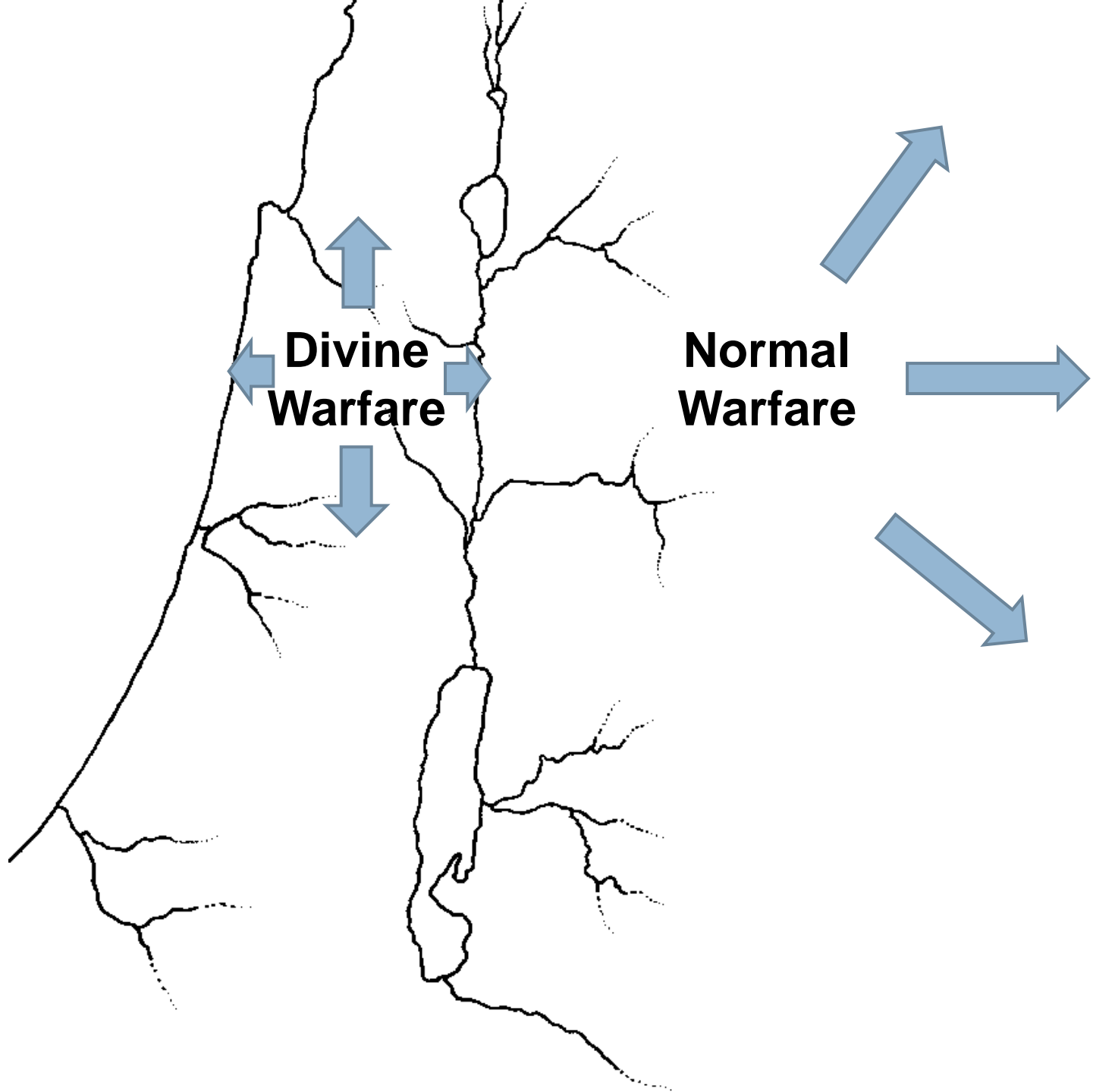


# PARTICIPANTS IN DIVINE WARFARE

The Church Prefigured in the OT

# Israel as Participants in Divine Warfare

- ***Two kinds of warfare waged by Israel (Deut. 20)***
  - **Normal** Warfare (fighting those outside the Promised Land):
  - **Divine** or “Herem” Warfare (Fighting those within the Promised Land):
    - “Herem” means to devote to complete **destruction**. It is generally used to refer to setting someone apart for God’s judgment. This is divine warfare.
    - The conquest of Canaan falls under this type of warfare.



