

CRUCIFYING MESSIANIC TRIUMPHALISM
Re-Reading Psalms 2 & 110 after Jesus of Nazareth

I once asked a friend of mine what his reasons were for not being a pacifist. He answered, “There’s violence in the Old Testament. There’s violence in Revelation. Why shouldn’t there be violence in the middle!” Unfortunately, this kind of argument is all too common. When such thinkers turn to the Old Testament in an attempt to find evidence against a coherent biblical pacifism, there are usually several key features of an Old Testament understanding of warfare that typically go unaccounted for. In no particular order:

- that the wars of premonarchic Israel were primarily miraculous wars, used by God to train Israel to trust not in their own strength but in divine provision, the archetype of these being the exodus from Egypt, an entirely weaponless triumph;¹
- that the decision of Israel to take a king and standing army were considered by God to be a direct rejection of his rule;²
- that such battles as are lauded in the Old Testament (e.g. 1 Samuel 18:24-27) would be considered deplorable by our own standards—those who appeal to the example of, for instance, David in defense of a “just-war” theory are hurting rather than helping their case;
- that the nonviolent messianity of Jesus of Nazareth may be seen dimly in a David who (bloody though he was) lifted neither sling nor sword to become king;³
- that the command of God to kill women, children, and livestock was more profoundly a command forbidding Israel the spoils of war, by which means pagan nations procured strength for themselves;
- that the Old Testament seems to reflect a double-mindedness regarding war in that, for example, the same God who commands David to go to war forbids David from

building the temple because he is a man of war,⁴ or, in that such prophets as Isaiah and Jeremiah preach and exemplify a peace born out of suffering servanthood over against the monarchy's vision of a peace born out of divinely ordained violence;⁵

- that coupled with the prophets' vision of a suffering Israel was an intense critique of Jewish nationalism.

Of course these points are but a handful of the many that have been raised in counter-distinction to the general assumption that the Old Testament itself authorizes some kind of "righteous" warfare. These points are more or less debatable, and what side of the debate one lands on is usually determined in advance by what interpretive commitments one brings to the table. Nevertheless, just a cursory glance at the above-mentioned issues should suffice to demonstrate that the question of warfare in the Old Testament is not as cut-and-dry as is ordinarily supposed. In fact, a good deal of the evidence in the Old Testament—if the Old Testament is to be read as broadly as it is diverse—seems to gesture to an internal struggle within Judaism, the climax of which may or may not have been reached in such a figure as Jesus of Nazareth.

The limited question we wish to treat in this particular investigation, however, is how the New Testament church attempted to resolve the tension that became so apparent in the Hebrew Scriptures after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth—the tension between monarchic militancy and prophetic pacifism. For our purposes we will take as examples two of the so-called "royal psalms," Psalms 2 and 110. We have chosen these psalms for three reasons:

- 1) The two psalms are intimately related in form, in content, and very likely in the occasion of their composition. They are both coronation psalms, used ritualistically in the monarchic period to pay tribute to the Davidic kings. In the postmonarchic period, they would come to be

seen as messianic psalms.⁶ Moreover, they converge again in the first chapter of the letter to the Hebrews, as we will see.

2) They both are textbook examples of nationalistic, militant triumphalism: Psalm 2 sees the Davidic king subduing the pagan nations “with an iron scepter,” dashing their kings “to pieces like pottery” (9). The imagery in Psalm 110 is even more violent. The Davidic king steps on the throats of his enemies (1); he is surrounded by an army of young men, zealous troops “arrayed in holy majesty” (3);⁷ God himself fights beside the Davidic king, crushing pagan kings in the wake of his wrath (5); every king on earth is massacred and armies of corpses are heaped up into a mass grave (6).

3) Despite their militant content, they are perhaps, surprisingly, the two psalms to which the New Testament writers allude the most. Both the “son of God” and the “right hand of God” motifs so prevalent in the Christian canon were in fact derived from Psalms 2 and 110 respectively.

