poverty and blindness (physical and spiritual) is coming to an end through the ministry of Jesus. He is the bringer of the kingdom of God, for He is the vanquisher of the kingdom of Satan.

The Work of the Church

In the light of Jesus' view of the kingdom of God, it seems highly peculiar that many New Testament scholars over the past several hundred years have concluded that the historical Jesus was, in one way or another, simply a moral teacher. This testifies to how thoroughly one's naturalistic presuppositions can filter one's reading of the evidence.³⁸ But it is hardly less puzzling how so many believing Christians today can read these same Gospels, commit themselves to following this Jesus, and yet never seriously consider treating sickness and disease (to say nothing of demonized people) the way Jesus treated them. Far from considering these evils as scourges of the devil the way Jesus did, we modern Christians most often attribute them to God's

“mysterious providence.” Rather than revolting against them as scourges of the enemy, we are more likely to ask God’s help in accepting such difficulties “as from a father’s hand.”

This testifies to the strength of the post-Augustinian classical-philosophical theistic tradition as well as to Western Enlightenment presuppositions that, until recently, have dominated Western thinking, believer and nonbeliever alike. And it goes a long way toward explaining why our “problem of evil” is not the same problem of evil that Jesus and His disciples confronted. If one believes that a good and wise divine purpose ultimately lies behind the sickness, disease and atrocity that make the world a nightmarish place, then one subtly shifts the problem of evil from something one has to war against to something one has to think through. Rather than a problem of overcoming the evil deeds of the devil and his army, the problem of evil becomes a problem of explaining intellectually how an all-good and all-powerful God could will what certainly are evil deeds of the devil.

Perhaps most tragically, when we trade problems in this fashion, we have surrendered a spiritual conflict we are commissioned to fight and ultimately win, for an intellectual puzzle we can never resolve. Whether considered on philosophical, biblical or practical grounds, it is an exceedingly poor trade. If instead we followed the example of our Savior, our basic stance toward evil in the world would be characterized by revolt, holy rage, social activism and aggressive warfare—not pious resignation.

The New Testament proclaims unequivocally that Jesus was victorious over the enemy in His ministry, death and resurrection (Col 2:14-15), but Jesus and the New Testament authors see the ultimate realization of this kingdom victory in the future. This constitutes the well-known “inaugurated eschatology” or the “already-but-not-yet” paradoxical dynamism of New Testament thought.³⁹ The Kingdom has already come, but it has not yet been fully manifested in world history. Jesus’ miracles over nature, as well as His healings, exorcisms and especially His resurrection, were definite acts of war that accomplished and demonstrated His victory over Satan. These acts routed demonic forces and thereby established

the kingdom of God both in the lives of people and in nature. Their primary long-term significance, however, was eschatological. People still are being demonized; people still get sick and die; storms still rage and destroy lives; famines still prevail and thousands starve. But the ministry of Jesus, most especially His death and resurrection, tied up “the strong man” in principle and established the kingdom of God, the restoration of a new humanity in the midst of a war zone. In doing this, Jesus set in motion the forces that will eventually overthrow the whole of Satan’s fatally damaged assault upon God’s earth and upon humanity.⁴⁰

Gustaf Wingren writes about the “already / not yet” dynamic when he speaks of Christ’s resurrection and says that:

The war of the Lord is finished and the great blow is struck. Never again can Satan tempt Christ, as in the desert. Jesus is now Lord, Conqueror. But a war is not finished, a conflict does not cease with the striking of the decisive blow. The enemy remains with the scattered remnants of his army, and in pockets here and there a strong resistance may continue.⁴¹

Jesus’ miraculous ministry was not simply symbolic of the *eschaton*. In principle, it achieved the *eschaton*. In principle, He won the war, struck the decisive deathblow, vanquished Satan, restored humanity and established the kingdom. Yet some battles must still be fought before the ultimate victory is fully manifested. Because of this, Jesus did not just carry out His warfare ministry; He commissioned, equipped and empowered His disciples, and later the whole of the Church, to do the same. He set in motion the creation of a new humanity by giving us His power and authority to proclaim and demonstrate the Kingdom just the way He did (e.g., 2 Cor 5:17-21; Matt 16:15-19; Luke 19:17-20; cf John 14:12; 20:21).

