



## War, New Testament

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### Introduction

In comparison to the extensive literature on war and warfare in the Old Testament and the depth and complexity of the accompanying moral and theological debates, the New Testament scholarship appears slight indeed. This is not only because of the relative sizes and timeframes of the two Testaments. The New Testament documents are the product of tiny, powerless 1st- and 2nd-century communities, which were themselves often the victims of war—in the case of the survivors and refugees from the Judean War (66–73 CE)—or marginalized and potentially illegal in the case of the earlier Pauline communities and later nascent “Christian” groups. For these communities, war was an inevitable reality and perhaps even seen as an apocalyptic necessity for the in-breaking new age of the Kingdom of God. In some contexts the reality of war may have been something too painful or dangerous to mention openly at a time when Rome was brutally reasserting its hegemony over the Eastern Mediterranean world. So war lurks in the background of the New Testament texts. Only after Constantine and the rise of a dominant Christian culture does it make any sense for Christians to turn to issues more widely canvassed in Old Testament scholarship such as the state and war, military service, Holy War, and Just War theory. For these reasons, publications explicitly on war in the New Testament itself are relatively scarce, tend to allegorize or spiritualize the topic, and/or focus on the battle scenes and eschatological warfare of the Book of Revelation. Nevertheless, since much continues to be written on these and related issues—such as Jesus, pacifism, and violence; the history of the Judean (Jewish) War and how some NT texts allude to it (or don’t); and the relationship between the early followers of Jesus and the power and warfare of the Roman Empire—all of these topics are included in this article. The overall focus in this bibliography is on war and violence at the state and imperial levels, since the inevitable consequences of war and violence for slaves, women and, in particular, ethnic groups are treated in separate Oxford bibliographies (see, for example, *Slavery and Anti-Semitism in the New Testament*), though some books discussed in this article touch on these areas also.

### General Overviews

The dictionary articles on war in the New Testament either focus on the use in the New Testament of the Greek words usually translated “war” (*polemos* noun, *polemeo* verb), or attempt a wider survey including related terms and motifs, and associated ethical issues. In the former category, Böcher 1993 (ET) provides a concise introduction suitable for introductory undergraduate work, and Bauernfeind 1968 (ET) and Hobbs 1995 give a more detailed overview appropriate for advanced undergraduate- or graduate-level study. Among the wider surveys, LaSor 1993 is helpful as an undergraduate starting point, while Furnish 1984, Hegermann 1990, and Klassen 1992 give more comprehensive accounts suitable for the higher-level student. Swartley 2014 gives a brief methodological overview, and Swartley 1996 is the most comprehensive and detailed coverage of the whole area.

**Bauernfeind, Otto.** “πόλεμος, πολεμέω.” In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 6. Edited by Gerhard Friedrich; translator and editor, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 502–515. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968.

A more extensive coverage of the background to war language, including in the Greek World and Hellenism, the Old Testament and later Judaism, and then its usage in the New Testament, where it is divided into “the events of the last time” and “other references.”

**Böcher, Otto.** “πόλεμος, πολέμῳ.” In *The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 3. Edited by Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, 128–129. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993.

A basic introduction to the use of “war” (*polemos*) in the New Testament. Helpful statistics and classification of usage into eschatological, paraenetic, and the metaphorical use of messianic war motifs.

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**Furnish, Victor Paul.** “War and Peace in the New Testament.” *Interpretation* 38 (1984): 363–379.

Explains clearly the different context and timeframe of the New Testament writings (compared with the Old Testament), and thus the indirect nature of the evidence for the attitudes of Jesus and Paul to war and violence.

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**Hegermann, Harald.** “Krieg III: Neues Testament.” In *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*. Edited by Gerhard Krause and Gerhard Müller, 25–28. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1990.

Includes discussion of war and apocalyptic expectation, holy war traditions, military service, and other ethical questions.

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**Hobbs, Raymond.** “The Language of Warfare in the New Testament.” In *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context*. Edited by Philip F. Esler, 259–273. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

Catalogues the language of warfare and weaponry in the New Testament and argues that it functions referentially and illustratively in the Gospels (usually negatively) and Acts (more positively), and metaphorically in the Epistles (as exhortation). Revelation is not analyzed.

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**Klassen, William.** “War in the NT.” In *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Vol. 6. Edited by David Noel Freedman, 867–875. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Detailed comment on war in the Greco-Roman world, God as “warrior” in Judaism, Jesus as eschatological or messianic warrior, and ethical questions concerning war and military service in the New Testament and early church.

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**LaSor, William Sanford.** “War.” In *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*. Edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, 791–792. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

A concise overview of war in the Bible, including a brief section pointing out that strictly, discussion of “pacifism” belongs to the Church Fathers, not the New Testament, where the predominately spiritual and apocalyptic nature of war language is evident.

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**Swartley, Willard M.** “War and Peace in the New Testament.” In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*. Part 2, *Principat* 26.3. Edited by Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini, 2298–2408. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1996.

A detailed and extensive review of the literature on war and peace in the New Testament, followed by a careful analysis of the interrelatedness of war and peace language in the Bible (they are not antonyms), and exegetical comments on the key New Testament texts. Excellent bibliographical detail.

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**Swartley, Willard M.** “Peace and Violence in the New Testament: Definition and Methodology.” In *Struggles for Shalom: Peace and Violence across the Testaments*. Edited by Laura L. Brenneman and Brad D. Schantz, 141–154. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014.

A brief and accessible overview of the issues around defining peace and violence in the New Testament, their wider semantic fields, and the way they are addressed in various New Testament texts.

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## Collected Essays and Readings

Collections of essays on war and peace in the New Testament are gathered here in two sections: those that cover these themes in general across the Bible, and with attention to reception history and/or contemporary experiences of violence; and those that focus on particular themes within the Bible, or on particular texts within the New Testament.

### War, Peace, and Violence in the New Testament

These collections include articles covering issues across the New Testament and sometimes the whole Bible. Astley, et al. 2003 provides a reader resource book of selected primary and secondary sources relating to the ethics of war and peace, and Long 2011 does the same for the history of war and peace themes from the Bible and its interpretation. De Villiers and van Henten 2012 (South Africa), Zehnder and Hagelia 2013 (Norway), and Horsley 2004 (“hidden transcripts” of the oppressed) all contain collected articles written out of, or motivated by, deep experiences of violence and powerlessness. Brenneman and Schantz 2014 (Mennonite tradition) gathers articles from a distinctive peace church tradition, while Geljon and Roukema 2014 and Matthews and Gibson 2005 provide collections of essays from a wide critical range of perspectives.

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**Astley, Jeff, David Brown, and Ann Loades, eds. *Problems in Theology 3: War and Peace—A Reader*. London: Continuum, 2003.**

A helpful collection of extracts from a wide range of key authors commenting on the ethics of war and peace, including sections on Jesus, the New Testament, and the early church.

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**Brenneman, Laura L., and Brad D. Schantz eds. *Struggles for Shalom: Peace and Violence across the Testaments*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014.**

Essays gathered in honor of the Mennonite peace-warriors Perry B. Yoder and Willard M. Swartley and reflecting the best of that tradition. Includes articles on Luke, John, Mark, Paul, and the Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as on Old Testament traditions.

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**De Villiers, Pieter G. R., and Jan Willem van Henten, eds. *Coping with Violence in the New Testament*. Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2012.**

A collection of articles mostly from South Africa exploring themes of violence in the New Testament in the context of ongoing struggles in that land. Includes introductory articles and detailed studies on the Gospels, Epistles, and the Apocalypse.

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**Geljon, Albert C., and Riemer Roukema, eds. *Violence in Ancient Christianity: Victims and Perpetrators*. Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2014.**

A collection of articles mainly on the post–New Testament period, but important because some address ethnic relations between Greeks, Romans, Christians, and Jews, as well as the reception history of New Testament texts, such as “Love your enemies.”

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**Horsley, Richard A., ed. *Hidden Transcripts and the Arts of Resistance: Applying the Work of James C. Scott to Jesus and Paul*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004.**

A collection of studies exploring Scott’s analysis of the arts of resistance and hidden transcripts and applying them to selected New Testament texts.

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Long, Michael G., ed. *Christian Peace and Nonviolence: A Documentary History*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2011.

An extensive collection of extracts on war and peace themes from the Old and New Testaments and throughout history to the 21st century.

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Matthews, Shelly, and E. Leigh Gibson, eds. *Violence in the New Testament*. New York: T&T Clark, 2005.

A collection of essays that move beyond older polarized constructions of Jewish/Christian violence to examine the question in a more nuanced way within the wider context of Roman power and violence. Some authors do not hesitate to blame the text for the violence if they feel it is justified.

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Zehnder, Markus Philipp, and Hallvard Hagelia, eds. *Encountering Violence in the Bible*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013.

A collection arising out of the tragic violence in Norway in the summer of 2011. Mostly focused on the Old Testament and intertestamental literature, but includes essays on the New Testament (the Apocalypse and Matthew) and the Qur'an.

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## Specific Themes and Texts in the New Testament

The Grimsrud and Hardin 2011 collection focuses on rethinking apocalyptic and cosmic violence; Horsley 2000 includes essays that have reshaped recent Pauline studies toward a reconsideration of the significance of the Roman Imperial context; Verheyden, et al. 2011 concentrates on war and battle scenes in the Apocalypse and their reception history in the early church; while Thomas, et al. 2013 concentrates on the Holy War motif in the Bible. Hess and Martens 2008 gathers reflections on biblical material that address the latest concerns regarding terrorism.

