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THE ROYAL PRIEST: PSALM 110 IN BIBLICAL-  
THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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A Dissertation  
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the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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Doctor of Philosophy

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by  
Matthew Habib Emadi  
May 2016

**APPROVAL SHEET**

THE ROYAL PRIEST: PSALM 110 IN BIBLICAL-  
THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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To my wife, Brittany, who is wonderfully patient,  
encouraging, faithful, and loving

To our children, Elijah, Jeremiah, Aliyah, and Josiah,  
may you be as a kingdom and priests  
to our God (Rev 5:10)

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANE	Ancient Near East
<i>As. Mos.</i>	<i>Assumption of Moses</i>
<i>ATR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
BAGD	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed.
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDB	Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. <i>The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
<i>BHS</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library</i>
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CTJ</i>	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
<i>DBSJ</i>	<i>Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal</i>
<i>DOTP</i>	<i>Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch</i>
<i>EBC</i>	<i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i> , rev. ed.

EUS	European University Studies
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
GKC	Kautzsch, E., ed. <i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JSHJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTI</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
JTISup	Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplements
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>Jub.</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NAC	New American Commentary
<i>NDBT</i>	<i>New Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i>
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i>
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements

NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>SBJT</i>	<i>The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SBLSP</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>T. Levi</i>	<i>Testament of Levi</i>
<i>T. Reub.</i>	<i>Testament of Reuben</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

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## PREFACE

Why did the sovereign Lord give me the unspeakable privilege of attending a world-class theological institution to study his precious Bible and grow in my knowledge of his glory? I have no answer. All I can do is thank him for his exceeding kindness and grace towards me. Many of my brothers and sisters around the world would love the opportunity to receive a theological education at a place like Southern Seminary, and so few actually get the chance. I do not deserve what I have been given, and all that I have has come from the gracious hand of God. I praise him for his steadfast love, abundant grace, and unfailing love. The Lord Jesus Christ is my sovereign king and great high priest. He is worthy of all glory. If there is anything good, true, and beautiful in this writing project, may it roll up in praise to him.

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pastoral sensitivity. Dr. Hamilton always made time to meet with me, and he patiently worked through all my questions and concerns. I am thankful for his encouragement and friendship. Our formal relationship bound together by the academy may be coming to an end, but he's stuck with me for the rest of his life, as I will continue to pester him for advice and counsel.

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at seminary. Without Brittany I would have quit before the end of my first semester. I am also grateful for my wife's grandmother (and now mine!), Dottie Olson. She has always taken an interest in my theological education and has supported me from the beginning.

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To our children Elijah, Jeremiah, Aliyah, and Josiah, I love you more than life itself. Elijah, our oldest: your enthusiasm, joy, integrity, and genuine concern for others make my heart swell with pride. Jeremiah: your quiet courage and love for life's little things bring me more joy than completing this project—and that's saying a lot! Aliyah: your life-giving smile and sweet sensitivity could brighten my heart in the darkest hour. Josiah, our son yet unborn: may you be a faithful and courageous servant in God's household. I determined in my heart that I would never sacrifice my family for the sake of my academic work, even if it meant my academic work had to suffer. I can only hope that each of you would say that I achieved my goal with great success.

Finally, what can I say to express my thankfulness to God for my wife, Brittany? She is the wife of my youth; she is more precious than jewels; she does me good all the days of my life; she provides food for her household; she dresses herself with



strength. I could go on and on, but I am not at liberty here to write another dissertation on the excellencies of my wife. Brittany has supported and encouraged me through this entire project. I love her more than I will ever be able to express in words. Ever since we met at Southern in the winter of 2008, Brittany has always known me as a student. Now that this project is complete, we are about to venture into a new season of life together. My excitement overflows not because this season is over, but because I get to look forward to the next season of life with the one thing that has remained constant throughout: the faithful love of a faithful wife. If I could be given 1,000 more lifetimes, I would marry Brittany in all of them. Thank you, Brittany. You are precious to me.

Matthew H. Emadi

Sandy, Utah

May 2016

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The union of the offices of priest and king in Psalm 110 has been, to some degree, a *crux interpretum* in modern scholarship. Commenting on Psalm 110:4, Leslie Allen writes, “The unique reference to the king’s role as *khn*, ‘priest,’ raises the controversial issue of Israelite sacral or sacerdotal kingship.”<sup>1</sup> This controversial issue in modern scholarship derives from the simple question: Was Israel’s king a priest? The answer to which lacks scholarly consensus.

A brief survey of the literature quickly reveals that there are about as many proposals on how to explain the psalm’s royal priestly theology as there are interpreters. The difficulty for interpreters in the modern era stems from the question of how the sacerdotal function of the king played out in the life and history of Israel. From a historical standpoint, there is no evidence that any of Israel’s kings also held the office of the priesthood. The union of these offices in Psalm 110 appears to be a novelty in the biblical record that does not make sense from a historical vantage point unless we are willing to say that David received a special revelation from God at some undisclosed point in time. Therefore, some modern scholars have simply tried to explain away the priestly role of the monarch in Psalm 110. For example, Gerleman’s proposed solution to the perceived dilemma was to assign Psalm 110 to the Maccabean period.<sup>2</sup> H. H. Rowley

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<sup>1</sup>Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed., WBC 21 (Mexico City: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 116. VanGemenen similarly writes concerning Ps 110:4: “This verse opens the question of whether Israel had a sacerdotal kingship.” Willem A. VanGemenen, *Psalms*, in vol. 5 of *EBC*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 816.

<sup>2</sup>Gillis Gerleman, “Psalm 110,” *VT* 31, no. 1 (January 1, 1981): 1–19.

took a different approach arguing that the psalm addressed two different people—the king in verses 1–3 and the priest in verse 4.<sup>3</sup> Still others like F. L. Horton argued that the term “priest” (כֹּהֵן) in 110:4 simply referred to an administrative official.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the confusion is best captured by A. H. Edelkoort’s proposal that the poet’s belief that the messiah would also be a priest forever (Ps 110:4) was simply an enthusiastic mistake.<sup>5</sup> Why has there been such an effort in modern scholarship to explain away Psalm 110’s vision of a *priestly* monarch? Part of the answer relates to the confusion surrounding the concept of priesthood in modern biblical studies.

### **Priesthood in Crisis**

In general the biblical concept of priesthood has not been a topic of great interest in modern scholarship. Crispin Fletcher-Louis says, “Priesthood has been marginalized in modern biblical studies.”<sup>6</sup> Such marginalization may correspond, in Peter Leithart’s words, to the “severe beating” priests have taken in modern philosophy, sociology, and theology.<sup>7</sup> For the modern age of Kantian rationalism, the cultic affairs of priest-craft were nothing more than an ancient fiction.<sup>8</sup> In a world of electric light and radios (still more iPhones and internet), an office that claims access to the divine realm

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<sup>3</sup>H. H. Rowley, “Melchizedek and Zadok (Gen 14 and Ps 110),” in *Festschrift: Alfred Bertholet Zum 80 Geburtstag*, ed. W. Baumgartner (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1950).

<sup>4</sup>Fred L. Horton, Jr., *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, SNTSMS 30 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 47–48.

<sup>5</sup>This observation from Edelkoort is taken from M. J. Paul, “The Order of Melchizedek (Ps 110:4 and Heb 7:3),” *WTJ* 49, no. 1 (March 1, 1987): 200. He cites A. H. Edelkoort, *De Christusverwachting in Het Oude Testament* (Wageningen: Veenman, 1941), 330–40.

<sup>6</sup>Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1,” *JSHJ* 4, no. 2 (2006): 156.

<sup>7</sup>Peter J. Leithart, “Attendants of Yahweh’s House: Priesthood in the Old Testament,” *JSOT* 24, no. 85 (September 1, 1999): 3.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 1–7.

had to be either the product of an unenlightened age or the attempt of power-hungry individuals using religious affairs to gain power in society. The modern period's disinterest in priesthood reflects, according to Fletcher-Louis, "a deeply felt antipathy to anything that smacks of high church spirituality."<sup>9</sup> It is no surprise, then, that modern Old Testament studies have generally taken a history of religions approach to formulating a theology of Israel's priesthood. According to Fletcher-Louis Old Testament scholarship has judged the descriptions of the priesthood (e.g., Exodus-Numbers, Ezekiel, Zechariah 3–6, Malachi, Joel) as "a lamentable decline in Israelite religion from the pure faith of the prophets and the Deuteronomist into a post-exilic obsession with cultic order and institutional religiosity."<sup>10</sup> Julius Wellhausen's source critical program lifted "priestly texts" (P) from their canonical context and laid them in the hands of post-exilic redactors in the business of producing pieces of political propaganda on behalf of power hungry priestly sects.<sup>11</sup> As a result, the task of arriving at a coherent theology of the priesthood was exchanged for historical reconstructions of the cult in Israel's history. According to Richard Nelson, "Scholarly literature in this century [twentieth] has focused almost entirely on the problems of historical reconstruction. The theology of priesthood in the Bible has taken a backseat to its history."<sup>12</sup>

The priesthood in New Testament scholarship has suffered from the effects of modernist assumptions about the nature of Old Testament priesthood. Alex Cheung identifies the lack of reflection on Christ's priesthood in conservative circles as an "irony

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<sup>9</sup>Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1," 156.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Peter Leithart writes, "Though occluded in the Old Testament text, the *real* history of Israel's priesthood and hence of Israel's religion, is one of continual strife between various self-interested priestly families and between temple priests jealous of their privileges and country Levites seeking a piece of the sacrificial pie." Leithart, "Attendants of Yahweh's House," 4.

<sup>12</sup>Richard Donald Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), ix.

of modern evangelical scholarship.”<sup>13</sup> Some scholars simply deny that the historical Jesus had any priestly self-consciousness. Commenting on the Gospels, Jürgen Becker writes, “If anything is incontrovertible from the Jesus material, it is that there is not the slightest connection between Jesus and the theological self-understanding of the Jerusalem priesthood.”<sup>14</sup> Even Hebrews, where Psalm 110-centered-theology of royal priesthood is central to the Christological argument, has not received significant scholarly attention on this important topic in recent years. Eric Mason observes that despite renewed interest in the epistle to the Hebrews “relatively little has been written in recent years about its key motif, Jesus as high priest, but this was not the case in previous decades.”<sup>15</sup>

Happily, the last thirty-five years of biblical scholarship has experienced a resurgence in literary, theological, and canonical readings of scripture. The time is ripe for fresh examinations of Scripture’s priestly theology in biblical-theological perspective. Both because of its profound priestly content and theological influence in the Christian tradition, Psalm 110 should have profound implications for a biblical theology of priesthood.<sup>16</sup> My intention is not to develop a biblical theology of the priesthood but to examine *royal* priesthood in Psalm 110 in canonical context. This study should help answer important big picture questions such as: Is priesthood in the Bible more than an office or a title? In other words, can an individual perform priestly functions without holding the office of the priesthood? What constitutes one as a priest in the biblical narrative? What is the relationship between the Melchizedekian priesthood and Aaronic

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<sup>13</sup>Alex T. M. Cheung, “The Priest as the Redeemed Man: A Biblical-Theological Study of the Priesthood,” *JETS* 29, no. 3 (1986): 265.

<sup>14</sup>Jürgen Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1998), 215.

<sup>15</sup>Eric Mason, *You Are a Priest Forever: Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 7.

<sup>16</sup>For a work of biblical theology, Richard Nelson’s *Raising Up a Faithful Priest* offers no treatment of Adam’s role as priest-king in the opening chapters of Genesis or any meaningful discussion of Ps 110 and Gen 14 in Old Testament context. Thus his analysis of royal priestly passages like Exod 19:6 and 1 Pet 2:9 lack biblical-theological depth. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*.

priesthood? Is Aaron's priesthood in some sense a 'royal priesthood'? Is Israel's identity as a "royal priesthood" (Exod 19:6) or Adam's royal priestly status in the garden typologically connected to the royal priestly messianism of Psalm 110? How does the royal priestly messianism of Psalm 110 harmonize with subsequent biblical literature on the same topic? How does one explain the fact that Hebrews can speak of Jesus as the fulfillment of the Melchizedekian priesthood and simultaneously describe his atoning work according to the duties of the Aaronic priesthood? Is Jesus a priest during his earthly career? This dissertation will contribute to the answers of such questions (directly or indirectly) by situating Psalm 110 in biblical-theological and canonical context in order to harmonize Psalm 110 with the rest of the biblical data.<sup>17</sup> A biblical-theological investigation of the priest-king theme is necessary to put Psalm 110's royal priestly pieces together.

### **Thesis**

My thesis is that a canonical reading of David's depiction of the eschatological Melchizedekian priest-king develops God's creational purpose for humanity to establish God's kingdom (king) by mediating God's covenantal blessings from his temple sanctuary (priest), and simultaneously advances God's redemption project by depicting the order of royal priesthood that would bring the promises of the Abrahamic covenant to fruition.<sup>18</sup> Underlying this thesis is the presupposition that a central theme of the Bible's

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<sup>17</sup>My task is primarily constructive and descriptive. Brevard Childs states, "By insisting on viewing the exegetical task as constructive as well as descriptive, the interpreter is forced to confront the authoritative text of Scripture in a continuing theological reflection." Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 83.

<sup>18</sup>In formulating the thesis for this project, I was tempted to play with the thesis of Gentry and Wellum's excellent book *Kingdom through Covenant* by nuancing their formula in order to capture the pivotal role of the protagonist in the storyline who institutes God's kingdom through his own covenant faithfulness. In this regard, my thesis would have been formulated around the idea that Ps 110 is part of the overarching interplay of kingdom and covenant in the framework of Scripture. In other words, God's kingdom will come through God's covenant mediator, hence kingdom through covenant *mediator*. Perhaps this emphasis on the covenant *mediator* is unfair because it implies that Gentry and Wellum have not properly articulated the importance of the covenant mediator in establishing the kingdom. This of course is

storyline is the kingdom of God.<sup>19</sup> Tom Schreiner asserts, “the phrase ‘kingdom of God’ thematically captures, from a biblical theology standpoint, the message of Scripture.”<sup>20</sup> The Bible progressively unfolds God’s plan to establish his kingdom over the entire earth to maximize his glory throughout the created realm. By God’s design, humanity’s role in the establishment of God’s kingdom is essential. Gentry and Wellum have persuasively argued that the relationship between God’s kingdom and man’s role in establishing that kingdom, meet together in the concept of covenant.<sup>21</sup> In other words, God’s kingdom comes through God’s covenants with men. These covenants begin with God’s covenant with creation (Adam), where God gave Adam the task of subduing and ruling creation. Fundamental to this commission was his role as a priest (covenant mediator) and king. As God’s viceroy, Adam was to extend the borders of Eden so that God’s glorious presence would fill the entire earth.<sup>22</sup> From the dawn of creation humanity’s status as royal priests identified them as rulers over creation, servants in God’s garden-temple, and mediators of

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not true. Gentry and Wellum describe the central importance of the covenant mediator in the makeup of the biblical covenants. Wellum suggests that the Old Testament tells the story of biblical covenants in a way that demands a covenant mediator. He also writes, “We contend that in order to grasp the unfolding nature of the biblical covenants we must see that all of the covenants, including the various covenant mediators, find their ultimate *telos* and antitypical fulfillment in Christ and him alone.” Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 120. I should also note here that my thesis contains the fundamental components of what constitutes or defines a priest, namely covenant mediation (intermediary) and access to the presence of God. Gentry’s definition of priesthood includes both access to the divine presence and the priest’s role as an intermediary. *Ibid.*, 318–24. For a fuller development of the meaning and design of priesthood in the Bible, see Stephen J. Wellum, “The New Covenant Work of Christ: Priesthood, Atonement, and Intercession,” in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*, ed. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 517–40.

<sup>19</sup>Thomas Schreiner argues that the “kingdom of God” is a central theme of the Bible’s storyline. Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013).

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>21</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*.

<sup>22</sup>See G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004); James M. Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

God's covenant blessings. Though Adam failed in his commission and marred his holy priestly position when exiled from Eden, the status of royal priest(hood) continued to find expression in various covenantal figures in redemptive history (i.e., Noah, Abraham, Melchizedek, Moses, Israel, David), reaching its climactic fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the perfect human royal priest who ushers in God's reign (king) through his covenant self-sacrifice and covenant mediation from God's heavenly tabernacle (priest) (Heb 8:1–2; 9:11–17). Jesus' fulfillment of humanity's royal priestly design establishes a new class of priest-kings that extend God's kingdom throughout the world (cf. 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6; 5:10).

The concept of royal priesthood is, therefore, fundamental to the covenantal storyline of scripture. God's "creation project" and later "redemption project" must come to pass through a human who perfectly fulfills the royal priestly job description.<sup>23</sup> It is the ideal man, patterned after Adam in Genesis 1–2, which underlies the biblical concept of royal priesthood and its place in redemptive history.<sup>24</sup> I will argue that the union of priest and king in Psalm 110 fits perfectly into this larger storyline.

As a project of biblical theology, there are two ways to look at the purpose of this investigation. First, from a hermeneutical perspective, my objective is to demonstrate that a canonical interpretation of Psalm 110 actually makes sense as part of the unified storyline of Scripture. In other words, my goal is to prove that the royal Melchizedekian priesthood is part of a developing and unified story across the canon that would have been accessible and recognizable to David during his lifetime. Second, from the

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<sup>23</sup>The phrase "creation project" is taken from T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009), 76–97.

<sup>24</sup>This statement is partly influenced by Alex Cheung. He states, "Overlooked though it has been, there is in fact in the Scriptures a foundational and pervasive theme underlying the idea of priesthood that lends itself easily to redemptive-historical treatments—namely, the priest as the redeemed (ideal) man." Cheung, "The Priest as the Redeemed Man," 265. If the priest represents the redeemed man, I think it is more correct to say that the *royal* priest is the ideal man because pre-fallen Adam is the Bible's royal priestly prototype.



perspective of the storyline itself, my purpose is to arrive at a clear statement of exactly what part the royal Melchizedekian priesthood of Psalm 110 actually plays in the story. In other words, I am simply attempting to tell the story of Psalm 110 within the larger story of Scripture. Though these two purposes are related, we could say that the difference between them boils down to the nature of their respective tasks. In the former, the task is methodological. In the latter, the task is descriptive. For this project, I will formulate my thesis around the descriptive task. I will not so much be arguing *why* we should read Psalm 110 canonically but *how* we should read Psalm 110 canonically. While I hope to demonstrate that my presuppositions are confirmed by the text itself, I have defined my thesis in terms of the descriptive outcome.

In order to establish this thesis I will first develop the royal priesthood theme in the Torah in order to lay the foundation on which later biblical authors build. I will then analyze Psalm 110 in canonical context to demonstrate how the psalm itself identifies with the earlier biblical data and fits into the unfolding biblical narrative. Finally, I will demonstrate how the authors of intertestamental literature and the New Testament interpreted the royal priestly vision of Psalm 110 with respect to messianic expectations and Christological fulfillment.

### **Survey of Modern Research**

To survey the literature on Psalm 110 would require a dissertation length treatment of the subject. Indeed, whole books exist on the history of interpretation of this particular Psalm.<sup>25</sup> The voluminous literature on Psalm 110 is due not only to the fact that the psalm occupies a pivotal role in New Testament Christology, but also because the psalm in its Old Testament context has produced more interpretive conjectures and

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<sup>25</sup>See for example David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Atlanta: Abingdon Press, 1973).

hypotheses than any other psalm.<sup>26</sup> A summary of the enormous literature is not necessary for the purpose of this study. Instead, I will survey the modern literature to summarize how scholars have handled the psalm's explicit union of the offices of king and priest in one figure. By surveying the literature, my goal is not to affirm or deny the validity of each proposal. Instead, this survey should reveal how the nature of the investigation—historical or canonical—has controlled the interpretive task and shaped the interpretive results.<sup>27</sup> The fruit of such a survey will demonstrate the need, for an investigation into Psalm 110 that situates its royal priestly theology in biblical-theological and canonical context.<sup>28</sup>

### **Royal Priesthood: Historical Reconstructions of Israelite Kingship**

Bernard Duhm argued in his book *Die Psalmen: Erklärt* (1899) that Psalm 110 is the product of the Maccabean era (141 B.C.). According to Duhm, Psalm 110:1–4 is an

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<sup>26</sup>Kraus writes, “Kein Psalm hat in der Forschung so viele Hypothesen und Diskussionen ausgelöst wie der 110.” Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalmen 60–150*, ed. Siegfried Herrmann and Hans Walter Wolff, BKAT 15 (Neukirchen-Vlyun: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 928.

<sup>27</sup>Waltke offers a helpful summary of modern scholarship's interpretive approach to Ps 110: “Modern scholarship, however, does not give primacy . . . to its predictions as understood in the New Testament. Rather, these scholars give primacy to its inferential historical use as part of the coronation ritual for David's non-supernatural sons or for a post-exilic priest. For most scholars . . . the New Testament re-interprets the original intention of the psalm. According to them, an exclusively human son of David during Israel's pre-exilic monarchy is the lord and priest-king celebrated in the psalm, and it uses courtly hyperbole, not necessarily substantial prophecy. Most deny Davidic authorship, and some deny the psalm's unity.” Bruce K. Waltke, “Psalm 110: An Exegetical and Canonical Approach,” in *Resurrection and Eschatology: Theology in Service of the Church: Essays in Honor of Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.*, ed. Lane G. Tipton and Jeffrey C. Waddington (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2008), 63.

<sup>28</sup>I do not want to be guilty of overstating the importance of this project for the field of biblical studies. I do not think that this dissertation is groundbreaking or novel or that it goes where no man has gone before. In fact, there might be only a few brief sections within this project that offer fresh exegetical insights into key biblical texts. The contribution of this work is its attempt to pull together the royal priestly logic of Ps 110 across the entire canon. In other words, I am not arguing anything “new” per se; I am just putting all the pieces together in a way that I hope will offer greater clarity to the royal priestly logic of Ps 110 in canonical context. Such a task is an appropriate pursuit for a dissertation in the discipline of biblical theology.

acrostic on the name Simon, the Hasmonean ruler of priestly decent.<sup>29</sup> The Hasmoneans' leadership skills and success on the field of battle made them king-like in their rise to power. For Duhm and others, Psalm 110 is part of a Maccabean agenda supporting the rise to power of Hasmonean priest-kings.<sup>30</sup>

In his essay "Melchizedek and Zadok" (1950), H. H. Rowley argued that Psalm 110 was written to legitimize the Zadokite priesthood in Jerusalem. He proposed that the story of Melchizedek in Genesis 14 was redacted during the Davidic age in order to link the father of Israel, Abraham, to the priesthood of Melchizedek, "whose successor in the Jebusite priesthood Zadok was."<sup>31</sup> According to Rowley, "It is understandable that in the age of David, if the Israelite Ark were brought into Zadok's shrine until an Israelite shrine could be built, Zadok's position should be legitimated for Israel by an aetiological story in which the authority of the example of the first father of Israel, Abraham was invoked."<sup>32</sup> Rowley maintained a strict separation between kingship and priesthood and therefore neither David, nor Melchizedek for that matter, should be thought of as priest-kings. The combined result of these assumptions led Rowley to assign two different authors to Psalm 110, "In the first three verses the king is addressed by Zadok; in the fourth Zadok is addressed by the king, who confirms Zadok in the priesthood."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Cited in A. B. Davidson, "Duhm's Die Psalmen: Erklärt," in *The Critical Review of Theological & Philosophical Literature*, ed. S. D. F. Salmond (Edinburgh: Williams and Northgate, 1900), 10:447–48. For a similar argument, see Marco Treves, "Two Acrostic Psalms," *VT* 15, no. 1 (1965): 81–90. Treves also suggests that the person addressed in Psalm 110 is not a king: "If our warrior had been a king, the poet would have found an opportunity to say so." *Ibid.*, 86. For a refutation of Treve's article, see J. W. Bowker, "Psalm CX," *VT* 17, no. 1 (1967): 31–41.

<sup>30</sup>See also Gerleman, "Psalm 110."

<sup>31</sup>H. H. Rowley, "Melchizedek and Zadok (Gen 14 and Ps 110)," in *Festschrift: Alfred Bertholet Zum 80 Geburtstag*, ed. W. Baumgartner (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1950), 470. For a similar argument, see Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955), 43.

<sup>32</sup>Rowley, "Melchizedek and Zadok (Gen 14 and Ps 110)," 468.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 470.

For some scholars, the priestly function of Israel's king is purely the result of Israel borrowing her monarchical identity from her ancient Near Eastern neighbors to solve political dilemmas.<sup>34</sup> Fundamental to this line of interpretation is the belief that the people of Israel developed a critical posture towards the monarchy. Sigmund Mowinckel, in his book *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (1962), suggested that this hostility "arose from religious motives and finally led to the kingship being regarded as contrary to Yahweh's sovereignty."<sup>35</sup> Only a new ideal for kingship, combining royal and religious practice, would win back the support of the people. According to Mowinckel, the union of royal and priestly power was characteristic of the El Elyon kings in ancient Jerusalem (cf. Gen. 14:18). The Davidic kingship rested on Jerusalem as its foundation for power. Yahweh's promise of the "old right" was necessary to offset the priests' threat to the ecclesiastical power of the king.<sup>36</sup> John Emerton drew a similar conclusion about the union of royal and priestly prerogatives in his essay "The Riddle of Genesis XIV" (1971).