What we will attempt to demonstrate in this short essay is that the New Testament writers resolved the tension between the monarchy and the prophets by taking the “son of God” and “right hand of God” metaphors, as well as additional imagery from our two psalms, out of their militaristic context, putting them instead in the context of the Isaian motif of suffering servanthood as exemplified in the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. As Mennonite theologian Jacob Enz has so succinctly put the matter, the early Christians were “in the business of demilitarizing Old Testament battle songs. . . . These the New Testament church under the lordship of Christ was converting into militant hymns of peace.”⁸

In order to demonstrate this, we will first explore some of the allusions to Psalm 2 in the synoptic gospels, specifically those at the baptism and transfiguration of Jesus, demonstrating

how Jesus' status as "son of God" is taken out of the context of militarism and resituated into a context of messianic suffering. Second, we will examine the way that Matthew and Luke subvert the conventional reading of Psalm 110 by turning it against Israel's own power structure. Third, we will take a look at how the "right hand" imagery is used in the Pauline corpus to encourage the church not to fear the threat of persecution. Fourth, we will turn to the letter to the Hebrews and evaluate the author's extensive use of both Psalms 2 and 110 as a part of his argument that Christians ought to imitate Christ in his sufferings. And finally, we will investigate the relationship between Psalm 2 and Luke's account in Acts 4 of the persecuted church, demonstrating once again how the conventional militant reading of a messianic psalm is subverted by those who have learned to read the scriptures again for the first time, after Jesus of Nazareth.

CRUCIFYING THE CORONATION

The commentators agree that in the baptism of Jesus there is a clear allusion to Psalm 2. The event is depicted by all three synoptic evangelists as the coronation ceremony at which God "becomes the Father" of the Davidic king, Jesus of Nazareth.⁹ What is striking here is not that a messianic figure is called the "son of God," for that is the typical title for a king. What is striking is the context in which this proclamation takes place. In Psalm 2, the Davidic king "becomes the son" as God's response to those pagan kings who "plot in vain" to subdue Israel. The son of David is crowned king and becomes the son of God himself, only to be let loose in wrath against all of God's enemies. Yet in the Gospels, the coronation ceremony is Jesus' baptism, which is to say, the sign of Jesus' impending death.¹⁰ Stripped from its context in militarism, the adoption depicted in Psalm 2 is used by the evangelists to paint a picture of the kind of son that is truly pleasing to the Father, namely, one who is willing to suffer defeat in order to "fulfill all righteousness" (Matt 3:15).

The next time we see the allusion to the coronation of Psalm 2 is at the transfiguration of Jesus. Moses and Elijah (the Law and the Prophets) are there to bear testimony, along with the voice of God himself, that Jesus of Nazareth does indeed bear the office of the “son of God.” The voice from heaven repeats the message given at Jesus’ baptism, “This is my son, whom I love,” this time adding, “Listen to him.” But what was Jesus saying to which the disciples should listen? All three synoptic evangelists agree: in each gospel, the transfiguration is directly preceded by Peter’s confession of Jesus’ status as the messianic king, by Jesus’ prediction of his suffering and the rebuke of Peter, and by Jesus’ call for his disciples to bear not arms but crosses.

In the first instance, Peter recognizes that Jesus is the messiah, but his understanding of what it means to be the messiah is still rooted in the old reading of Psalms 2 and 110. Jesus knows this. Immediately after Peter’s “great confession,” Jesus attempts to reorient the disciples’ understanding of his messianity. It will be marked not by the politics of the world, but by the politics of suffering servanthood. Peter rebukes Jesus, rightly according to the conventional wisdom. If Jesus is truly “God’s son,” the messianic liberator, the only suffering in Jesus’ future will be that of the enemies of Israel. Jesus in turn rebukes Peter, calling him Satan, indicating that Peter’s conception of messianity is identical to the one offered Jesus by Satan in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13).¹¹ After this Jesus proceeds to articulate the cost of discipleship. The messianic revolution of Jesus of Nazareth will not be one of militarism but of suffering and (apparent) defeat. Some revolution! Jesus recognizes the shame associated with a failed messianic revolution, particularly with a failed messianic revolution culminating in crucifixion. That is why in Mark 8:38 Jesus warns his followers, “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words . . . the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.” To not be ashamed of the Gospel, then, is to be willing to suffer without regret.