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Grimsrud, Ted, and Michael Hardin eds. *Compassionate Eschatology: The Future as Friend*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011.

An ecumenical collection of authors giving a peacemaking perspective on Divine judgment and the Book of Revelation. Diverse influences from Girard, the peace churches, and ecotheology are evident in a range of detailed and scholarly responses.

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Hess, Richard S., and Elmer A. Martens, eds. *War in the Bible and Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*. Bulletin for Biblical Research, Supplement 2. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008.

A collection of articles ranging from biblical to contemporary peacemaking initiatives, including essays by Volf and Stassen.

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Horsley, Richard A., ed. *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation; Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000.

A collection of essays that put the issue of Paul's relationship to the Roman Empire in the center of current debates. In particular, the letters to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians are analyzed for the way they engage imperial power and mythology, with critical responses from contributing scholars.

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Thomas, Heath, Jeremy A. Evans, and Paul Copan, eds. *Holy War in the Bible: Christian Morality and an Old Testament Problem*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013.

A collection of essays covering Old and New Testament perspectives together with contemporary theological reflections on the issues raised by the Holy War motif.

Verheyden, Joseph, Tobias Nicklas, and Andreas Merkt, eds. *Ancient Interpretations of "Violent Texts" in the Apocalypse. Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus/Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments 92*. Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011.

English and German articles covering early Jewish background to the battle scenes in Revelation through to the reception history of violent texts in Revelation from the early Church Fathers onwards.

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## First-Century Uprisings and the Judean War (66–73 CE)

The New Testament texts were written in a violent age, the Pax Romana notwithstanding. In the generation before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the battles of the Roman Civil War in Asia, Philippi, and Actium, Herod's wars with the Parthians, and ongoing smaller rebellions in Judea, Samaria, and the Galilee all formed part of the wider context in which the New Testament documents took their shape. Of even more significance was the Jewish War—commencing in 66 CE and leading to the fall of Qumran (68 CE), Jerusalem (70 CE), and Masada (73 CE)—which had a profound and yet still somewhat unclear effect on the formation of the Gospels, the later Pauline corpus and other Epistles, and the Revelation to John. Publications dealing with the history of wars and uprisings in 1st-century Palestine are listed first, followed by those that focus on how the Judean (Jewish) War influenced or was alluded to in New Testament texts. These are more difficult to collect and classify—being dependant on the dating of the Gospels in relation to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE, and also on the methods used to detect the connections—but some recent attempts to uncover "hidden transcripts" revealing the plight of powerless minorities behind some New Testament texts and traditions are listed.

## History

The essential primary source is Josephus (b. 37 CE–d. c. 100 CE)—at times an eyewitness to the events he records—and for decades Schürer 1973–1987 has been the paradigmatic historical interpretation of events surrounding the war. Briefer and more recent historical accounts include Goodman 1987 and Horsley 1993, with Esler 1995 and Jones 2011 providing analyses of Jewish responses, and some graphic and pictorial input from Lewis 2009.

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Esler, Philip F. "God's Honour and Rome's Triumph: Responses to the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE in Three Jewish Apocalypses." In *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context*. Edited by Philip F. Esler, 239–258. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

An analysis of the responses to the fall of Jerusalem as depicted in the various *Iudaea capta* coins minted by the Flavians, and in 4 Ezra, the Apocalypse of Abraham, and 2 Baruch. Valuable parallels to the responses in the New Testament documents.

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Goodman, Martin. *The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome, A.D. 66–70*. Cambridge, UK, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

A comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the causes of the Jewish revolt. Argues for the combination of increasing economic inequality and a disintegrating society and ruling class as the critical factors triggering the war.

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Horsley, Richard A. *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.

Argues for the reality of widespread and recurring social violence rather than a benign Pax Romana. Describes Palestine (and Galilee in particular) as a hotbed of "social banditry" and local uprisings against Roman and Herodian power as the context for Jesus' nonviolent renewal movement.

Jensen, Morten Hørning. *Herod Antipas in Galilee: The Literary and Archaeological Sources on the Reign of Herod Antipas and its Socio-economic Impact on Galilee*. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 2/215. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2006.

Argues for a quieter and less revolutionary Galilee than Richard Horsley, describing Herod Antipas as an unremarkable minor client ruler who provides a buffer between the Romans and the Galileans and forty-three years of relative peace.

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Jones, Kenneth R. *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70: Apocalypses and Related Pseudepigrapha*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2011.

Describes various responses to the fall of Jerusalem in 4 Ezra, Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch, Greek Apocalypse of Baruch, Paralipomena Jeremiae, Oracula Sibyllina. Valuable parallels to the New Testament documents, Revelation in particular.

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Josephus, Flavius. "Judean War 2." In *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*. Vol. 1b. Edited by Steve Mason. Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2008.

Essential primary source vividly describing 1st-century events. A new translation and detailed additional commentary make this edition valuable for all levels of study and research as both a primary and a secondary source.

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Lewis, Brenda. *Battles of the Bible*. Edison, NJ: Chartwell, 2009.

A popular-level introduction to the battles of the Bible from Exodus to Masada. Includes maps and pictures. Suitable for undergraduate orientation.

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Schürer, Emil. *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)*. Translated by T. A. Burkill, et al.; revised and edited by Geza Vermes and Fergus Millar. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973–1987.

For decades this has been the paradigmatic historical interpretation of Late Second Temple Judaism and the rise of Christianity.

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Schwieb, Helmut. *Tempel und Tempelzerstörung: Untersuchungen zu den theologischen und ideologischen Faktoren im ersten jüdisch-römischen Krieg (66–74 n. Chr.)*. *Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus* 11. Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1989.

Explores the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in the wider context of the religious polemic between Judea and Rome. Suggests a link between the burning of the Capitol in Rome in 69 and Titus burning the Temple in 70, thereby establishing Jupiter's supremacy over the Judean God and legitimating Flavian rule.

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Sorek, Susan. *The Jews against Rome: War in Palestine AD 66–73*. London: Continuum, 2008.

A lucid and engaging account of the Jewish War at a more accessible level than the detailed work of Schürer, Mason, or Goodman. Argues that this war included the longest Roman siege on record and stands as *the* major event in Roman military history. Includes maps and photos.

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## Wars and Uprisings in the New Testament

The provenance of the final form of the Gospel of Mark in relation to the Judean War is a central, unresolved issue in New Testament studies. Myers 1988 argues for a "reading site" in the midst of, and before the end of, the war itself; Marcus 2000–2008

for a location nearby but after the war; and Incigneri 2003 argues for Rome after the war. The dominant position found in most other commentaries is still probably Rome before the war, or, unhelpfully, “around 70 CE.” Carter 2006 provides a very accessible introduction to the Roman Imperial context of the New Testament and demonstrates the implications of this for reading Matthew’s Gospel in the aftermath of the war (Carter 2001). Horsley 2004 (collected essays), Moore 2006, and Punt 2012 demonstrate the more recent turn to postcolonial perspectives, rather than the earlier anti-imperial stance, for reading the New Testament within the Roman Empire.

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**Carter, Warren. *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001.**

Matthew’s Gospel interpreted in the context of ever-present Roman Imperial power, such that the text is read as evidence of the Matthean communities negotiating their way in that power-laden context.

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**Carter, Warren. *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006.**

A very accessible introduction to the nature of Roman power as the context for reading New Testament texts—even when it is not explicitly mentioned.

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**Gaston, Lloyd. *No Stone on Another: Studies in the Significance of the Fall of Jerusalem in the Synoptic Gospels*. NovTSup. 23. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1970.**

A detailed study of the relationship of the Synoptic Gospels to the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem, with a particular focus on Mark 13 and the Luke-Acts tradition. Argues that the latter historicizes the pre-fall prophecies found in Mark.

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**Horsley, Richard A., ed. *Hidden Transcripts and the Arts of Resistance: Applying the Work of James C. Scott to Jesus and Paul*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004.**

A collection of studies that utilizes Scott’s analysis of the arts of resistance and hidden transcripts and applies them to texts about Jesus and Paul. Other scholars then respond critically to the insights gained.

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**Incigneri, Brian. *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark’s Gospel*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2003.**

Reads Mark as a text of the Jesus followers in Rome after the Judean War. Detailed connections are made between the text of Mark and postwar triumphs and other events in Rome in the early 70s as the Flavian dynasty was established on the basis of the defeat of the Judean rebels.

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**Marcus, Joel. *Mark. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. 2 vols. Anchor Bible 27. New York: Doubleday, 2000–2008.**

A major commentary reading Mark as the product of a community in southern Syria after the Judean War. Contains detailed reasoning for that perspective.

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**Moore, Stephen D. *Empire and Apocalypse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2006.**

Mark, the Fourth Gospel, and the Revelation to John are read from a postcolonial perspective rather than a binary anti-imperial perspective, and thereby attuned to some of the hidden arts of resistance.

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**Myers, Ched. *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988.**

Reads Mark as a text of a suffering community (maybe in Southern Syria or the Galilee) caught between both sides of the conflict in the wider Judean War before the fall of Jerusalem.