The Melchizedek passage in verses 18–20 was added, probably in the reign of David. It was hoped to encourage Israelites to accept the fusion of the worship of Yahweh with the cult of El Elyon, to recognize the position of Jerusalem as the religious and political capital of Israel, and to acknowledge that the status of David as king had behind it the ancient royal and priestly status of Melchizedek.<sup>37</sup>

Walter Eichrodt employed a similar interpretive framework that could make sense of royal priestly theology only in light of ancient Near Eastern parallels and the national political climate. In his *Theology of the Old Testament* (1961), Eichrodt concluded that "royal psalms such as Pss. 2; 45; 72; 110 present features of the court-

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<sup>34</sup>Mowinckel said, "The conception of the king held in Israel was fundamentally the same as in the rest of the ancient East." Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (Dearborn, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 50.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 58–59.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>37</sup>John A. Emerton, "Riddle of Genesis XIV," *VT* 21, no. 4 (October 1, 1971): 28. For a similar interpretation, see John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 130–31.

style and the king-mythology of the ancient Near East which could only have percolated into Israel from her heathen environment.”<sup>38</sup> The king’s priestly quality in Psalm 110:4 was the result of “the temptation to use cultic apotheosis to enlarge the royal power and authority to disarm popular criticism.”<sup>39</sup>

Similarly, John Day argues for Canaanite influence on the Davidic royal priesthood in his essay, “The Canaanite Inheritance of the Israelite Monarchy” (1998). He argues that Psalm 110 is the “clearest evidence of Canaanite . . . influence on Israel’s monarchy.”<sup>40</sup> Psalm 110:4 demonstrates, according to Day, that David’s conquest of Jerusalem led to syncretism with the Jebusite cult of Elyon. The Davidic royal priesthood in Psalm 110 thus finds its origin in the Jebusite cult of El Elyon, of which Melchizedek, the Jebusite priest-king, was a pre-Israelite prototype.

Relying heavily on form-critical assumptions, H. J. Kraus, in his *Theology of the Psalms* (1979), argued that Psalm 110 was part of the liturgy of an enthronement festival that brought together Israelite traditions and the traditions of Jerusalem—the Jebusite royal city state.<sup>41</sup> According to Kraus, “The ruler enthroned in Jerusalem united several offices in his person and, therefore, that in the act of enthronement several assumptions and traditions concerning his office had to be taken into account and their authority conferred on the ruler.”<sup>42</sup> These offices included a blend of Davidic kingship traditions (2 Sam 7; Ps 132) and the royal priestly traditions of Jerusalem, which found

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<sup>38</sup>Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J. A. Baker (London: SCM Press, 1961), 1: 125.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>John Day, “The Canaanite Inheritance of the Israelite Monarchy,” in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies, JSOTSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 73.

<sup>41</sup>Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, trans. Keith R. Crim (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 111–16. Kraus asserted, “Psalm 110 contains the most clearly recognizable descriptions and texts of an enthronement festival.” Ibid., 111.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 112.

their origin in Melchizedek (Ps 110:4; Gen 14:18). Kraus makes explicit that the installation of the ruler as a priest after the order of Melchizedek “was not a genuine and primary tradition of Israel.”<sup>43</sup> Instead, it must be relegated to the cultic traditions of Jerusalem.

Lester Grabbe similarly attached a political agenda to the meaning of Psalm 110 and its description of a priestly monarch. In his book *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* (1995), Grabbe suggests that the development of sacral kingship in the Old Testament is due to priestly redactors “who would want any future monarch to be subordinate to them in cultic matters.”<sup>44</sup> Grabbe attempts to reconstruct historically the cultic functions of Israel’s kings. He concludes that the king was ultimately responsible for the cult.<sup>45</sup>

Michael Goulder takes a more novel approach to the historical setting of Psalm 110 in his book, *The Psalms of Return (Book V, Psalms 107–150)* (1998). Goulder argues that Psalm 110 is post-exilic and is likely the product of a poet within the community of the Asaphites, who were the only singers at the time of the return from exile (Ezra 2:41).<sup>46</sup> In this context, Zechariah 6:9–14 is the key to interpreting the Psalm’s royal priestly theology. According to Goulder, David’s lord is the priest Joshua (Zech 6:9–14). If Psalm 110 was indeed written during the time of the return, then, as Goulder argues, David’s lord should not primarily be thought of as a king, but first and foremost as a

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<sup>43</sup>Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, trans. Keith R. Crim (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 115.

<sup>44</sup>Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 39.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 35–40.

<sup>46</sup>M. D. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return (Book V, Psalms 107–150)*, JSOTSup 258 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 146. David Mitchell situates Ps 110 in the same historical context with Zech 9–14 as its primary parallel. David C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms*, JSOTSup 252 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 258–71.

priest. He writes, “The ‘lord’ is in fact a priest, who is being called to a special vocation as secular leader of the nation.”<sup>47</sup> Psalm 110:1, therefore, refers to Joshua who is “installed in an office which has all the trappings of Davidic kingship, but to which it would be impolitic to give the name of king (cf. Neh. 6.6).”<sup>48</sup>

Taking a different approach, Deborah Rooke, in her essay “Kingship as Priesthood: The Relationship between the High Priesthood and the Monarchy” (1998), attempts to elucidate the difference between the royal priesthood and the ‘ordinary’ priesthood.<sup>49</sup> She presupposes a priestly redactor (P) as she attempts to define the nature of the priesthood and monarchy at various points in Israel’s history. Her investigation leads her to the conclusion that the “monarch can fulfill priestly duties because of the nature of his kingship, but equally because of the nature of his priesthood the high priest cannot be a king, nor should he ever be confused with a messianic figure.”<sup>50</sup>

In Rooke’s later article, “Jesus as Royal Priest: Reflections on the Interpretation of the Melchizedek Tradition in Heb 7” (2000), she summarizes her findings on the relationship between the monarch’s priesthood and the ordinary priesthood. She describes the monarch’s priesthood as “ontological.” In other words, the monarch’s priesthood was inherent in his identity as the son of God. She states, “The monarch had no choice as to whether or not to fulfill the priestly responsibility of mediation laid upon him; he was a priest for ever . . . because of the sonship granted to him by the deity . . . His priesthood was part of his identity as son of God; it was

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<sup>47</sup>Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return*, 145.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>49</sup>Deborah W. Rooke, “Kingship as Priesthood: The Relationship between the High Priesthood and the Monarchy,” in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1998), 187.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 208.

‘ontological’, part of his very being.”<sup>51</sup> Her analysis gives historical credence for how the king could also be considered a priest without actually holding the office of a priest.

Israel Knohl argues in his article “Melchizedek: A Model for the Union of Kingship and Priesthood in the Hebrew Bible, 11QMelchizedek, and the Epistle to the Hebrews” (2009), that the biblical texts are at odds with each other over the relationship between kingship and priesthood. He suggests that the Torah depicts a “total separation” between priesthood and kingship while in the rest of the biblical tradition the king has royal and priestly functions.<sup>52</sup> According to Knohl, Melchizedek, a non-Israelite king, is not “restrained by the limitations that the Torah puts on Israelite kings” and thus serves as a model for the union of kingship and priesthood.<sup>53</sup>

Hossfeld and Zenger, in their commentary on the Psalms published in 2011, assert that the priestly role of the king (Ps. 110:4) appears to be a public relations move on behalf of a redactor. They write, “The priestly dimension of the kingship is meant to relativize or correct the dominant military dimension of the rest of the psalm.”<sup>54</sup> Psalm 110:4 is a redactional comment that provides a dignity to the “new” kingship.

Even when scholars do not adopt higher-critical assumptions, they tend to formulate their investigation into the union of kingship and priesthood in Psalm 110 primarily through a historical reconstructive lens. M.J. Paul investigated the union of priesthood and kingship in Psalm 110 in his essay, “The Order of Melchizedek (Ps 110:4

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<sup>51</sup>Deborah W. Rooke, “Jesus as Royal Priest: Reflections on the Interpretation of the Melchizedek Tradition in Hebrews 7,” *Bib* 81, no. 1 (January 1, 2000): 82. I find this aspect of Rooke’s argument very helpful. As I will argue later, Sonship, royalty, and priesthood are intimately connected in the biblical narrative.

<sup>52</sup>Israel Knohl, “Melchizedek: A Model for the Union of Kingship and Priesthood in the Hebrew Bible, 11QMelchizedek, and the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 258.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>54</sup>Erich Zenger and Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 150.



and Heb 7:3)” (1987). His historical inquiry led him to the conclusion that the separation of kingship and priesthood in Israel fundamentally distinguished them from the surrounding nations. Therefore, while Israel retained the memory of Melchizedek who was king and priest in the far past, Psalm 110 cannot address one of the kings of Israel. The Psalm had to speak of a future messiah.<sup>55</sup> Without any historical precedent for a priest-king in the life of Israel, Paul concludes that David’s insight into the messiah’s priesthood was a special revelation from God. He writes, “At a moment the Lord revealed to David—how we do not know—that one of the descendants of David should be a priest.”<sup>56</sup> The implication of such a statement is that the royal priestly theology of Psalm 110 is completely devoid of any biblical or typological logic outside of the Melchizedek narrative in Genesis 14.

David Anderson’s work *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews* (2001) attempts to settle a theological debate between dispensational and covenant theologians concerning the nature of the present ministry of Christ.<sup>57</sup> In his chapter on Psalm 110, Anderson analyzes the king’s priestly role. He does not adopt the higher-critical approaches of modern scholarship, but neither is his goal to provide a biblical-theological reading of the union of priest and king in Psalm 110. Instead, the focus of his investigation with respect to the priestly function of the king is a historical one. He concludes, “Lacking more objective evidence of an early king-priest office in the

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<sup>55</sup>Paul, “The Order of Melchizedek,” 200.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>57</sup>Anderson examines Ps 110 in Hebrews in hopes of “solving the tension” between premillennial and amillennial interpreters over the timing of Christ’s reign. He specifically investigates the royal and priestly aspects of Ps 110 in the book of Hebrews to “unravel the current discussions related to the present ministry of Christ and how all this affects millennial studies.” David R. Anderson, *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 3. In Anderson’s own words, “The purpose of this study will be to determine if the use of Ps 110:1 and 4 in the Book of Hebrews helps delineate the present ministry of Christ” (3–4). Thus, the priest-king theme is central to Anderson’s thesis, but his objective is to settle a question of systematic theology. Nevertheless Anderson’s work helpfully develops the influence of Ps 110 on Hebrew’s royal priestly Christology.

monarchy of Israel, the traditional understanding of a priesthood completely limited to the Aaronic line is preferred. The king of Israel may have been the head of the Yahweh cult, but that does not mean he had the office of a priest.”<sup>58</sup>

Daniel Block makes a similar argument in his essay “My Servant David” (2003), published in *Israel’s Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Block argues for a strict separation between the royal and priestly offices in Israel’s history. He states, “Although the Deuteronomic History and the chronicler recount cultic actions performed by Davidic kings, the narratives never confuse or conflate priestly and royal offices.”<sup>59</sup> Block’s insistence on this point is meant to strengthen his argument that the Old Testament distinguishes the priesthood from the messiah. Psalm 110 is no exception. According to Block, “Psalm 110 attaches priestly prerogatives to the monarchy . . . without compromising the Aaronide-Davide distinction.”<sup>60</sup> Psalm 110 appeals to a type of kingship that existed in the time of Abraham and thus maintains the Old Testament’s consistent distinction between the Aaronic/Zadokite priesthood and the Davidic messiah.<sup>61</sup> What, then, is the priestly role of the king in Psalm 110:4? The priestly prerogative of the king, according to Block, is mediatorial. The king stands in the gap

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<sup>58</sup>David R. Anderson, *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001) 57–58. I do not disagree with Anderson’s historical analysis here. I am simply emphasizing the fact that a historical approach to Ps 110 has dominated modern scholarship.

<sup>59</sup>Daniel I. Block, “My Servant David: Ancient Israel’s Vision of the Messiah,” in *Israel’s Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 34.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 42. Block’s essay leads one to believe that there is no relationship between the Melchizedekian and Aaronic priesthoods in redemptive history. In the same book J. Daniel Hays responds to Block in his essay “If He Looks Like a Prophet and Talks Like a Prophet, Then He Must Be . . . .” Hays argues that Block overstates his case when arguing that the biblical narratives never confuse nor conflate the royal and priestly offices. He suggests that David’s priestly activities are not entirely different than those of the Aaronic priesthood and “mirror instead the old priest-king pattern of patriarchal Israel.” J. Daniel Hays, “If He Looks Like a Prophet and Talks Like a Prophet, Then He Must Be . . . .,” in *Israel’s Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 66–69.

between God and the people—mediating God’s rule and blessing to the people of Israel.<sup>62</sup>

### **Biblical-Theological Literature**

A body of literature relevant to this study includes works of biblical theology that attempt to explain the metanarrative of Scripture or major themes within Scripture’s metanarrative. Some of the most notable biblical-theological studies informing the shape of my thesis are the works of Beale,<sup>63</sup> Alexander,<sup>64</sup> Dempster,<sup>65</sup> Hamilton,<sup>66</sup> and Schreiner.<sup>67</sup> These works unfold Scripture’s metanarrative while highlighting the importance of humanity’s role as royal priests in establishing God’s kingdom. They argue that Adam’s mandate, as priest-king, was to extend the borders of Eden by subduing and ruling the earth so that God’s glorious temple would cover the entire globe. Only Dempster, in little more than a passing comment, links the messianic priest-king of Psalm 110 to humanity’s commission in Genesis 1–2.<sup>68</sup>

The recent Old Testament biblical theology by Steve Wellum and Peter Gentry, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, provides one of the most thorough developments of royal priesthood in the

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<sup>62</sup>Block appeals to Rooke’s essay, “Kingship as Priesthood,” on this point. Block, “My Servant David,” 43n94. Rowe argues along similar lines as he observes that the king sometimes exercised a priestly role. This priestly role manifested itself in the king’s relationship to the temple, the practice of offering sacrifices (1 Sam 13:9–10; 2 Sam 6:13, 17, 18), the wearing of priestly garments (2 Sam 6:12–15), and the pronouncement of blessing on the people (2 Sam 6:18; 1 Kgs 8:14). Robert D. Rowe, *God’s Kingdom and God’s Son: The Background in Mark’s Christology from Concepts of Kingship in the Psalms* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 56.

<sup>63</sup>Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*.

<sup>64</sup>Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*.

<sup>65</sup>Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003).

<sup>66</sup>Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment*.

<sup>67</sup>Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*.

<sup>68</sup>Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 59–60, 200. Although they are only indirectly referring to Ps 110, Gentry and Wellum do suggest that the combination of priest and king in messianic texts suggest that the Messiah would fulfill the Adamic role. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 515.

metanarrative of the Old Testament. Gentry and Wellum show how the concept of royal priesthood is tied to major covenantal figures—Adam, Abraham, Israel, David, and Jesus. They argue that the royal priestly role of Adam to exercise dominion over the earth and to serve God in his garden-temple is tied up with the concept of covenant, and thus informs the rest of the biblical covenants. The messianic texts that combine the offices of priest and king indicate, according to Gentry and Wellum, “that the coming figure fulfills an Adamic role planned by God from the beginning for a man over his creation.”<sup>69</sup> They also link the king’s priestly role to the identity of Israel, suggesting that “the king will accomplish in his person the purpose that God had for the nation of Israel as a whole, to be a kingdom of priests.”<sup>70</sup>

Eugene Merrill’s essay “Royal Priesthood: An Old Testament Messianic Motif” represents a classic typological approach to Psalm 110. Merrill argues from 2 Samuel 6, Psalm 110, and the epistle to the Hebrews that David was the prototypical royal priest, and thus functioned as a type of Jesus’ superior royal priesthood.<sup>71</sup> The reason Psalm 110:4 identifies David as a priest after the order of Melchizedek is to establish a link between the Davidic and Abrahamic covenants. Melchizedek’s connection to Abraham, a pre-Mosaic patriarch (Gen 14), substantiates the superiority of the Melchizedekian priesthood over Aaron’s priesthood. “The Melchizedek-David-Jesus priesthood is a straight-line extension that operates outside of and superior to that of Aaron and the nation of Israel.”<sup>72</sup> What then is the relationship between the Sinaitic and Davidic covenant? Merrill writes, “Israel was the kingdom of priests called to mediate Yahweh’s saving grace to the world, and David was the priestly king whose task was to

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<sup>69</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 515.

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*, 422.

<sup>71</sup>Merrill argues that “my lord” in Ps 110:1 is an honorific title referring to David. Eugene H. Merrill, “Royal Priesthood: An Old Testament Messianic Motif,” *BSac* 150 (1993): 55–57.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, 59.

lead them to the full accomplishment of its high and holy calling.”<sup>73</sup>

Similar to Merrill, Robin Routledge interpreted Psalm 110 and the union of priesthood and kingship against the backdrop of the Genesis 14 narrative in his article, “Psalm 110, Melchizedek and David: Blessing (the descendants of) Abraham” (2009). His analysis focused on the meaning of Psalm 110:4—“You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek”—in light of the prevalence of the concept of “blessing” in Genesis 14:18–20. His insights into the meaning of Psalm 110:4 attach David’s priestly messianism to God’s purposes for Abraham. He concludes, “The Davidic king functions as a priest in the way we see Melchizedek functioning as a priest in Genesis 14:18–20, that is, as a means of blessings (the descendants of) Abraham.”<sup>74</sup>

Bruce Waltke attempted a canonical interpretation of Psalm 110 in his essay, “Psalm 110: An Exegetical and Canonical Approach.” Waltke’s canonical interpretation of royal priesthood in Psalm 110 moves in a straight-line typological approach from Melchizedek to David’s lord to Jesus Christ. He does not spend much time developing the logic of Psalm 110 in Old Testament context. Instead he focuses on contrasting the Old Covenant priesthood with Christ’s superior priesthood as the Melchizedekian priest.<sup>75</sup> Thus, his interpretation of Psalm 110 should rightly be classified as “canonical,” but his canonical analysis is limited primarily to Melchizedek-Jesus typology.

The most developed canonical reading of Psalm 110 I have found is in Scott Hahn’s *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God’s Saving Promises* (2009). Hahn’s main objective in this book is to “construct a covenantal interpretation of the Christ event as it is presented in Luke 22, Galatians 3–4 and Hebrews 1–9, the three loci of the New Testament that correlate the terminology of

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<sup>73</sup>Merrill, “Royal Priesthood,” 61.

<sup>74</sup>Robin L. Routledge, “Psalm 110, Melchizedek and David: Blessing (the Descendants Of) Abraham,” *Baptistic Theologies* 1, no. 2 (September 1, 2009): 14.

<sup>75</sup>Waltke, “Psalm 110,” 73–75.

kinship with that of covenant.”<sup>76</sup> Hahn’s work is important for the purpose of this project because he develops the concept of royal priesthood as it relates to the issue of covenantal sonship. With regard to Psalm 110, Hahn’s exegesis focuses on the content of the divine oath in Psalm 110:4. Hahn evaluates this oath in light of Genesis 14, 2 Samuel 6–7, Psalm 89, and Psalm 132. He concludes that the “content of the oath points to God’s dynastic establishment of David’s line through a son who is divinely adopted. The son is thereby authorized to build the Temple and rule as priest-king in Jerusalem.”<sup>77</sup> Similar to Merrill and Wellum and Gentry, Hahn suggests the “royal priestly primogeniture” of David’s greater son echoes back to Israel’s calling to be a kingdom of priests.<sup>78</sup> Hahn goes on to develop the logic of Psalm 110 in the argument of Hebrews concluding that royal priestly primogeniture is fundamental to the author’s Christology.<sup>79</sup> Jesus’ exaltation as the firstborn and royal priest was prefigured by Melchizedek and thus “represents the restoration of a more perfect form of covenant mediation originally intended for Adam and Israel and practiced to some extent prior to the Sinai rebellion.”<sup>80</sup>

## Summary

Within the field of biblical studies, scholars tend to take one of two trajectories when describing the union of kingship and priesthood in a single figure. They focus either on royal priestly messianism as depicted in Psalm 110 from a primarily historical reconstructive perspective or the emphasis falls on the Torah’s development of

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<sup>76</sup>Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God’s Saving Promises* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 22.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 193.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 213. Surprisingly Hahn offers no treatment of the controversial Adamic/creation covenant. He mentions it only in passing. Adam’s role as priest-king in Gen 1–2 is therefore not tied to Hahn’s discussion of royal priestly primogeniture in later biblical texts.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 278–331.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 280.

humanity's (Adam) original status as royal priests and its biblical-theological fulfillment in Jesus (Hebrews) and the Church (1 Pet 2:9). In other words, the Melchizedek-David-Jesus typology is rarely ever harmonized with the development of royal priesthood traced through Adam, Israel, Jesus, and the Church.<sup>81</sup> Perhaps this is due to the simple fact that there is no monograph devoted to a whole Bible theology of royal priesthood. Biblical-theological studies examine royal priesthood through the rubric of creation-fall-redemption-consummation highlighting major points of development in Adam, Israel, Jesus, and the Church. Historical studies attempt to reconstruct Israelite history groping for evidence of an Israelite sacral kingship that makes sense out of David's depiction of the messiah in the royal priestly vein of Psalm 110. The table below (table 1) captures the general methodological trend on how modern scholarship has approached the concept of regal priesthood in the Torah and Psalm 110.

Table 1. Methodological approaches to royal priesthood (priest-king)

Canonical Section	Primary Methodology Employed	Redemptive-Historical Development
Torah	Biblical Theology	Adam, Israel, Jesus, Church
Psalm 110	Historical Reconstruction	Melchizedek, David (Messiah), Jesus

What I am hoping this chart demonstrates is that the different methodological approaches applied to royal priesthood in the Torah versus royal priesthood in Psalm 110 have created a disconnect between the Torah's development of royal priesthood and the royal priestly messianism found in Psalm 110. Works of biblical theology tend to develop royal

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<sup>81</sup>For two recent works that do not bifurcate these two biblical-theological trajectories, see Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*.

priesthood in the Torah and jump over the messianic texts while historical studies attempt to explain the Messiah's priestly function, i.e., Psalm 110:4, apart from the foundation of the Torah. Critical assumptions combined with the lack of biblical-theological and canonical reflection on Psalm 110 have been so pervasive in much of modern scholarship that, for many interpreters, the figure of Melchizedek simply had to be a later insertion into the Genesis narrative during the rise of Israel's monarchy. Psalm 110 has suffered relentless scrutiny from the historical-critical and form-critical methods of modern scholarship, and though conservative scholarship has opted for a typological and theological interpretation of Psalm 110, there appears to be a need for a greater biblical-theological basis for David's royal priestly theology. I will argue that the Torah is the theological foundation for Psalm 110's royal priestly theology, though in scholarly literature never the twain meet.<sup>82</sup> My goal, therefore, is to connect the dots. This project will build on the typological and canonical approaches to Psalm 110 and the biblical-theological developments of the concept of royal priesthood in the Torah in order to demonstrate how David's messianic expectation is the outworking of earlier biblical literature and ultimately fulfilled in Christ. I will demonstrate that a canonical reading of David's depiction of the eschatological Melchizedekian priest-king develops God's creational purpose for humanity to establish God's kingdom (king) by mediating God's covenant from his temple sanctuary (priest), and simultaneously advances God's redemption project by depicting the order of royal priesthood that would bring the promises of the Abrahamic covenant to fruition.

Before moving forward, it is important to observe that the interpretive discrepancies in biblical studies over the relationship between kingship and priesthood in

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<sup>82</sup>The exceptions to this comment are Gentry and Wellum, Dempster, Merrill, and Hahn. Furthermore, I am not suggesting that scholars have not recognized how the royal priesthood of Ps 110 fits into the canonical story. I am simply stating that there needs to be more work done to develop the logic of the royal priestly messianism in Ps 110 in the context of the entire canon.



Psalm 110—at least in the modern period—probably relate to what Jeremy Treat laments as the “oversystematization of certain doctrines, such as the states and offices of Christ” in the field of systematic theology.<sup>83</sup> Treat’s comments on the difficulty of relating the kingdom to the cross are worth quoting at length because they are relevant to my contention that the union of kingship and priesthood in a single figure in Psalm 110 is a conundrum in modern biblical studies. He writes,

If Christ’s work is divided neatly into the two categories of humiliation and exaltation, with the cross being only in the state of humiliation, it is difficult to see how it could relate to the kingdom at all. If Christ’s death is interpreted only in terms of his priestly office then it will be difficult to connect the cross to the kingdom. Although the doctrines of the states and offices themselves are not to blame, they have often been used in a way that draws a thick doctrinal line between Christ’s royal and Christ’s atoning work.<sup>84</sup>

That “thick doctrinal line” between Christ’s royal and atoning work in systematic theology is probably the cause (or result?) of the lack of development of the relationship between kingship and priesthood in biblical studies (i.e., Ps 110).