Immediately following this exchange, all three evangelists place the transfiguration, with God's approval of Jesus' brand of messianity and the stern charge to "listen to him." "The Son," Enz writes, "who piles up corpses in the Old Testament, applied to our Lord Jesus Christ, is stripped of all military power in this expression of the voice from heaven saying, 'Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased.'"¹² Here on this mountain we see figured the same tension we have already noted between the monarchy and the prophets of the Old Testament. In the disciples is represented the monarchic vision of messianism as depicted in Psalms 2 and 110, and on the other hand we have both the Law and Prophets, and the Father and Son, confirming the vision of Isaiah's suffering servant. The reader of the gospels is meant "to see the incongruity of it and realize that Jesus' way is truly the way of the God of power."¹³

The next and last time we see a reference to the coronation of Psalm 2 in the New Testament is in Acts 13. Paul enters the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch to preach Jesus to his kinsmen. Here Paul argues that the coronation takes place at the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection is the final proof that Jesus is indeed the son of God spoken about in Psalm 2. As such, Paul corrects the conventional understanding of the son of God. He takes one of the key texts used to describe the son's coming in power and applies it to his coming in humility and suffering.

Thus in three instances we see an allusion or a reference to the coronation of Psalm 2, and in each case—baptism, transfiguration, resurrection—the coronation is stripped from its original context in militarism and engrafted into the narrative of Jesus' suffering.

CRUCIFYING NATIONALISM

Psalm 110, even more clearly than Psalm 2, depicts the militaristic defeat of all the enemies of Israel by the Davidic king. Enz writes that "the New Testament was heir to some brilliantly and shockingly nationalistic poetry that had served effectively to bind the Jews into a firm militant

unity.”¹⁴ Of course, by the time of Jesus the Jews’ “firm militant unity” (if it ever existed) had been broken up into several rival factions. But what remained across the board was a belief in the superiority of the Jewish people over the gentile nations. If anything would bind the Jews together again into a “firm militant unity” it was their common hatred for the gentiles, particularly the Romans. And if any psalm aptly conveys this sentiment of nationalistic fervor, it is Psalm 110. Psalm 110 was clear about one thing: the gentile nations would be judged and the Jewish nation would judge them.

That is why Jesus’ use of Psalm 110 is so earth-shattering. In each of the synoptic gospels, Jesus uses the psalm to argue that the messiah will be greater than David himself.¹⁵ That alone was enough to silence the Jewish leaders. But that is not the earth-shattering part. What came next, in each of the synoptic gospels, is what really separated Jesus’ use of Psalm 110 from the pack. What came next was not an indictment of paganism, as expected, but an indictment of Israel itself. In fact, not once does Jesus use Psalm 110 with reference to the gentiles. Luke and Mark both follow Jesus’ use of the psalm with a judgment against the Jewish leadership (20:41-47 and 12:35-40 respectively), and Matthew follows the psalm with an indictment of pharisaic hypocrisy, the seven woes, and a lament for the city of Jerusalem, who kills the very prophets sent to her by God (22:41-23:39). Again in Matthew 26:64, Jesus uses “right hand” imagery, reminiscent of Psalm 110, to heap condemnation on Israel’s high priest.

In imitation of his master, the Peter of Acts 2 not only subverts the image of Psalm 110 by applying it to the oxymoronic “crucified christ,” he further subverts the psalm by turning it into an indictment of the Jews (36), not the gentiles. Likewise in Acts 7, just before his death, Stephen sees Jesus “standing at the right hand of God” (55), a clear allusion to Psalm 110. Here again the psalm is used, not to advocate militant nationalism, but to vindicate the suffering of the

faithful at the hands of a corrupt Jewish regime. In this way the New Testament church resolved the Old Testament tension between nationalism and mission. Taking an unmistakably nationalistic, militant text out of context, the New Testament writers put an end to the parochialism of conventional messianic hope and took the first steps toward opening the doors of the kingdom to the gentiles.

CRUCIFYING THE EXALTATION

As in the gospels and Acts, the Pauline corpus is replete with allusions to the “right hand” imagery of Psalm 110. The term itself is found in Romans 8, 1 Corinthians 15, Ephesians 1, and Colossians 3. In each instance, the right hand/exaltation imagery is employed not to advocate a justified violence but to prescribe an ethic of patience and peacemaking. In Romans 8, for instance, Paul argues that because Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God, we no longer have anything to fear from the sword (35). We can go on building the church in the face of persecution and every kind of danger, because all authority has been given to “Christ Jesus, who died” (34).