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**Punt, Jeremy. "Violence in the New Testament and the Roman Empire: Ambivalence, Othering, Agency." In *Coping with Violence in the New Testament*. Edited by Pieter G. R. de Villiers and Jan Willem van Henten, 23–39. Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2012.**

Argues that the ambivalence of the New Testament toward violence must be interpreted in the wider context of the pervasive Roman ideology of violence if it is to be understood, if not excused.

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## **Jesus, Peace, and Violence**

The overwhelming majority of the scholarly literature in this area interprets Jesus in terms of some form of pacifism ("love your enemies"), despite a few sayings that seem to indicate the opposite ("I did not come to bring peace but a sword," Matthew 10:34; "the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one," Luke 22:36). On the basis of this colorful Semitic language, some have argued that Jesus was in fact a revolutionary political figure akin to what used to be known as "the Zealots." Books that argue for and against this position are listed first and then followed by some major contributions to the wider debate about Jesus, peace, and violence.

## **Jesus and "the Zealots"**

Brandon 1967 made the first detailed argument that Jesus was a "Zealot," but very few were persuaded by this book. The argument was revived in Aslan 2013 and has generated a much larger response at the popular level. Hengel 2011 (first published in 1961) provided the classic study on "the Zealots" as a series of related movements, and Horsley 2005 is a summary of the author's responses deconstructing the "Zealot Party" into many different revolutionary groups and movements (zealous, but not Zealots), and his disassociation of Jesus of Nazareth from them. Horsley 1993 gives his earlier more detailed arguments.

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**Aslan, Reza. *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*. New York: Random House, 2013.**

A popular-level overview of the life of Jesus including a reworking of Brandon's arguments that Jesus was a political revolutionary in the style of the Zealots.

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**Brandon, S. G. F. *Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1967.**

The classic statement of the arguments that the historical Jesus was more involved in political insurrection than the later church traditions admitted.

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**Hengel, Martin. *Die Zeloten: Untersuchungen zur jüdischen Freiheitsbewegung in der Zeit von Herodes 1. Bis 70 n. Chr.* Herausgegeben von Roland Deines und Claus-Jürgen Thornton. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.**

The third edition of Hengel's 1959 doctoral thesis, arguing for a connection between successive Jewish resistance movements against Rome in the mid-1st century. Includes a response by Roland Deines to fifty years of scholarly discussion of Hengel's thesis. The previous edition is found in English as *The Zealots* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989).

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**Horsley, Richard A. *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.**

A more detailed study that demolishes the myth of an organized Zealot faction and instead describes Palestine (and Galilee in particular) as a hotbed of “social banditry” and local uprisings against Roman and Herodian power as the context for Jesus’ nonviolent renewal movement.

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**Horsley, Richard A. “‘By the Finger of God’: Jesus and Imperial Violence.” In *Violence in the New Testament*. Edited by Shelly Matthews and E. Leigh Gibson, 51–80. New York: T&T Clark, 2005.**

A short and accessible overview of the study of Jesus and violence and Horsley’s own contribution to it, including a rebuttal of the older view about a “Zealot Party” and a brief refutation of Brandon’s arguments.

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## Jesus and Peace

Most studies on Jesus, violence, and peace focus on the nature of Jesus’ numerous teachings on peace and love and whether he advocated passive pacifism, active pacifism, or a form of partial pacifism, and on the interpretation of those few texts and actions of Jesus that appear to be violent in some way. Borg 1984 is representative of the Jesus Seminar scholars who “de-eschatologize” Jesus and argue that the early church added the layer of violent apocalyptic sayings to his teachings under the pressure of persecution. Trocmé 1973 drew on the Kingdom and Jubilee themes in Jesus’ teaching, as did the influential work Yoder 1994 (first published in 1972). Klassen 1987 (messianic types), Wengst 1987 (Roman context), Joseph 2014 (Enochic traditions), and Horsley 2014 (violent Roman context) explore the nonviolent teaching of Jesus from differing perspectives. Neufeld 2011 is written in the peace church tradition of Yoder and provides an accessible and updated survey of the issues across the New Testament.

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**Borg, Marcus J. *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus*. New York: Mellen, 1984.**

A foundation text of the “third quest” for the historical Jesus that argues for a non-apocalyptic, nonviolent view of Jesus as a social prophet concerned with social inclusion rather than holiness.

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**Horsley, Richard A. “Jesus and Imperial Violence.” In *Jesus and the Politics of Roman Palestine*. By Richard A. Horsley, 54–79. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2014.**

Describes the context of imperial violence in Jesus’ day, its effects on the populace, the nature of resistance movements, and then outlines the nature of Jesus’ active nonviolent response and pronouncements of judgment.

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**Joseph, Simon J. *The Nonviolent Messiah: Jesus, Q, and the Enochic Tradition*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014.**

Argues for a nonviolent Jesus based on the Adamic redeemer figure in the Enochic material and some Son of Man sayings, in contrast to other more warlike messianic traditions.

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**Klassen, William. “Jesus and the Messianic War.” In *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis: Studies in Memory of William Hugh Brownlee*. Edited by Craig A. Evans and W. F. Stinespring, 155–175. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987.**

Surveys the various messianic concepts available in the 1st century (warrior of the word; son of Joseph; Suffering Servant) and argues that in continuity with Judaism, Jesus interprets the messianic war in terms of the Suffering Servant motif.

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**Neufeld, Thomas Yoder. *Jesus and the Subversion of Violence: Wrestling with the New Testament Evidence*. London: SPCK, 2011.**

An accessible yet detailed exploration of Jesus' teaching on forgiveness and violence, his actions in the temple, and his violent death. Also treats subordination (household codes and Romans 13:1–7) and divine warfare in the later New Testament texts. Published also as *Killing Enmity: Violence and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011).

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**Trocme, André. *Jesus and the Non-violent Revolution*. Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1973.**

The French precursor to Yoder, describing the significance of the Kingdom of God and the Jubilee for Jesus' social agenda of active pacifism.

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**Wengst, Klaus. *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ*. Translated by John Bowden. London: SCM, 1987.**

The standard older text that rediscovered the significance of the Roman Imperial context for interpreting the stories about Jesus.

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**Wink, Walter. "Neither Passivity nor Violence: Jesus' Third Way (Matt. 5:38–42 Par.)." In *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament*. Edited by Willard M. Swartley, 101–125. *Studies in Peace and Scripture*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992.**

Describes Jesus' ethical exhortation as active nonviolent resistance, not passivism or resignation. "Turning the other cheek" is a challenge, and not meek submission to bullying.

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**Yoder, John Howard. *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.**

A foundational text for those interpreting Jesus as a pacifist and political activist.

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## **The Gospels and Violence**

Inextricably connected to the question of whether Jesus advocated war or violence in any situation is the further consideration of how each Gospel differs in addressing, or avoiding, these issues. The word "war" (*polemos*) only occurs in the Synoptic texts about "wars and rumors of wars" not yet meaning the end (Matthew 24:6; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9) and in an additional text in Luke about kings waging war (Luke 14:31). It does not occur in John at all, but there we find the description of Jesus making a whip (John 2:15) to drive everyone out of the Jerusalem Temple. A general interpretive overview of key Gospel texts is given in Mauser 2003, and a comprehensive analysis of the problem of violent eschatological language in Neville 2013. Piper 1979 provides the standard analysis of the positive statement of the love command in the Synoptic Gospels, and Kloppenborg 2011 for interpreting Jesus' forceful language contextually. Wright 2001 argues for a historical interpretation of violent apocalyptic language, Williams 1991 for a Girardian approach, and Brett 2008 explores the legacy of the Jesus traditions in the "tides of empire" from a postcolonial perspective.

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**Brett, Mark G. "Jesus, Non-violence and the Christ Question." In *Decolonizing God: The Bible in the Tides of Empire*. By Mark G. Brett, 132–152. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008.**

Traces the subversive active resistance connections between Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount from a postcolonial perspective.

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**Kloppenborg, John S. "The Representation of Violence in the Synoptic Parables." In *Mark and Matthew I: Comparative Readings; Understanding the Earliest Gospels in Their First Century Settings*. Edited by Eve-Marie Becker and Anders Runesson, 323–351. WUNT 271. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.**

Surveys the use of violent language in the Synoptic parables and argues that the violence found in the Mark and Q traditions reflects the realism of everyday life, whereas the violence in the Matthean parables is intensified to an imaginary and lethal level.

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**Mauser, Ulrich. *The Gospel of Peace: A Scriptural Message for Today's World*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2003.**

A systematic overview of New Testament teaching on peace and peace language, focusing in particular on Matthew, Acts, Paul, Colossians, and Ephesians.

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**Neville, David J. *A Peaceable Hope: Contesting Violent Eschatology in New Testament Narratives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.**

Wrestles honestly and in detail with the problematic texts of violence in Matthew, Mark, Luke-Acts, John, and Revelation, and particularly those relating to eschatology.

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**Piper, John. *Love Your Enemies: Jesus' Love Command in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Early Christian Paraenesis; A History of the Tradition and Interpretation of Its Uses*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979.**

Argues for the distinctiveness of Jesus' command to love enemies compared with earlier traditions, and for two forms of the saying in the early church: the paraenetic (in the Epistles) and the command (in the Synoptic Gospels).

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**Williams, James G. "The Gospels and the Innocent Victim." In *The Bible, Violence, and the Sacred: Liberation from the Myth of Sanctioned Violence*. By James G. Williams, 185–211. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1991.**

An accessible overview of how a Girardian nonviolent approach might inform our interpretation of the four Gospels.