### **Methodology**

As an exercise in biblical theology, this dissertation will investigate the inner-biblical logic informing the royal priestly theology of Psalm 110.<sup>85</sup> I am not primarily concerned with defending issues of authorship and historicity for the psalm. The final

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<sup>83</sup>Jeremy R. Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 28.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>By “inner-biblical logic,” I mean the process by which the biblical authors interpreted and applied earlier biblical texts to their own context. In this regard, inner-biblical logic is synonymous with what Beale describes as “inner-biblical exegesis.” Critiquing the use of the term “intertextuality” in biblical studies, Beale writes, “In biblical studies, as noted above, ‘intertextuality’ is sometimes used merely to refer to the procedure by which a later biblical text refers to an earlier text, how that earlier text enhances the meaning of the later one, and how the later one creatively develops the earlier meaning. In this respect, ‘intertextuality’ may be seen as a procedure of inner-biblical or intrabiblical exegesis, which is crucial to doing biblical theology.” G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 40.

form of the text will control my interpretation.<sup>86</sup> My selection of relevant texts in the Torah and other sections of the Bible will not rely on a word study approach. The title “royal priesthood” occurs only twice in Scripture (Exod 19:6; 1 Pet 2:9) and any attempt to find the specific titles of “priest-king” or “royal priest” will prove vain. Even a search for the individual words “king” and “priest” used in reference to the same person or entity will prove fruitless. Instead, I am using the phrases “royal priesthood” and “priest-king” in the sense that they thematically capture an important biblical-theological theme related to humanity’s role in God’s plan of redemption as it unfolds in the storyline of the Bible.<sup>87</sup>

### **Presuppositions**

I affirm the Scripture’s own testimony concerning itself as the Word of God. God moved men by his Spirit to author the very words of Scripture so that every word of the Bible is divinely intended and without error. Scripture’s divine origin necessitates an essential unity across the canon. Even though Scripture consists of individual books of diverse genres written by various authors, it comes to us as unified revelation from a

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<sup>86</sup>This is not to say that my interpretation of a given passage of Scripture will not account for its historical context. I am simply stating that I will adopt a text’s historical background as indicated by the text or canon at large. While biblical theology is primarily concerned with the Bible’s overall theological message, the historical context of Scripture is an essential component for arriving at a biblical-theological interpretation. Biblical theology happens as the interpreter works with “the mutual interaction of the literary, historical, and theological dimensions of the various corpora, and with the interrelationships of these within the whole canon of Scripture.” Brian S. Rosner, “Biblical Theology,” in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 3.

<sup>87</sup>This line of argumentation is taken from Thomas Schreiner’s rationale for how the “kingdom of God” is a central message of Scripture even though the phrase itself and related words are rare in Scripture. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*, xiii. Schreiner’s comments can be appropriately applied to the nature of this project and I fully acknowledge my dependence on his reasoning for my comments about the word study approach. Wright similarly notes the limitations of a word-study approach when investigating a biblical theme. Commenting on the study of the kingdom of God in Scripture, he warns against an approach that limits our study to the “strict occurrences of the work ‘kingdom’ and its obvious cognates.” Though his comments are in reference to the study of the kingdom in Jesus’ teachings, his advice is applicable to any theologically rich concept in biblical studies. See N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 225.

single divine author.<sup>88</sup> Amidst Scripture's diversity, it is therefore possible to speak of the Bible's own "meta-story." T. D. Alexander says it this way:

The anthology itself, which abounds in intertextual references, provides most of the literary context within which its contents may be understood. There is not a book within the whole collection that can be interpreted satisfactorily in isolation from the rest. Each book contributes something special to the meta-story and, in turn, the meta-story offers a framework within which each book may be best interpreted. In this regard, the long-standing principle of interpreting Scripture by Scripture makes considerable practical sense.<sup>89</sup>

The numerous intertextual references within the anthology suggest that the biblical authors themselves relied on earlier biblical texts as they interpreted and applied these texts to their own context. Thus my interpretation of any given passage of Scripture will be an attempt to discover the author's intended meaning in light of the meta-story of the Bible.

Furthermore, I will attempt to adopt the interpretive positions of the biblical authors themselves. While modern scholarship may deny Mosaic authorship of the Torah or Davidic authorship of Psalm 110, the New Testament indicates that Jesus, the apostles, and the early church did nothing of the sort (Mark 12:35–37; Acts 2:34). The New Testament authors interpret the Old Testament texts on their own terms. Thus, I will allow the canon of Scripture to dictate my interpretive assumptions concerning issues of authorship and salvation-historical setting. These hermeneutical assumptions are foundational for any biblical-theological investigation. For an interpretation to be truly biblical, it must operate with Scripture's own terms and grow out of Scripture's own worldview.

### **Biblical Theology**

In his recent book *What is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible's Story*,

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<sup>88</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 84.

<sup>89</sup>Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 10.

*Symbolism, and Patterns*, James Hamilton defines biblical theology as the attempt to understand “the interpretive perspective of the biblical authors.”<sup>90</sup> This “interpretive perspective,” according to Hamilton, is the “framework of assumptions and presuppositions, associations and identifications, truths and symbols that are taken for granted as an author or speaker describes the world and the events that take place in it.”<sup>91</sup> Hamilton’s definition of biblical theology is most helpful because, as he notes elsewhere, “Focusing biblical theology on the *interpretive perspective of the biblical authors* moors it to authorial intent.”<sup>92</sup> Following Hamilton’s definition my investigation will analyze the historical and literary features of specific texts and synthesize their relationship to the Bible’s overarching narrative in order to arrive at the interpretive perspective of the biblical authors regarding the union of kingship and priesthood.<sup>93</sup> This process of analysis and synthesis is what Steve Wellum identifies as a “grammatical/linguistic-historical-canonical” methodology.<sup>94</sup> According to Wellum, “The best way to read Scripture and to

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<sup>90</sup>James M. Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 15.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid. Treat’s definition of biblical theology is compatible and also helpful: “Biblical theology is faith seeking understanding of the redemptive-historical and literary unity of the Bible in its own terms, concepts, and contexts.” Treat, *The Crucified King*, 35. For other helpful discussions on the subject of biblical theology, see Edward W. Klink III and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006); Rosner, “Biblical Theology”; P. Balla, “Challenges to Biblical Theology,” in *NDBT*, ed. T. D. Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 20–27; C. H. H. Scobie, “History of Biblical Theology,” in *NDBT*, ed. T. D. Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 11–20.

<sup>92</sup>James M. Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 13. Hamilton’s comment on thematic studies in biblical theology is also applicable to my project. He writes, “For thematic studies, the question of what the biblical authors intended trains our gaze on themes they themselves develop. If we are pursuing this method, we do not bring themes to the Bible but examine the texts to see how later biblical authors have developed thematic issues set forth in earlier texts.” Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>This statement is also influenced by Brian Rosner’s definition of biblical theology: “Biblical theology may be defined as theological interpretation of Scripture in and for the church. It proceeds with historical and literary sensitivity and seeks to analyze and synthesize the Bible’s own teaching about God and his relations to the world on its own terms, maintaining sight of the Bible’s overarching narrative and Christocentric focus.” Rosner, “Biblical Theology,” 10.

<sup>94</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 100.

draw theological conclusions is to interpret a given text of Scripture in its linguistic-historical, literary, redemptive-historical, and canonical context.”<sup>95</sup> The goal of this type of theological reading is to extract the theological intent of the biblical authors themselves and situate their individual theology in the context of the canon. The canon of scripture by its very nature provides its own theological boundaries that control the interpretive task.<sup>96</sup> The “canonical context” will primarily control my analysis of royal priesthood in Psalm 110.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, I will be operating on the axiom that the biblical authors use typology to develop the priest-king theme in Scripture. A typological interpretation assumes that God designed certain persons, events, or institutions in redemptive history to prefigure and typologically correspond to their antitypical fulfillment(s). These typological structures—generally speaking—find their ultimate end in Jesus Christ.<sup>98</sup>

Lastly, my analysis of the biblical logic of royal priesthood in Psalm 110 will

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<sup>95</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 100.

<sup>96</sup>The canon as a boundary marker does not inhibit the task of fresh and stimulating exegesis. Instead, as Childs suggests, “the canon establishes a platform from which exegesis is launched rather than a barrier by which creative activity is restrained.” Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 83.

<sup>97</sup>The canonical context is a given text’s relationship to the entire canon of Scripture. Canonical readings of Scripture operate on the presupposition that the Bible unfolds a unified revelation because the Bible is God’s Word. Individual passages of Scripture must, therefore, be understood in light of the whole Bible.

<sup>98</sup>Clearly there are biblical types that do not culminate in Christ. For example, Balaam is presented as a type of false teacher in 2 Pet 2:15, Jude 11, and Rev 2:14. It is unnecessary here to develop the nature of biblical typology. Instead, I point the reader to Steve Wellum’s excellent discussion of typology in Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 101–8, 121–26. I will be adopting Wellum’s understanding of typology for this project. For other discussions of biblical typology and typological interpretations of Scripture, see John H. Stek, “Biblical Typology: Yesterday and Today,” *CTJ* 5, no. 2 (1970): 133–62; G. W. H. Lampe and K. J. Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology*, SBT 22 (Naperville, IL: A. R. Allenson, 1957); James M. Hamilton, “The Typology of David’s Rise to Power: Messianic Patterns in the Book of Samuel,” *SBJT* 16 (2012): 4–25; Patrick Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture* (Philadelphia: Daniels & Smith, 1852); David L. Baker, “Typology and the Christian Use of the Old Testament,” *SJT* 29, no. 2 (1976): 137–57; Benjamin J. Ribbens, “Typology and Types: Typology in Dialogue,” *JTI* 5, no. 1 (2011): 81–96; Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical Typos Structures* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981); Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?*, 77–86; Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*; Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 234–57.

be filtered through the framework of “progressive covenantalism” presented by Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum in their book *Kingdom through Covenant*. Their biblical-theological approach to the covenants in Scripture is, in my opinion, the best exegetical and theological treatment of the covenants to date. Adopting neither dispensationalism nor covenant theology, they demonstrate how the concept of covenant is central to the “narrative plot structure” of the Bible.<sup>99</sup> In their words, “We assert that the covenants form the backbone of the metanarrative of Scripture and thus it is essential to ‘put them together’ correctly in order to discern accurately the ‘whole counsel of God’ (Acts 20:27).”<sup>100</sup> By situating the royal priestly logic of Psalm 110 in Scripture’s larger covenantal framework, the apparent novelty of the union of priesthood and kingship in David’s messianic expectation will actually prove itself to be an essential part of a unified story dealing with God’s covenants with man.

### **Preview**

In this dissertation, I will develop the inner-biblical logic of the royal Melchizedekian priest of Psalm 110 over the course of four more chapters. Chapter 2 will analyze the scriptural data and development of royal priesthood in the Law. I will argue that Adam functions as the Scripture’s prototypical priest-king and demonstrate how key figures such as Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham and Israel pick up Adam’s royal priestly task. I will highlight the thematic and verbal links between the textual development of each of these figures and the creation narrative in order to demonstrate how the various expressions of royal priesthood all develop God’s creation project begun with Adam. I will also address the question of how the Melchizedekian priesthood relates to the

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<sup>99</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 21.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid. Again they write, “The biblical covenants form the backbone of the metanarrative of Scripture, and apart from understanding each biblical covenant in its historical context and then in its relation to the fulfillment of all the covenants in Christ, we will ultimately misunderstand the overall message of the Bible.” Ibid., 21n2.

Aaronic priesthood. Furthermore, I will hone in on Melchizedek and his significance in the Genesis narrative as he relates to Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant.

In chapter 3, I will investigate Psalm 110 in Old Testament context. My analysis of Psalm 110 will proceed along several lines of investigation. I will argue that the patterns of David's own life recorded in 1–2 Samuel and the content of the Davidic covenant reveal how David would have come to the understanding that the messiah would be a priest-king after the order of Melchizedek. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that the Davidic covenant is the program that will bring God's promises made to Abraham to fulfillment, and thus require an order of priesthood separate from the priesthood under the Mosaic law-covenant. I will also investigate Psalm 110 in the context of the Psalter and highlight verbal and thematic links between Psalm 110, Genesis 1–2, and Psalm 8 to demonstrate the influence of Moses on David's royal priestly theology. I will argue for linguistic parallels between Psalm 110 and Psalm 2 in order to demonstrate that Psalm 110's portrayal of the messianic royal priest is the same messianic priest-king depicted in Psalms 1–2.<sup>101</sup> Not only does the New Testament promote this type of canonical reading of the Psalter, but also the Psalter itself has an organized structure that should be read through the lens of Psalms 1–2.<sup>102</sup>

In chapter 4, I will turn to the influence of Psalm 110's royal priestly messianism in the intertestamental literature. *11QMelchizedek* describes a messianic figure who rules over his community as king and “atones for his people on the eschatological Day of Atonement.”<sup>103</sup> According to Israel Knohl, *11QMelchizedek*

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<sup>101</sup>Though I am not suggesting that everything in Ps 110 is already revealed in Pss 1–2. For example, Melchizedek is not mentioned in Pss 1–2.

<sup>102</sup>This type of canonical reading of the Psalter has precedent in the New Testament. In 1 Cor 15:25–28 the apostle Paul juxtaposes Ps 110 and Ps 8 as mutually interpretive texts concerning the resurrection of Jesus. Likewise, the author of Hebrews juxtaposes Ps 2 and Ps 110 to substantiate the priesthood of Jesus.

<sup>103</sup>Knohl, “Melchizedek,” 263.

presents a savior and redeemer arriving on the eschatological Day of Atonement that combines kingship and priesthood within a single personality.<sup>104</sup> In this chapter, I will also examine the Enochic literature and the *Testament of Levi*.<sup>105</sup> A brief survey of the intertestamental literature should suffice to demonstrate how these ancient communities interpreted Psalm 110 to arrive at royal priestly messianic hope.

In chapter 5, I will examine the New Testament's interpretation of David's royal priestly theology. Being the most quoted Old Testament passage in the New Testament, I do not intend to examine every text of the New Testament that relies Psalm 110. Instead, I will limit my investigation to the New Testament documents that appeal to Psalm 110 to develop both a royal and priestly Christology. In this regard, I will consider the Gospel of Mark and the epistle to the Hebrews. The majority of this chapter will focus on the epistle to the Hebrews. Hebrews, more than any other New Testament book, develops a robust royal priestly Christology that is thoroughly grounded in Psalm 110.<sup>106</sup> I will attempt to uncover the logic of Psalm 110 in the Christological argument of the epistle. This chapter will prove to be the interpretive capstone, so to speak, for this project because the New Testament holds final authority for a correct understanding of all Old Testament biblical texts.

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>Levi is consecrated as a priest of El Elyon. The El Elyon reference associates Levi with the priest-king Melchizedek (Gen 14:18; Ps 110:4). See John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 97.

<sup>106</sup>Psalm 110 is cited or alluded to in Heb 1:3, 14; 5:6–9; 6:19–7:28; 8:1–10:13; 12:3. Eric Mason's recent monograph on Hebrews, *"You Are a Priest Forever": Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) argues that Qumran texts serve as the best background for understanding the presentation of Jesus as priest in Hebrews. The accuracy of his thesis aside, even a cursory reading of Hebrews demonstrates that the Old Testament served as the author's primary text from which he built his Christology. The Old Testament is explicitly referenced throughout the epistle and implicitly assumed nearly everywhere else. The very fact that Mason would appeal to a body of literature outside of the Old Testament for understanding Hebrew's presentation of Christ as *priest* suggests, at the very least, that more work should be done on investigating the Old Testament development of priestly messianism.



## CHAPTER 2

### ROYAL PRIESTHOOD IN THE LAW

This chapter will develop the theme of royal priesthood in the Torah in order to lay the theological foundation for David's royal priestly messianism in Psalm 110.<sup>1</sup> The first and only appearance of the phrase "royal priesthood" in the Old Testament appears in Exodus 19:6 and describes Israel's covenantal identity before Yahweh. This identity marker becomes the basis for the Aaronic priesthood after the covenant at Sinai and makes possible the rise of the monarchy in Israel's history. Yet, David appeals neither to Israel's royal priesthood nor the Aaronic priesthood for his eschatological priestly vision in Psalm 110. Instead, a priest "after the order of Melchizedek" will usher in God's kingdom and execute judgment over the nations (Ps 110:4, 6). Why Melchizedek? This chapter will begin to answer this question by demonstrating that the priest-king Melchizedek is part of a robust development of the theme of royal priesthood that begins with Adam at creation.

In what follows, I will argue that Adam functions as the Bible's archetypal priest-king and develop the purpose behind both his royal and priestly task in relation to the kingdom of God. I will then demonstrate how the Torah recapitulates Adam's royal priestly role in key covenantal figures: Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, and Israel. In each case, the royal priestly figures cannot be separated from their position as covenant mediators. I will therefore follow the covenantal contours of the Torah in order to demonstrate that the union of priest and king in a single figure is a fundamental concept

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<sup>1</sup>The reference to Melchizedek in Ps 110:4 explicitly links David's messianic vision to the books of Moses, specifically Gen 14.

that informs the rest of salvation history. This chapter is thus bigger than Melchizedek alone. By developing the concept of royal priesthood (priest-king) in the Torah, I will have shown how Melchizedek is one drop in the larger bottle of royal priestly ink into which David dips his quill when penning the words of Psalm 110.

### **Adam**

In the world of the ancient Near East, a man who simultaneously held the offices of king and priest was more than a mere man; he was a god—a son of the gods, to be exact. The ancient Near Eastern kings were divine sons of god, believed to fulfill a divine purpose, who ministered in temple-palaces.<sup>2</sup> In the Torah, the status of king and priest originally belonged not to a divine man, but to a man who bore the divine image and was commissioned to fulfill a divine calling. God created Adam, the ideal man, to function as a king over the earth and a priest before God. His calling was to establish God’s kingdom by making God’s garden sanctuary into a global reality. Adam functions as the Bible’s archetypal royal priest, even though he failed to fulfill his royal priestly role. Nevertheless, as Ralph Smith states, “The origins of kingship and priesthood are to be found in the Genesis story of God’s creation of Adam.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Adam as King**

The opening narrative of Genesis 1 depicts God as the creator and ruler of the universe, whose sovereign position over the world establishes him as king over his kingdom. Fundamental to the storyline of Scripture is the kingdom of God and

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<sup>2</sup>Richard E. Averbeck, “Sumer, the Bible, and Comparative Method: Historiography and Temple Building,” in *Mesopotamia and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 88–125; William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, eds., *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 417–43.

<sup>3</sup>Ralph Allan Smith, “The Royal Priesthood in Exodus 19:6: A Festschrift in Honor of James B. Jordan,” in *The Glory of Kings*, ed. Peter J. Leithart and John Barach (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 102.

humanity's place in that kingdom.<sup>4</sup> Although discussions on the nature of the kingdom of God are often cast in the categories of *reign* or *realm*,<sup>5</sup> Treat suggests that there is now a scholarly consensus that the phrase “the kingdom of God” refers primarily to God’s dynamic reign.<sup>6</sup> The remarkable truth of Genesis 1–2 is that God chooses to mediate his divine rule over the world through human beings made in his image. Human beings will establish and rule God’s kingdom.

Genesis 1 depicts the creation of man and woman as the climactic expression of God’s creation.<sup>7</sup> Genesis 1:26–28 describes the creation of these image bearers:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness so that they may rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."<sup>8</sup>

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this text for understanding the rest of the

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<sup>4</sup>Graeme Goldsworthy says that the concept of the kingdom of God “dominates the whole biblical story.” Graeme Goldsworthy, *The Goldsworthy Trilogy* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 2000), 60. As already noted, Tom Schreiner similarly suggests that “the phrase ‘kingdom of God’ thematically captures, from a biblical theology standpoint, the message of Scripture.” Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), xiii.

<sup>5</sup>For a balanced discussion of the meaning of βασιλεία as denoting both reign and realm, see Jonathan T. Pennington, *Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew*, NovTSup 126 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 279–300.

<sup>6</sup>Jeremy Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 41. Goldsworthy's definition of the kingdom includes people, place, and God's blessings. He writes, “The New Testament has a great deal to say about ‘the Kingdom’ but we may best understand this concept in terms of the relationship of ruler to subjects. That is, there is a king who rules, a people who are ruled, and a sphere where this rule is recognized as taking place.” Goldsworthy, *The Goldsworthy Trilogy*, 53–54.

<sup>7</sup>Gentry observes ten reasons the creation of humanity on day 6 (Gen 1:26–28) should be viewed as the “climax and crown of God’s creative work.” Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 181–84. Stephen Dempster similarly argues that thematic and verbal evidence in Gen 1 demonstrates that “humanity is crowned the royalty of creation.” Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: Academic, 2003), 56–58.

<sup>8</sup>Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of biblical texts are my own.

Bible's storyline. Genesis 1:26–28 reveals what T. D. Alexander calls God's "creation project."<sup>9</sup> God's creation project is to establish his global kingdom through human viceroys who will rule over creation and perpetuate the divine image through procreation. Fundamental to humanity's task is its royal or kingly status. In what follows I will argue that Adam's royal status is primarily communicated in the creation narrative through the concepts of "image of God," and Adam's role as gardener.<sup>10</sup> I will also briefly discuss the importance of covenant sonship as it relates to the divine image.

**Image of God.** The noun **צֶלֶם** appears three times in Genesis 1:26–27 to describe the creation of man and woman as made in God's own "image." The meaning of **צֶלֶם** in Genesis 1 has received much attention in scholarly literature.<sup>11</sup> For the purpose of this section, it is only necessary to point out the royal and filial connotations of the term. These connotations are apparent from both the ancient Near Eastern and literary context of Genesis 1:26–27.

The Hebrew word **צֶלֶם** is related to the Akkadian *šImu* meaning "statue."<sup>12</sup> In Egyptian and Mesopotamian literature, the king alone possessed the privilege of bearing

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<sup>9</sup>Desmond T. Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009), 76–97. I borrow this phrase from Alexander at several points in this dissertation.

<sup>10</sup>Catherine Beckerleg suggests that an argument for Adam's kingly role can be made from the use of the verb **נָוָה** in Gen 2:15. She admits the evidence is inconclusive, but we should nevertheless "consider the possibility that the author chose the second hiphil of *nwh* in Gen 2:15 to indicate that Adam was not simply placed in the garden of Eden but that Yahweh installed him there in the office of royal caretaker and watchman." Catherine Leigh Beckerleg, "The 'Image of God' in Eden: The Creation of Mankind in Genesis 2:5–3:24 in Light of the Mīs Pī Pīt Pī and Wpt-R Rituals of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2009), 218.

<sup>11</sup>A few examples include Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 181–208; W. Randall Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness: Humanity, Divinity, and Monotheism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); James Barr, "The Image of God in the Book of Genesis: A Study of Terminology," *BJRL* 51 (1968): 11–26; H. Wildberger, "צֶלֶם *šelem* Image," ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, trans. Mark E. Biddle, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 1080–85. It is not my intention to rehearse an exhaustive study of the term **צֶלֶם**, but simply to highlight its royal connotations.

<sup>12</sup>Wildberger, "צֶלֶם *šelem* Image," 1080.

the image of the gods. The king, as a living statue, was the representation of the gods on earth. The Egyptian deity Amon Re identified king Amenophis III as “my living image, the creation of my limbs,” and “my beloved son, coming from my limbs, my image which I have put upon the earth. I have let you govern the earth in peace.”<sup>13</sup> The Pharaoh was the “bodily (son of Re) . . . the good god, image of Re, son of Amun, who tramples down foreigners.”<sup>14</sup> He possessed dominion over the earth and its subjects: “the earth is subject to you because of your prowess.”<sup>15</sup> These texts suggest that in the ancient Near East the concept of “image” was directly tied to sonship and dominion (kingship).<sup>16</sup> Both of these concepts are apparent in the biblical usage of צֶלֶם in Genesis 1:26–28.

In Genesis 1:26–28, God gave Adam and Eve the commission to “rule” (רָדָה) and “subdue” (כִּבַּשׁ) the earth (Gen 1:28). The verb רָדָה occurs 25 times in the Hebrew Bible and literally means “to tread” or “to trample” (cf. Joel 4:13). Most of the occurrences of רָדָה appear in a relational context and are immediately followed by the ב preposition. In this sense, the construction (רָדָה followed by ב) communicates the idea that one person *rules* over someone or something else.<sup>17</sup> In Psalm 72:8 and 110:2, the verb appears in the context of kingly rule or dominion. The verb כִּבַּשׁ has a similar connotation in this context meaning “to subdue.” It is also used in later biblical literature to describe the conquest of the king over foreign nations (cf. 2 Sam 8:11) and the

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<sup>13</sup>Werner H. Schmidt, *The Faith of the Old Testament: A History*, trans. John Sturdy (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 195.