**Divine Warfare**

**Normal Warfare**

# Israel as Participants in Divine Warfare

- ***Excursus: The Canaanite Conquest and the Justice of God***
  - ▣ According to Scripture, all human beings are **enemies** of God and deserve to die. We are all objects of divine warfare.
  - ▣ The conquest of Canaan was not genocide or ethnic cleansing. Divine warfare is about **ethics**, not ethnicity. It is an impartial judgment of sin.
    - **Rich Lusk:** “God did not use Israel to invade a peace-loving, righteous people...Canaanite society was filled with violence, cruelty, idolatry, and immorality.”
    - Israel is under the same threat. If Israel **acts** like the Canaanites, God will **treat** them like the Canaanites. He will drive them out of the land (Deut. 6:14-15).

# Israel as Participants in Divine Warfare

- ***Excursus: The Canaanite Conquest and the Justice of God***
  - ▣ Divine warfare is delayed 400 years because of God's patience and longsuffering (Gen 15:16).
    - **Genesis 15:16** "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."

# Israel as Participants in Divine Warfare

- ***Excursus: The Canaanite Conquest and the Justice of God***
  - ▣ God himself wages war against the Canaanites as an act of divine justice. Israel is but a **participant** under God's command in divine warfare against the Canaanites.

# Israel as Participants in Divine Warfare

- ***Excursus: The Canaanite Conquest and the Justice of God***
  - The fertile strip of land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River doesn't belong to the Canaanites nor does it belong to the Israelites, it belongs to **God**. He created it. He can give it to whomever he pleases.
  - The conquest “does not reveal the whole of God's purpose for the Gentile nations” (Rich Lusk). God does not give the Israelites the goal or mission of conquering the **world**.

# Israel as Participants in Divine Warfare

- ***The Nature of Divine Warfare (Deut. 7)***
  - ▣ **Divine warfare is **initiated** and defined by God.**
    - God commands it. The failure to go into the land after the spies returned with their report was a rebellion against God's command.
    - God determines its **scope**. Herem warfare is only to be waged against 7 nations within certain geographical boundaries.



# Israel as Participants in Divine Warfare

- ***The Nature of Divine Warfare (Deut. 7)***
  - **Divine warfare leads to total destruction and is waged against both **people** and false **gods** (Deut. 7:1-6).**

# Israel as Participants in Divine Warfare

- ***The Nature of Divine Warfare (Deut. 7)***
  - ▣ **Divine warfare is a revelation of the **character** of God that should lead to humble obedience (Deut. 7:7-16).**
    - The conquest is God keeping his covenant with Israel while simultaneously repaying the Canaanites for their sin. It is a revelation both of his love and mercy as well as his justice and holiness.

# Israel as Participants in Divine Warfare

- ***The Nature of Divine Warfare (Deut. 7)***
  - ▣ **Divine warfare is waged by God himself so do not **fear** (Deut. 7:17-21).**
    - The antidote to fear is remembering that the God who defeated Pharaoh and brought Israel out Egypt is the same God who is in their midst.

# Israel as Participants in Divine Warfare

- ***The Nature of Divine Warfare (Deut. 7)***
  - Divine warfare is waged **progressively**, not all at once (Deut. 7:22).
  - Because divine warfare is waged by God himself, absolute **victory** is assured (Deut. 7:23-24).
  - Divine warfare must not be waged for personal **gain** (Deut. 7:25-26).

# Believers as Participants in Divine Warfare

- ***Divine Warfare Transformed (Acts 1:1-8)***
  - Divine warfare continues in the new covenant age but the nature of the conflict has changed. Divine warfare has been **transformed** and redefined by Jesus, the greater Moses and the greater Joshua.
  - Jesus wants his people to participate with him in this great **invasion** of Satan's kingdom, in divine warfare.



# Believers as Participants in Divine Warfare

- ***Divine Warfare Transformed (Acts 1:1-8)***
  - If the story of the exodus prefigures Jesus' victory on the cross, then the story of the conquest prefigures the events in the book of **Acts**. The book of Acts describes the continuation of Jesus' warfare through his people, the church. It is the new covenant version of the conquest.