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**Wright, N. T. *Jesus and the Victory of God*. 2 vols. 3d ed. London: SPCK, 2001.**

Argues strongly for a historical interpretation of the "little apocalypse" (Mark 13 and parallels) as referring to the realities of the Judean War rather than to future apocalyptic and cosmological violence.

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## Matthew

The violent endings to a number of parables of Jesus in Matthew are so distinctive and problematical that they have received special attention in Reid 2004 and Neville 2013. Carter 2005 sets the problem in the context of a violent Roman Empire, and Stassen 1992 argues for active nonviolent resistance and peacemaking on the basis of the Sermon on the Mount. LeMarquand 2005 uses the traditions about the Canaanite wars in Deuteronomy 7 as the interpretive context for Matthew 15.

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**Carter, Warren. "Constructions of Violence and Identities in Matthew's Gospel." In *Violence in the New Testament*. Edited by Shelly Matthews and E. Leigh Gibson, 81–108. New York: T&T Clark, 2005.**

Includes a detailed table of the violent language in Matthew and its perpetrators, and questions the stereotype of Jewish violence against Jesus and his followers. Concludes that Matthew's Gospel itself imitates the imperial violence it opposes in order to sustain the hopes of the beleaguered community.

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**LeMarquand, Grant. "The Canaanite Conquest of Jesus (Mt 15:21–28)." *ARC: The Journal of the Faculty of Religious Studies* 33 (2005): 237–247.**

Interprets Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite woman as the symbolic reversal of the ethnic cleansing (the *herem*) in Deuteronomy 7.

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**Neville, David J. "Nonretaliation or Vengeance? Protesting Matthew's Violent Eschatology." In *A Peaceable Hope: Contesting Violent Eschatology in New Testament Narratives*. By David J. Neville, 17–44. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.**

Confronts squarely the problem of the acute tension between Matthew's violent parable endings and eschatology and the peaceful transforming initiatives of Jesus' teaching, especially in the Sermon on the Mount. Argues strongly that the latter must provide the interpretive framework for the former.

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**Reid, Barbara. "Violent Endings in Matthew's Parables and Christian Non-violence." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 66 (2004): 237–255.**

Clearly identifies the tension between the exhortations of Jesus in Matthew to nonviolence and the threatened *eschatological* violence in eight of the Matthean parables, and suggests four possible resolutions of the theological problem raised.

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**Stassen, Glen H. *Just Peacemaking: Transforming Initiatives for Justice and Peace*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992.**

Analyses of the Sermon on the Mount and of similar "transforming initiatives" in the rest of the New Testament form the basis for exploring and evaluating peacemaking initiatives around the world today. Demonstrates the transition *from* exegesis, to hermeneutics, to praxis.

## Mark

Myers 1988 describes the Markan communities of disciples as "hated by all" because of their non-involvement in either side of the Judean War. Moore 2006 agrees with Myers in perceiving a hidden critique of Rome in the Legion of pigs in Gerasa, and suggests other "hidden transcripts." Van Eck 2012 focuses on the violence in the parable of the tenants (Mark 12), and Hamerton-Kelly 1994 explores a Girardian approach to the violent death of Jesus in Mark. Neville 2013 provides a detailed analysis of Markan eschatology and argues for a distinctive nonviolent use of the Son of Humanity traditions.

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**Hamerton-Kelly, Robert G. *The Gospel and the Sacred: Poetics of Violence in Mark*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.**

A Girardian approach to issues of violence in Mark's Gospel, describing the center of the Gospel as scapegoating rather than sacrifice.

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**Kloppenborg, John S. "Self-Help or *Deus Ex Machina* in Mark 12.9?" *NTS* 50 (2004): 495–518.**

Argues that the violence that occurs at the end of the parable when the vineyard owner takes the law into his own hands is not historically plausible, and therefore that the parable (as also other parables of Jesus) functions more as realistic fiction designed to challenge hearers by the twists in the narrative.

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**Moore, Stephen D. "'My Name Is Legion, for We Are Many': Representing Empire in Mark." In *Empire and Apocalypse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament*. By Stephen D. Moore, 24–44. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2006.**

A detailed postcolonial reading of the diverse engagements with empire in the narrative of Mark. Respectful of Horsley's reading of Mark, but takes a less oppositional stance toward empire than does Horsley.

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**Myers, Ched. *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988.**

Using the principles of Mahatma Gandhi as an interpretive frame, Myers reads Mark from the perspective of a nonviolent community of Jesus followers caught in the midst of the Judean War.

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**Neville, David J. "Peaceful Power: Pleading Mark's Ethical Eschatology." In *A Peaceable Hope: Contesting Violent Eschatology in New Testament Narratives*. By David J. Neville, 45–87. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.**

A detailed study of Mark's discipleship ethics and distinctive use of the "Son of Humanity" language in support of a less violent and more ethical eschatology in selected key texts (Mark 8:38–9:1; 13:26; 14:62).

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**Van Eck, Ernest. "Jesus and Violence: An Ideological-Critical Reading of the Tenants in Mark 12:1–12 and Thomas 65." In *Coping with Violence in the New Testament*. Edited by Pieter G. R. De Villiers and Jan Willem van Henten, 101–131. Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2012.**

Demonstrates how the parable of the tenants has been used on many occasions to justify establishment violence and goes on to show that Jesus critiques all acts of violence in the parable, including that of the Little Tradition (the response of the peasants).

## Luke and Acts

Swartley 1983 provides a brief and helpful overview of the history of interpretation of Luke and the tension over peace language in an imperial setting. Both Ahn 2006 and Neville 2013 give much more detail, with Neville clearly setting out the tension between "peace" and retributive eschatological violence in Luke. Allison 2002 explores the relationship between texts of violent judgment (including Luke 9:52–56), and Schertz 2014 focuses on the particular problem of Jesus' saying about swords in Luke. Seland 1995, Matthews 2010, and Wills 1991 all explore the violence between Jews and Christians depicted in Acts, with very different results—the latter two strongly challenging the benign historical view of the narrative from the stoning of Stephen onwards.

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**Ahn, Yong-Sung. *The Reign of God and Rome in Luke's Passion Narrative: An East Asian Global Perspective*. Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2006.**

Explores the conflict between empire and the Reign of God in terms of space-time and power relations in Luke's theology.

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**Allison, Dale C. "Rejecting Violent Judgment: Luke 9:52–56 and Its Relatives." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 121 (2002): 459–478.**

A detailed examination of the critique of Elijah's violent summoning of fire (2 Kings 1:9–12) implied in Luke 9:52–56, demonstrating that this is not to be seen as a "Christian" critique of Judaism (grace versus judgmentalism), but develops what is already present in other Jewish traditions.

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**Matthews, Shelly. *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.**

A carefully nuanced reading of the stoning of Stephen in Acts that demonstrates its use in the tradition to define early Christian identity and superlative mercy over against non-believing Jews in a way that appealed to Roman values of security and respectability. Also reveals the violent after-effects of Stephen's final prayer, and challenges the "God of peace" theme in Luke-Acts.

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**Neville, David J. *A Peaceable Hope: Contesting Violent Eschatology in New Testament Narratives*. By David J. Neville. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.**

Two chapters explore the tension between Luke's undoubted emphasis on peace and the occasional retributive expressions of eschatological judgment, arguing that the latter are surrounded and relativized by the former. "The Evangelist of Peace," pp. 91–117, and "'As in the Days of Noah and Lot': Retributive Eschatology in Luke's Gospel," pp. 119–144.

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**Schertz, Mary H. "Swords and Prayer." In *Struggles for Shalom: Peace and Violence across the Testaments*. Edited by Laura L. Brenneman and Brad D. Schantz, 191–204. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014.**

Explores the narrative structure of Luke 22:35–38 and interprets the swords in light of the prayer of Jesus: "Take this cup from me," as an integration of Holy War and Suffering Servant motifs and a commitment to nonviolent power.

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**Seland, Torrey. *Establishment Violence in Philo and Luke: A Study of Nonconformity to the Torah and Jewish Vigilante Reactions*. Biblical Interpretation Series 15. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1995.**

Examines Jewish-Christian conflict in Acts, particularly relating to Stephen and later Paul, and argues that Philo's affirmation of zealous punishment of nonconformity provides a context for interpreting the vigilante killings and in-group violence within Judaism.

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**Swartley, Willard M. "Politics and Peace (*Eirēnē*) in Luke's Gospel." In *Political Issues in Luke-Acts*. Edited by Richard J. Cassidy and Philip J. Scharper, 18–37. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983.**

Evaluates the differing constructions of Luke's eschatology by Conzelmann, Cassidy, and Yoder by using Luke's emphasis on peace as key to social and relational renewal. Affirms the Cassidy-Yoder view of Luke's revolutionary social agenda rather than any pro- or anti-Roman apologetic.

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**Wills, Lawrence M. "The Depiction of Jews in Acts." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110 (1991): 631–654.**

Sees the Jews in Acts as repeatedly portrayed as stirring up trouble whereas the early followers of Jesus are represented as conforming to legitimate standards of Roman citizenry. Argues that this accords well with a 2nd-century date for Acts, and Roman disapproval of repeated Jewish revolts.