Jesus gives to all who in faith receive it His authority to break down the gates of hell and take back for the Father what the enemy has stolen, just as he himself has done (Matt 16:18). Now that the “strong man” is bound, this is a task we can and must carry out. In doing so, we, the church, expand the kingdom of God against the kingdom of Satan and lay

the basis for the Lord's return, when the full manifestation of Christ's victory, and of Satan's defeat, will occur. In the time between the "already" of Christ's work and the "not yet" of the *eschaton*, the Church is to be about what Jesus was about. In a real sense, it is His "body" here on earth. As such, the Church is an extension of the ministry Jesus carried out in His incarnate body while on earth (2 Cor 5:18-19).

The Church is called to manifest the truth

that God's kingdom has come and Satan's kingdom is defeated. Under the victorious authority of Christ, the Church is called to engage and overthrow evil powers just as Jesus has done. Indeed, when the Church does this through the Spirit, it is still Jesus Himself who is doing it. And although His followers can express an exuberant confidence in the accomplished work of the cross, we should not find that the warfare worldview of Jesus is lessened among them one iota. 🌟

Study Questions

1. How did Jesus' life, teachings and ministry clarify the spiritual battle he was engaged in for the establishment of the kingdom of God?
2. How can the church today "manifest the truth that God's Kingdom has come and Satan's kingdom is defeated?"
3. Describe the ramifications of Boyd's view that Jesus was not explaining evil but overcoming evil.
4. In light of Boyd's exposition of Christ's authority and triumph over evil, explain the significance of Matthew 28:18 in understanding Matthew 28:19-20.

Endnotes

1. On the covenantal theology that lies behind this conception, see G.W. Buchanan, *The Consequences of the Covenant*, NovTSup 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1970), pp. 123-31; as well as D. R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), pp. 120-42.
2. Kallas, James G. *The Significance of the Synoptic Miracles*, Greenwich, Conn: Seabury Press, 1961), p.54.
3. W.F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the History Process*, 2d ed. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1957), p. 362.
4. The identification of this "highest mediating agent" differs among (and even within) apocalyptic texts. For example, *1 Enoch* identifies Azazel and Semjaza as leaders of the rebel angels but also speaks of a group of fallen angels called *satans* (adversaries) headed up by Satan. *Jubilees* speaks of Mastema but also speaks of the fallen angels being under Satan. Tobit speaks of Asmodeus (who purportedly was in love with a young woman and killed all prospective husbands, 3:8; 6:13-14), a name that also appears in the rabbinic literature. *Second Enoch* speaks of Satanail, whereas the *Martyrdom of Isaiah* refers to Sammael along with Beliar and Satan. On this, see esp. Barton, "Origin of the Names," as well as Ling, *Significance of Satan*, p. 9; Ferguson, *Demonology*, pp. 76-78; Langton, *Essentials*, pp. 119-38; H. Gaylord, "How Satanel Lost His 'El,'" *JJS* 33 (1982): 303-9; W. Foerster, "The Later Jewish View of Satan," in "διδασκαλία" *TDNT* 2:75-79; J. Russell, *Devil*, pp. 188-89; S. V. McCasland, "The Black One," in *Early Christian Origins. Studies in Honor of Harold R. Willoughby*, ed. A. Wikgren (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1961), pp. 77-80; C. Molenberg, "A Study of the Roles of Shemihazah and Asael in 1 Enoch 6-11," *JJS* 35 (1984): 136-46.
5. Though the members of the infamous Jesus Seminar claim that one of the seven "pillars of scholarly wisdom" is the view that the historical Jesus' thought world was noneschatological (see R. W. Funk, R. W. Hoover and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* [New York: Macmillan, 1993], p. 4), J. H. Charlesworth is certainly correct in affirming that "one of the strongest consensus in New Testament research" involves the conviction that Jesus' teaching was fundamentally apocalyptic. See his "Jesus Research Expands with Chaotic Creativity," in *Images of Jesus Today*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth and W. P. Weaver (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity, 1994), p. 10. For a critique of the post-Bultmannian view of Jesus as noneschatological, see my *Cynic, Sage or Son of God? Recovering the Real Jesus in an Age of Revisionist Replies* (Wheaton, Ill.: Bridgepoint, 1995), pp. 55-56, 145-50; as well as P. R. Eddy, "Jesus as Diogenes? Reflections of the Cynic Jesus Thesis," *JBL* 115 (1996):449-69; and L. Johnson, *The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1995). For several good arguments for an apocalyptic Jesus, see B. F. Meyer, *Christus Faber: The Master-BUILDER and the House of God* (Allison Park, Penn.: Pickwick, 1992), pp. 41-80; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), pp. 222-41, 319-40; B. Witherington, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World. A Comparative Study in New Testament Eschatology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992), pp. 59-74, 170-80.
6. Arnold Powers of *Darkness: Principalities and Powers in Paul's Letters*, (Downers Grove Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992), p. 81. The phrase is used of Beliar in *Martyrdom of Isaiah* 2:4 (an early first-century apocalyptic work). See J. H. Charlesworth, "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in IQS 3:13-4:26 and the 'Dualism' Contained in the Gospel of John," in *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Charlesworth (New York: Crossroad, 1990), pp. 76-106. Charlesworth's attempt to demonstrate that John represents a move away from a "hypostatic" personal view of the devil strikes me as forced.
7. The frequent apocalyptic notion that a particular angel was given charge over all creation may be behind the Synoptics' concept of the world being "given" to Satan. See Daniélou, *Jewish Christianity*, pp. 188-89; Gokey, *Terminology*, p. 50. Many in the early postapostolic church held this view. See Daniélou, *Angels and Their Mission*, pp. 45-46. In this case, Satan must