# Believers as Participants in Divine Warfare

- ***Divine Warfare Transformed (Acts 1:1-8)***
  - ▣ **Acts 1:1-8** Pay attention to kingdom language.
    - V. 1 Acts is a **continuation** of Jesus' ministry, his warfare.
    - V. 3 The main subject matter discussed after Jesus' resurrection is the **kingdom** of **God**.



# Believers as Participants in Divine Warfare

## □ *Divine Warfare Transformed (Acts 1:1-8)*

- V.6-8 Jesus does not change the **subject**. He redirects their attention from the timing of the event to the event itself.
  - The prophets spoke of a day when the nations would stream to Israel, when the whole earth would be given as an inheritance to the Son of David, when the Messiah would reign over all the nations.
  - The disciples ask, “WHEN will the prophecies concerning the kingdom be fulfilled? Jesus answered: The question is not WHEN but HOW. How will the prophecies concerning the kingdom be fulfilled? By a Spirit empowered church bearing **witness** to **Jesus** in all the earth.

# Believers as Participants in Divine Warfare

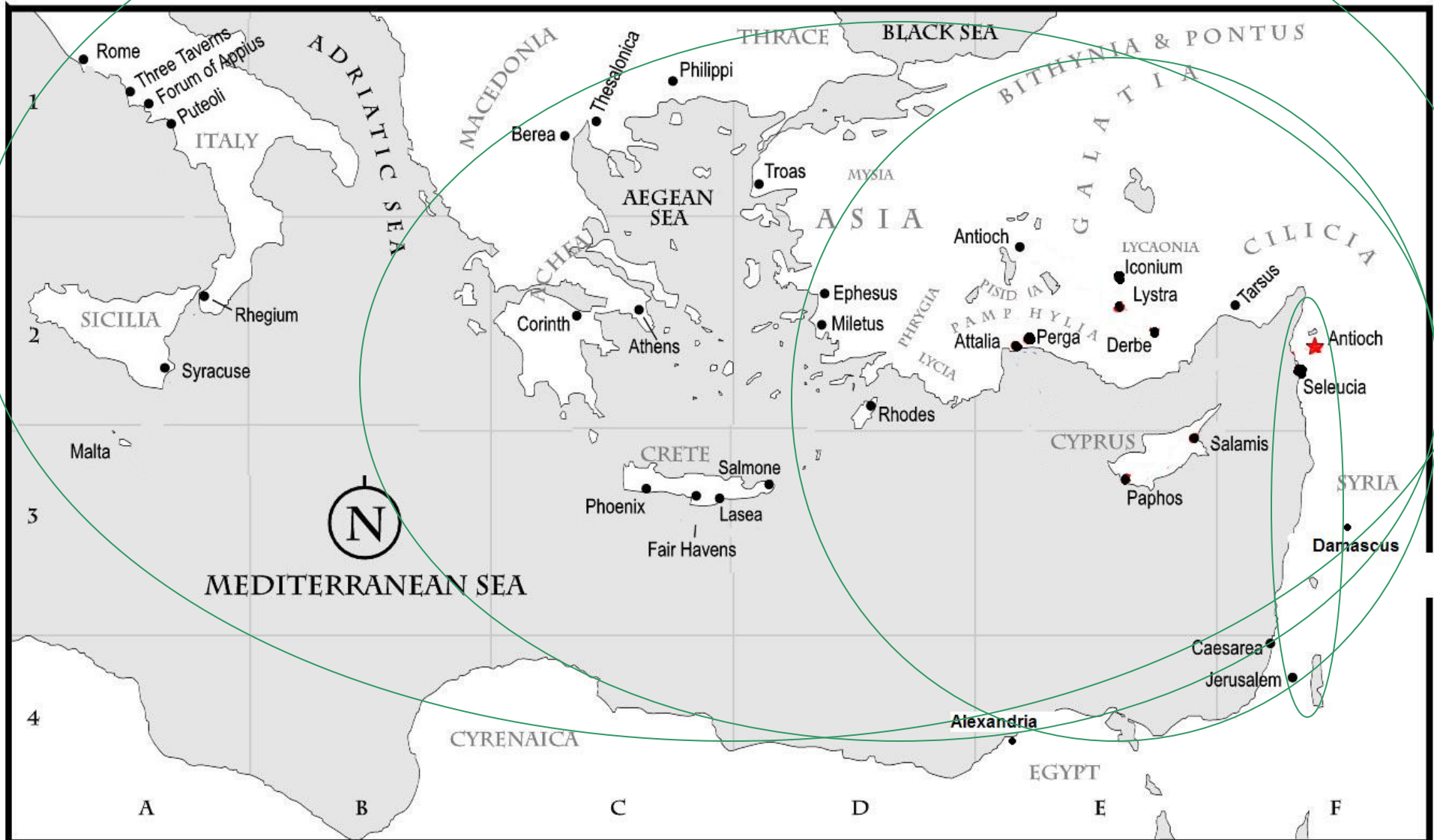
- ***Divine Warfare Transformed (Acts 1:1-8)***
  - ▣ This is the great purpose and task of the church of Jesus Christ on this earth. This is the divine warfare in which we are called to participate. This is the conquest redefined and transformed.