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## John (Fourth Gospel)

Reinhartz 2005 and Van der Watt and Kok 2012 state the issue in John clearly: How can the "Gospel of love" also promote hatred (particularly of "the Jews")? Motyer 1997 attempts to interpret John's use of "the Jews" more positively. Rensberger 2014 (the use of a whip in the Temple, John 2:15) and Kovacs 1995 (cosmic battle, John 12:20–36) focus on particular texts, while Neville 2013 explores John's distinctive nonviolent eschatology.

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**Kovacs, Judith L. "'Now Shall the Ruler of This World Be Driven Out': Jesus' Death as Cosmic Battle in John 12:20–36." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114 (1995): 227–247.**

Argues that for John it is at the crucifixion that the powers of evil are judged and defeated and the cosmic battle between God and Satan has been won.

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**Motyer, Stephen. *Your Father the Devil? A New Approach to John and "the Jews."* Milton Keynes, UK, and Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 1997.**

Contends that “the Jews” in John refers to the leadership group in Judea and that far from demonizing Jews in general, John’s aims are to appeal to them to see Jesus as Messiah.

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**Neville, David J. “Nonviolent Apocalypse: The Peace Witness in the Fourth Gospel.” In *A Peaceable Hope: Contesting Violent Eschatology in New Testament Narratives*. By David J. Neville, 177–216. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.**

Reads the Fourth Gospel as a nonviolent apocalypse with a dialectical relationship between realized and future eschatology.

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**Reinhartz, Adele. “Love, Hate, and Violence in the Gospel of John.” In *Violence in the New Testament*. Edited by Shelly Matthews and E. Leigh Gibson, 109–123. New York: T&T Clark, 2005.**

Explores why the Gospel known for its focus on love has also been the source of so much hatred of “the Jews.” Suggests that the tiny and powerless Christian community at the end of the 1st century were taking future “cosmological vengeance” on their persecutors.

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**Rensberger, David. “Jesus’s Action in the Temple.” In *Struggles for Shalom: Peace and Violence across the Testaments*. Edited by Laura L. Brenneman and Brad D. Schantz, 179–190. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014.**

Focuses on the question of the violence or lack of violence in the two distinct accounts (Mark and John) of Jesus’ Temple judging/cleansing action and argues for its symbolic nature.

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**Van der Watt, Jan, and Jacobus Kok. “Violence in a Gospel of Love.” In *Coping with Violence in the New Testament*. Edited by Pieter G. R. De Villiers and Jan Willem van Henten, 151–183. Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2012.**

States starkly the problem of the language and metaphors of violence in the Fourth Gospel, alongside the language of love. Is the former excused in a context of powerlessness, or by the intent to bring about faith and salvation?

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## **Paul, the State, and Violence**

The Pauline corpus does not address “war” explicitly, but certain key texts (notably Romans 13:1–7) have often been used to justify war, slavery, and colonization. Recent studies have sought instead to draw attention to Paul’s subversive critique of the Roman Empire, indicated by the presence of “hidden transcripts” that mimic and subvert dominant power structures. Others have focused on Paul’s rhetorical violence, or the violent assumptions behind his language of “Christ crucified” and sacrificial atonement.

## **Overviews of Paul and Violence**

Brett 2008 critiques the violent legacy of Pauline (mis)interpretation in colonial contexts and provides an alternative view. Horsley 2000 (collected studies) and Elliott 2004 also examine Paul’s subversive responses to the imperial context, while Gager and Gibson 2005 is somewhat less positive about Paul’s violent language. Hamerton-Kelly 1992 and Marshall 2008 take a more theological approach, the former using Girardian perspectives, and the latter appealing to the significance of Paul’s own experience.

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**Brett, Mark G. “Paul and Hybrid Christian Identities.” In *Decolonizing God: The Bible in the Tides of Empire*. By Mark G. Brett, 153–177. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008.**

A postcolonial critique of the use of Paul to defend colonial wars and slavery, arguing that hybrid solidarity in the cosmic Christ provides an alternative interpretation of Romans 13:1–7 and the right of states to wield the sword.

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**Elliott, Neil. "Strategies of Resistance and Hidden Transcripts in the Pauline Communities." In *Hidden Transcripts and the Arts of Resistance: Applying the Work of James C. Scott to Jesus and Paul*. Edited by Richard A. Horsley, 97–122. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004.**

Explores traces of subversive hidden transcripts in Romans 13:1–7 in relation to the governing authorities and in Paul's use of apocalyptic language.

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**Gager, John G., with E. Leigh Gibson. "Violent Acts and Violent Language in the Apostle Paul." In *Violence in the New Testament*. Edited by Shelly Matthews and E. Leigh Gibson, 13–21. New York: T&T Clark, 2005.**

Critiques Hamerton-Kelly's Girardian (nonviolent) interpretation of Paul, and suggests that Paul's "penchant for violent language" (p. 19) is due to his excessive zeal and his identification with Christ crucified.

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**Hamerton-Kelly, Robert G. *Sacred Violence: Paul's Hermeneutic of the Cross*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.**

A Girardian nonviolent approach to issues of violence and the centrality of "Christ crucified" in Paul's letters.

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**Horsley, Richard A., ed. *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation; Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000.**

A collection of essays that put the issue of Paul's relationship to the Roman Empire in the center of current debates. In particular, the chapters by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (pp. 40–57) and Neil Elliott (pp. 1–39), and the response by Robert Jewett (pp. 58–71), reignited discussion over Romans 13:1–7 and Paul's understanding of the "governing authorities" (State) and violence ("bearing the sword"), and whether he was being submissive or subversive.

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**Marshall, Christopher D. "The Violence of God and the Hermeneutics of Paul." In *The Work of Jesus Christ in Anabaptist Perspective*. Edited by A. Epp Weaver and G. Biesecker-Mast, 74–105. Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2008.**

Reflects on the hermeneutical strategies necessary to bridge the apparent gulf between the God of violence (Paul's former life as persecutor) and the reconciling God of peace (Paul's later experience).

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## Specific Texts of Violence in Paul

Neufeld 1997 (from the Jewish traditions) and Janssen 2014 (from a Greco-Roman perspective) explore Paul's use of armor language. Van Aarde 2012 examines Paul's version of the nonviolent response to oppression (Romans 12:29), and Finger 2014 explores intra-ecclesial conflict in Corinth, while Wan 2008 argues for hidden transcripts in Paul's teaching about governing authorities. Kahl 2010 rereads Galatians in the midst of images depicting the power of Rome over the barbarian nations, while Glancy 2002 points out the problems of Paul's responses to the violence of slavery (1 Corinthians 6 and elsewhere).

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**Finger, Reta Halteman. "'Not Peace but a Sword': Class Conflict in Paul's Corinthian Churches." In *Struggles for Shalom: Peace and Violence across the Testaments*. Edited by Laura L. Brenneman and Brad D. Schantz, 243–255. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014.**

Argues that Paul's letter does not bring peace and unity to the *ekklesiai* of Corinth, but rather a "sword" of family and class division. Nevertheless, Paul pleads for self-emptying love and the common good.

**Glancy, Jennifer. *Slavery in Early Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.**

Presents forcefully the violence of slavery in the 1st century and reads the New Testament texts in that context. Charges Paul with responding inadequately to the ongoing abuse of slave prostitutes in 1 Corinthians 6.

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**Janssen, David. "The Roman Cuirass Breastplate Statue and Paul's Use of Armour Language in Romans 13:12 & 1 Thessalonians 5:8." *Colloquium* 46 (2014): 55–85.**

Utilizes the concepts of "vivid speech" and "visual exegesis" to suggest that Paul's use of armor language subverts the imperial values and military glory promoted by the imagery on the cuirassed breastplates widely displayed throughout the provinces.

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**Kahl, Brigitte. *Galatians Re-imagined: Reading with the Eyes of the Vanquished*. Paul in Critical Contexts. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010.**

Reads Galatians in light of the defeat of the Galatians depicted on the Great Altar of Pergamon and reinscribed in Caesar's *Gallic Wars* as the foundation of the Roman Empire. In this context, Paul's Gospel of Messianic faith is pitted against imperial idolatry.

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**Neufeld, Thomas Yoder. *Put On the Armour of God: The Divine Warrior from Isaiah to Ephesians*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1997.**

A comprehensive evaluation of the Divine Warrior motifs in the Hebrew traditions and their reuse and reinterpretation in the Pauline literature.

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**Van Aarde, Andreas. "Paul's Version of 'Turning the Other Cheek': Rethinking Violence and Tolerance." In *Coping with Violence in the New Testament*. Edited by Pieter G. R. De Villiers and Jan Willem van Henten, 43–67. Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2012.**

Considers Paul's ethics of faith, hope, and love as gifts from God in the context of the spiral of violence in South Africa.

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**Wan, Sze-kar. "Coded Resistance: A Proposed Rereading of Romans 13:1–7." In *The Bible in the Public Square: Reading the Signs of the Times*. Edited by Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, Ellen Bradshaw Aitken, and Jonathan A. Draper, 173–184. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008.**

Argues that Paul's careful use of vocabulary in these verses (particularly *diakonos* and *leitourgos*, and the singular and plural use of *exousia*) reveals a coded message for insiders in the form of an accusatory challenge to the powerful and a reiteration that God alone holds supreme authority.

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## **The Revelation to John (the Apocalypse) and Violence**

The literature on war and violence in the Apocalypse is extensive and embraces diverse methods, interests, and assumptions. Here it is divided into two sections: overviews that tackle the problem of violent warfare more generally (whether seeking to explain, excuse, or name it), and more specific analyses of particular texts or themes within the Apocalypse.