<sup>14</sup>Wildberger, “צֶלֶם šelem Image,” 1083. See also Wolfgang Helck, *Urkunden Der 18. Dynastie: Übersetzung Zu Den Heften 17–22* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), 176.

<sup>15</sup>Wildberger, “צֶלֶם šelem Image,” 1083.

<sup>16</sup>According to Gentry, “The term ‘image of god’ in the culture and language of the ancient Near East in the fifteenth century B.C. would have communicated two main ideas: 1) rulership and 2) sonship.” Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 192. The creation of Adam and Eve in the “image” of God parallels the ANE concept of kingship with one major difference—all of humanity is made in God’s image.

<sup>17</sup>See Gen 1:26, 28; Lev 25:43, 46; 1 Kgs 5:4, 30; 9:23; 2 Chr 8:10; Ps 49:15; 110:2; Isa 14:2, 6; Ezek 29:15; Neh 9:28.

subjugation of Israel’s enemies (Zech 9:15). Commenting on the Bible’s own perspective on Genesis 1, Dempster writes, “The rest of the canon assumes the royal overtones of Genesis 1, indicating the unique authority assigned to the primal couple, and thus to all humanity.”<sup>18</sup> The repetition of רָדָה in the volitional mood (Gen 1:26, 28) together with the imperative וְכִבְּשֶׁהָ expresses God’s intent for humanity to exercise kingly dominion over the rest of creation. They possessed a regal authority unique to human beings as bearers of the divine image.

Psalm 8 confirms the conclusion that Genesis 1:26–28 assigns royal status to mankind at creation. As a commentary on Genesis 1:26–28, Psalm 8 marvels at God’s design for humanity—“the son of man” (בֶּן־אָדָם Ps 8:5 [8:6 MT]).<sup>19</sup> David uses royal imagery to describe God’s creative purpose for mankind.<sup>20</sup> Humanity is thus “crowned” (עָטָה) with “glory” (כְּבוֹד) and “honor” (הַדָּר) (Ps 8:5 [8:6 MT]) exercising dominion (מָשַׁל) over the works of God’s hands (Ps 8:6 [8:7 MT]). All things, including the created animals (cf. Gen 1:28), are placed under man’s feet (Ps 8:6–8 [8:7–9 MT]; cf. 1 Kgs 5:3 [5:17 MT]). The psalmist’s inspired commentary on Genesis 1:26–28 posits an understanding of mankind’s status over creation as a royal office.

The syntax of Genesis 1:26 also supports the notion that being made in God’s image is intimately linked to the authority to rule. The first person plural cohortative נַעֲשֶׂה is followed by a jussive with a conjunctive ו (וְיִרְדּוּ). The ו in this arrangement

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<sup>18</sup>Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 60.

<sup>19</sup>It is possible that the author uses both אָנוּשׁ (man) and בֶּן־אָדָם (son of man) in Ps 8:5 in order that the latter might evoke Adam and his role in God’s creation project.

<sup>20</sup>Peter Gentry suggests that the phrase “you have made him a little lower than the gods; you have crowned him with glory and honor” in Ps 8:5 is a commentary on Gen 1:26a, “let us make mankind in our image and according to our likeness.” According to Gentry the following verses of Ps 8:6–8, which concentrate on the rule of mankind, are a reflection on the meaning of “image” in Gen 1:26. The royal terminology in Ps 8:6–8 reveal that the psalm writer “understood ‘image’ to speak of royal status.” Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 198.

always communicates the purpose or result of the volitional antecedent.<sup>21</sup> A more accurate translation of Genesis 1:26a than the common “Let us make man . . . and let them rule,” would be “Let us make man in our image according to our likeness *so that* they may rule.”<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the point is clear: to be made in God’s image is to possess royal authority.<sup>23</sup>

**The gardener of Eden.** Adam’s vocation as a gardener parallels the ancient Near Eastern concept that the king was a gardener who brought agricultural prosperity to the land.<sup>24</sup> Catherine Beckerleg explains:

In Mesopotamian royal ideology the king, who could be referred to specifically as ‘gardener’ . . . and ‘farmer, cultivator’ . . . was responsible for tending the royal and sacred gardens and for harvesting rare trees and plants from conquered countries and cultivating them within his own kingdom.<sup>25</sup>

Later biblical literature poetically captures the king’s role as gardener. King Solomon writes concerning his own gardening efforts:

I magnified my works. I built houses for myself and I planted vineyards (כרם) for myself. I made gardens (גן) and orchards for myself, and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. I made for myself pools of water from which to water the forest of growing trees. (Eccl 2:4–6)

Similarly, in Song of Songs 4:12–5:1 the king compares his bride to his own bountiful gardens. She is as the king’s very own garden (לגני “my garden,” 5:1), a

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<sup>21</sup>Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), sec. 34.6.

<sup>22</sup>For supporters of this syntactical argument, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 188; Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 77n3. A quick survey of several English translations demonstrate that the translators have missed the volitional syntax of the unconverted ו. See the ESV, ASV, RSV, NKJ, NAB, NAS, and NAU for examples. The only English translation I have found that uses a purpose clause for the clause in question is the NET.

<sup>23</sup>Alexander makes a similar statement: “To be made in the ‘image of God’ is to be given regal status.” Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 77.

<sup>24</sup>This is not to say that commoners were not gardeners in the ancient Near East as well. See Gentry’s discussion of this point in *Kingdom through Covenant*, 210.

<sup>25</sup>Beckerleg, “The ‘Image of God’ in Eden,” 190.

“garden spring” (מעין גנים 4:15), and an orchard of pomegranates with the choicest fruit (4:13). The ancient Near Eastern context and later biblical associations between kingship and gardening suggest that Adam’s role as the gardener of Eden is also an indication of his royal status.<sup>26</sup>

**Covenant and sonship.** One final observation on the image of God in Genesis 1 is necessary at this point. The terms **צֶלֶם** and **דְמוּת** in Genesis 1 suggest that humanity exists in a covenantal relationship with God.<sup>27</sup> Genesis 5:1–3 employs the terms **צֶלֶם** and **דְמוּת** to describe Seth’s relationship to Adam. The terms “image” and “likeness” therefore denote a filial relationship between father and son. Commenting on the relationship between image and sonship in Genesis 5:1–2, Meredith Kline writes,

Since the Spirit’s act of creating man is thus presented as the fathering of a son and that man-son is identified as the image-likeness of God, it is evident that image of God and son of God are mutually explanatory concepts. Clearly man’s likeness to the Creator-Spirit is to be understood as the likeness which a son bears to his father. And that understanding of the image concept . . . is further and unmistakably corroborated by Genesis 5:1–3 as it brings together God’s creation of Adam and Adam’s begetting of Seth, expressing the relation of the human father and son in terms of the image-likeness that defines man’s relation to the Creator. To be the image of God is to be the son of God.<sup>28</sup>

Adam’s filial relation to God moves the relationship beyond merely the formal viceroy agreement. As the son of God, Adam is in covenant with God himself. Through a detailed

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<sup>26</sup>Commenting on Mary’s mistake of believing the resurrected Jesus to be the gardener (John 20:11–16), N. T. Wright says, “It wasn’t, after all, such a silly mistake for Mary to think that Jesus, the true Adam, was the gardener.” N. T. Wright, *Following Jesus: Biblical Reflections on Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 59.

<sup>27</sup>Though a debated point in scholarship, the existence of a covenant in Gen 1–3 has received much support from scholars associated with a variety of theological traditions. See O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1981), 67–92; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 177–221; Scott J. Hafemann, *The God of Promise and the Life of Faith: Understanding the Heart of the Bible* (Wheaton: IL: Crossway, 2001); William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of Old Testament Covenants* (repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2009), 11–46. For a recent work arguing against the existence of a covenant an Adamic/creation covenant, see Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God’s Unfolding Purpose*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007).

<sup>28</sup>Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Overland Park: KS: Two Age Press, 2000), 45–46.



analysis of the terms “image” and “likeness” in both ancient Near Eastern contexts and the literary context of Genesis, Gentry concludes that *image* is “consistently used of man representing God in terms of royal rule,” while *likeness* is “closely associated with the creation of the human race, human genealogy, and sonship.”<sup>29</sup> Gentry explains,

Although both terms specify the divine-human relationship, the first focuses on the human in relation to God and the second focuses on the human in relation to the world. These would be understood to be relationships characterized by faithfulness and loyal love, obedience and trust—exactly the character of relationships specified by covenants after the Fall. In this sense the divine image entails a covenant relationship between God and humans on the one hand, and between humans and the world on the other.<sup>30</sup>

Adam is God’s son and king of creation. He stands between heaven and earth mediating God’s divine rule and blessing to the rest of creation.<sup>31</sup> From the very first page of Scripture, according to Gentry, the narrative structure is built on the concept of kingdom through covenant. Perhaps it is also appropriate, in light of mankind’s central role in God’s kingdom, to nuance the structuring principle of the Bible as kingdom through covenant *mediator*.<sup>32</sup> Adam’s mediatorial role between God and creation hints that he is more than a mere king; he is also a priest of God most high. Dempster’s comment on the

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<sup>29</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 199. Gentry offers one of the best treatments of the linguistic function of the prepositions ב and כ attached to the terms “image” and “likeness.” Many scholars, like Wildberger, for example, suggest that בְּצִלְמוֹתֵינוּ should be interpreted to some degree by בְּדְמוּתֵנוּ. The prepositions ב and כ, according to Wildberger, have the same connotation. Gentry, relying on the work of Randall Garr, has offered a more thorough linguistic analysis of these terms and their respective prepositions. Gentry concludes that the meaning of ב and כ are not identical in Gen 1:26. Instead, ב indicates the way in which humans are like God representing God’s rule in creation, while כ indicates the way in which humans are similar to God as agents who create human life, but in a distinct way. Thus, ב “indicates something locative and proximate” whereas כ “indicates something similar but distal and separate.” Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 199. For Wildberger’s explanation, see Wildberger, “שֵׁלֶם שֵׁלֶם,” 1082.

<sup>30</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 195.

<sup>31</sup>Richard Middleton says, “Humanity is created *like* this God, with the special role of representing or imaging God’s rule in the world.” J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005), 26.

<sup>32</sup>The accent on mediator gives Gentry and Wellum’s excellent thesis more of a Christocentric focus by highlighting the role of the protagonist in the story who establishes God’s kingdom by mediating God’s covenant.

relationship between “image,” kingship, and priestly mediation is well put:

Thus, there is a deliberate anthropological climax in Genesis 1 with the creation of humanity as the ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ of God. In a deft literary move, with the use of these terms the writer makes the goal of creation anthropological and thus doxological, since to crown the creation with the creation of humanity is firmly to stamp God’s own image in the very heart of the created order. It is as if humanity is functioning as a type of priest-king, mediating God to the world and the world to God.<sup>33</sup>

### **Adam as Priest**

Before discussing Adam’s priestly role in the garden, it is necessary to review the evidence that points to the garden of Eden as the first temple-sanctuary. Several scholars have argued the concept of an Edenic temple in Genesis 2 at length.<sup>34</sup> According to Wenham, “The garden of Eden is not viewed by the author of Genesis simply as a piece of Mesopotamian farmland, but as an archetypal sanctuary, that is the place where God dwells and where man should worship him.”<sup>35</sup> This fact can be seen from several observations.

First, Genesis 2:10–14 describes a river that flowed out of Eden to water the garden. The river divides into four rivers as it spreads out into the earth (Gen 2:10). The description of Eden’s four rivers parallels Ezekiel’s vision of the eschatological temple in Ezekiel 47:1–12. In Ezekiel’s vision, a river flows from the temple threshold in Jerusalem

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<sup>33</sup>Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 62.

<sup>34</sup>See for example Gordon J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” in *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11*, ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 19–25; G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 66–80; William J. Dumbrell, “Genesis 2:1–17: A Foreshadowing of the New Creation,” in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect & Prospect*, ed. Scott J. Hafemann (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002), 57–61; Lifsa Schachter, “The Garden of Eden as God’s First Sanctuary,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (2013) 73; John H. Walton, “Eden, Garden of,” in *DOTP*, ed. T. D. Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003), 202–7. Daniel Block does not adopt this popular position. He argues against the notion that the Garden of Eden was meant to be understood as a temple-sanctuary. Daniel Block, “Eden: A Temple? A Reassessment of the Biblical Evidence,” in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis: Essays in Honor of G. K. Beale*, ed. D. M. Gurtner and B. L. Gladd (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013), 3–32.

<sup>35</sup>Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” 23.

toward the east (cf. Gen 3:24). The river is a source of life and blessing to the rest of the world (Ezek 47:9). Edenic imagery colors the description of the eschatological temple in Ezekiel 47. The river's description as a source of life to every "living creature which swarms" (כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׂרָץ) Ezek 47:9) echoes the creation of "swarming creatures" (נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה) in Genesis 1:20–21 and Adam's naming of the "living creatures" (נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה) in Genesis 2:19. The banks of the river are lined with "trees for food" (עֵץ־מֵאֵכֶל) bearing "its fruit for food" (פְּרִיָּו לְמֵאֵכֶל) and leaves for healing (Ezek 47:12; cf. Gen 1:29; 2:9). According to Gentry, "such a source of life and fertility is an indication that the divine presence is there."<sup>36</sup> Second, the entrance into the garden was from the east (Gen 3:24). After Adam and Eve's sin, cherubim stood guard at this eastern entrance to guard the way to the tree of life. The tabernacle and the temple were both entered from the east and guarded by cherubim (Exod 25:18–22; 1 Kgs 6:23–29). Third, Eden was the place of God's presence. Genesis 3:8 describes the Lord God "walking" (מִתְהַלֵּךְ) in the cool of the day. The same verb (מִתְהַלֵּךְ) in the Hithpael stem is used to describe the Lord's presence in the tabernacle (Lev 26:12; Deut 23:15; 2 Sam 7:6). Fourth, the construction of the tabernacle and priestly garments with "gold" (זָהָב) and "onyx" (שֹׁהַם) alludes to the Edenic imagery described in Genesis 2:11–12. Fifth, Genesis 2:15 indicates that God placed Adam in the garden "to work" (עָבַד) and "to keep" (שָׁמַר) it. The same two verbs are used together in later passages to describe the responsibilities of priests in the tabernacle and temple (Num 3:7–8; 8:25–26; 18:5–6; cf. Ezek 44:14). Gentry observes that "Adam is portrayed as a kind of Levite who fulfills his role or task by maintaining the priority of worship."<sup>37</sup> Sixth, after Adam and Eve sin, the Lord "clothes" (לָבַשׁ) them with "tunics" (כַּתְנֵת) of skin (Gen 3:21). This act of God parallels the Lord's instruction to Moses to "clothe" (לָבַשׁ) the priests with "tunics" (כַּתְנֵת) to prepare them for their

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<sup>36</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 212.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

priestly duties (Exod 28:40–41; 29:5, 8). Seventh, the tree of life in the midst of the garden reflects Israel’s understanding that life is found in the sanctuary of God.<sup>38</sup> All of these observations support the notion that Eden serves as the Bible’s first temple.<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, when God places Adam in the garden “to work” (עבד) and “to guard” (שמר) it (Gen 2:15), he is doing more than simply establishing a primeval landscaping operation. As noted above, the verbs עבד and שמר appear together in passages describing the duties of priests (cf. Num. 3:7–8; 8:25–26; Ezek. 44:14). God gave Adam access to the divine presence to serve as a royal priest on holy ground. Walton observes that the verbs עבד and שמר refer to Adam’s priestly role of caring for sacred space: “In ancient thinking, caring for sacred space was a way of upholding creation. By preserving order, chaos was held at bay.”<sup>40</sup> Moreover, Matthews notes that שמר is used to describe the priests faithfully carrying out God’s instructions (Lev 8:35).<sup>41</sup> Taken together, עבד and שמר anticipate the “Mosaic context of worship and obedience.”<sup>42</sup> Worship and obedience are naturally tethered to the keeping of God’s law. God gave Adam the command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

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<sup>38</sup>Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” 401. It is also the case that the menorah in Israel’s tabernacle symbolized the garden’s tree of life. Ibid. Beale also notes this connection suggesting that the lampstand in the tabernacle and the temple looked like a “flowering tree” and is described in Exod 25:31–36 with blossoming tree-like imagery. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 71.

<sup>39</sup>The temple and the priesthood associated with the temple are not fundamentally defined by sacrifices and altars. Alexander rightly states, “The absence of references to sacrifices and altars should not detract from seeing temple imagery in the opening chapters of Genesis. Since no one had yet sinned, there was no need for atonement sacrifices.” Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 25. I suggest that the place of God’s presence and the privilege of access to God are the fundamental characteristics of the temple and priesthood. In a fallen world, sacrifice and atonement is what grants the priest access.

<sup>40</sup>Walton, “Eden, Garden of,” 206.

<sup>41</sup>Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 210.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 209n96. An argument can also be made that the tripartite structure of the tabernacle and temple reflects the tripartite structure of Eden, the garden, and the world outside the garden. I will discuss this observation below.

under the threat of death (Gen 2:17). The psalmist's description of the law in Psalm 19:7–8 (19:8–9 MT) as “making wise the simple,” “rejoicing the heart,” and “enlightening the eyes” echoes the description of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as “good for food and desirable to the eyes, and . . . desired to make one wise” (Gen 3:6).<sup>43</sup> The law was kept in the holy of holies inside the ark, and touching or seeing the ark resulted in death (Num 4:20; 2 Sam 6:7).<sup>44</sup> According to David Schrock, there is a connection between Adam and later priests with respect to the law: “Just as later priests, under the threat of death, guarded the ark of the testimony (Exod 25:16; Deut 31:26), so Adam was commanded to guard God's law.”<sup>45</sup> Lastly, Ezekiel 28:12–19 describes the king of Tyre as a guardian cherub in Eden, the garden of God (Ezek 28:13–14). His covering is made up of precious stones that adorned the breastplate of Israel's high priest (Exod 28:17–20). Ezekiel's description of the king of Tyre as a priestly Adamic figure in Eden implies that Adam himself possessed a priestly status.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, when God places Adam in the

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<sup>43</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 213.

<sup>44</sup>Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” 403.

<sup>45</sup>David Stephen Schrock, “A Biblical-Theological Investigation of Christ's Priesthood and Covenant Mediation with Respect to the Extent of the Atonement” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), 60. Beale notes the interesting observation between עֵבֶד and שָׁמַר in Gen 2:15 and God's command (צִוָּה) not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the very next verse (Gen 2:16). He suggests that “divine commanding” typically follows the word שָׁמַר in later biblical texts. He points to 1 Kgs 9:1–7 where upon finishing the house of the Lord (1 Kgs 9:1), Solomon receives the divine command: “if you turn aside from me . . . and do not keep (שָׁמַר) my commandments (מִצְוָה) and my statutes . . . and serve (עִבַּד) other gods . . . then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them, and the house that I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight” (1 Kgs 9:6–7 ESV). Beale writes, “Adam's disobedience, as Israel's, results in his being cut off from the sacred land of the Garden.” Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 68–69. The verb שָׁמַר also hints at Adam's responsibility to protect the garden from unwelcomed intruders. Dumbrell suggests that שָׁמַר communicates a sense of “watchfulness” that will need to be “exercised against the serpent, which will appear in Genesis 3.” Dumbrell, “Genesis 2:1–17,” 60.

<sup>46</sup>Dumbrell, “Genesis 2:1–17,” 61. Dumbrell also points to Ezekiel's use of בְּרֵא (Ezek 28:13), the presence of cherub, expulsion from God's presence due to sin, and the phrase “mountain of God,” as evidence that the king of Tyre is an Adamic figure. See also Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 75.

garden, Adam begins his reign as a priestly viceroy in God's royal temple.<sup>47</sup> According to Beale, "Adam should always be referred to as a 'priest-king', since it is only after the 'fall' that priesthood is separated from kingship."<sup>48</sup>

**Expanding Eden.** Finally, a few comments about the eschatological nature of Adam's role as priest-king are in order. Implicit in the Genesis 1–2 narrative is a relationship between Adam's role as priest-king and his duty to expand God's garden sanctuary over the earth.<sup>49</sup> Again, the ancient Near Eastern context is instructive on this point. In the ancient Near East, building a temple was the duty of the king.<sup>50</sup> A prime example of this fact is found in the Sumerian Gudea Cylinders. This ancient text records a temple building hymn from the Mesopotamian king: "To build the house for his king he does not sleep by night, he does not slumber at midday."<sup>51</sup>

Genesis 1–2 similarly implies that the first royal image-bearers were to establish God's kingdom by building God's temple.<sup>52</sup> Adam and Eve, however, were not to build with bricks and mortar, but by extending the boundaries of the garden through procreating the divine image. The Hebrew word גַּן (garden) literally refers to an enclosure usually protected by some type of fence or hedge.<sup>53</sup> The garden in Eden (Gen 2:8) is to be

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<sup>47</sup>Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 70.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>The argument that Gen 1–2 implies that Adam was to expand the borders of Eden to make the entire earth God's sanctuary has been developed by various scholars. See Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 83–121; Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 25–26; Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 73–74; T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 123–26.

<sup>50</sup>See Averbeck, "Sumer, the Bible, and Comparative Method," 88–125; Hallo and Younger, *The Context of Scripture*, 417–43.

<sup>51</sup>Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 269.

<sup>52</sup>See Dumbrell, "Genesis 2:1–17," 61–65; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 93–100; Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 76–78.

<sup>53</sup>Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs*

viewed, then, as a “special, localized place that is spatially separated from its outside world.”<sup>54</sup> The garden is the special place of God’s presence (Gen 3:8) where man could enjoy fellowship with God.<sup>55</sup>

Adam’s commission to subdue and rule the earth implies that the world outside of the garden needed to be brought into subjection under God’s rule. Beale argues that Adam’s task of “working” and “guarding” the garden in Genesis 2:15 is an expression of the Genesis 1:28 mandate to “subdue” and “rule” the earth.<sup>56</sup> Beale writes,

Just as God, after his initial work of creation, subdued the chaos, ruled over it and further created and filled the earth with all kinds of animate life, so Adam and Eve, in their garden abode, were to reflect God’s activities in Genesis 1 by fulfilling the commission to ‘subdue’ and ‘rule over all the earth’ and to ‘be fruitful and multiply’ (Gen 1:26, 28).<sup>57</sup>

A necessary implication surfaces from the relationship between Adam’s localized work in the garden and his commission to be fruitful and take dominion over the earth. The boundaries of the garden would expand to “inhospitable outer spaces” as Adam and Eve populated the earth with images of God.<sup>58</sup> Similar to the kings of the ancient Near East

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*Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 171.

<sup>54</sup>Dumbrell, “Genesis 2:1–17,” 56.

<sup>55</sup>Beale’s suggestion that the use of the verb נוח in Gen 2:15 underscores the garden’s uniqueness as a place of rest is unwarranted. He argues that the verb נוח in the Hiphil stem literally means “to cause to rest.” As such, Beale writes, “The selection of a word with overtones of ‘rest’ may indicate that Adam was to begin to reflect the sovereign rest of God discussed above and that he would achieve a consummate ‘rest’ after he had faithfully performed his task of ‘taking care of and guarding’ the garden.” Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 70. The problem with this argument is that the verb נוח in the Hiphil stem can be vocalized two different ways. According to BDB, the Hiphil form הִנִּיחַ means *to cause to rest*. The problem is, however, that this is not the form used in Gen 2:15. The Hiphil form of נוח in Gen 2:15 is הִנִּיחַ, which means *to place or to put*.

<sup>56</sup>Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 83–85.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 83.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 85. Walton asserts, “If people were going to fill the earth, we must conclude that they were not intended to stay in the garden in a static situation. Yet moving out of the garden would appear a hardship since the land outside the garden was not as hospitable as that inside the garden (otherwise the garden would not be distinguishable). Perhaps, then, we should surmise that people were gradually supposed to extend the garden as they went about subduing and ruling. Extending the garden would extend the food supply as well as extend sacred space.” John H. Walton, *Genesis*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids:

who placed their own statues (images) in newly conquered lands as a tangible symbol of their geographical authority, God's image, and thus his kingdom, was to cover the entire world. Through procreation, Adam and Eve's descendants would build God's garden-temple by extending the borders of Eden into a global sanctuary, filling the earth with the glory of God.<sup>59</sup> By populating the earth with images of God, God's rule and reign would be mediated through priest-kings to the far corners of the earth. The entire earth would become God's temple and display his glory forever.<sup>60</sup>

### Summary

All of these facts taken together reveal a teleological or eschatological purpose in the creation account and set the trajectory for the rest of the biblical storyline. Genesis 1–2 lays the biblical-theological foundation for the meaning and purpose of royal priesthood (priest-king), and the first half of the thesis of this dissertation: a canonical reading of David's depiction of the eschatological Melchizedekian priest-king develops God's creational purpose for humanity to establish God's kingdom (king) by mediating God's covenantal blessings from his temple sanctuary (priest). God's original purpose for humanity was for them to mediate God's own rule and blessing to the whole world by functioning as priest-kings in God's own sacred sanctuary. Adam's status as a priest-king before God cannot be separated from his covenantal relationship to God as God's own son.<sup>61</sup> Sonship, kingship, and priesthood all find their origins in Adam.<sup>62</sup> These roles will

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Zondervan, 2001), 186–87.