be seen as telling the truth when he says that all the kingdoms of the world were given to him. In other words, he did not steal the world, as Kallas maintains (*Synoptic Miracles*, p. 54), and in this sense his power over the world cannot in and of itself be said to be “illegitimate,” as I claimed above. Nevertheless, Satan’s evil tyranny over the world can be seen as illegitimate even if his God-given authority itself is not.

8. Beelzebul (and its forms Beezebul, Beelzebub) was a frequent name for the ruler of the demonic kingdom in the Talmud, as well as in the *Testament of Solomon*. There has been much discussion and little agreement as to the etymology of this term and its forms. For several summary discussions with various suggested solutions, see T. J. Lewis, “Beelzebul,” *ABD*, 1:638-40; W. E. M. Aitken, “Beelzebul,” *JBL* 31 (1912): 34-53; W. Foerster, “βεελζεβουλ” TDNT 1:605-06; L. Gaston, “Beelzebul,” *TZ* 18 (1962): 247-55; P. L. Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: Satan in the Hebrew Bible*, HSM 43 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 151-59; E. C. B. MacLaurin “Beelzebul,” *NovT* 20 (April 1978): 156-60; S. J. Wright, “Satan, Beelzebul, Devil, Exorcism,” *NIDNTT*, 3:468-76. For a superb argument that this Q pericope essentially goes back to the historical Jesus, see J. D. G. Dunn, “Matthew 12:28/Luke 11:20—A Word of Jesus?” in *Eschatology and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of George Raymond Beasley-Murray*, ed. W. H. Gloer (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1988), pp. 29-49. The accusation that Jesus was possessed by Satan or a demon is repeated in John 7:20; 8:48, 52; and 10:20. It should be noted that the response to the charge in 10:21, “Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” recalls Mark 3:24 and is predicated on the assumption that blindness is itself a demonic work.
9. Arnold sees this verse as the key to understanding Christ’s ministry. “Christ has come to engage this ‘strong man’ and plunder his house: that is, to release the captives in Satan’s kingdom” (*Powers of Darkness*, p. 79). See also J. Ramsey Michaels, “Jesus and the Unclean Spirits,” in *Demon Possession*, ed. J. W. Montgomery (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1976), p. 53. E. Ferguson sums up well the picture of the world and of Jesus’ ministry assumed in this passage when he notes that this world is “enemy-occupied territory; Satan as its ruler has a fortress to protect his ill-gotten possessions. But there comes one stronger than he. The conqueror liberates the fortress, takes away Satan’s power, and takes over his possessions for his own use” (*Demonology of the Early Christian World*, pp. 22-23). See also E. Pagels, *The Origin of Satan* (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 20.
10. Newport J., response to Michaels, J. Ramsey in *Demon Possession A. Medical, Historical, Anthropological, and Theological Symposium*, ed., J.W. Montgomery (Minneapolis: Bethany 1976), p. 90. Forsyth argues that demons are portrayed in the Gospels as “a sort of loosely organized army under their general, Satan” (*Old Enemy*, p. 293; cf. p. 295). See also J. Russell, *Devil*, p. 237; Gokey, *Terminology*, p. 50; Kallas, *Synoptic Miracles*, pp. 67-68. Ling argues that the Gospels differ from previous apocalyptic literature precisely in the intensity with which they affirm that the kingdom of evil is a unified kingdom and focus most of their attention on the head of this kingdom, Satan (*Significance of Satan*, pp. 12-22). Roy Yates also sees this as one of the main contributions of the Gospels. For Jesus, “exorcisms are no longer to be seen as isolated victories over a series of autonomous demons...Jesus does not have an atomistic view of the world of evil, but sees it as a unity under Satan, whose power is beginning to crumble” (“The Powers of Evil in the New Testament,” *EvQ* 52, no.2 [1980]: 99).