### **Overviews of War and Violence in the Apocalypse**

Skaggs and Doyle 2007 provides a review of the preceding sixty years of scholarship on violence in the Apocalypse, whereas Verheyden, et al. 2011 gives Jewish background to the battle imagery and an account of the reception history of the text. Barr 2003

(call to endurance), Bauckham 2011 (the language of warfare), Decock 2012 (creation and chaos motifs), Harris 2013 (God's ultimate purposes), Rossing 2007 (in response to the "Left Behind" novels), all give largely positive responses to the challenge of reading the Apocalypse nonviolently. Finamore 2011 describes the limits of a Girardian nonviolent approach.

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**Barr, David L. "Doing Violence: Moral Issues in Reading John's Apocalypse." In *Reading the Book of Revelation: A Resource for Students*. Edited by David L. Barr, 97–108. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.**

Challenges the presumption that the Revelation to John affirms divinely sanctioned violence and highlights instead John's call for endurance ("consistent resistance"), while not ignoring the ethical problems of John's violent language.

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**Bauckham, Richard. "The Language of Warfare in the Book of Revelation." In *Compassionate Eschatology: The Future as Friend*. Edited by Ted Grimsrud and Michael Hardin, 28–41. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011.**

Shows how the Revelation to John reuses the Holy War language of Exodus to describe Christ's war on evil, in which God's people participate actively, but without weapons and never as the subject of the verb "warring."

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**Decock, Paul B. "Images of War and Creation, of Violence and Non-violence in the Revelation of John." In *Coping with Violence in the New Testament*. Edited by Pieter G. R. De Villiers and Jan Willem van Henten, 186–200. Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2012.**

Uses the motif of creation as war against chaos to evaluate divine miraculous violence in the Apocalypse, as distinct from human violence. The restrained intervention of God has brought only a partial victory over chaos, so humanity still suffers even as the faithful seek to strengthen the foundations of creation.

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**Finamore, Stephen. "A Kinder, Gentler Apocalypse? René Girard, the Book of Revelation, and the Bottomless Abyss of the Unforgettable Victim." In *Compassionate Eschatology: The Future as Friend*. Edited by Ted Grimsrud and Michael Hardin, 196–217. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011.**

Explores the limits of a Girardian approach to violence in the Revelation, in that a loving, nonviolent God cannot ensure that humanity itself does not bring on apocalyptic upheavals.

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**Harris, Dana M. "Understanding Images of Violence in the Book of Revelation." In *Encountering Violence in the Bible*. Edited by Markus Philipp Zehnder and Hallvard Hagelia, 148–164. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013.**

Interprets the images of violence in the Revelation to John in terms of the biblical metanarrative of God's ultimate purpose to judge sin and evil and to restore *shalom*, while offering no warrant for violence to be committed in God's name.

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**Rossing, Barbara R. "Apocalyptic Violence and Politics: End-Time Fiction for Jews and Christians." In *Contesting Texts*. Edited by Melody D. Knowles, Esther Menn, John Pawlikowski, and Timothy Sandoval, 67–77. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.**

Explores the themes of "conquering/victory" and "making war" in the Book of Revelation and critiques the use of them by some fundamentalist Christians to justify violence against Palestinians, and ultimately Jews, in the Middle East. A very clear introduction to the political implications of interpreting the "Lamb" and "blood" language in Revelation.

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**Skaggs, Rebecca, and Thomas Doyle. "Violence in the Apocalypse of John." *Currents in Biblical Research* 5 (2007): 220–234.**

A review article briefly summarizing the previous sixty years of scholarship on the issue of violence in the Book of Revelation.

Verheyden, Joseph, Tobias Nicklas, and Andreas Merkt, eds. *Ancient Interpretations of "Violent Texts" in the Apocalypse*. Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011.

English and German articles covering early Jewish background to the battle scenes in Revelation through to the reception history of violent texts in Revelation from the early Church Fathers onwards. These interpretations bear witness to the problem of the violent legacy of interpretations of the Apocalypse.

## Specific Themes and Texts of Violence in the Apocalypse

Bredin 2003 explores a nonviolent christology in the Apocalypse, as does Neville 2011, together with a re-examination of the assumption of Divine vengeance in the narrative. Gorman 2014 traces the dimensions of *shalom*, while Moore 2006 wrestles with the implications of the Empire of Rome becoming the Empire of Jesus Christ. Marshall 2005 gives a very different account of "Jezebel" of Thyatira (Revelation 2:20), de Villiers 2012 explores the demise of Babylon (Revelation 18), and Nicklas 2012 joins those who see the rider on the white horse covered in his own blood and not that of his victims. Moore 2006, however, is particularly skeptical about the prospects for a "gentler Apocalypse," arguing that the violence of the Empire of Rome is replaced by that of the Empire of God, both in John's invective and in subsequent historical events.

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**Bredin, Mark. *Jesus, Revolutionary of Peace: A Nonviolent Christology in the Book of Revelation*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2003.**

Makes use of Gandhi and Girard to frame an exploration of Jesus as a nonviolent revolutionary of peace in the Revelation to John.

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**De Villiers, Pieter G. R. "Unmasking and Challenging Evil: Exegetical Perspectives on Violence in Revelation 18." In *Coping with Violence in the New Testament*. Edited by Pieter G. R. De Villiers and Jan Willem van Henten, 201–225. Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2012.**

A close reading of Revelation 18 that argues against a simplistic view that the powerless are called to participate and rejoice in the vengeance against "Babylon." Rather, the call to be witnesses is a call to nonviolence and a distancing from total disregard for human life and dignity.

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**Gorman, Michael J. "Shalom in the Book of Revelation: God, Church, Judgment, New Creation." In *Struggles for Shalom: Peace and Violence across the Testaments*. Edited by Laura L. Brenneman and Brad D. Schantz, 279–290. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014.**

Contends that despite the violent history of interpretation of the Revelation to John, the four themes of God, Church, Judgment, and New Creation constitute the dimensions of *shalom* within the overall narrative of the book.

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**Marshall, John W. "Collateral Damage: Jesus and Jezebel in the Jewish War." In *Violence in the New Testament*. Edited by Shelly Matthews and E. Leigh Gibson, 35–50. New York: T&T Clark, 2005.**

Reads the Revelation to John in the midst of the Judean War (69 CE) and John's violent rhetoric against "Jezebel" as insider threats to sustain communal identity at a time of crisis.

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**Moore, Stephen D. "'The World Empire Has Become the Empire of Our Lord and His Messiah': Representing Empire in Revelation." In *Empire and Apocalypse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament*. Edited by Stephen D. Moore, 97–121. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2006.**

Using the postcolonial concepts of catachresis, hybridity, and mimicry, Moore suggests that by using the language of empire and imperial violence to oppose empire, John's vision of the Empire of God eventually becomes its nemesis, and the all-conquering Christ the new Caesar.

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**Neville, David J. "Faithful, True, and Violent? Christology and 'Divine Vengeance' in the Revelation to John." In *Compassionate Eschatology: The Future as Friend*. Edited by Ted Grimsrud and Michael Hardin, 56–84. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011.**

Points out that for all the violent language in the Revelation to John, there is not a single exhortation for its readers to use violence, nor can the symbolic imagery of violence within a visionary account (such as a bloodstained rider on a white horse with a sword in his mouth) be pressed literally.

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**Nicklas, Tobias. "The Eschatological Battle According to Revelation 19:11–21." In *Coping with Violence in the New Testament*. Edited by Pieter G. R. De Villiers and Jan Willem van Henten, 227–244. Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2012.**

Supports the reading of Revelation 19:13 as the blood of the Lamb, not the blood of his opponents, and the once-for-all nature of this vision of the defeat of violence and evil.

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## **Eschatological Warfare and Violence**

The Revelation to John does not have a complete monopoly on eschatological violence in the New Testament. Neville 2013 and the collected essays in Grimsrud and Hardin 2011 give the most complete overviews of the issue. Rossing 2008 argues that 2 Peter's cosmic violence presents more ethical problems than does Revelation; Bovon 1999 provides a visual and symbolic perspective on the problem of violent eschatology; and Reiser 1997 and Travis 2009 explore in some depth the theological issues surrounding Christology and violent judgment.

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**Bovon, Francois. "The Child and the Beast: Fighting Violence in Ancient Christianity." *Harvard Theological Review* 92 (1999): 369–392.**

Uses the love of enemies saying in Luke, and the continuing portrayal of Jesus as "child," to overcome the beast as embodying evil.

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**Grimsrud, Ted, and Michael Hardin, eds. *Compassionate Eschatology: The Future as Friend*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011.**

An ecumenical collection of authors giving a peacemaking perspective on Divine judgment and the Book of Revelation. Diverse influences from Girardian nonviolence, the peace churches, and ecotheological concerns are all marshaled to show that speaking about "the end times" can be done in ways consistent with Jesus' message of peace and reconciliation.

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**Neville, David J. *A Peaceable Hope: Contesting Violent Eschatology in New Testament Narratives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.**

A detailed exegetical approach to New Testament narratives that wrestles honestly with the problematic eschatological texts of violence in Matthew, Mark, Luke-Acts, John, and Revelation, and asks whether they can be interpreted in ways consistent with Jesus' other teachings on peace.