<sup>59</sup>Psalm 8, which is a commentary on Gen 1:26–28, frames the description of man's dominion over the earth with statements about God's majesty and glory filling the earth.

<sup>60</sup>Alexander writes, "Taken in conjunction with their holy status, Adam and Eve are to be fruitful so that their descendants may, as priest-kings, extend God's temple and kingdom throughout the earth." Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 78.

<sup>61</sup>Smith comments on the covenantal nature in which Adam was created and the implications for all of humanity. He writes, "To begin at the beginning, Adam was created into a covenant relationship with God. He was not created into a 'natural' situation and then granted a covenant afterwards, as an added feature to his relationship with God. The intratrinitarian counsel of Genesis 1:26 already defines man as



later define the nation of Israel, epitomize the messiah in Psalm 110, and ultimately find purest expression in Jesus Christ.<sup>63</sup>

As the story continues beyond Eden, Genesis 3 introduces a dramatic intrusion into the narrative that threatens to dissolve the entire created order. Adam and Eve fail to fulfill their royal priestly role when they succumb to the serpent's temptation and are banished from Eden. The cherubim take over Adam's priestly role of guarding the garden (Gen 3:24), and humanity is now locked in struggle to take dominion over cursed soil, sin, death, Satan, and evil.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, God's plan to rule the world through human mediation does not fade away. The promise of Genesis 3:15 that the seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head (שׂוֹרֵץ) echoes back to Adam's role in the garden. Genesis 2:15 implied that part of Adam's royal *priestly* responsibility was to "guard" (שָׁמַר) the garden-sanctuary. When the serpent confronted Adam and Eve in the garden, Adam

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God's covenantal representative and ruler of the world before Adam is created. The covenantal meaning of Adam and his race precedes the existence of Adam and already qualifies every cell of his body when God breathes into him the breath of life. His position as king over the world and priestly servant of Yahweh in the Garden is fundamental not only for Adam, but for the whole race descended from him. The Garden is the biblical and theological starting point for royal priesthood." Smith, "The Royal Priesthood in Exodus 19:6," 105.

<sup>62</sup>Gentry observes that Adam, as the son of God, was like a priest who was to learn the ways of God in order to exercise the rule of God as God himself would." Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 398.

<sup>63</sup>Concerning Jesus' identity as son of God, priest, and king, Hahn writes, "Christ's threefold role as firstborn son, king, and high priest . . . represents the restoration of an original and superior form of covenant mediation that has been lost since the institution of the Levitical priesthood." Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 278. Thus, it is not difficult to understand how, in Israel's history, the king could have been considered a priest without holding the "office" of priesthood. As the representative of Israel (God's son), the king was considered to be the son of God. He therefore, occupied not only a royal status, but a priestly function. He mediated God's rule and blessing to the people. His priesthood was not granted to him on the basis of Mosaic Law, but by virtue of his identity as son of God. See Deborah W. Rooke, "Jesus as Royal Priest: Reflections on the Interpretation of the Melchizedek Tradition in Hebrews 7," *Bib* 81, no. 1 (January 1, 2000), 81–88.

<sup>64</sup>Regarding the transfer of Adam's priestly status to the Cherubim, Beale writes, "When Adam failed to guard the temple by sinning and letting in a foul serpent to defile the sanctuary, he lost his priestly role, and the cherubim took over the responsibility of 'guarding' the Garden temple . . ." Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 70. This is not to deny the fact that the Cherubim now guarded the garden to keep man from living forever in his sinful condition.

should have exercised his priestly authority by destroying the serpent, but he failed in his priestly role. Perhaps implicit in Genesis 3:15 is the notion that the crushing of the serpent's head will happen by a seed of the woman who perfectly fulfills Adam's original royal priestly task. Interestingly enough, Psalm 110:6 alludes to Genesis 3:15 by describing the messianic priest-king as one who will “shatter the head (רָאָה) over the wide earth.” From Genesis 3:15 onward, then, God's creation project has turned into his “redemption project.” God's plan to establish his kingdom through human agency unfolds through a series of covenant relationships. Adam's role as priest-king in establishing God's kingdom now finds expression in other royal priestly covenantal figures. God's plan to establish his kingdom has not changed, even though the way it comes about now takes on a redemptive element. God's kingdom will come—a kingdom established by a royal covenant mediator. The rest of the biblical narrative describes how God's creational project is going to be fulfilled in a fallen world infested with chaos and sin. Humanity's role as priest-kings is still an integral part of the story.

### **Noah**

Noah appears on the stage in a world filled with violence and murder (Gen 4:23–24). Noah's name (נֹחַ) appears to be a word play on the verbs נָחַם meaning “to comfort” (Gen 5:29) and נָח meaning “to rest.” It is likely that Noah's name is meant to recall Genesis 2:15 where God “put” (נָחַ) Adam in the garden. Lamech's prophecy over his son suggests that Noah will be the one to reverse the curse on creation and bring rest to humanity. He will provide comfort from the “pain” (עֲצָבוֹן, Gen 5:29; cf. Gen 3:16–17) of a “cursed” (אָרֶר, cf. Gen 3:14, 17) land.

Noah's redemptive character is a function of his role as a new Adam. The narrative of Genesis 6–9 describes Noah as the one who will fulfill the creation mandate originally given to Adam. God will bring a flood to destroy the earth and Adam's race so that he can effect a new beginning through Noah (Gen 6:17–22). Yet, this new beginning

will not deviate from God’s original creation project. God still plans to establish his kingdom through a royal priest. Like Adam, Noah adopts a royal position over creation and a priestly function as a covenant mediator on behalf of the rest of creation.

### **Noah as King**

Noah’s royal function in the narrative of Genesis 6–9 must be understood in light of his status as a new Adam. The parallels between Genesis 1–2 and Genesis 8–9 indicate that the “new creation” initiated with Noah replaces the original creation project begun with Adam (see table 2).<sup>65</sup> Dempster rightly suggests that the flood represents a return to the “pre-creation chaos” of Genesis 1:2 before the new creation dawns with the “presence of the Spirit of God pushing back the primal waters (Gen 8:1).”<sup>66</sup> Von Rad remarks, “perhaps the words of Genesis 8:21ff. may actually be called the real conclusion of this history, for at that point the history of mankind begins anew.”<sup>67</sup> Through Noah, then, the world will receive a new beginning.

Noah is nonetheless the savior of the world. Despite the fact that creation will be undone (Gen 6:7; cf. Gen 1:25–26), Noah finds favor in the eyes of the Lord. Noah is a righteous and blameless man. The description of Noah as a man who “walked with God” (הִתְהַלֵּךְ) is reminiscent of the Lord “walking” (מְהַלֵּךְ) in the garden with Adam and Eve (Gen 6:9; cf. Gen 3:8). Noah is portrayed as a man who experiences the life-giving presence of God as opposed to the shadow of death that hovers over those who are

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<sup>65</sup>Gary Smith identifies seven parallels between Gen 1–2 and Gen 8–9. Gary V. Smith, “Structure and Purpose in Genesis 1–11,” *JETS* 20, no. 4 (December 1, 1977): 310–11. Ken Matthews, Bruce Waltke, and Peter Gentry adopt the position that the flood narrative is structured in seven phases that parallel the creation week in Gen 1. See Kenneth Matthews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 383; Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 128–29; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 162–63.

<sup>66</sup>Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 73.

<sup>67</sup>Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of Israel’s Historical Traditions*, trans. David M. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 1:164. This quote is also cited by Gary Smith, “Structure and Purpose in Genesis 1–11,” 310.

blotted out from the cursed ground (Gen 3:17; 6:7).<sup>68</sup> Unlike Adam, who brought death into the world, Noah will be an agent of life.

Table 2. Correspondences between the creation narrative and flood narrative

Correspondences	Creation Narrative	Flood Narrative
The spirit (רוח) is active over the waters	Gen 1:2	Gen 8:1b–2
Boundaries between sky and earth	Gen 1:6–8	Gen 8:2b
Separation of dry ground from waters	Gen 1:9	Gen 8:3–5
Birds, animals, and creeping things that swarm the earth	Gen 1:20–25	Gen 8:17–19
Days and seasons are established	Gen 1:14–18	Gen 8:22
Man and beast must be “fruitful and multiply”	Gen 1:22, 28	Gen 8:17; 9:1, 7
Dominion theme	Gen 1:28	Gen 9:2
God provides food (“every green plant”)	Gen 1:29–30	Gen 9:3
Image of God	Gen 1:26–28	Gen 9:6

After the flood, God gives Noah the same creational commission given to Adam. In Genesis 9:1, God blesses Noah and his sons, commanding them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth (Gen 9:1; cf. Gen 9:7). The language is almost an exact replica of the commission given to Adam in Genesis 1:28 (see table 3).

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<sup>68</sup>Smith develops the relationship between the curse on the ground in Gen 3:17 and the destruction of mankind from the face of the ground in the flood narrative. Smith, “Structure and Purpose in Genesis 1–11,” 314–15.

Table 3. Linguistic parallels between Genesis 9:1  
and Genesis 1:28

Genesis 9:1	Genesis 1:28
<p>וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נֹחַ וְאֶת־בְּנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ</p>	<p>וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־ הָאָרֶץ</p>

God established a covenant with Adam so that Adam would mediate the rule and blessing of God to the rest of creation. Similarly, God initiates a covenant relationship with Noah to preserve life and mediate God’s rule and blessing in a fallen world. Noah is to fulfill in a new creation what God had intended for Adam in the original creation. That is, Noah is to be fruitful and multiply images of God across the globe so that God’s worldwide kingdom will be established and God’s glory will be on display from the far corners of the earth. Noah inherits the Adamic role of global dominion as God’s covenant mediator on earth. Noah’s royal authority is reflected in the fact that God puts the fear of mankind into all of the created beings (Gen 9:2). Similarly, God gives all the created beings into the hand of Noah and his lineage (Gen 9:3). Furthermore, Genesis 9:16 indicates that the Noahic covenant pertains to “every living creature among all flesh that is on the earth.” According to Hahn, the covenant assigns Noah “a dynastic authority over ‘all flesh’ (9:16, 17).”<sup>69</sup> Noah now possesses royal authority over all of the created order just as God gave Adam kingly dominion over the earth (Gen 9:2; cf. Gen 1:26–28).

### Noah as Priest

Noah’s priestly ministry is most clearly seen in Genesis 8:20–22.<sup>70</sup> After the

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<sup>69</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 97.

<sup>70</sup>Before Sinai, the responsibility of priestly ministry belonged to the patriarchal head of any particular family. See J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 373. Hahn suggests that “during the patriarch age the firstborn son was accorded certain privileges

flood subsides, Noah leaves the ark and builds an altar to offer sacrifices to Yahweh (Gen 8:20). Before the Mosaic era, altars functioned as the place of God's special presence.<sup>71</sup> By constructing an altar, Noah created "a holy place, a sanctuary, where he could come into the presence of God."<sup>72</sup> Noah's act of offering "clean" (טָהוֹר) animals as "burnt offerings" (עֹלָה) on an "altar" (מִזְבֵּחַ) anticipates the sacrificial ministry of the Levitical priesthood (cf. Lev 1:17; 10:10; 20:25). Furthermore, the restatement of the creation mandate (Gen 9:1) immediately following the Lord's acceptance of Noah's sacrifice from a localized sanctuary (altar) may recall Adam's royal priestly assignment to expand the borders of the garden-sanctuary over the entire earth.<sup>73</sup>

The smoke rising from Noah's burnt offering becomes a "soothing aroma" (רִיחַ הַגִּיחֹחַ) to Yahweh (Gen. 8:21). The same phrase appears repeatedly in Leviticus where the burnt offerings of the priests result in the same "pleasing aroma" to Yahweh (Lev 1:9, 13; 2:2; 4:31; 6:21; 8:21: 17:6). Upon smelling the "pleasing aroma," the Lord promises to never again destroy mankind, even though "the inclination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen 8:21). The Lord's response to mankind's sinful nature is a powerful contrast to Genesis 6:5–7 where the Lord determines to blot out mankind because "every inclination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil every day" (Gen 6:5). The difference

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and prerogatives which later would belong to the Levites. Genesis describes how the patriarchs performed certain quasi-priestly functions (e.g., erecting altars, offering sacrifice, paying tithes, imparting blessings), which were supposedly handed down, in turn, to the firstborn son, as part of his birthright." Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 136.

<sup>71</sup>See Tremper Longman III, *Immanuel in Our Place: Seeing Christ in Israel's Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001), 15–23.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>73</sup>Beale argues for a connection between the patriarchal episodes of altar construction and the original Adamic commission. He writes that "the Adamic commission is repeated in direct connection with what looks to be the building of small sanctuaries." In the same line of thought, he comments, "The patriarchs appear also to have built these worship areas as impermanent, miniature forms of sanctuaries that symbolically represented the notion that their progeny were to spread out to subdue the earth from a divine sanctuary in fulfillment of the commission in Genesis 1:26–28." Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 96–97.

between the Lord's response to man's evil in these two passages—judgment in Genesis 6:5–7 and mercy in Genesis 8:21—must be attributed to Noah's sacrifice. The "soothing aroma" appeases God's wrath toward sinful humanity. Noah's propitiatory sacrifice is a priestly act on behalf of the entire human race. Wenham concludes that "we can view Noah's offering of sacrifice as a prototype of the work of later priests, who made atonement for Israel . . . Here, however, Noah's sacrifice is effective for all mankind."<sup>74</sup> Noah's priestly sacrifice not only functions as a prototype of the work of later priests, but its universal character anticipates the ministry of Israel as a royal priesthood. Wenham writes elsewhere, "Here Noah is portrayed as exercising a priestly ministry on behalf of the rest of humankind, just as Israel would later be called to act as a kingdom of priests on behalf of all the nations in the world (cf. Exod 19:6)."<sup>75</sup> On account of Noah, the rest of the world will have an opportunity to live under the rule and blessing of God.

## Summary

The numerous links between Genesis 6–9 and the creation account in Genesis 1–2 clearly identify Noah as a new Adam. The Noahic covenant is an expression of the original creation covenant, which means that Noah's royal priesthood finds its origin in the royal priesthood of Adam. Adam and Noah functioned as both covenantal mediators on behalf of humanity and as the natural fathers of the entire human race. The covenant relationships that make up the rest of redemptive history are particular expressions of the original covenants God made with Adam and Noah. The development of kingship and priesthood in the history of Israel is not the product of Israel borrowing the institutions of

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<sup>74</sup>Gordon J. Wenham, "The Theology of Old Testament Sacrifice," in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995), 81.

<sup>75</sup>Gordon J. Wenham, "Flood," in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 4:642. Wenham writes elsewhere, "Noah is portrayed as an exemplary keeper of the covenant law, observing the Sabbath, distinguishing between clean and unclean, and offering a sacrifice effective for all mankind." Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," 403.

her ancient Near Eastern neighbors as the nation progressed from an uncivilized tribe to a sophisticated political entity. Instead, we can conclude from the historical record of Genesis that the development of kingship and priesthood in Israel's history, and later in the messianic vision of Psalm 110, find their origin in Adam and Noah, "the two great 'king-priests' of the ancient world."<sup>76</sup> The next major question I will need to address, then, is how Melchizedek's royal priesthood fits into the royal priestly narrative of Adam and Noah. If Adam and Noah are the source of royal priestly ideology, then why does David appeal to Melchizedek in Psalm 110?

### **Melchizedek**

The incorporation of the Melchizedek narrative into Genesis has proved to be a *crux interpretum* for modern scholars. Source critics could not find the narrative a home in J, E, D, or P.<sup>77</sup> This led many scholars to the conclusion that the Melchizedek episode was a redacted story from the time of David's conquest meant to provide a theological support for Jerusalem's Jebusite priesthood.<sup>78</sup> For most of the modern period, scholarship simply could not (or *would* not) fit the Melchizedek narrative into the literary and historical context of Genesis.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, a canonical approach to Genesis 14:17–24

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<sup>76</sup>Smith, "The Royal Priesthood in Exodus 19:6," 94.

<sup>77</sup>On this point, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Melchizedek in the MT, LXX, and the NT," *Bib* 81, no. 1 (January 1, 2000): 64.

<sup>78</sup>John Emerton's comment is indicative of the majority view in critical scholarship. He writes, "The Melchizedek passage in verses 18–20 was added, probably in the reign of David. It was hoped to encourage Israelites to accept the fusion of the worship of Yahweh with the cult of El Elyon, to recognize the position of Jerusalem as the religious and political capital of Israel, and to acknowledge that the status of David as king had behind it the ancient royal and priestly status of Melchizedek." John A. Emerton, "Riddle of Genesis XIV," *VT* 21, no. 4 (October 1, 1971), 437.

<sup>79</sup>The title of John Emerton's essay, "The Riddle of Genesis 14," bears witness to this reality. P. J. Nel writes, "I am convinced that Gen 14:18–20 can only make sense when the tradition of Ps 110 is presupposed. Nothing in the narrative flow of Gen 14 anticipates the almost miraculous appearance of the priest-king, Melchizedek." Philip J. Nel, "Psalm 110 and the Melchizedek Tradition," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 22, no. 1 (January 1, 1996): 7–8.



will yield different results.<sup>80</sup> If the text is allowed to stand on its own terms, as part of an intelligently designed compositional strategy, then the reader can arrive at an intelligible interpretation of the pericope within the historical and literary context of Genesis.<sup>81</sup> Thus it will be necessary to understand the Melchizedek episode within the context of Genesis and explore how Melchizedek's priesthood relates to the royal priesthoods of Adam, Noah, Israel, and Aaron. My objective in this section is to demonstrate that Melchizedek's importance for biblical theology—i.e., understanding the interpretive perspective of later biblical authors (Ps 110)—is bound up with his relationship to the Abrahamic covenant. Furthermore, I will argue that Melchizedek's royal priesthood is an expression of the royal priesthoods of Adam and Noah.<sup>82</sup>

### **Priest after the Order of Adam and Noah**

Genesis 14:18 identifies Melchizedek as “king of Salem” and “priest of God Most High” (כהן לאל עליון). Despite the attempts of critical scholars to identify El Elyon as a Canaanite deity, the narrative of Genesis 14:17–24 intends for its readers to identify El Elyon with Yahweh.<sup>83</sup> In Genesis 14:22 the title El Elyon (אל עליון) stands in

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<sup>80</sup>A canonical approach to understanding Melchizedek in Gen 14:17–24 will seek to interpret the pericope on its own historical terms and as part of the literary unit of Gen 12–22. For a defense of the historical and literary integrity of the Melchizedek incident in the book of Genesis, see J. Gordon McConville, “Abraham and Melchizedek: Horizons in Genesis 14,” in *He Swore and Oath: Biblical Themes from Genesis 12–50*, ed. R. S. Hess, G. J. Wenham, and P. E. Satterthwaite (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1994), 93–118.

<sup>81</sup>It is beyond the scope of this project to enter debates about the identity of Melchizedek, explore source-critical issues, or build arguments for Melchizedek's historical credibility. A canonical approach interprets the final form of the text on its own terms and assumptions. For various historical analyses see K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 313–22; A. Andreasen, “Gen 14 in Its Near Eastern Context,” in *Scripture in Context: Essays on the Comparative Method*, ed. Carl D Evans, William W. Hallo, and John Bradley White (Pittsburg: Pickwick Press, 1980), 59–77. Gard Granerød, *Abraham and Melchizedek: Scribal Activity of Second Temple Times in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110*, BZAW 406 (New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 129–52.

<sup>82</sup>Smith similarly argues that “the Melchizedekian priesthood was a particular expression of the priesthood inherited from Noah and Adam, the two greatest ‘king-priests’ of the ancient world.” Smith, “The Royal Priesthood in Exodus 19:6,” 94.

<sup>83</sup>Fitzmyer argued that Melchizedek was a pagan Canaanite priest-king. Fitzmyer,

apposition to Yahweh (יהוה).<sup>84</sup> Melchizedek, then, is a royal priest of Yahweh, the covenant God of Adam and Noah. But what is the origin of Melchizedek's royal priesthood? On what basis does he claim the titles מלך and כהן? The answer proposed here is that Melchizedek's royal priesthood is an expression of the royal priesthoods of Adam and Noah. Before Genesis 14, Adam and Noah stand out as the two great priest-kings in world history. If it can be shown that Moses links Melchizedek to Adam and Noah, then it is not a stretch to assume that his royal priesthood finds its origin in these ancient priest-kings and fathers of humanity.

**Abraham as a new Adam.** Melchizedek's importance in biblical theology is bound up with his relationship to Abraham. Thus, before discussing Melchizedek's connection to Adam and Noah, it is necessary to observe how Genesis presents Abraham as a new Adam. Abraham's story is part of the metanarrative begun with Adam. Like Adam who had three sons (Gen 5:4) and Noah who had three sons (Gen 5:32), Abraham is one of Terah's three sons (Gen 11). Gentry suggests this genealogical parallel is "a literary technique inviting the reader to compare Abram with Noah and Adam."<sup>85</sup> God's call of Abraham in Genesis begins to hint that, through Abraham, God's global purposes will come to pass.<sup>86</sup> Like Adam, Abraham receives God's blessing (ברך) (Gen 12:2; cf.

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"Melchizedek in the MT, LXX, and the NT."

<sup>84</sup>It should be noted that the LXX supplies no translation for יהוה in Gen 14:22. For the sake of argument, if we were to assume that the LXX is the more accurate reading, then we can no longer clearly identify El Elyon with Yahweh. However, to suggest that Abraham has in mind someone other than Yahweh at this point in the Genesis narrative when he refers to the "God Most High" is difficult to fathom. Abraham's announcement that he will not receive any goods from the king of Sodom is a demonstration of his trust that God will fulfill his promises. Abraham knows this promise-making God as Yahweh.

<sup>85</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 224.

<sup>86</sup>Hamilton has demonstrated that the blessings promised to Abraham match the curses of Gen 3:14–19 point for point so as to provide a redemptive solution to humanity's plight. He writes, "The promise of seed to Abraham guarantees that the cursed difficulty in childbirth and conflict between the genders will be overcome. The conflict between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman will also be resolved by the seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations will be blessed. And the curse of the land is answered by the promise of land, where the collective seed of Abraham will become a great nation." James

Gen 1:28), the promise of an Eden-like land (Gen 12:6–8; cf. Exod 15:17),<sup>87</sup> and the guarantee that God will make him exceedingly “fruitful” (פֶּרֶה) and “multiply” (רָבָה) his offspring (Gen 17:2, 6; 22:17; cf. Gen 1:28). The hope for God’s global kingdom will come through Abraham; his offspring will become a nation of royal priests (Exod 19:6) who will mediate God’s reign to the rest of the world. Hamilton captures the Abraham-Adam link by connecting Abraham’s seed to the land promise. He writes, “As the story of the Pentateuch unfolds, the Promised Land almost becomes a new Eden. The Lord will walk among his people in the land, just as he walked in the garden.”<sup>88</sup>

Why is Abraham’s Adamic role important for understanding Melchizedek’s royal priesthood? The answer I propose has to do with Melchizedek’s relationship to Abraham. In what follows, I will argue that Genesis 14:17–24 presents Melchizedek and Abraham in covenant solidarity so that Abraham himself is to be regarded as a priest-king like Melchizedek. If Abraham is the inheritor of the Adamic role and stands in covenant solidarity with the priest-king Melchizedek, then by implication Melchizedek’s own royal priesthood must be an expression of that which was originally given to Adam and later assumed by Noah. Several literary and thematic connections between Melchizedek, Adam, and Noah support this observation.

First, Melchizedek’s name means “king of righteousness.” Prior to Genesis 14, the only other person described as “righteous” is Noah. Noah walked with God and was

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M. Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 82. For the full development of this argument, see James M. Hamilton, “The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham,” *TynBul* 58, no. 2 (2007): 253–73.

<sup>87</sup>Exodus 15:17 depicts Canaan as a mountain sanctuary linking it to the Edenic mountain sanctuary in Gen 2.