11. Ferguson, Everett. *Demonology of the Early Christian World*, (New York: Mellen, 1984), p. 12.
12. The passage likely means that the success of the disciples’ exorcism ministry was evidence that Satan’s kingdom was on its way down. So argues G. E. Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), pp. 145 ff.; and Forsyth, *Old Enemy*, pp. 294-95. Ling argues that Jesus was here drawing the disciples’ attention away from their ability to cast out individual demons to “the fact that the kingdom of evil in its entirety was being conquered in the exercise of the authority which was theirs in his name” (*Significance of Satan*, p. 18). Julian Hills, however, argues in the opposite direction. Jesus was, in effect, saying that the disciples were successful in their exorcisms because the demons saw that their leader was already being dethroned by Jesus’ exorcist ministry. See J. V. Hills, “Luke 10:18—Who Saw Satan Fall?” *JSNT* 46 (1992): 25-40. This verse, incidentally, is the only reference to the fall of Satan in the Gospels, and it is clearly not about his original fall. This absence of speculation sets the Gospels apart from the apocalyptic literature of their time. That Satan was a fallen angel, however, seems to be taken for granted by the Gospel authors and is made more explicit in other New Testament literature (1 Tim 3:6; 4 Jude 6, 8-10; 2 Pet 2:4; Eph 2:2; 2 Cor 11:13-14).
13. So Ferguson correctly notes in commenting on this passage, “Evil may have varied manifestations, but ultimately there is only one principle of evil. Instead of a world dominated by many warring demons (a pagan and polytheistic conception), Jesus saw one kingdom of Satan.... Jesus saw his work as demonstrating that the whole dominion of evil was being conquered. The demons functioned as part of a larger whole, the dominion of the devil” (*Demonology*, p. 20).
14. Later rabbinical tradition had it that demons “surround us like the ridge round a field...every one among us has 1,000 on his left hand and 10,000 on his right hand.” Moreover, all manner of evil is attributed to them, everything from weakening in the knees to clothes wearing out to sore feet. See Babylonian Talmud *Berakot* 6a, cited in Ferguson, *Demonology*, p. 89. It is unlikely that something of this tradition does not extend back to the first century.
15. Langton, Edward. *The Essentials of Demonology: A Study of Jewish and Christian Doctrine, Its Origin and Development*. (London: Epworth, 1949), p. 147.
16. Some take John 9:1-5 to be an exception to this. I argue against this interpretation in chapter seven [of *God at War*]. But even if this passage does presuppose a divine purpose for this particular person’s blindness, this only slightly qualifies the point being made here.
17. For several informative discussions on the connection between sickness and Satanic/demonic activity in the New Testament, see R. Brown, “The Gospel Miracles,” in his *New Testament Essays* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), pp. 222-28; E. Yamauchi, “Magic or Miracle? Diseases, Demons and Exorcisms,” in *The Miracles of Jesus*, ed. D. Wenham and C. Blomberg, GP 6 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), pp. 92-93; D. S. Russell, *From Early Judaism to Early Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), pp. 90-93; and esp. P. H. Davids, “Sickness and Suffering in the New Testament,” in *Wrestling with Dark Angels: Toward a Deeper Understanding of the Supernatural Forces in Spiritual Warfare*, ed. C. P. Wagner and F. D. Pennoyer (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 1990), pp. 215-37. There