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**Reiser, Marius. *Jesus and Judgment: The Eschatological Proclamation in Its Jewish Context*. Translated by Linda M.**

**Maloney. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.**

Argues against a non-eschatological Jesus in favor of a Jesus whose message affirms both salvation and judgment, in the tradition of John the Baptist and other early Jewish sources.

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**Rossing, Barbara. "Hastening the Day When the Earth Will Burn: Global Warming, 2 Peter, and the Book of Revelation." In *The Bible in the Public Square: Reading the Signs of the Times*. Edited by Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, Ellen Bradshaw Aitken, and Jonathan A. Draper, 25–38. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008.**

Contends that while the Revelation to John is a resource for cosmic and environmental hope through its critique of empires, 2 Peter's vision of a cosmic meltdown constitutes a "text of terror" (p. 31) to be resisted.

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**Travis, Stephen H. *Christ and the Judgement of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in New Testament Thought*. Rev. ed. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2009.**

A comprehensive survey of judgment, retribution, the violence of God, and wrath in the Bible, with a particular focus on the Pauline literature.

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## **Spiritual Warfare**

The language of warfare and military hardware (shields, breastplates, helmets, swords) is explicitly metaphorical in many New Testament texts (1 Thessalonians 5:8; Romans 13:12; Ephesians 6:10–17) and used to exhort the faithful to stand against the spiritual forces that undergird evil and oppressive powers. Neufeld 1997 (from the Jewish traditions) and Janssen 2014 (from a Greco-Roman perspective) explore in detail Paul's use of armor language to exhort the faithful, and Neufeld 2012 gives an accessible overview of the issues. Pierce 2013 presents a more general overview still of spiritual warfare as a biblical theme, Arnold 1989 a detailed study of the spiritual powers in 1st-century Asia as addressed in Ephesians, and Yoder 2009 a collection of essays by a leading scholar on these themes.

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**Arnold, Clinton E. "The Conflict with the 'Powers.'" In *Ephesians: Power and Magic; The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of Its Historical Setting*. By Clinton E. Arnold, 103–122. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989.**

Sees the battle with the spiritual powers in terms of an offensive aspect (making known the Gospel) and a defensive dimension (endurance and resisting evil), for which the imagery of armor is used metaphorically.

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**Janssen, David. "The Roman Cuirass Breastplate Statue and Paul's Use of Armour Language in Romans 13:12 & 1 Thessalonians 5:8." *Colloquium* 46 (2014): 55–85.**

Utilizes the concepts of "vivid speech" and "visual exegesis" to suggest that Paul's use of armor language subverts the imperial values and military glory promoted by the imagery on the cuirassed breastplates widely displayed throughout the provinces. Argues that Paul uses counter-images of "armor" to promote alternative values and virtues to those proclaimed by imperial imagery.

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**Neufeld, Thomas Yoder. *Put On the Armour of God: The Divine Warrior from Isaiah to Ephesians*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1997.**

A comprehensive evaluation of the Divine Warrior motifs in the Hebrew traditions and their reuse and reinterpretation in the Pauline literature, arguing that it is now the people of God who put on the armor of the Divine Warrior (Ephesians 6 in particular) to fight God's spiritual battles.

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Neufeld, Thomas Yoder. "Divine Warfare in the New Testament." In *Jesus and the Subversion of Violence: Wrestling with the New Testament Evidence*. By Thomas Yoder Neufeld, 122–149. London: SPCK, 2012.

Reads Revelation, 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11, and Ephesians 6:10–20 nonviolently, as texts wielding metaphorical weapons of justice in the battle for the salvation of the cosmos. First published as *Killing Enmity: Violence and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011).

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Pierce, Madison N. "War: Fighting the Enemies of God, not Man." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 43 (2013): 81–87.

An overview of the case for seeing war from the perspective of God's war on evil throughout both Testaments.

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Yoder, John Howard. *The War of the Lamb: The Ethics of Nonviolence and Peacemaking*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2009.

A posthumously published collection of essays on the theme of a this-worldly war for peace that is both spiritual and political. In three sections: the biblical case for nonviolence, interacting with Just War theory, and examples of nonviolent peace initiatives.

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## Reading the Bible in Contexts of War and Violence

A sample is given here of the many recent contextual readings of the New Testament, especially from situations of past or present conflict. Sugirtharajah 2006 (first published in 1991) is a foundational text legitimating "readings from this place." West 1999 is an early example of the prominence of South African scholarship in this area, continued in de Villiers and van Henten 2012. Holland 2002 (northern Nigeria) and Zehnder and Hagelia 2013 (Norway) provide examples of responses to violence in Africa and Europe, respectively. Kinukawa 1994 (Japan) and Kim 2010 (Korea) give readings of Mark from an Asian female perspective, still wrestling with the aftermath of World War II and the fraught relationship between their two nations. Melanchthon 2012 describes the empowerment of the Dalits of India as they read the Bible in their own context of entrenched prejudice and violence.

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De Villiers, Pieter G. R., and Jan Willem van Henten, eds. *Coping with Violence in the New Testament*. Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2012.

A collection of articles mostly from South Africa exploring themes and texts of violence in the New Testament in the context of ongoing struggles and violence in that land. Includes introductory articles on method and theories of violence and detailed studies on the Gospels, Epistles, and the Apocalypse.

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Holland, Scott. "The Gospel of Peace and the Violence of God." *Crosscurrents* 51 (2002): 470–483.

Asks the question: "Could it be that because Yahweh is a Warrior, we can be a people of peace?" in the context of Muslim-Christian bloodshed in northern Nigeria and in the light of readings from the Revelation to John. Reprinted in *Seeking Cultures of Peace: A Peace Church Conversation*, edited by Fernando Enns, Scott Holland, and Ann K. Riggs (Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2004), pp. 132–146.

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Kim, Seong Hee. *Mark, Women and Empire: A Korean Postcolonial Perspective*. Bible in the Modern World 20. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010.

Reads the women in Mark as faithfully practicing Jesus' way (*Tao*) of self-emptying, as evident in their response at the tomb of emptiness.

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Kinukawa, Hisako. *Women and Jesus in Mark: A Japanese Feminist Perspective*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994.

A courageous reading of Mark and her own context that challenges the androcentrism of the text and its interpretation in creative ways. Kinukawa points out that the relationality between female and male disciples is largely missing in the narrative.

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**Melanchthon, Monica Jyotsna. "Unleashing the Power Within: The Bible and Dalits." In *The Future of the Biblical Past: Envisioning Biblical Studies on a Global Key*. Edited by Roland Boer and Fernando Segovia, 47–65. Semeia Studies Series. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012.**

An example of Indian postcolonial writing from a subaltern perspective whereby the accumulated effects of successive waves of colonial and imperial violence and power are challenged from the very bottom of the caste system. The oral culture of the Dalits and their deep experience of prejudice and pain resonates with readings of the Bible that release power in transforming ways.

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**Sugirtharajah, Rasiah S., ed. *Voices from the Margins: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006.**

The foundational collection of articles that gave impetus and validity to the discipline of reading from situations other than powerful and wealthy Western academies.

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**West, Gerald O. *The Academy of the Poor: Toward a Dialogical Reading of the Bible*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1999.**

The methods and examples of reading from the context of the poor, and the challenge to academic scholarship to reconnect with, and learn from, real communities of faith.

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**Zehnder, Markus Philipp, and Hallvard Hagelia, eds. *Encountering Violence in the Bible*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013.**

A collection arising out of the tragic violence in Norway in the summer of 2011, and a subsequent conference on "Violence as an Ethical Challenge in the Bible." Essays by scholars from nine different nations range across the Old Testament, intertestamental literature, the New Testament (the Apocalypse and Matthew), the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Qur'an.

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## **War and Military Service in the Earliest Churches**

New Testament studies and the history of the earliest churches inevitably overlap, so here are listed some publications that address war and military service in the context of the developing Christian movements of the 1st and 2nd centuries. An older scholarly presumption that pacifism was the norm because of opposition to killing and bloodshed has more recently been challenged on the grounds that aversion to Roman military religion was the major problem for Christians, and now some are arguing that there were a number of different attitudes among Christians to war and military service, including forerunners to Augustine's Just War theory.

## **Attitudes to War and Peace**

Bainton 1961 and Cahill 1994 provide the earlier and later standards for historical overviews of Christian attitudes to war from the New Testament onwards, with Cahill 1984 a convenient summary for beginning students. Reimer 2010 provides a readable intermediate-level overview. Brock 1988 gives a helpful bibliography of the one hundred years before he wrote, while Cadoux 1982 (first published in 1919) is still a helpful classification and compendium of source material and quotations. Brownlee 1983 and Thomas, et al. 2013 cover the Holy War traditions in detail across both Testaments.

**Bainton, Roland H. *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-evaluation*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1961.**

Still a classic overview of attitudes to war and peace in the Christian era, including chapters on the Old and New Testaments, pacifism in the early church, and the rise of Just War thinking.

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**Brock, Peter. *The Military Question in the Early Church: A Selected Bibliography of a Century's Scholarship, 1888–1987*. Toronto: P. Brock, 1988.**

A helpful bibliography of one hundred years of scholarship on questions of war in the early church.

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**Brownlee, William H. "From Holy War to Holy Martyrdom." In *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Essays in Honor of George E. Mendenhall*. Edited by H. B. Huffmon, F. A. Spina, and Alberto Ravinell Whitney Green, 281–292. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983.**

An early attempt to break from the presumption of a radical discontinuity between the Testaments regarding Holy War traditions. Explores the intertestamental literature to argue that Jesus is presented as both Divine Warrior and human martyr in the New Testament.