<sup>88</sup>Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 81. Similarly, N. T. Wright states, “Abraham’s children are God’s true humanity, and their homeland is the new Eden.” N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1993), 23. Gentry notes the Abraham-Adam connection. He writes, “Abram (and the nation that comes from him) constitutes an *Adamic* figure, indeed the last Adam, since there are no major new starts after this. God intends to establish his rule over all creation through his relationship with Abram and his family: kingdom through covenant.” Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 245.

blameless in his generation. After a statement concerning Noah's obedience to follow all of God's commands (Gen 6:22), Yahweh declares, "I have seen that you are righteous (צדיק) in this generation" (Gen 7:1). Noah followed God's commands in faithful obedience to God's will. It is not unlikely, then, that Melchizedek's name, "king of righteousness," is meant to recall Noah's faithful obedience to God.<sup>89</sup> Like Noah, Melchizedek is a faithful worshiper of Yahweh, the God Most High. Second, Melchizedek blesses Abraham with bread and wine (Gen 14:18). Prior to Genesis 14, the only appearance of wine is found in Genesis 9:21 and 24. In this episode Noah is depicted as a gardener planting a vineyard, no doubt alluding to Adam's regal role as gardener in Eden (9:20).<sup>90</sup> Just as Adam failed in the garden by disobeying God's law, Noah fails in his garden-sanctuary by becoming intoxicated with wine. For Melchizedek, however, wine is a means of blessing for victorious Abraham.<sup>91</sup> It is also interesting to note that the only other occurrence of "bread" (לֶחֶם) prior to Genesis 14 is found in Genesis 3:19, where God's curse on Adam means that man will have to eat bread by the sweat of his brow. Thus, the two elements, bread and wine, that were associated with Adam and Noah's failure and God's curse, become elements of blessing to Abraham, perhaps signifying that Melchizedek's royal priesthood is a replacement of the royal priesthood originally belonging to Adam and Noah. Through Abraham, God will reverse

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<sup>89</sup>Though his concern is with the book of Hebrews, Andrei Orlov also links Melchizedek to Noah through the use of the term "righteousness." Andrei A. Orlov, "The Heir of Righteousness and the King of Righteousness: The Priestly Noahic Polemics in 2 Enoch and the Epistle to the Hebrews," *JTS* 58, no. 1 (April 1, 2007): 63–65.

<sup>90</sup>The use of the verb *נָטַע* recalls its only previous occurrence in the narrative found in Gen 2:8: "And the Lord God *planted* a garden in Eden . . . and there he put the man whom he had formed" (ESV, emphasis mine). Mathews observes several parallels between the events of Gen 9 and Adam. He concludes, "Indeed, Noah is the second Adam both as a recipient of divine blessing and as a father of a corrupt seed." Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 314–15.

<sup>91</sup>Jim Jordan writes, "Wine is the sign of Noahic kingship, and Melchizedek communicates a new 'garden' to Abram." Jim Jordan's response at the end of Ralph Smith's essay in Smith, "The Royal Priesthood in Exodus 19:6," 111. Without further development, I am not sure why wine would be the sign of Noahic kingship.

the curse and failure of the two previous covenantal heads of humanity. Third, by submitting to Melchizedek through the giving of the tithe, Abraham acknowledges Melchizedek's authoritative and even superior status (Gen 14:20). This fact suggests that Melchizedek's priesthood was rooted in a superior covenant. Smith explains,

Given Abraham's position as covenant-head of the new era and the one through whom the world would be blessed, it may seem odd that he would recognize another priest, unless that priest was established under the terms of a superior covenant. Melchizedek's priesthood, therefore, had to be prior to the gift of the covenant to Abraham and based upon the more fundamental Noahic covenant.<sup>92</sup>

Fourth, Melchizedek's blessing upon Abraham echoes Noah's blessing on Shem (Gen 9:26; 14:19).<sup>93</sup> Noah, a royal priestly figure, pronounced blessing on Shem, while the priest-king Melchizedek pronounced a similar blessing on Shem's descendant Abraham, the one through whom the blessing of Shem would come to pass.<sup>94</sup> Thus, the associations between Melchizedek and Shem suggest that Melchizedek's royal priesthood is tied to and in succession with the royal priesthood of Noah.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>Smith, "The Royal Priesthood in Exodus 19:6," 106.

<sup>93</sup>In ancient Jewish and Christian tradition, Melchizedek is Shem. If this were the case, Shem would have inherited his priestly role by virtue of his status as Noah's firstborn son. Abraham's tithe to Melchizedek (Shem) would have been an act of submission to the authority of his greater ancestor. Scott Hahn attempts to make a case that Melchizedek was Noah's firstborn son Shem in *Kinship by Covenant*, 130–34. Hahn comments, "Not only his identification as Melchizedek but also his status as Noah's firstborn son qualifies Shem for the priesthood. Ancient Jewish and Christian interpreters generally recognized that a pre-Levitical natural priesthood belonged to the firstborn son in the patriarchal narratives, before the Levites acquired the right at Sinai after the golden calf incident (Exod 32)." *Ibid.*, 133–34. While the notion that Melchizedek is Shem is intriguing, it is impossible to prove or substantiate from the text of Genesis.

<sup>94</sup>Hahn notes the importance of blessings in the primeval history: "They often assume a programmatic importance for tracing the course of God's covenant dealings with humanity in general and Israel in particular." *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>95</sup>The links between Abraham, Melchizedek, Noah, and Shem are also apparent at a structural level. It is worth quoting Hahn at length here. He writes, "There are several notable connections between Genesis 14 and the surrounding narrative. For instance, Steinmetz notes how the genealogies in Genesis 10–11 trace the development of certain thematic concerns from Genesis 9 to the Abraham cycle, especially to the events in Genesis 14: 'From this perspective, when the genealogy gives way to narrative after ten generations, the narrative is of the world's new beginning. And the narrative to which the genealogy gives way is the history of Abraham and his family . . . . But while he is born in the tenth generation of the blessed line of Shem, it is only in the episode of the battle with the kings that Abraham actually comes into the blessing of Shem.' Commenting on Genesis 14, Steinmetz states: 'This episode has two parts, a long section before Abraham enters the action (14:1–13) and an equally long section with Abraham as a

At least two more observations link Melchizedek to God’s creational project. First, by contrasting Melchizedek with the king of Sodom in the same pericope, we discover that Melchizedek’s kingship—like Adam’s before him—is rooted in God’s reign over creation. Melchizedek is not just the king of righteousness; he is also the king of “peace” (שלום Gen 14:18; cf. Heb 7:2). The title “king of peace” distinguishes Melchizedek from the warring kings Abraham defeated in the preceding narrative and from the king of Sodom (Gen 14:21). Melchizedek blesses Abraham by “God most high, possessor of heaven and earth” (Gen 14:19). Melchizedek’s blessing acknowledges the universal rule of God over all creation. God controls the universe and God is the one who gives victory in battle (Gen 14:20). The king of Sodom, on the other hand, desires the spoils of victory, namely people to control. His strength is in numbers. The king of Sodom therefore represents corrupt human kingship that clamors for power at the expense of others.<sup>96</sup> Melchizedek’s kingship is characterized by submission to the true king, namely Yahweh, the God Most High. His kingship is a righteous rule of peace characterized by trust in God. Melchizedek does not seek Abraham’s spoils but instead offers Abraham a priestly blessing of bread and wine. In this sense, Melchizedek is a priest-king and servant of the creator God. His reign and service to Yahweh is grounded in God’s universal rule over creation.<sup>97</sup> His kingship is “divinely instituted,” according to

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participant. While the whole chapter is puzzling in many ways, scholars have had an especially difficult time accounting for the first half, which seems in no way to be relevant to the Abraham narrative in which it is embedded. But the two parts together constitute a working-out of the blessing and curse of Noah’s sons, and the two halves parallel the two visions of the relationship between Noah’s descendants, one prior to Babel and one after it.’ Steinmetz then explains Abram’s part in the episode: ‘When Abraham enters the story, the relationship shifts to that described in chapter 11. Abraham, the descendant of the chosen line of Shem, conquers the rest of the descendants of Noah. He asserts his ascendancy of Canaan, of course, by conquering their conquerors.’ In short order, Abram rises above the nine kings warring for control of Canaan, the land which the reader recognizes as the object of the divine promise.” Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 130. Hahn is quoting here from Devora Steinmetz, *From Father to Son: Kinship, Conflict, and Continuity in Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 146.

<sup>96</sup>Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 82.

<sup>97</sup>It is possible that Melchizedek’s blessing of bread and wine also hints at his submission to God as the creator and ruler of the universe. Wenham discusses how bread and wine were used as

Alexander, in that it “seeks to re-establish God’s sovereignty on the earth in line with the divine mandate given to human beings when first created.”<sup>98</sup>

Finally, Melchizedek’s connection to God’s creation blueprint can be observed by a comparison of Genesis 14–15 with Exodus 17–18. Several similarities exist between Abraham’s encounter with Melchizedek and Moses’ encounter with Jethro.<sup>99</sup> Both narratives follow similar structures (see table 4).<sup>100</sup>

Table 4. Sailhamer’s compositional similarities: Genesis 14–15 and Exodus 17–18

The Nations	The Seed
The Nations (Gen 14:1–12) Divine Victory (Gen 14:14–17) Melchizedek (Gen 14:18–20)	Abraham’s Covenant (Gen 15)
War with Nations (Exod 17:8–10) Divine Victory (Exod 17:11–13) Jethro (Exod 18:1–12)	Moses’ Covenant (Exod 19–24)

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sacrificial elements by priests in Israel’s later history, “With most animal sacrifices it was customary to offer a cereal offering of wheat and also to pour out a libation of wine. In the symbolic system of Israel, clean animals offered in sacrifice represented the Israelite worshipper, and so did wheat and wine. Thus burning part of the wheat and pouring out the wine, like the slaughter of the animal and pouring out its blood, portrays the worshipper dying for his sin and giving himself entirely to God. Meat, bread, and wine made a banquet in ancient Israel, so that the whole procedures represented a wonderful meal in honour of God the creator, who supplied man with all his physical and spiritual needs.” Wenham, “The Theology of Old Testament Sacrifice,” 78.

<sup>98</sup>Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 82.

<sup>99</sup>I came to this conclusion through my own study before I found a Sailhamer’s treatment of the same topic. See John H. Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 369–78. For the sake of space, it is not necessary to observe all of the textual and thematic similarities between the two episodes. For a full summary of the narrative similarities see *ibid.*, 370–71.

<sup>100</sup>This table is adapted from *ibid.*, 369.

The general flow of events in both narratives proceeds as follows: war with gentiles, divine victory, appearance of royal priestly figure, and establishment of covenant. Similarly, the actions and identities of Melchizedek and Jethro mirror one another. Melchizedek is “priest” (כהן) of Salem (שלם) (Gen 14:15); Jethro is “priest” (כהן) of Midian (Exod 18:1) who asks for “peace” (שלום) for Moses (Exod 18:7). Melchizedek meets Abraham with “bread” (לחם) and wine (Gen 14:18) after Abraham returns from battle; Jethro offers sacrifices and eats “bread” (לחם) with Moses after Moses’ victory in battle (Exod 18:12). Melchizedek pronounces a blessing on Abraham (Gen 14:20); Jethro pronounces a similar blessing on Moses (Exod 18:10, see table 5).

Table 5. Linguistic parallels between Genesis 14:20a and Exodus 18:10

Genesis 14:20a	Exodus 18:10
And blessed (וּבֵרַךְ) be God Most High who delivered (מִגַּן) your enemies into your hand (בְּיָדְךָ) . . .	And Jethro said, “Blessed (בְּרַךְ) be Yahweh who has delivered (הִצִּיל) you from the hand (מִיַּד) of the Egyptians and from the hand (מִיַּד) of Pharaoh and has delivered (הִצִּיל) the people from under the hand (יַד) of the Egyptians.

Furthermore, Abraham submits to Melchizedek by paying him a tithe, while Moses submits to Jethro by bowing down to him (Gen 14:20; Exod 18:7). Both narratives take place near a significant mountain: Mount Zion ([Jeru]Salem) (Gen 14:18, cf. Ps 76:1–2) and Mount Sinai (Exod 18:5).<sup>101</sup> And lastly, both narratives close with reference to a meal (Gen 14:24; Exod 18:12).

The structural and thematic similarities between the two narratives reveal an

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<sup>101</sup>Gen 14:17 indicates that the king of Sodom and Melchizedek, the king of Salem, met Abraham in the Valley of Shaveh. It is likely that this ancient location was near Salem, which is to be identified with what would later become Jerusalem (cf. Ps 76:1–2).



important connection between the nations and God’s chosen people (Abraham and Israel). In both episodes, God’s chosen people—represented by Abraham and Moses—experience divine victory in battle with Gentile nations, encounter a Gentile priest-king, and enter into a covenant with God (Gen 15; Exod 19–24).<sup>102</sup> John Sailhamer rightly determines the importance of these patterns: “The author shows that Israel’s dealings with these nations tell something about the nature of the covenants that they were to enter and their relationship to the nations.”<sup>103</sup> In other words, Melchizedek and Jethro reveal that God’s covenantal purposes with Abraham and Israel have global implications. Melchizedek ties the Abrahamic covenant to creation (Gen 14:19–20, 22), while Jethro’s reference to the exodus (Exod 18:10) links the Mosaic covenant to redemption.

Sailhamer’s summary on this point is well put:

These two important pentateuchal narratives, Genesis 14–15 and Exodus 18–24, link creation and redemption blessings to God’s covenants with the “seed” of Abraham. Genesis 14–15 links the creation blessing (Gen 14) to covenant blessing (Gen 15), and primeval law (Ex 18) to Mosaic law (Ex 19–24). God’s work of redemption is grounded in creation and covenant.<sup>104</sup>

Sailhamer’s conclusion is accurate, but it is also necessary to emphasize the fact that the priests involved in these narratives were also *royal* figures. A Gentile *kingly* priest appears in the narratives immediately prior to the covenantal episodes with Abraham (Gen 15) and Israel (Exod 19). These covenants, linked to creation and redemption, will establish God’s global kingdom. God’s covenant with Israel (Abraham’s seed) will be the means to establish God’s kingdom so that the entire world may experience the blessing of

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<sup>102</sup>Jethro is never explicitly identified as a “king,” yet he appears to possess royal authority. Davies summarizes this point well, “Rather than being ‘a priest of Midian’ (Exod 2.16 NIV), the construction (construct state followed by proper noun) requires that he be *the* priest of Midian, and he appears to enjoy something like a general authority, civil and religious, in his community that the Israelite patriarchs, as portrayed in Genesis, did in theirs . . . the biblical characterization of the priest-king of Midian does add another facet to the broad portrayal of the status of priests in the world familiar to the Israelites.” John Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19.6* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 152–53.

<sup>103</sup>Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 371.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*, 374.

God. In the narrative plot of Scripture, Melchizedek and Jethro remind the reader of God's global kingdom project begun with the primal priest-king Adam at a time when God's redemption plan narrows in on one man (Abraham) and his progeny (Israel). God has not abandoned his purposes for the nations. The nations, typified by Melchizedek and Jethro, will experience the overflow of blessing that comes through God's covenant relationships with a particular person and particular nation.<sup>105</sup> God's covenant will, therefore, establish his global kingdom. Melchizedek and Jethro serve as reminders that all of humanity will be priests and kings (cf. 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 5:10) unto God as a result of God's covenant faithfulness.

Taken together, the observations that link Melchizedek to creation, Adam, and Noah imply that Melchizedek's royal priesthood is an expression of the royal priesthood originally given to Adam and later inherited by Noah. The question remains, then, as to why David would appeal to Melchizedek and not Adam, since Adam is Scripture's royal priestly prototype. If Melchizedek's royal priesthood is an expression of Adam's, why not cast the messiah as "a priest after the order of Adam"? This question will be more fully developed in chapter 3, but for now the answer can be stated thus: David appeals to Melchizedek in Psalm 110:4 because Melchizedek is uniquely identified in the text of Genesis with the Abrahamic covenant—the covenant that will serve as the basis for and find fulfillment in (albeit partial) the Davidic covenant.<sup>106</sup> In what follows, then, I will demonstrate that Melchizedek stands in covenant solidarity with Abraham.

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<sup>105</sup>The familial hierarchy present in the relationships between Moses and Jethro, and Abraham and Melchizedek support this interpretation. The narrative of Exodus almost never mentions Jethro without qualifying him as Moses' "father-in-law." Why is this the case? It appears that the author is reminding the reader that God's redemptive purposes extend beyond the people of Israel. Jethro, a Gentile priest-king, is a figure whom Moses reveres (Exod 18:7) because of Jethro's superior status as his father-in-law. The familial relationship between Moses and Jethro, similar perhaps to the ancestral relationship between Melchizedek (Shem) and Abraham, reminds the reader that God's covenantal purposes are subservient to his purpose for the nations. The nations (Melchizedek and Jethro) will be made priests and kings unto God as a result of God's covenants with Abraham and Israel.

<sup>106</sup>In chapter 3, I will develop the relationship between the Davidic and Abrahamic covenants and demonstrate a typological relationship between Abraham and David.

## Melchizedek and the Abrahamic Covenant

Melchizedek's importance in Genesis 14 and in later biblical history is tied to his association with Abraham. On this point two primary observations are at hand: 1) the Melchizedek episode sheds light on the nature of the Abrahamic covenant and, related to this observation, 2) Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek supports the evidence that Abraham, the father of the nation of royal priests (Exod 19:6), is himself a royal priestly figure.<sup>107</sup> These observations cannot ultimately be separated from one another; nevertheless, I will develop the latter observation first.

### **Abraham as priest-king.** Melchizedek appears on the heels of battle.

Abraham has just rescued Lot by defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings with him when Melchizedek shows up to bless him (Gen 14:17–20). The covenantal promise that Abraham would be a blessing to others (Gen 12:1–3) has already begun to work itself out in the events of Genesis 14.<sup>108</sup> Abraham's deliverance of Lot and the Gentile kings illustrates how others could be blessed through their association with Abraham—a blessing that comes through Abraham's role as a royal priestly figure.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>The development of Abraham as a royal priestly figure should probably be given its own section in this dissertation. Nevertheless, due to space constraints, the arguments for viewing Abraham, in some sense, as a priest-king will be treated within this section of the dissertation.

<sup>108</sup>On the meaning of “to bless” (ברך) and its relationship to covenant, Gentry writes, “Blessing operates in the context of a covenant relationship with God. Blessings are the manifestation of a faithfulness, fidelity, and solidarity in relationships whereby one's natural and personal capacity to fulfill God's intention and purpose is advanced and furthered.” Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 242.

<sup>109</sup>McConville writes, “In the proclamation of Yahweh as the Most High God, Abram puts the events narrated in a new light, for the promise which he has received involves a reading of history. Through Abram all the families of the earth will bless themselves (Gn. 12:3). The deliverance of Sodom may betoken this; and the confession in the ears of its king announces it.” McConville, “Abraham and Melchizedek,” 116. McConville also suggests that Abraham's rescue of Lot may have been partly motivated by Abraham's misguided attempt to establish Lot as his heir and, therefore, heir of the covenantal promises made to Abraham. Thus, immediately following the Melchizedek incident, Abraham laments the fact that he still has no heir (Gen 15:2). However, after Abraham encounters Melchizedek and refuses the request of the king of Sodom, we discover that Abraham recognizes that he must receive the promises of God through faith in God without trying to force them (Gen 14:22–23). McConville writes, “In the gift and the polite refusal, therefore, Abram shows how he will possess the land; he will receive it as a

Abraham's kingly and mediatorial roles are both present in Genesis 14. Alexander observes that the "events of Genesis 14 indicate that Abraham is no ordinary semi-nomadic pastoralist. His military exploits place him on a par with kings."<sup>110</sup> Similarly, Wenham writes, "In these scenes Abram is portrayed not merely as the archetypal Israelite who has faith in God, but as a conquering king who has been promised victory over his foes and a great territory."<sup>111</sup> By delivering his nephew Lot, Abraham acted as a mediator on behalf of his kin. Park suggests that these two functions, deliverer and mediator, "came from God by the nature of the Abrahamic covenant" and could be regarded as identical to the two offices of kingship and priesthood.<sup>112</sup> By the time Abraham encounters Melchizedek, Abraham has already proven himself to be, in some sense, a royal priestly figure. Abraham identifies with Melchizedek by accepting Melchizedek's priestly blessing of bread and wine, by offering Melchizedek a tithe, and by swearing an oath with language identical to that spoken by Melchizedek: "God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen 14:19, 22). Commenting on Abraham's tithe and solemn oath, Hahn writes,

After the blessing, Abram gives tithes to Melchizedek (v. 20) . . . Abram then swears a solemn oath (vv. 22–23), which entails the renunciation of the benefaction of the King of Sodom. By means of these two acts (paying the tithe and swearing the oath), Abram pledges continued loyalty to El Elyon and to his priest-king, Melchizedek. The mutuality of covenant solidarity is formally acknowledged by Melchizedek through his priestly blessing and the shared meal of bread and wine.<sup>113</sup>

This covenant solidarity between Abraham and Melchizedek supports the evidence that

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gift." Ibid., 115.

<sup>110</sup>Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 82.

<sup>111</sup>Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC 1 (Waco: TX: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 335.

<sup>112</sup>Sung Jin Park, "Melchizedek as a Covenantal Figure: The Biblical Theology of The Eschatological Royal Priesthood," *Bible.org -Where the World Comes to Study the Bible*, April 4, 2011, sec. 3.1.1, accessed March 3, 2014, <https://bible.org/article/melchizedek-covenantal-figure-biblical-theology-eschatological-royal-priesthood>.

<sup>113</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 131.

Abraham is to be regarded as a royal priestly figure. Alexander asserts,

By affirming the truthfulness of what Melchizedek has to say and rejecting the offer of the king of Sodom, Abraham indicates his own commitment to be a righteous priest-king. Abraham will not inherit the earth through the use of aggressive military power, although clearly his defeat of the eastern kings indicates he has the capacity to do so. Rather, he looks to God to provide for his future well-being.

The biblical data outside the narrative of Genesis 14 solidifies Abraham's royal priestly function. With regard to his royal status, several observations are worth noting. First, the Hittites identify Abraham as a "prince of God" in Genesis 23:5. Second, Abraham's treaty with king Abimelech suggests that Abraham was considered the king's equal. Third, God promises Abraham that kings will come from his line (Gen. 17:6). Fourth, God promises to make Abraham's name great. According to Bill Arnold, "to have a great name given to one by God . . . is to be viewed as a royal figure (2 Sam 7:9)."<sup>114</sup>

With respect to his priestly function, Abraham builds altars and offers sacrifices to God. In Genesis 12, Abraham builds an altar in Canaan—the place later described as the mountain sanctuary of God (Exod 15:11–13; 15–17). Gentry suggests that here "we see Abram fulfilling an *Adamic role*: he offers sacrifice as a priest and worships God in this mountain sanctuary."<sup>115</sup> Moreover, Alexander notes that Abraham's divine encounters and communications with God suggest that "he enjoys a status equivalent to that of a priest, although he is never designated as one."<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, Abraham's intercession before God on behalf of the righteous ones in Sodom hints at his priestly role (Gen 18:22–33). In this scene Abraham functions as a covenant mediator on behalf of the nations. Again, commenting on Genesis 18, Gentry observes that Abraham "intercedes as a *priest for the nations* on the basis of God's own character."<sup>117</sup> Finally,

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<sup>114</sup>Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 132.

<sup>115</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 235.

<sup>116</sup>Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 83.

<sup>117</sup>The scene anticipates Israel's mediatorial role as a royal priesthood on behalf of the nations.

Schrock argues that the covenantal ceremonies recorded in Genesis 15 and 17 highlight Abraham's priestly role as a covenant mediator.<sup>118</sup> He writes "in Genesis 15, Abraham is observed preparing the sacrifices and guarding the holy place of God—the place where God's presence would soon pass. In these twin functions—especially in his driving away the carrion-eating birds of prey—he is acting out the duties that would later be given to the Levitical priests."<sup>119</sup> In Genesis 17, the covenant of circumcision highlights Abraham's priestly identity. According to Gentry, "Circumcision symbolised complete devotion to the service of God as a priesthood. The covenant sign underlines Abraham's Adamic role as a priest in his calling to bring blessing to the nations."<sup>120</sup>

All these considerations support the evidence from Genesis 14:17–24 that Abraham functioned as a royal priestly figure.<sup>121</sup> But why is Abraham's role as priest-king important? First, by painting Abraham in royal priestly colors, Moses demonstrates to the people of Israel that they are part of the redemption plan God promised from the beginning. Their calling as a "royal priesthood" (Exod 19:6) finds its origin in God's covenant with Abraham and, by extension, God's covenant with creation. Through his

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<sup>118</sup>An argument for Abraham's priestly role can also be deduced from Gen 22. For the sake of space, these observation will not be discussed. I simply point readers to David Schrock's discussion of Gen 22 in Schrock, "A Biblical-Theological Investigation," 78–84.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 77–78.

<sup>120</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 275. This quote is also cited by Schrock in his dissertation. Schrock, "A Biblical-Theological Investigation," 77–78. Gentry's discussion of circumcision and its relation to the priesthood relies heavily on John Meade's "The Meaning of Circumcision in Israel: A Proposal for a Transfer of Rite from Egypt to Israel," *Adorare Mente I* (2008): 14–29. In this essay Meade writes that "just as the king-priest was the son of the god in Egypt, and was consecrated to him through circumcision, Israel as the first born son of Yahweh (Ex 4:22–23) has undergone and will undergo circumcision (Josh 5:2–9) in order to be consecrated to his service." Meade goes on to write that "Only priests were obligated to be circumcised in Egypt, but in Israel every male was to be circumcised on the eighth day (Gen 17:12), signifying that Abraham's family consists of priests. Later in the story Israel is called a *kingdom of priests* and a holy nation (Ex 19:6) . . . . As a kingdom of priests, circumcision is the appropriate sign for the people of Israel, for it will remind every male Israelite that he is a priest, specially consecrated to Yahweh and his service." Meade, "The Meaning of Circumcision in Israel, 27–29. This quote is cited in Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 273.