is now strong evidence that first-century Jews (hence perhaps Jesus himself) were assisted in their inclination to think of sickness and disease as demonically induced by the “Solomon/Son of David as exorcist and healer” tradition. J.H. Charlesworth has noted: “We possess traditions that may well derive from the first century C.E. in which Solomon is hailed as an exorcist who controls demons and the sickness, including blindness, the cause” (“The Son of David” Solomon and Jesus [Mark 10:47],” unpublished paper presented to the Jesus Seminar, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J., Oct. 1992, p.12). See also D.C. Duling, “Solomon, Exorcism and the Son of David,” *HTR* 68 (1975): 235-52. Thus it may be that Jesus’ title as the “Son of David” is linked with his reputation as healer/exorcist. See L. Fisher, “Can This Be the Son of David?” in *Jesus and the Historian: Written in Honor of Ernest Cadman Colwell*, ed. F.T. Trotter (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), pp. 82-87. For evidence of the prevalence within rabbinic Judaism of the view that much sickness was the result of demonic activity, see H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, 5 vols. (Munich: Bick, 1922-61), 4:510-35.

18. Kallas, *Synoptic Miracles*, p. 63.
19. “Gospel Miracles,” p. 224.
20. *Ibid.* Cf. Kallas, *Synoptic Miracles*, p. 79.
21. For references, see BAGD, p. 495.
22. My translation. The NIV translates *mastix* as “flogging” in Acts 22:24 and Hebrews 11:36, and the verbs *Mastizō* and *mastigoō* as “to flog” in Matthew 10:17; 20:19; 23:34; Mark 10:34; 15:15; Luke 18:32; John 19:1; Acts 22:24-25; and as “to punish” in Hebrews 12:6. But it translates *mastix* as “suffering,” “disease” and “sicknesses” in the Gospels (Mark 3:10; 5:29,34; Luke 7:21). Such a translation loses the unique forces of this rather unusual usage of this word.
23. See also Mark 9:29 (parallel Matt 17:21), where Jesus assumes there are different “kinds” of demons.
24. Kallas, *Synoptic Miracles*, p. 66.
25. Wingren, Gustaf. *The Living Word: A Theological Study of Preaching and the Church*. (London: Epworth, 1949), p. 53; cf. p. 167.
26. The centrality of Satan and the cosmic/spiritual warfare motif in the New Testament received an unprecedented amount of attention just prior to, during and after World War II. The classic statement of this position is Gustaf Aulen’s *Christus Victor*, trans. A Hebert (New York: Macmillan, 1961). See also from this period R. Leivestad, *Christ the Conqueror: Ideas of Conflict and Victory in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1954); J.S. Stewart, “On a Neglected Emphasis in New Testament Theology,” *SJT* 4 (1951): 292-301; E. Fascher, *Jesus und der Satan*, Hallische Monographien 11 (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1949); Schlier, *Principalities and Powers*; Wingren, *Living Word*. This view has received increasing attention in recent scholarship. For strong contemporary representative statements or arguments on the centrality of Satan and of the warfare motif in general for the New Testament, see R. Hiers, “Satan, Demons and the Kingdom of God,” *SJT* 27 (1974): 35-47; R. Yates, “Jesus and the Demonic in the Synoptic Gospels,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 44 (1977): 39-57; J. D. G. Dunn and G. H. Twelftree, “Demon-Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament,” *Churchman* 94, no. 3 (1980): 211-15; S. R. Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke’s Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989); H. Kruse, “Das Reich Satans,” *Bib* 58 (1977): 29-61; Ling, *Significance of Satan*; P. W. Hollenbach, “Help for Interpreting Jesus’ Exorcism,” *SBLSP*, 1993, ed. E. H. Lovering Jr. (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1993), pp. 124-26; M. Kelsey, *Encounter with God. A Theology of Christian Experience* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1972), pp. 242-45; J. Russell, *Devil*, pp. 222, 227, 234-39; Forsyth, *Old Enemy*, pp. 249, 286, 295-96; Langton, *Essentials*, p. 156; Yamauchi, “Magic or Miracle?” pp. 124-25; Kallas, *Jesus and the Power of Satan*; *idem*, *Synoptic Miracles*; *idem*, *The Satanward View* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966); W. Kirchscläger, *Jesu exorzistisches Wirken aus der Sicht des Lukas: Ein Beitrag zur lukanischen Redaktion*, Österreichische Biblische Studien 3 (Klosterneuburg: Österreichisches Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1981); W. G. Kümmel, “Liberation from the Spiritual Powers,” in his *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. J. E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), pp. 186ff.; J. J. Rousseau, “Jesus, an Exorcist of a Kind,” in *SBLSP*, 1993, pp. 129-53; Bocher, *Christus Exorcista*.
27. See J. Jeremias’s observation in “The Lord’s Prayer in the Light of Recent Research,” in his *Prayers of Jesus* trans. J. Bowden et al., *SBT* 2/6 (Naperville, Ill.: Allenson, 1967), p. 99. G. E. Ladd (*A Theology of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974], pp. 45-56) also draws a strong connection between the coming of the future kingdom and the vanquishing of the evil forces that presently control the world.
28. In the light of the fact that “the satanic and demonic is a dominant theme of the New Testament,” Newport argues, we must see the New Testament as constituting “at least a limited dualism” (“Satan and Demons: A Theological Perspective,” in *Demon Possession*, p. 331). Similarly, Kvanvig distinguishes this type of Jewish dualism from the cosmic dualism of Zoroastrianism by casting it as a temporary, eschatological and moral dualism rather than a metaphysical dualism. See *Roots of Apocalyptic*, pp. 610-11. See also C. S. Lewis’s strong case for a form of biblical dualism in “God and Evil,” in *God in the Dock: Essays in Theology and Ethics*, ed. W. Hooper (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 21-24. For an argument along similar lines but cast in relationship to Greek philosophical forms of dualism, see A. H. Armstrong, “Dualism: Platonic, Gnostic and Christian,” in *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, ed. R. T. Wallis and J. Bregman (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), pp. 33-54. For similar assessments of the apocalyptic or New Testament dualism, see J. G. Gammie, “Spatial and Ethical Dualism in Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature,” *JBL* 93 (1974): 356-59; J. H. Charlesworth, “A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS 3:13-4:26 and the ‘Dualism’ in the Gospel of John,” *NTS* 15 (1968-69): 389-418; Aulen’s classic *Christus Victor*, pp. 4-5, 10-11, 76, 89, 108, 148-49.
29. Garrett, Susan R. *The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke’s Writings*. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) p. 55.
30. Kallas, *Synoptic Miracles*, p. 78. See also pp. 55, 66. See E. Stauffer: “The Kingdom of God is present where the dominion of the adversary has been overthrown” (*New Testament Theology* 5th ed., trans. J. Marsh [New York: Macmillan, 1955], p. 124). Similarly, Elaine Pagels notes that for the Gospel authors, “Jesus has come to heal the world and reclaim it for God; in order to accomplish this, he must overcome the evil powers who have usurped authority over the world, and who now oppress human beings” (*Origin of Satan*, p. 36). See also J. Robinson, “The Exorcism Narratives,” in *The Problem of History in Mark, and Other*

- Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), pp. 83ff.; Arnold, *Powers of Darkness*, p. 80; Dunn and Twelftree, "Demon-Possession and Exorcism," pp. 219-23; Rousseau, "Jesus, an Exorcist," pp. 150-51. In his recent superb study, Graham Twelftree concludes that "Jesus was the first to make the connection between exorcism and eschatology. For him, his exorcisms were the first or preliminary binding of Satan who would finally be destroyed in the eschaton" (*Jesus the Exorcist*, pp. 217-24).
31. So Brown writes, "The miracle was not primarily an external guarantee of the coming of the kingdom; it was one of the means by which the kingdom came. In particular, Jesus' miracles were the weapons He used to overcome Satan" ("Gospel Miracles," p. 222). See also Yates, "Powers of Evil," pp. 106-7.
 32. Against this, Robert Guelich has argued: "We find no hint of any cosmic or ethical dualism in Jesus' ministry as portrayed in the Synoptics. The Kingdom of God is never juxtaposed to a 'kingdom of Satan'" ("Spiritual Warfare: Jesus, Paul and Peretti," *Pneuma* 13, no. 1 [1991]: 41). He thus regards Scripture's warfare motif as strictly metaphorical (p. 34). Interestingly enough, however, Guelich does seem to accept that the coming of the kingdom of God is (literally?) simultaneous with the binding of the strong man and the plundering of his house (pp. 38-39). One of the main reasons Guelich argues against the centrality of the warfare motif in the Gospels' portrayal of Jesus' ministry concerns what he regards as the absence of any struggle or theme of conquest against Satan in this portrayal (pp. 40-42). "In every case," he writes, "Jesus is clearly in control of the situation. There is simply no contest" (p. 40). Against this four points can briefly be made: (1) That Jesus (like Yahweh in the Old Testament) at least had to rebuke Satan and demons shows that they are genuine foes who must be conquered. God is (through Jesus) in control, to be sure, but this control has genuine opposition, and it must therefore be established by "a rebuke." (2) If the Gospel accounts of Jesus' temptation don't represent a genuine struggle with Satan, what would? The meaning of Guelich's observation that "Jesus was vulnerable to Satan's 'temptation' but not to Satan personally" is not clear to me (p. 40). (3) It is, we shall see, possible that in at least one Gospel account Jesus' exorcistic command did not issue in an immediate exorcism (Mark 5:6-10; see Boyd, *God at War*, 1997, chapter seven), and it is certain that the disciples' exorcisms were not always immediate (Matt 9:17-18). Indeed, one of Jesus' healings was not instantaneous (Matt 8:24), and Mark implies that on at least one occasion Jesus could not do certain miracles because of people's lack of faith (Mark 6:5). Hence it seems fair to characterize the ministry of both Jesus and certainly his disciples as a struggle against the enemy. (4) It is clear from the Epistles that followers of Jesus understood themselves to be part of an ongoing cosmic battle and thus to be under constant attack from the enemy (see Boyd, *God at War*, 1997, chapters seven to ten).
 33. Ferguson speculates that "the use of these titles of Jesus was an effort by the demon to claim power over him," since knowing someone's name and office was seen as a form of power (*Demonology*, p. 7). Hence Jesus sometimes inquires into the name of the demon(s) he is confronting (Luke 8:30).
 34. Forsyth captures the theme well: "the teaching is somehow presented by the event [viz., the exorcism] the people have witnessed—a new teaching: power over the spirits" (*Old Enemy*, p. 286).
 35. If Pagels is correct, even the interlude discussion about sabbath propriety is not irrelevant to Mark's warfare perspective, for here (Mark 2:23-26) "Jesus dares claim as precedent for his disciples' apparently casual action [of picking corn] on the Sabbath, the prerogative of King David himself, who, with his men, broke the sacred food laws during a wartime emergency" (*Origin of Satan*, p. 18).
 36. Forsyth notes that this is the same apocalyptic cosmic battle motif, but "the battle scheme has now shifted to Christ's life" (*Old Enemy*, p. 289). See also Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, pp. 91-118. For a fascinating study that draws the literary connections between this portrayal of Satan and Old Testament and apocalyptic warfare motifs, see H. A. Kelly, "The Devil in the Desert," *CBQ* 26 (1964): 190-220. Adrio König sees in the temptation narratives a reversal of Adam's succumbing to temptation, and hence the beginning of a new creation in Jesus' ministry (*New and Greater Things: Re-evaluating the Biblical Message on Creation* [Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1988], pp. 106-7). E. Best goes so far as to argue that Mark locates the central confrontation between Jesus and the devil in the temptation narrative (*The Temptation and the Passion: The Markan Soteriology*, 2d ed., SNTSMS 2 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990]).
 37. Arnold, *Powers of Darkness*, p. 78.
 38. As noted earlier, this is not to say that those critical scholars today who acknowledge that Jesus was perceived to be an exorcist or a healer have necessarily dissociated themselves from an antisupernatural worldview. Many times they have simply expanded a naturalistic worldview and thus account for the supposed exorcisms and healings by psychosomatic and sociological explanations. See, e.g., R. Funk, "Demon: Identity and Worldview," *The Fourth R* 5, no. 3 (1992): 15; Hollenbach, "Jesus, Demoniacs," p. 567; Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, pp. 310-32; Davies, *Jesus the Healer*.
 39. *Ibid.* Cf. Kallas, *Synoptic Miracles*, p. 79.
 40. For references, see BAGD, p. 495.
 41. Wingren, *Living Word*, p. 62 Cf. p. 164. It is perhaps worth noting here that Scripture does not generally envisage the eschatological kingdom as "above" the earth so much as it envisages it as "on" the earth. All who overcome will "reign on earth" (Rev 5:10). Just as our bodies will be transformed but will still be our bodies (1 Cor 15:35-54), so too the earth will be transformed, but it will nevertheless be our earth (see 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 20:8, 21:1, 24).