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**Cadoux, C. John. *The Early Christian Attitude to War: A Contribution to the History of Christian Ethics*. New York: Seabury, 1982.**

A reprint of the original 1919 edition that contains a useful collection, classification, and critique of primary source material from the New Testament onwards, even if some interpretations are dated.

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**Cahill, Lisa Sowle. "Nonresistance, Defense, Violence, and the Kingdom in Christian Tradition." *Interpretation* 38 (1984): 380–397.**

A manageable overview of war and peace debates in the church from the New Testament to the Reformation and beyond; suitable for undergraduates beginning study.

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**Cahill, Lisa S. *Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.**

Traces the development of pacifist and Just War thinking from the New Testament teaching on discipleship and then through history until the end of the 20th century. The "new Bainton."

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**Reimer, James A. *Christians and War: A Brief History of the Church's Teaching and Practices*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010.**

A survey of issues concerning war and soldiers in the New Testament, followed by an intermediate-level historical survey of church teaching and practice since then.

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**Thomas, Heath, Jeremy A. Evans, and Paul Copan, eds. *Holy War in the Bible: Christian Morality and an Old Testament Problem*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013.**

A collection of essays covering Old and New Testament perspectives together with contemporary theological reflections on the issues raised by the Holy War motif. Includes essays on Divine War in Ephesians (pp. 87–107) and John's Apocalypse (pp. 108–132), as well as wider biblical themes and theologies.

## Attitudes to Military Service

The earlier views of Campenhausen 1968 and others about early Christian pacifism were challenged in Helgeland, et al. 1985 and Ruyter 1982. Hunter 1992 and Young 1989 give very accessible overviews of the debates.

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**Campenhausen, Hans von. "Christians and Military Service in the Early Church." In *Tradition and Life in the Church: Essays and Lectures on Church History*. By Hans von Campenhausen. Philadelphia and London: Fortress, 1968.**

A succinct statement about what seem to be conflicting viewpoints on these matters in the early church, and why they developed in a context where war was viewed as inevitable.

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**Helgeland, John, Robert J. Daly, and J. Patout Burns. *Christians and the Military: The Early Experience*. Edited by Robert J. Daly. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.**

Argues against the assumption that the earliest churches were pacifist because of ethical objections to shedding blood. Points out that Roman army religious practice also discouraged Christian involvement in the military.

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**Hunter, David G. "A Decade of Research on Early Christians and Military Service." *Religious Studies Review* 18 (1992): 87–94.**

A concise overview of the development of more diverse scholarly views on pacifism and military involvement among the earliest Christians.

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**Ruyter, Knut Willem. "Pacifism and the Military Service in the Early Church." *Cross Currents* 32 (1982): 54–70.**

Argues that military service became more of an issue for Christians as the Pax Romana began to collapse in the late 2nd century, as border wars increased, and as more Christians were Roman citizens and able to serve in the army.

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**Young, Frances. "The Early Church: Military Service, War and Peace." *Theology* 92 (1989): 491–503.**

Surveys the evidence for Christian discussions over military service in the early church and argues for its relevance for today.

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## Ethics, War, and Violence

In this section are studies exploring issues of war and peace together, often within a wider ethical framework. Astley, et al. 2003 collects together a valuable reader of documents and extracts, while Clouse 1991 provides an ideal beginning for introductory undergraduate work. Hays 1996, Swartley 1983, and Verhey 1984 provide helpful overviews of the issues within the context of wider treatments of New Testament ethics. The studies of Desjardins 1997 and Winn 1993 present the ambiguities of the texts on peace and violence in the New Testament and of their interpretation.

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**Astley, Jeff, David Brown, and Ann Loades, eds. *Problems in Theology 3: War and Peace—A Reader*. London: Continuum, 2003.**

Source texts from a wide range of key authors commenting on the ethics of war and peace, including sections on Jesus, the New Testament, and the early church. Provides documents constituting a reception history of the biblical texts on war and peace.

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**Clouse, Robert G. *War: Four Christian Views*. Rev. ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991.**

A very accessible introduction to four differing Christian viewpoints on war: biblical nonresistance (Herman Hoyt), Christian pacifism (Myron S. Augsberger), Just War thinking (Arthur F. Holmes), and preventative war (Harold O. J. Brown).

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**Desjardins, Michael. *Peace, Violence and the New Testament*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1997.**

About half the book focuses on violence in the New Testament before moving on to the issues arising.

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**Guyette, F. "Scripture and the Field of Hate Studies: Traversing Biblical Landscapes." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 41 (2011): 59–67.**

An examination of the love-hate language in both Testaments from the perspective of the defining and dehumanizing of "the other."

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**Hays, Richard B. "Violence in Defense of Justice." In *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation; A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*. By Richard B. Hays, 317–346. San Francisco: HarperOne, 1996.**

Uses Matthew 5:38–48 as a key text to argue for peacemaking, love of all enemies, and nonviolence as fundamental to the message of Jesus.

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**Swartley, Willard M. "The Bible and War." In *Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women: Case Issues in Biblical Interpretation*. By Willard M. Swartley, 96–149. Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1983.**

A clear and systematic setting out of the traditional biblical arguments concerning war and pacifism in both Testaments.

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**Verhey, Allen. *The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984.**

A general survey of New Testament ethics arguing that Jesus was neither Zealot nor escapist—but his actions in the Temple show that he was not a pacifist either.

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**Winn, Albert Curry. *Ain't Gonna Study War No More: Biblical Ambiguity and the Abolition of War*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993.**

An engaging presentation of the ambiguities of the war and peace debates, from Jesus' statements: "Not peace but a sword" and "Put away your sword" onwards.

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## Pacifism

These publications focus on arguments for pacifism based at least in part on the interpretation of New Testament texts. Brenneman and Schantz 2014 and Swartley 2000 are each collections of essays on a wide range of texts and themes generally arguing for nonviolent readings; Swartley 2006 provides the most comprehensive survey of the peace theme in the New Testament, while Yoder 1992 sketches the different types of pacifism.

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**Brenneman, Laura L., and Brad D. Schantz, eds. *Struggles for Shalom: Peace and Violence across the Testaments*.**

**Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014.**

A diverse collection of essays on peace, justice, and violence themes in the Bible, including studies specifically on Jesus' action in the Temple, the two swords in Luke, and violent language in Paul and Revelation.

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**Swartley, Willard M., ed. *Violence Renounced: René Girard, Biblical Studies, and Peacemaking*. Telford, PA: Pandora, 2000.**

A helpful starting point for understanding the influence of Girard on biblical scholars exploring issues of violence, war, atonement, and sacrifice.

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**Swartley, Willard M. *Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006.**

A comprehensive New Testament survey of peace, love for enemies, and reconciliation language, including an appendix critiquing the absence of these themes in many approaches to New Testament ethics.

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**Yoder, John Howard. *Nevertheless: The Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism*. 2d ed. Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1992.**

Short sketches on the different types of, and motivations for, pacifism—including, at times, their perceived biblical foundations.

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## Just War Theory

These publications focus on arguments for the possibility of a Just War, based at least in part on the interpretation of New Testament texts. Lewis 2001 and Kennedy 1994 provide very clear and succinct introductions to the debate, while Charles 2005 and Johnson 2011 give more detailed treatments. Capizzi 2001 and Yoder 1996 address the issues from a different direction altogether in the interests of clarifying the arguments, and Ramsey 1988 (with a response from Hauerwas) also provides a sympathetic exploration of both sides of the issue.

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**Capizzi, Joseph E. "On Behalf of the Neighbor: A Rejection of the Complementarity of Just-War Theory and Pacifism." *Studies in Christian Ethics* 14 (2001): 87–108.**

Argues against any complementarity between pacifism and Just War theory so that a better case can be made for Just War thinking.

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**Charles, J. Daryl. *Between Pacifism and Jihad: Just War and Christian Tradition*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005.**

Surveys Christian Just War thinking and argues that controlled violence may be justified in the defense of others (public and political sphere) but not of oneself (private relationships). Justice precedes peace.

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**Johnson, James Turner. *Ethics and the Use of Force: Just War in Historical Perspective*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011.**

The most recent overview by one of the most significant Just War proponents.

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**Kennedy, Thomas D. "Can War Be Just?" In *From Christ to the World: Introductory Readings in Christian Ethics*. Edited by Wayne G. Boulton, Thomas D. Kennedy, and Allen Verhey, 436–442. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.**

A clear and brief statement of the arguments for and against Just War.

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Lewis, C. S. "Why I Am Not a Pacifist." In *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*. Rev. and exp. ed., 64–90. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.

A classic statement from the well-known Christian writer, apologist, and thinker, delivered in the early stages of World War 2.

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Ramsey, Paul. *Speak Up for Just War or Pacifism*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988.

Includes a response from Hauerwas, so that two of the foremost exponents of Just War thinking and pacifism, respectively, agree substantially on responding to their bishops' statement on nuclear war—including a statement of biblical and theological foundations.

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Yoder, John Howard. *When War Is Unjust: Being Honest in Just-War Thinking*. 2d ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996.

An attempt by a leading pacifist to outline a better Just War tradition and theory, including a defense of that doctrine from a Catholic perspective. Engages with later church thinking more than the biblical text.

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