<sup>121</sup>According to Gentry, "Abram is thus adopting a king-priest role originally given to Adam and now given to him." Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 238.

covenant mediator, Israel, God will establish his global kingdom. Second, as already mentioned, Abraham's royal priestly role uniquely identifies him with Melchizedek. The solidarity between Abraham and Melchizedek implies that Melchizedek himself embodies the global implications of the Abrahamic covenant. In other words, the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant will impact the Gentile nations. Furthermore, Melchizedek's association with Abraham hints at the type of priesthood that will be capable of mediating the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant to the world. In this sense, it seems reasonable to deduce from the covenantal context of Genesis 12–15 that Melchizedek functions as the priest of the Abrahamic covenant. Robert Letham draws a similar conclusion:

In Genesis chapter 14 Melchizedek functions in a covenantal context. His blessing of Abram is parallel to Yahweh's blessing him in Genesis 12. In that sense, Melchizedek can be seen as the one through whom the promised covenant blessings are channeled, even mediated. Consequently, he is the priest of the Abrahamic covenant, just as Aaron is the priest of the Mosaic covenant.<sup>122</sup>

The author of Hebrews will make it clear that Melchizedek's priesthood will be the order of priesthood that has the power to mediate the blessing of Abraham in a way that priests under the Mosaic law simply cannot do (cf. Heb 6:14–7:28). In chapter 3, I will argue that Psalm 110:4 reveals that David himself recognized that a Melchizedekian priesthood would be required to mediate the promises of the Abrahamic covenant. For now, it is necessary to further develop the concept of covenantal solidarity between Abraham and Melchizedek in order to lay the groundwork for understanding David's reason for identifying the messiah as a priest "after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps 110:4).

**Melchizedek and the Abrahamic covenantal context of Genesis 15.** There are several textual connections between Genesis 14 and 15 that bind Melchizedek's significance to the Abrahamic covenant. First, Melchizedek's blessing acknowledges God as the sovereign being who "delivered" (מגן) Abraham's enemies into his hand (Gen

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<sup>122</sup>Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ: Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993), 109.

14:20b). The verb מגן only occurs in the Piel stem and it means “to deliver.”<sup>123</sup> The nominal form of the same word occurs in the covenant episode in Genesis 15, where the Lord tells Abraham in 15:1b, “Do not be afraid. I am your shield (מגן); your reward will be exceedingly great.” The nominal מגן, translated “shield,” links God’s covenantal blessing to Abraham (Gen 15:1–6) to Melchizedek’s blessing upon Abraham in Genesis 14:20. Just as God delivered Abraham from battle against the kings (Gen 14:20), so too will God protect Abraham and his future descendants so that they may inherit their reward (Gen 15:1–6). The promise of “reward” at the hands of Yahweh recalls Melchizedek’s and Abraham’s confession of God as the “possessor of heaven and earth” (Gen 14:19, 22). Abraham refused the spoils of war from the hand of the king of Sodom, but God will reward him greatly. Kline comments, “The imagery of Genesis 15:1 is that of the Great King honoring Abraham’s notable exhibition of compliance with covenant duty by the reward of a special grant that would more than make up for whatever enrichment he had foregone at the hands of the king of Sodom for the sake of faithfulness to Yahweh, his Lord.”<sup>124</sup>

Second, Melchizedek identifies with the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 15 through the terms “righteousness” and “peace.” As I already noted, Melchizedek’s name means “king of righteousness.” He is also the king of Salem (שלם) the Hebrew word for peace (cf. Heb 7:2). In Genesis 15:6, Abraham’s faith is counted to him as “righteousness” (צדקה) while in Genesis 15:15, God promises Abraham that he will go to his fathers in “peace” (שלם). Sung Park notes that in Genesis 14, Abraham is depicted as a king-like figure who brings peace to the land.<sup>125</sup> Abraham thus shares with Melchizedek the qualities of righteousness and peace.

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<sup>123</sup>Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *BDB*, 171.

<sup>124</sup>Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 324.

<sup>125</sup>Park, “Melchizedek as a Covenantal Figure,” sec. 3.1.2.



From a canonical perspective, the terms “righteousness” and “peace” are used together in Davidic and Abrahamic covenantal contexts. Concerning the Messiah, Isaiah writes,

Of the increase of his dominion and of *peace* (שלום)  
there will be no end,  
upon the throne of David and over his kingdom  
to establish it and to support it  
with justice and with *righteousness* (צדקה)  
from now unto eternity.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. (Isa 9:7 [MT 9:6])

In Psalm 72, the Davidic king possesses the righteousness of God and judges with righteousness (Ps 72:1–2). His reign is described as one of righteousness and peace in verse 7:

May the *righteous* (צדיק) abound in his days,  
and may *peace* (שלום) multiply until the moon expires. (Ps 72:7)

The terms occur together in Isaiah 48:18 followed immediately by an allusion to the Abrahamic covenant:

Oh that you had paid attention to my commandments!  
Then your *peace* (שלום) would have been like a river,  
and your *righteousness* (צדקה) like the waves of the sea;  
your offspring would have been like the sand,  
and your descendants like its grains;  
their name would never be cut off  
or destroyed from before me. (Isa 48:18–19 ESV)

These verses from Isaiah 9:7 and 48:18–19 demonstrate that later biblical authors characterized the reign of the Davidic king in terms of “righteousness” and “peace,” qualities that were to be characteristic of the nation of Israel, Abraham’s offspring (Isa 48:18–29; cf. 12:2; 22:17). In the immediate context, then, the terms function to link Melchizedek and Abraham together, while from a canonical perspective, “righteousness” and “peace” are defining qualities of the Davidic king.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>126</sup>Commenting on Heb 7:2b—“He [Melchizedek] is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace” (ESV)—Rooke writes, “There

One final observation is worth noting at this point. Salem is later identified in Psalm 76:1–2 with Zion, the city of (Jeru)salem.

In Judah God is known;  
his name is great in Israel.  
His abode has been established in Salem,  
his dwelling place in Zion. (Ps 76:1–2 ESV)

The terms “Salem” and “Zion” stand in synonymous parallelism highlighting their identification with each other. If we understand Salem in Genesis 14 as Jerusalem—the future city of David—then we have in a patriarchal narrative an account of Abraham coming into contact with Jerusalem and her priesthood. Having just established peace by experiencing victory in warfare (Gen 14:1–16), Abraham immediately comes into contact with Jerusalem, the city of peace. The events anticipate David’s own peace producing reign and triumphal entry into Jerusalem (2 Sam 6)—events that will be important for understanding David’s eschatological vision in Psalm 110.<sup>127</sup>

**Summary.** Through the associations between Abraham and Melchizedek, we begin to understand why David would appeal to Melchizedek in Psalm 110:4. Melchizedek was a priest uniquely associated with Abraham, the Abrahamic covenant, and (Jeru)salem. Apart from his desire to see Melchizedek as Shem, Hahn’s comments are appropriate on this point:

A canonical interpretation of the Melchizedek narrative generates a series of important connections that will be invaluable for examining the reappearance of these traditions in the Davidic covenant (Ps 110:4), and also in the royal high

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should be no mistaking the royal overtones of this description. Apart from the explicit use of the term ‘king’, the qualities of righteousness and peace were closely associated in ancient times with the rule of the ideal king, as is evident from a psalm such as Ps 72, where the two qualities listed together in a prayer for the king . . .” Rooke, “Jesus as Royal Priest,” 85–86.

<sup>127</sup>Weinfeld writes, “It is worth observing that Abram acts as ruler over the whole area from north of Damascus to El Paran (Gen 14:6, 15; cf. the promise made to Abraham in Gen 15:18), and so foreshadows the Israelite king who will in the future rule the region.” Moshe Weinfeld, “Zion and Jerusalem as Religious and Political Capital: Ideology and Utopia,” in *The Poet and the Historian: Essays in Literary and Historical Biblical Criticism* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 103. This quote (and its larger context) is also cited by Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 133.

priestly Christology of Hebrews. By linking Melchizedek with Shem, and Salem with Jerusalem, the canonical narrative underwrites the application of such traditions to David, and the divine covenant sworn to “the son of David.”<sup>128</sup>

If David recognized, as I will argue later, that the Davidic covenant would bring to fruition the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, then it would be logical to assume that he also recognized that the priesthood associated with the Abrahamic covenant (i.e., Melchizedek) would play a role in fulfilling the promises of the Davidic covenant.

Furthermore, the Melchizedekian priesthood claims salvation-historical superiority over the Aaronic/Levitical priesthood by virtue of its association with Abraham. Abraham, the father of Israel and chosen by God to bring blessing to the nations, acknowledges Melchizedek’s superior status by paying him a tithe. The superior Melchizedek in turn blesses the inferior Abraham (cf. Heb 7:9). These facts imply that the Melchizedekian priesthood is rooted in the terms of a covenant superior to the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. This superior covenant is the covenant of creation mediated through Adam and later inherited by Noah. We therefore have a basis for the idea that Melchizedek’s priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood because it is tied to the creation ordinance, not the codification of the law. Hahn is on the right track to suggest that “the exaltation of Jesus as the firstborn Son and royal high priest—prefigured by Melchizedek—represents the restoration of a more perfect form of covenant mediation originally intended for Adam and Israel.”<sup>129</sup> Smith similarly suggests, “David . . . realized that the Messiah would be a king-priest like Melchizedek because the Messiah would replace Adam as the king of the world, the firstborn son of all mankind.”<sup>130</sup> Thus, David appeals to the Melchizedekian priesthood—not Adam, Noah,

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<sup>128</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 134.

<sup>129</sup>*Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>130</sup>Smith, “The Royal Priesthood in Exodus 19:6,” 108. By understanding Melchizedek’s priesthood in relation to the creation ordinance, it is not difficult to see why Ps 110:4 and the author of the Hebrews can speak of the permanence of Melchizedek’s priesthood (Heb 7:3, 17, 21). The Levitical priesthood was tied to the temporary legislation of the Mosaic covenant. Melchizedek’s priesthood was grounded in the permanence of the creation ordinance and linked to the salvation-historically superior

or the Levitical priesthood—because the Melchizedekian priesthood simultaneously looks back to God’s creation project for royal priestly humanity and typologically points forward to the Davidic covenant by linking Jerusalem to the Abrahamic covenant.

To sum up, three important truths surface from Melchizedek’s interactions with Abraham: 1) the Melchizedekian priesthood maintains salvation-historical superiority over the Levitical priesthood and functions as the order of priesthood that mediates the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant to the world; 2) the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant will bring about God’s creational purpose for humanity (all nations) to exist as kings and priests unto God; and 3) Melchizedek’s connection to Jerusalem and solidarity with the Abrahamic covenant lays the groundwork for David’s typological interpretation of these events in Psalm 110.

### **Israel**

The final and most explicit expression of royal priesthood in the Pentateuch is found in Exodus 19:6: “And you will be to me a royal priesthood and a holy nation. These are the words that you will speak to the people of Israel.” It is obvious by now that Israel’s royal priestly identity does not appear in a vacuum, but is part of the story begun at creation. The royal priestly task that began with Adam now resides in a nation of priest-kings. Israel will become the conduit through which God’s rule and blessing flow to the rest of the world.

The purpose of this section is to develop the meaning of Israel’s royal priesthood in light of the discussion thus far. The primary goal, therefore, in what follows is (1) to demonstrate that Israel’s identity as a royal priesthood is a function of their role as a new Adam, and (2) to suggest that Aaron’s priesthood represents the royal priesthood of the nation as a whole and is itself a symbolic expression of the priesthood

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Abrahamic covenant.

originally assigned to primal humanity. By proving these claims, I will have demonstrated that the Torah presents a unified development of royal priesthood from creation to Israel as part of God's plan to establish his kingdom on earth. Although the offices of king and priest become institutionalized and separated in Israel's history,<sup>131</sup> the eschatological hope that a royal priest will establish God's kingdom is necessitated by the trajectory of the Torah's metanarrative.

### **The Last Adam**

Prior to Israel becoming a nation, God's covenantal dealings with Noah and Abraham were extensions of the covenant with Adam.<sup>132</sup> Noah and Abraham were to mediate God's rule and blessing by filling the earth with descendants who would bring blessing to the rest of creation. At the end of Genesis, Abraham's seed is in Egypt and it remains to be seen how God's creation project will come to pass. Enter Israel. Israel inherits the Adamic role and owns the privilege of being the final Adam in Old Testament history.

Several observations verify Israel's role as a new and final Adam. First, Exodus 1:7 describes the numerical growth of Israel in language reminiscent of Genesis 1:28: The people were "fruitful" (פֶּרְיָה) and "multiplied" (רָבָה) and "filled" (מָלֵא) the earth.<sup>133</sup> The creation mandate given to Adam and the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant would come to pass through Israel. Second, Exodus 4:22 identifies Israel as

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<sup>131</sup>This discussion should also demonstrate that Israel's identity as a royal priesthood lays the foundation for institutionalized kingship and priesthood in the history of Israel.

<sup>132</sup>Smith's summary on the relationship between the covenants is correct on this point. He writes, "Israel's royal priesthood finds its roots in the royal priesthood of Adam and Noah. God called His firstborn son out of Egypt and set him up over all the nations of the world as a king-priest nation. The covenant given to Israel at Sinai was based upon the Abrahamic covenant, just as the Abrahamic covenant was an extension of the Noachic and the Adamic covenants. In fact, all the covenants in the old covenant era are renewals of the covenant into which Adam was created at the beginning. It is in that original creation covenant that the origins of the royal priesthood are found." Smith, "The Royal Priesthood in Exodus 19:6," 103.

<sup>133</sup>All of these Hebrew terms appear in Gen 1:28.

Yahweh's "firstborn son." Yahweh commands Pharaoh to release his son "so that they might serve me" (ויעבדני, Exod 4:23).<sup>134</sup> The combination of Israel's identity as Yahweh's firstborn son and the purpose of their redemption defined as service to Yahweh suggests that Israel has inherited the Adamic role.<sup>135</sup> Like Adam, Israel now exists in a covenantal relationship with Yahweh characterized by faithful service and obedience to him. Third, Exodus 15:17–18 reveals the grand purpose of Israel's redemption:

You will bring them and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance,  
the place you have made for your dwelling, O Yahweh,  
the sanctuary, O Lord, your hands have established.  
Yahweh will reign forever and ever.

The passage echoes God's project begun at creation. According to Dempster, "The goal of the Exodus is thus the building of the Edenic sanctuary so that the Lord can dwell with his people, just as he once was Yahweh Elohim to the first human beings."<sup>136</sup> Dumbrell helpfully summarizes the relationship between Adam and Israel and their roles in establishing God's kingdom:

Thus the relationship of Israel to Adam is important for the development of the eschatology of the Bible in that the creation account indicates the nature and purpose of Israel's special status in its role of exercising dominion in its world, a status that Adam had once exercised. For beginning with the Cain narrative, the movement from Adam to Israel will be accomplished by a series of divine selections that are designed to bring Israel onto the world stage. This series of movements

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<sup>134</sup>The ׀ conjunctive followed by the volitional mood always communicates purpose. See Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, sec. 34.6.

<sup>135</sup>The verb עבד appears in twice in Gen 2 to describe man's responsibility to maintain God's garden-sanctuary (Gen 2:5, 15). Furthermore, priests are identified as "servants of Yahweh" (עבדי יהוה) in Ps 134:1 and 135:1 and "servants/ministers" (משרת) in several other places (cf. Jer 33:21; Ezek 45:4; 2 Chr 3:10). Peter Leithart argues that the defining quality of Old Testament priesthood is that of service to Yahweh. He suggests that "fundamentally . . . priests were ministers, stewards, or administrators of Yahweh's house and his personal attendants." Leithart, "Attendants of Yahweh's House," 12. On Israel as son of God and inheritor of the Adamic role, Gentry writes, "Israel will display to the rest of the world within its covenant community the kind of relationships first to God and then to one another and to the physical world, that God intended originally for all humanity." Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 303.

<sup>136</sup>Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 100. See also Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 227. For a typological reading of the Song of Moses, see Norbert Lohfink, *The Christian Meaning of the Old Testament*, trans. R. A. Wilson (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1968), 67–86.

results in God's concluding the Sinai covenant, by which he establishes a special relationship with Israel. In turn the Sinai covenant is designed to bring the world of nations into the sphere of the universal kingdom of God. The final status of the saved will be as kings and priests unto God (Rev 1:5–6; 5:10; 20:4–6), with the fulfillment of this expectation met at Revelation 22:1–5. These texts make it clear that the function of the creation account is to indicate the nature and purpose of Israel's special status as the bearer of the role that Adam once occupied.<sup>137</sup>

Thus, like Adam, Israel exists to establish God's kingdom (royalty) by displaying to the surrounding world what life in the sanctuary (priesthood) of God looks like.

### **A Royal Priesthood**

The purpose of the Sinai covenant is made plain in Exodus 19:5–6: obedience to Yahweh will make Israel Yahweh's own "treasured possession," "royal priesthood" and "holy nation." This revelation appears at a climactic moment within the narrative. In fact this episode appears as part of the central narrative of the entire Pentateuch.<sup>138</sup> The events at Sinai describing God's covenant with Israel are the substance of this central narrative. The purpose of the covenant is that Israel would mediate God's rule and blessing to the entire world by functioning as a "royal priesthood" (Exod 19:6).<sup>139</sup> Before situating Exodus 19:6 in biblical-theological context, a few comments are necessary on the meaning of Exodus 19:6 and the phrase מְמִלְכָת כְּהֹנִיִּים.

Since its publication in 2004, John Davies' monograph *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19:6* has quickly

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<sup>137</sup>Dumbrell, "Genesis 2:1–17," 62.

<sup>138</sup>Dempster observes several narrative signals that highlight the importance and centrality of the Sinai episode within the Torah. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 100–101. Sailhamer similarly argues that the "Sinai narrative is at the center of the compositional strategy of the Pentateuch." Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 365.

<sup>139</sup>In light of Israel's identity as a *royal* priesthood, it is difficult to see how Fletcher-Louis can deny the strong kingship theme in the Pentateuch. He writes, "In its canonical form the Sinaitic covenant, the institution of the tabernacle (as ideal temple) and the supremacy of the (high) priesthood of Aaron and the prophetic-teaching role of the Levite Moses define the utopian vision of Israel's political existence. The Pentateuch is almost devoid of royalty." Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1," *JSHJ* 4, no. 2 (2006): 167. Fletcher-Louis' comment is either a major overstatement or just plain false. We do not need the presence of an established monarchy with institutionalized kingship in order to find regal concepts in the Pentateuch. I believe I have demonstrated that royal overtones permeate the scriptural storyline beginning with the very first page of Scripture.

become the *locus classicus* on the meaning and function of Israel's identity as מְלִכְתָּהּ כֹּהֲנִים in Exodus 19:6. Based on syntactical and linguistic evidence, Davies argues that מְלִכְתָּהּ כֹּהֲנִים is best rendered as "royal priesthood." Davies argues for what he calls an "active-corporate" interpretation of the phrase מְלִכְתָּהּ כֹּהֲנִים.<sup>140</sup> The combination of terms, according to Davies, denotes a "collective royal company consisting of 'priests.'"<sup>141</sup> This corporate royal priestly identity grants Israel a unique and privileged position with respect to God. Davies concludes, "As a nation, Israel is assured of the privilege of royal status, a royalty characterized by the essence of priesthood, namely, access to the divine presence. Israel's corporate priesthood is pre-eminently that which is exercised towards God, not other nations." Israel's priestly service to God is part of what it means for them to exist as Yahweh's "personal treasure" and firstborn son (Exod 19:5; cf. Exod 4:22). According to Gentry, "When Yahweh calls Israel to be his personal treasure, he is speaking of the kind of devoted service given by a son."<sup>142</sup>

Israel's royal priestly prerogative is reminiscent of God's royal priestly covenantal son Adam who enjoyed God's presence in the garden. Yet, this observation needs further development. I will argue that Exodus links Israel's role to God's original commission to Adam in two primary ways: 1) by highlighting parallels between the tabernacle and creation and the garden of Eden, and 2) by demonstrating that the Aaronic priesthood, as a representation of Israel's corporate priesthood, echoes primal humanity's priest-king status.

**An Edenic tabernacle.** The reasons for viewing the tabernacle as a symbolic

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<sup>140</sup>Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 76.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., 86. The priestly function of Israel in the immediate context of Exod 19 is not primarily concerned with sacrifice. Instead, their priestly identity is one that gives them access to God. As a royal company consisting of priests, Israel has access to the divine presence.

<sup>142</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 318. Gentry persuasively argues on the basis of literary structure and ancient Near Eastern parallels that סִגְלָה ("personal treasure") is tied to service and sonship. Ibid., 315–17.



microcosm of the cosmos and an Edenic sanctuary are apparent from several points of contact between the description of the tabernacle in Exodus 25–31 and 39–40 and Genesis 1–2.<sup>143</sup> First, the seven speeches of Yahweh to Moses (“The Lord said to Moses...”) in Exodus 25–31 echo the seven days of creation in Genesis 1 and the respective substance of each of those days.<sup>144</sup> Most notably in this regard are the sixth and seventh speeches of Yahweh to Moses; the sixth speech emphasizes the “installation of two human beings filled with the Spirit of God to implement the making of the structure”<sup>145</sup>, while the seventh is a reminder of the importance of Sabbath keeping for the people of Israel and concludes with a direct reference to creation: “in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed” (Exod 31:17 ESV). Second, Weinfeld has provided a helpful summary of the linguistic parallels between the completion of the tabernacle described in Exodus 39–40 and the creation narrative in Genesis 1–2 (see table 6).<sup>146</sup> Commenting on the relationship between the tabernacle, Sabbath, and creation and its significance in Israel’s history, Dempster writes,

...this shows that the covenant at Sinai marks a people that manifests God’s intentions for creation from the beginning: the rule of God. Just as the Sabbath was a sign of God’s rule at creation, so it becomes a sign of his rule in history. There is a significant progression here: the stability of the world order, the blessing of descendants, human activity mirroring divine activity. This is a noteworthy expression of rulership and dominion in history. Created order leads to descendants who exercise dominion. Just as the divine ruler worked and rested, human beings are to work and rest. This kingdom of priests is to manifest God’s rule to the

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<sup>143</sup>The notion of the tabernacle as a new Eden and symbol of creation has been argued above as well as by several other scholars. For a few examples, see Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 145–49; Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 66–76; Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story”; Moshe Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord: The Problem of the ‘Sitz Im Leben’ of Genesis 1:1–2:3,” in *Melanges Bibliques et Orientaux En L’honneur de M Henri Cazelles* (Kevelaer, Germany: Butzon and Bercker, 1981), 501–12; Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 122–24.

<sup>144</sup>Crispin H. T Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 63, 76.

<sup>145</sup>Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 102.

<sup>146</sup>Table 6 is adapted from Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord,” 503.

world.<sup>147</sup>

Dempster is right to highlight the royal implications that flow from the significance of the tabernacle as a microcosm of creation. Once world order is stabilized, represented by the construction and maintenance of the tabernacle, the new humanity (Israel) is to fulfill the Adamic role of mediating God's rule and blessing to the rest of the world. Hence, the royal tent helps give meaning to the royal purpose of the nation.

Table 6. Linguistic parallels between Exodus 39–40 and Genesis 1–2

Exodus 39–40	Genesis 1–2
And when Moses saw that they had performed all the tasks (כל המלאכה) as the Lord had commanded, so they had done (והנה עשר תהאו) (Exod 39:43)	And God saw all that he had made, (כל אשר עשה) and found it (והנה) very good. (Gen 1:31)
Thus was completed all (ותכל כל) the work of the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting. (Exod 39:32)	The heaven and the earth were completed (ויכלו) and all (וכל) their array. (Gen 2:1)
When Moses had finished the work (ויכל משה את-המלאכה) (Exod 40:33)	God finished the work which He had been doing (מלאכתו אשר עשה) . . . (וכל אלהים) (Gen 2:2)
Moses blessed (ויברך) them. (Exod 39:43)	And God blessed... (ויברך) (Gen 2:3)
...to sanctify (וקדשת) it and all its furnishings (Exod 40:9)	And sanctified it (ויקדש) (Gen 2:3)

The royal tent, however, was also a priestly tent. This fact not only finds support from the obvious reality that the tabernacle was the place where priests performed their duties, but also from the association between the tabernacle and Eden.<sup>148</sup> The tabernacle as a whole functioned as a microcosm of creation, but the inner sanctuary (holy of holies) symbolized the garden of Eden. Beale has demonstrated that the tripartite

<sup>147</sup>Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 103.