Again, in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul uses Psalm 110 to prescribe radical patience in the face of suffering. Paul quotes the psalm as a part of his argument that the resurrection makes all the difference for how Christians ought to live. It is precisely because the messiah has been raised and exalted that we are empowered to “endanger ourselves every hour” (30), to “die every day” (31). Rather than the exaltation of Jesus being used as propaganda for “justified” militarism, Paul exhorts his readers to “stand firm” in the face of death. “Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (58).

In Ephesians 1, the Jesus who is seated at the right hand of God is the same Jesus who suffered. Moreover, the authority given to Jesus “over everything” is “for the church” (22). Because of Jesus’ exaltation, the church is now seated “with him in the heavenly realms” (2:6). Our appointment is for the sake of doing “good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (10). The good works we are appointed with Christ to perform are none other than to tear down “the dividing wall of hostility” (14) between “Jew” and “gentile.” For the work of the messiah was not to battle the pagan kings (like the warrior king David), but (like the peaceful king Solomon) to build the temple, the temple of a united humanity (15), “built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit” (22), “thus making peace” (15).

Finally, in Colossians 3 the message is the same. Since we have been seated with Christ who is at the “right hand of God” (1) we can no longer define ourselves by earthly categories, but rather we must put to death everything that divides us (11). We are to clothe ourselves, not with the garments of war but with “compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and [not least of all] patience” (12). Rather than calling out to a militant messiah for bloody vindication, we are to “let the peace of the messiah rule in our hearts,” since peace is our calling (15). Rather than the exaltation of Christ resulting in justified social upheaval, even slaves are to obey their masters “in everything,” and what’s worse, they are to obey “with sincerity of heart” (22)!

Thus we are put in a position to appreciate how the conventional understanding of Psalm 110’s exaltation of the messiah was subverted by Paul. Without denying the coming of a final judgment, Paul changed the subject. The subject for Paul is no longer the righteousness of our cause, but the rightness of our actions. And quite consistently, Paul measures the rightness of our actions by their conformity to the sufferings of Christ. In light of the exaltation of the crucified messiah, Paul urges us to be, in the words of the psalm, troops willing on the day of battle, “ar-

rayed in holy majesty.” The only difference between the church of the Pauline corpus and the army of Psalm 110 is that the weapons of the church “are not the weapons of the world” (2 Cor 10:4). Our messiah, after all, is a “meek” and “gentle” messiah (10:1). Yet that does not make our weapons impotent. “On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds” (10:4). The difference, then, according to Paul, between militarism and pacifism is not the difference between power and weakness, but between ephemeral power and divine power.

CRUCIFYING ATONEMENT THEORY

The doctrine of substitutionary atonement, informally put, that Christ died for our sins so we wouldn’t have to, is perhaps one of the most disastrous doctrines ever to trickle down to popular consciousness, not because the doctrine itself is false but because it is only a partial truth understood by many to be the whole truth about the cross of Christ. The author of the letter to the Hebrews, among others, saw the danger in viewing the cross purely in substitutionary terms, and fortunately for our purposes, he put both Psalms 2 and 110 to work in order to dispel that heresy. In chapter 1, the author of Hebrews couples Psalms 2 and 110 together, applying them not to a messiah of military conquest, but to the suffering servant, the one who “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” only after having first “provided purification for sins” (3). “His step to the throne of universal power,” Enz comments, “was not to be on the head of vanquished and slaughtered foes, but from a cross on which He Himself died.”¹⁶ This “son of God,” whose stepping stone to the throne was not a sword but a cross, is the one through whom God has spoken to us in these last days (2). It is this suffering, defeated king of whom the author of Hebrews writes that he is “the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being” (3).

In chapter 2, the author alludes again to Psalm 110 when he writes that “in putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him” (8). “Yet at present,” he goes on,

“we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death” (9). The message is plain. Although the nations are not yet tangibly/historically subject to Jesus, it is now possible for us to see that Jesus was given authority not based upon his prowess or the political efficacy of his messianity but because of his willingness to suffer.