# Believers as Participants in Divine Warfare

## □ *Parallels and Contrasts*

- Israel is commanded to conquer the land of **Canaan**; The church is commanded to conquer the whole **world**.
  - **Matthew 24:14** "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.
- The conquest of **Canaan** was progressive; The conquest of the world will also be **progressive**.

# Roman World



# Believers as Participants in Divine Warfare

## □ *Parallels and Contrasts*

□ **Israel must wage war against people and idols; The church's warfare is directed against both **people** and **demonic** powers.**

- **The Devil:** We fight the devil by applying and exercising Jesus' victory over demonic powers (Eph. 6:10-20).
- **People:** We fight people by applying and exercising Jesus' victory over people and their sin by means of a substitute.

# Believers as Participants in Divine Warfare

## □ *Parallels and Contrasts*

- We wage war against **ourselves** (Rom 13:12-14; Gal. 5:24; Col. 3:3-5).
  - **Colossians 3:3-5** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. <sup>5</sup> Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.
- We wage war, when necessary, against fellow believers (1 Cor. 5:1-5).
- We wage war against unbelievers (see below).

# Believers as Participants in Divine Warfare

## □ *Parallels and Contrasts*

▣ **Israel is to devote all to destruction; The church also devotes all to **destruction**.**

■ Total destruction is an important aspect of divine warfare. There is a “**no survivor**” policy. All must die. How does the church carry this out? By bearing witness to Jesus in all the world.

# Believers as Participants in Divine Warfare

## □ *Parallels and Contrasts*

- **The Devil:** We can understand this concept with regard to the devil. We are not to give any room to the devil. We are to **resist** him steadfastly. We are to progressively destroy his power and influence over people by proclaiming the gospel.



# Believers as Participants in Divine Warfare

## □ *Parallels and Contrasts*

### □ **People:** What about people?

- **Vern Poythress:** “When wicked people repent and are baptized into Christ, they undergo destruction and resurrection. They are consecrated to **destruction** in a way analogous to what happened to the Canaanites. But they do not stay dead and destroyed because God raises them. When they come to Christ in faith, they experience both death to the old life and resurrection to the new life.”
- Those who refuse God’s substitute will die in the end. God will judge them and wage war against them (Rev. 19).
- All will die. Either people will be put to death in Christ and be delivered or they will be put to death in judgment and be destroyed.

# Believers as Participants in Divine Warfare

## □ *Parallels and Contrasts*

- Israel uses physical weapons waging a physical battle; The church uses **spiritual** weapons waging a spiritual battle.
  - The conquest involves a Spirit empowered church bearing witness to Jesus in all the earth. How is this carried out? Read the book of Acts. Our weapons are the same as Jesus' weapons, Peter's weapons, Paul's weapons.
    - These weapons include **prayer**, proclamation of the gospel, doing **good**, suffering.
    - Israel won by taking the lives of others; The church triumphs, like Jesus, by **giving** its life for others. We cannot atone for others, but we can reflect Jesus and point to Jesus' atonement.

# Believers as Participants in Divine Warfare

## □ *Parallels and Contrasts*

- **Both for Israel and the church, the conflict is hindered by **fear** and **covetousness**.**
  - Fear causes us to **quit**, it causes us to shut up (external attack).
  - Covetousness causes us to **sin** against God and fight for the wrong reasons subverting the warfare (internal attack) (see Acts 20:33).
    - **Acts 20:33** "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes."

# Conclusion:

- ▣ **How does the church participate in divine warfare?** By bearing witness to Jesus in all the earth by the power of the Spirit.
- ▣ **2 Corinthians 2:15** “For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; <sup>16</sup> to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?”