“He suffered death,” the author of Hebrews writes, “so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone” (9). If we stopped reading there, of course, things would be looking quite good for the doctrine of substitutionary atonement. The author of Hebrews says it himself—Jesus died on the cross so we wouldn’t have to! But the verses that follow bear out a different point: “For it was fitting that he [God], for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer [*archegon*]¹⁷ of their salvation perfect through suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren” (10-11, RSV). What the author of Hebrews is suggesting, here, is that Jesus in fact pioneered suffering *for* us, not to prevent us from having to endure it ourselves, but to empower us to suffer without regret as we follow the same path the crucified messiah negotiated before us.

The same word pioneer (*archegon*) is used again later to make the same point: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted” (12:1-3). Here the author connects enduring the cross not only with yet

another subverted allusion to Psalm 110 (being “seated at the right hand of the throne of God”) but more importantly with “our faith.” The explicit lesson being taught here is that by enduring the cross, Jesus was pioneering a trail for the church to continue walking after him. Jesus’ exaltation to the right hand of God, rather than excusing us from having to suffer, is what makes our suffering good for us, for as we imitate Jesus we make his sufferings our own; we are walking the only path in history ever to terminate in exaltation.

In chapter 5 the author has the same message. He rips a quotation from Psalm 110 right out of its heavily militaristic context and suffuses it with the sufferings of Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁸ “We have much to say about this,” the author reprimands us, “but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn” (11). Since we are so slow to learn, it might benefit us to appeal to one final example and pray God we get the message before our Hebrews 5:11-14 becomes our Hebrews 6:4-6!

CRUCIFYING VINDICATION: CONCLUSION

In Acts 4 Peter and John are warned by the Jewish political heavies—the same heavies behind the murder of their master—not to preach anymore in the name of Jesus. Peter and John refuse of course, whereupon the heavies threaten them further before letting them go. Returning to their community, Peter and John recount the story of their run-in with the law and lead the Christians in a typical prayer for vindication. Beginning with a quote from Psalm 2, they pray,

Sovereign Lord, you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

“Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth take their stand
and the rulers gather together
against the Lord
and against his Anointed One.”

Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus. (4:24-30)

There are several significant moves made in this prayer, all of which subvert the original meaning of Psalm 2 in ways we have already seen throughout the course of this investigation. First, like the evangelists, they apply the psalm not to one who ruled with an iron scepter but to one who suffered, not to one who scoffed at his enemies but to one who died trying to save them. Second, although the enemies of God in the psalm are pagan nations, the prayer points the finger equally at Rome and Israel. Thus a nationalistic anthem is turned against its own people. Third, though the format of this prayer is that of a typical petition for vindication, it is faithfulness and boldness rather than vindication that the apostles ultimately request.¹⁹ In the face of persecution, the apostles do not turn to the exalted messiah for violent vindication but for the strength to suffer well (as Peter and John will happily do in the following chapter). Fourth, and finally, the meaning of the psalm itself is altered slightly from its normal use. Conventionally, the psalm depicted a Davidic king incapable of being beaten by virtue of the fact that God himself was on his side. But in this new reading, the irony only increases. Even death cannot hold down the true “son of God.” The nations not only conspire in vain, but they crucify in vain! As such, the death of Jesus of Nazareth encourages his followers to walk all the more boldly down the path of suffering already mapped out for them.

I once asked a friend of mine what his reasons were for not being a pacifist. He answered, “There’s violence in the Old Testament. There’s violence in Revelation. Why shouldn’t there be violence in the middle!”²⁰ I hope that in this short essay we have begun to demonstrate why there

should not be “violence in the middle.” We have spoken of a double-mindedness in the Old Testament. But to speak in those terms, Enz clarifies, “does not mean the rejection of the Old Testament as some may think. Rather, it means accepting it as a living book where we find our own double-mindedness mirrored. I would recommend that we do not rationalize the tension by accepting excessive forms of dispensationalism or irreverent criticism, but that we see ourselves in its tension.”²¹ For once we have found ourselves situated in such a tension, we are ready to let ourselves be schooled by the New Testament church how rightly to see Jesus in the Old Testament. The double-mindedness we find there, at the heart of ancient Israel, is an inspired reminder of our own double-mindedness, we who send the sons and daughters of the church to kill in the name of democracy, we who ordain chaplains to feed the body and blood of Christ to American soldiers. Our prayer, then, is that the same New Testament church that taught us to re-read Psalms 2 and 110 might teach us now to question the legitimacy of our own national anthems, as we learn in the shadow of the cross of Jesus of Nazareth how to re-read ourselves.

END NOTES

¹ For more on this see John Howard Yoder, *The Original Revolution* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1971) 91-111. See also Jacob J. Enz, *The Christian and Warfare: The Roots of Pacifism in the Old Testament* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1972) 52.

² For instance, Enz, *Christian and Warfare* points out that “archaeologists have found the stables from the time of the monarchy, evidence of a standing army,” 52.

³ See my “David: Subject-King,” *Thomercia* 12/04 <<http://thomercia.com/essays/david.pdf>>.

⁴ For more on this see Enz, *Christian and Warfare* 80-83.

⁵ Enz, *Christian and Warfare* reminds us that “the prophets who stood up to the kings called for a policy of faith instead of frantic preparation in the case of Isaiah and submission rather than use of force in the case of Jeremiah,” 52.

⁶ Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms*, Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry, edited by David W. Cotter (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001) 274.

⁷ The troops are “consecrated” for holy war, according to Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, vol. 5, edited by Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991) 698. It is worth pointing out the contrast between the Davidic king and his holy warriors in the psalm and Jesus and *his* followers in, for instance, Matthew 26:52 and Luke 9:54-55.

⁸ Enz, *Christian and Warfare* 69-70. Anyone familiar with this beautiful little book will recognize immediately how indebted I am to Enz for my argument.

⁹ See for example VanGemeren, *Psalms* 70 and Shaefer, *Psalms* 8. See also Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993) 53.

¹⁰ Since at least the second century after Christ, there has been a great deal of confusion as to why Jesus had to be baptized. If he was sinless, as the church believes, why should he have been baptized for the remission of sins? Many have suggested that Jesus was baptized as an example, that we should follow. This is not entirely wrong, for inasmuch as his baptism is a sign of his crucifixion, we are indeed called to follow him in it. But the better explanation of Jesus baptism is seen, for example, in Keener, *Bible Background Commentary* 53: “Jesus’ response seem to stress his identification with Israel”; and again in “Baptism,” *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, edited by Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992) 57: “Theologically, the baptism of Jesus identifies Jesus as the messianic servant who stands in solidarity with his people.” In other words, as king of Israel, Jesus is baptized on behalf of his people. In this sense, Jesus’ baptism and crucifixion are really of a piece, for both are the substitutionary acts of a king. The relationship between Jesus’ baptism and his crucifixion is further highlighted in Matt 20:20-21, where Jesus uses the language of “baptism” to warn his disciples of his coming death. See again, “Baptism” 58.

¹¹ For an account of the wilderness temptations arguing, persuasively, that each is a temptation to shortcut Jesus’ track to the throne, see John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 30-34.

¹² Enz, *Christian and Warfare* 73.

¹³ Enz, *Christian and Warfare* 75-76.

¹⁴ Enz, *Christian and Warfare* 69-70.

¹⁵ Conventionally this is taken to mean that because Jesus is ontologically the son of God, he is ontologically greater than David. Without denying this aspect of Jesus' argument, we want to suggest another way in which the messiah might be "greater" than David, namely, in the nature of his rule. That is, after all, the most patent distinction between the messianity of David and that of Jesus. David was a man of blood, Jesus a man of peace.

¹⁶ Enz, *Christian and Warfare* 75.

¹⁷ The NIV translates *archegon* as "author," which is right but misleading. When the author writes that Jesus is the "author" of our salvation, he does not mean that Jesus wrote the book on salvation. Rather it has the sense that Jesus, in his suffering, was mapping out our salvation. He was drawing us a map so that we would know where and how to walk. That is why the RSV's "pioneer" is to be preferred to the NIV's "author."

¹⁸ In fact, he quotes both Psalm 2:7 & Psalm 110:4. In Psalm 110, the Melchizedek imagery is sandwiched in military allusions. In Hebrews 5, it is interpreted in light of Jesus' "reverent submission," his "obedience" in suffering.

¹⁹ Keener, *Bible Background Commentary* 334.

²⁰ I have since convinced him that this is not a good argument against biblical pacifism. Now he says that he is not a pacifist because pacifism is too coherent a position to be trustworthy.

²¹ Enz, *Christian and Warfare* 82.