<sup>148</sup>I have noted above the associations between the garden of Eden and the tabernacle and temple. These observations do not need to be rehearsed again here.

structure of the tabernacle and temple was a reflection of the tripartite structure of the garden of Eden.<sup>149</sup> Genesis 2:10 indicates that the garden and Eden formed two distinct regions—“a river flowed *out of* Eden to water the garden.” The eschatological temples in Ezekiel 47 and Revelation 22 present similar imagery with a river flowing out of the inner sanctuary to water the earth around. If, as Beale argues, the outer court of the temple represented the land and seas outside of the garden, then the tripartite structure of the tabernacle-temple is a mirror image of the tripartite structure of Eden, the garden, and the world outside. Beale writes,

Thus, one may be able to perceive an increasing gradation in holiness from outside the garden proceeding inward: the region outside the garden is related to God and is ‘very good’ (Gen 1:31) in that it is God’s creation (= the outer court); the garden itself is a sacred space separate from the outer world (= the holy place), where God’s priestly servant worships God by obeying him, by cultivating and guarding; Eden is where God dwells (= the holy of holies) as the source of both physical and spiritual life (symbolized by the waters).<sup>150</sup>

The association between the tabernacle and Eden is strong evidence that Israel has inherited Adam’s role as priest. Like Adam, who was placed in the garden to enjoy God’s presence and learn God’s ways before taking dominion over the earth, Israel—through her priests—enjoys access to God and must make the worship of Yahweh the priority if they are to be a blessing to other nations.

Furthermore, Israel’s collective responsibility to build the tabernacle parallels Adam’s royal commission to build God’s temple to take dominion over the earth by expanding the borders of the garden-sanctuary. Davies explains,

In keeping with the expectation that sanctuary-building is the work of a chosen king, acting on instructions of a god and according to a divinely revealed pattern, it is suggested that Israel corporately functions as a royal sanctuary builder according to Exodus, in keeping with the designation as a ‘royal priesthood.’<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup>Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 74–75.

<sup>150</sup>*Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>151</sup>Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 169. Gentry’s conclusion is similar: “Chapters 25–40 describe the construction of a place of worship, showing the proper response to the divine kingship established among the people by means of the covenant. Just as Genesis 1 establishes divine rule via covenant,

Israel's calling as a "royal priesthood" implies that the tabernacle (God's dwelling place) was not intended to remain relegated to the people of Israel.<sup>152</sup> Beale also notes the connection between the repetition of the Adamic commission to the patriarchs and the construction of small sanctuaries (altars). This connection, according to Beale, suggests that the patriarchs built these "impermanent, miniature" sanctuaries as symbolic of the fact that their descendants were to spread out "and subdue the earth from a divine sanctuary in fulfillment of the commission in Genesis 1:26–28."<sup>153</sup> These sanctuaries anticipate Israel's tabernacle and temple "from which Israel was to branch out over all the earth."<sup>154</sup> As a corporate covenant mediator, Israel was to mediate God's reign (kingdom) by bringing others into the boundaries of his dwelling presence (priest).<sup>155</sup>

Finally, it is worth noting that as a microcosm of creation (royal tent) and Edenic sanctuary (priestly tent), the tabernacle functions as a symbolic representation of Israel's identity as a royal priesthood. The likelihood of this claim receives support from the fact that the priest, who embodied Israel's identity as a royal priesthood, wore clothing that was regal in character and shared similar imagery, colors, and design to that of the tabernacle.<sup>156</sup> In the tabernacle, then, we have a picture of the dwelling place of

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followed by the priority of worship in the sanctuary in Genesis 2, so the book of Exodus establishes God as king in the midst of Israel, followed by the priority of worship for the nation as God's Adamic son." Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 307–8. Elsewhere Gentry writes, "Since in the Bible and the ancient Near East, kings are the ones who build temples, Israel as a nation building the tabernacle in Exodus 25–40 also depicts her royal status. She is a king-priest." *Ibid.*, 322.

<sup>152</sup>Blackburn suggests that "the purpose of the tabernacle was not *limited* to Israel, by virtue of the fact that Israel herself was called for the nations." W. Ross Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known: The Missionary Heart of the Book of Exodus* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012), 150.

<sup>153</sup>Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 97.

<sup>154</sup>*Ibid.*, 97–98.

<sup>155</sup>Following Beale, Blackburn concludes that "the missionary mandate first given to Adam, and then to Israel, is given so that the Lord's presence would extend throughout the earth, bringing blessing to all its families." Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known*, 150.

<sup>156</sup>I discuss the regal character of the priestly vestments below. On this point see also Davies, *Royal Priesthood*, 157–61. On the association between the priestly vestments and the tabernacle, see Beale,

God (tabernacle) symbolically representing a new humanity—redeemed Israel. This observation is important for lending credence to a typological understanding of the tabernacle. If the royal priestly tent represented Israel’s identity as a royal priesthood, and the messiah would embody the nation as a righteous priest-king (Ps 110), then it is not a stretch to assume that the tabernacle typologically pointed to an individual who would mediate God’s presence in his own person as God’s righteous royal priest and true Israel.<sup>157</sup> God’s royal house—made of wood, stone, and fabric—pointed forward to a royal house that would be made of flesh (Jn 1:14).

### **Aaron as *Royal Priest***

Israel’s collective priesthood raises questions about the existence of the Aaronic priesthood. If Adam’s role as priest-king is the origin of Israel’s identity as a royal priesthood, then how does the Aaronic priesthood fit into the picture? Why does the Aaronic priesthood even exist? Is there any relationship between the Aaronic priesthood and Adam’s role as priest-king or Melchizedek’s royal priesthood? In what follows I will argue that the Aaronic priesthood is another expression of the royal priesthood originally given to Adam, though it is grounded not in creation, but in the Mosaic covenant. In order to demonstrate the link between Aaron and Adam, it is necessary to develop two main observations: 1) the Aaronic priesthood embodies the royal priesthood of Israel and

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*The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 39–42; Meredith G. Kline, “Investiture with the Image of God,” *WTJ* 40, no. 1 (September 1, 1977): 46–51. It is interesting to note that in 2 Kgs 16:10 the terms דמות and תבנית are synonymous to each other. The term תבנית is used to describe the pattern of the tabernacle (Exod 25:9, 40), while Gen 1:26 describes humanity as the “image” and דמות (“likeness”) of God (cf. Gen 2:22 where God “built” [בנה] the woman from Adam’s rib). The link between דמות and תבנית may contribute to the web of associations between primal humanity, the priest, and the tabernacle.

<sup>157</sup>If this observation is correct, one may conclude that the tabernacle structure functioned as a type of Christ. God’s house, i.e., his tabernacle-temple, was fulfilled in the person of Jesus and by extension those in union with him, namely the church. Furthermore, we may conclude that the New Testament’s depiction of Jesus as the fulfillment of the tabernacle and temple suggests not only that Jesus, in his person, manifests the presence of God among men, but that as the last Adam and true Israel, Jesus fulfills the royal priestly mandate given to Adam and Israel and symbolized in the tabernacle-temple.

thus her role as a new Adam, and 2) the priest symbolically portrays God's original design for humanity: regal servants possessing access to God's presence.

**Israel's royal priesthood and Aaron's priesthood.** If God called Israel to be a royal community of priests, then why was there a need for the Aaronic order? Hahn argues that Israel lost their status as royal priests because of their idolatry with the golden calf (Exod 32) and, as a result, the rites of the priesthood transferred to the tribe of Levi.<sup>158</sup> Sailhamer offers a more nuanced interpretation of the relationship between Israel's royal priesthood and the Aaronic priesthood within Israel. By analyzing the compositional strategy of Exodus 19–24, Sailhamer argues that the need for a priesthood within the community of Israel arose out of the people's failure to meet with God at Mount Sinai (Exod 19:13, 16–21; 20:18–21). At Sinai, the people of Israel are afraid to approach God, so they ask Moses to go before God on their behalf. Sailhamer proposes that the people “appear to be asking for a priesthood to represent them, to teach them, and to stand before God in their place.”<sup>159</sup> Whereas Hahn argued that the failure of the golden calf incident gave rise to the Levitical priesthood, Sailhamer suggests that it is the people's failure to draw near to Yahweh that gives rise to the priesthood in the community of Israel. According to Sailhamer, “The fundamental failures recorded in Exodus 19:19 and Exodus 20:18–21 thus lead to and give an occasion for the need of a priesthood and a temple (Exod 19:20–25).”<sup>160</sup> Both Hahn and Sailhamer are less than satisfying on this point.

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<sup>158</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 146–55.

<sup>159</sup>Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 390. The people of Israel, according to Sailhamer, “traded a personal face-to-face relationship with God for a priesthood.” *Ibid.*, 392. Sailhamer does not hinge his conclusions about priesthood in Israel on the golden calf episode. He writes, “Israel's fear that lay behind their need for a safe approach to God. It was for that reason that the tabernacle was given to Israel. The golden calf was an important part of God's motive for giving Israel the tabernacle but that was not the only reason. There were multiple “transgressions” of the people recorded in these texts. There were stages of transgressions that led up to the golden calf and also followed it.” *Ibid.*, 399.

<sup>160</sup>Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 394.

The texts in question do not demand that we conclude that Israel's priesthood was *replaced* by a "professional priestly class" after the golden calf incident. Indeed, Aaron was an integral part of the idolatrous affair (Exod 32:2–6, 35) and his priesthood was later restored after God graciously renewed his covenant with Israel (Exod 34:10–27). The problem with Sailhamer's argument is that his reconstruction of the events at Sinai contradicts what the text actually says. The people were commanded not to go near the mountain or touch it (Exod 19:12), but Sailhamer claims they were to do just the opposite.<sup>161</sup> A more satisfying solution is that the events at Sinai show us that while Israel maintained their communal identity as a royal priesthood, they needed a representative like Moses to mediate on their behalf.<sup>162</sup> Within the community of priests, there remained a need for a single covenant mediator to represent the people and order their relationship to God—hence the Aaronic/Levitical priesthood.<sup>163</sup> Thus, Davies is accurate to conclude

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<sup>161</sup>At this point Sailhamer has contradicted his compositional method of interpretation. He ends up going behind the text to reconstruct the events at Sinai, rather than forming his interpretation based on what is actually in the text.

<sup>162</sup>Sailhamer writes that "in the depiction of the Sinai covenant...an emphasis was placed on the need for a mediator and for an office of priesthood." Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 399. Gentry reaches a similar conclusion based on the repeated descriptions of Moses going up and down the mountain. He writes, "The constant ascending and descending provides a vivid portrayal of the distance between the people and God and the need for a mediator." Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 309. This solution fits with Davies' observation that the meaning of Israel's corporate royal priesthood is not primarily functional, but ontological. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 97–98.

<sup>163</sup>It must be noted that the Torah portrays Moses himself as a royal priestly figure. It is not necessary to develop Moses's function as a royal priest in order to advance my thesis. Nevertheless, I will make a few comments on this point. The book of Exodus presents Moses as a priest on behalf of the people of Israel. Moses's priestly role is primarily a function of his privilege of having access to God. Moses's theophanic encounter with the burning bush on the mountain of Horeb anticipated the Israel's own experience at Mount Sinai as a corporate priesthood. At Horeb, Moses is given access to divine space, just as Israel and her later priests would receive access to God's presence (cf. Exod 19:13, 16–17; 28:43). Exod 19 depicts Moses ascending the mountain to meet with God (Exod 19:3, 20–22). Furthermore, Moses's privileged access to God in the tent of meeting anticipated the ministry of priests in the tabernacle (Exod 33:7–11). Moses's priestly identity is confirmed by Ps 99:6 where Moses and Aaron, are described as Yahweh's priests. Deut 33:4–5 reveals that Moses is also to be considered a kingly figure. Upon giving the תורה Moses is described as "king in Jeshurun" (Deut 33:5). He thus serves as archetypal 'king' in Israel's history. For the argument that Deut 33:5 refers to Moses, see John Lierman, *The New Testament Moses: Christian Perceptions of Moses and Israel in the Setting of Jewish Religion*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 80–85. The arguments for viewing Moses as a royal figure cannot be developed here. For an extensive analysis of the Pentateuch's portrayal of Moses as a royal figure, see Danny Mathews, *Royal*

that the “Levitical priesthood as portrayed in Exodus is seen not as diminishing or supplanting the collective royal priesthood, but as providing a visual model of that vocation, and secondly as facilitating it.”<sup>164</sup> There is, according to Davies, a “deliberate typology” between the priestly activity of Aaron and the communal priestly identity: “What is declared to be ideally true for all Israel at one level is portrayed stylistically in Aaron and his sons on another level.”<sup>165</sup> Similarly, Smith suggests that the “Aaronic priesthood supplemented the royal priesthood of the nation and was charged with the responsibilities of priestly service in the tabernacle, but the royal priesthood remained fundamental.”<sup>166</sup> The representative nature of the Aaronic priesthood is confirmed by the symbolism of the priestly garments, as Aaron was to wear an ephod with two stones bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel before Yahweh (Exod 28:6–12). When Aaron entered the most holy place, the twelve tribes entered through him.<sup>167</sup>

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*Motifs in the Pentateuchal Portrayal of Moses*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 571 (New York: T&T Clark, 2012). Moses’s royal priestly identity is important because it demonstrates that even though Israel was to mediate God’s rule to the rest of the world as a corporate royal priesthood, the Israelites themselves needed a mediator like Moses to intercede before God on their behalf. Moses embodies Israel’s identity as a corporate royal priesthood just as the Messiah would later adopt this role. Moses, as a royal lawgiver who enjoys privileged access to the divine sanctuary, recalls Adam’s royal priestly task in the garden and anticipates the messiah’s ministry on behalf of the nations (Ps 1–2; 110). At a point in the narrative when the royal priestly assignment has been given to a nation, there remains a clue that the establishment of God’s kingdom will come through an individual priest-king.

<sup>164</sup>Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 240.

<sup>165</sup>*Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>166</sup>Smith, “The Royal Priesthood in Exodus 19:6,” 107. Davies summarizes the relationship between corporate Israel and the institutional priesthood. He writes, “The notion of the corporate royal priesthood of Israel is not inherently in tension with the notion of a restricted institutional (Aaronic or Levitical) priesthood any more than it is with the notion of the Davidic monarchy... Rather, the Aaronic priesthood is presented as both modeling and facilitating (in the cultic drama) the nearness to God which is the objective of Israel’s covenantal relationship to Yhwh . . . . Priests share characteristics of royalty in the prevailing ideology of priesthood in the ancient Near East. Israel had a collective memory of ancient priest-kings, and the descriptions of the garb of the Israelite priests preserve something of these royal associations. In their priests, the Israelites had a perpetual reminder of their own royal-priestly standing and privilege.” Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 168-69.

<sup>167</sup>Davies similarly writes, “When the priest enters the divine presence in the sanctuary, the community enters through him.” Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 166.



As a symbolic embodiment of Israel's royal priesthood, the Aaronic priesthood itself is yet another expression in salvation history of the priesthood originally assigned to Adam in the garden. Adam was a priest-king, Israel is a new Adam and royal priesthood, and Aaron and his sons embody Israel's communal identity as priests before God. This unity of priestly development in the canon of Scripture does not deny the unique differences that characterize the Aaronic priesthood. Unlike Adam, Noah, and Melchizedek, the Aaronic priesthood takes on a new form of cultic and liturgical responsibility due to its position in salvation history. Smith's comment on this matter is well put,

Though the nature of priestly ministry did not fundamentally change, the service of the Aaronic priests at the tabernacle and temple delineated in the Mosaic covenant constituted the most specialized and refined epitome of priestly service in the entire old covenant era. As an advanced form of the Adamic and Noahic priesthood, the Aaronic ministry provided the most exalted typological depiction of priestly labor and therefore had to be fulfilled by the Messiah, even though His priesthood was not Aaronic.<sup>168</sup>

The establishment of the nation of Israel and the covenant at Sinai required an institutionalized priesthood in relation to the tabernacle. The Mosaic covenant gave priestly labor a formal job description, so to speak. The stipulations of the covenant defined how priests were to minister before God and on behalf of the people within the confines of the central sanctuary. Thus, even though the nature of priestly duties became more nuanced and detailed with the establishment of the Aaronic priesthood in the Mosaic covenant, there remains an obvious connection between Aaron's priesthood, Israel's status as a royal priesthood, and humanity's creational purpose to function as priest-kings in the service of God. The Aaronic priesthood does not introduce a radically new form of priesthood into the narrative, but instead represents an institutionalized display of cultic ministry within the confines of a geopolitical nation.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>168</sup>Smith, "The Royal Priesthood in Exodus 19:6," 108.

<sup>169</sup>According to Davies, "The notion of Israel's corporate priesthood is the frame of reference

The ontology of priesthood in Israel, nevertheless, finds its etiology in God's original design for humanity. Thus, we would expect to find some association between the Aaronic priestly ministry and humanity's original royal priestly role. To this topic I now turn.

**The priest as the primal man.** Commenting on Israel's high priest, Keil writes, "The Old Testament knows nothing whatever of a royal dignity as attaching to the office of the high priest."<sup>170</sup> However, this can hardly be the case as there are several points of contact between the Aaronic priesthood and Adam's role as priest-king in the garden.<sup>171</sup> First, the priest's vestments had a regal quality.<sup>172</sup> The priest's "turban" (מצנפת) Exod 28:4; Lev 8:9; צניף in Isa 62:3 and Zech 3:5) was set with a holy "crown" (נוֹר) Exod 29:6; Lev 8:9). The נֹזֶר symbolized royal power (Pss 89:40; 132:18) and was worn by kings during the monarchy (2 Sam 1:10; 2 Kgs 11:12).<sup>173</sup> Moreover, the cosmic symbolism of the priestly attire adorns the priest with the royal dignity originally given to humanity at creation.<sup>174</sup> The symbolic colors of "blue" (תכלת), "purple" (ארגמן), and

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for understanding the significance of the cult and . . . is never seen to be in competition with the cultic priest-hood." Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 169. Davies also writes, "From this framework, it is not difficult, then, to see the rationale for much of the remainder of the priestly duties. As the one who moves between heaven and earth, the priest is ideally placed to be a mediator of divine blessing and an imparter of divine truth. Even his role as a certifier of that which is healthy or free from agents of decay finds ready explanation (Lev. 13–14). The priest is the living symbol of blessing and wellbeing, of life to the full, of all that humanity should be and could be in relation to God." *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>170</sup>Carl F. Keil, *Manual of Biblical Archaeology*, ed. Frederick Crombie, trans. Peter Christie (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1887), 1:232.

<sup>171</sup>Kline argues that "Aaron's priestly investiture corresponds to the original creation of man in the image of God's Glory." Kline, "Investiture with the Image of God," 46.

<sup>172</sup>For an in-depth discussion of the priestly vestments, see Keil, *Manual of Biblical Archaeology*; 1:230–36.

<sup>173</sup>In Ezek 21:25–26 [MT 21:30–31] Yahweh orders the "prince" (נשיא) of Israel to remove the "turban" (מצנפת) and take off the "crown" (עטרה). The imagery conflates the priestly and kingly roles into the single figure of the prince.

<sup>174</sup>Fletcher-Louis suggests that "the making of the priestly garments in Exodus 39 is structured so as to recall the tenfold sequence of creative acts Genesis 1 . . . . This seems to say that the 'manufacture'

“scarlet” (שני) appear together 26 times in Exodus 25–28 and 35–39, all describing either the tabernacle or the priest’s clothing.<sup>175</sup> The “onyx” (שהם) stones set in “gold” (זהב) filigree similarly appear as material for both the tabernacle and priestly ephod and breastplate (Exod 25:7; 28:9, 20; 35:9, 27; 39:6, 13), and allude to the Edenic world of Genesis 2.<sup>176</sup> Ezekiel 28:13 uses similar terminology to describe the king of Tyre as a priestly Adamic figure in the garden of God.<sup>177</sup> Furthermore, Beale has demonstrated that the priest’s garment had three primary sections that corresponded to the three sections of the tabernacle and temple.<sup>178</sup> The shared imagery between the tabernacle and priestly vestments suggests that the priest functions as cosmic man keeping order in the microcosm (tabernacle) of creation.<sup>179</sup> The description of the priestly wardrobe in Exodus 28 is framed by a purpose statement concerning the fabrication of these garments, namely

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of Aaron’s garments by Bezalel, the one who has divine Wisdom and the Spirit of God (Exod 31.1–3), recapitulates God’s own creation of the cosmos.” Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1,” 159n13.

<sup>175</sup>See Exod 25:4; 26:1, 31, 36; 27:16; 28:5f, 8, 15, 33; 35:6, 23, 25, 35; 36:8, 35, 37; 38:18, 23; 39:1–3, 5, 8, 24, 29

<sup>176</sup>The terms שהם and זהב both appear in Gen 2:12.

<sup>177</sup>The precious stones listed in this chapter include שהם and זהב.

<sup>178</sup>On this point Beale writes, “First, the outermost part at the bottom (the outer court), on which were sewn ‘pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet’ along ‘with variegated flowers’ represented the fertile earth. Secondly, the main body of bluish robe (the holy place), within which and on the upper part of which are set the jewels, symbolized the stars that are set in the sky. Thirdly, the square ephod resembles the square of the holy of holies, within which were placed the Urim and Thumim, stones representing God’s revelatory presence (the priest’s crown with ‘holy to the Lord’ inscribed on it may represent the divine presence in heaven or above the ark in the temple’s sanctuary that the ephod symbolized).” Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 39–40.

<sup>179</sup>A similar understanding of the cosmic symbolism of the priestly office is found in ancient Jewish commentators. Philo, for example, writes that “the high priest of the Jews offers them [prayers] up not only on behalf of the whole race of mankind, but also on behalf of the different parts of nature, of earth, of water, of air, and of fire; and pours forth his prayers and thanksgiving for them all, looking upon the world... as his country, for which, therefore, he is accustomed to implore and propitiate its governor by supplications and prayers, beseeching him to give a portion of his own merciful and human nature to the things which he has created.” Philo, “De Specialibus Legibus,” in *The Works of Philo*, trans. C.D. Yonge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), secs. 1.80–1.97; See also Philo, “De Vita Mosis,” in *The Works of Philo*, trans. C. D. Yonge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), secs. 2.117–26, 133–35; Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, n.d., sec. 4.324.

לְתִפְאֲרָתָּהּ וּלְתִכְבוֹדָּהּ (“for glory and for beauty,” Exod 28:2, 40). Cheung suggests that the description was “mostly likely an echo of God’s original purpose to crown . . . man ‘with glory . . . and majesty’ (Ps 8:5)”<sup>180</sup> The linen garments that covered the priest’s “naked flesh” likely allude to the garden where God covered the nakedness of Adam and Eve—a condition now necessary for access to God’s presence in a fallen world (Gen 3:10, 21).<sup>181</sup> Access to God’s presence is also the reason behind the priest’s sacrificial duties. The sacrifices put away sin so that the priest could enter into the presence of God—access that was “free for Adam, the primal man-priest before the fall.”<sup>182</sup> Related to the notion of the priest as the primal man (new Adam) was the prescription that priests not have any bodily imperfections (Lev 21). He represented, according to Cheung, “the restored creation” and imperfections “were not part of the original creation, and hence they must not be associated with the priest.”<sup>183</sup> The cumulative effect of these considerations concerning the priest and the tabernacle is, in the words of Davies, “the prospect of Eden restored, and a restored humanity to dwell in it in security and harmony with God and with the world around them.”<sup>184</sup>

**Summary.** The combined evidence supports the hypothesis that the Aaronic

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<sup>180</sup>Alex T. M. Cheung, “The Priest as the Redeemed Man: A Biblical-Theological Study of the Priesthood,” JETS 29, no. 3 (1986): 268. Isaiah later applies the terms “glory” and “beauty” to a redeemed Israel who models for the nations the righteousness that comes from living in covenant relationship to Yahweh (Isa 62:2–3). Isaiah 28:5 appears to describe royal and priestly imagery to Yahweh—“In that day Yahweh of hosts will be a crown of honor (צָבִי) and a diadem of beauty (תִּפְאֲרָה) to the remnant of his people.” If this is right, then the picture of Yahweh himself as a royal priest would be consistent with the picture of Yahweh in Isa 6 as a priest-king in the temple (cf. John 12:36–43).

<sup>181</sup>Cheung writes, “God clothed Adam and Eve with garments so that their fear of judgment in his presence might subside.” Ibid., 269. Exodus 20:26 applies a similar concept to the nation as a whole: “You shall not go up by steps to my altar, that your nakedness be exposed not on it” (ESV).

<sup>182</sup>Ibid., 268.

<sup>183</sup>Ibid. It is also likely that the priest’s responsibility to discern between “good” and “evil” recalls Adam’s similar responsibility in the garden (Lev 27:12, 14; cf. Gen 2:9, 17; 3:5).

<sup>184</sup>Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 165.

priesthood itself was a picture of primal humanity and thus a picture of *royal* priesthood. As the representative of the entire community, the high priest adopted Israel's identity as a royal priesthood. Furthermore, the priest represented the people of God as a cosmic man keeping order in the microcosm of creation. After creating his cosmic temple, God placed his "image" (Gen 1:26–27) in the garden-sanctuary to learn God's ways before mediating God's rule to the world. In a similar fashion, the people of Israel, led by a man filled with the "Spirit of God" (רוח אלהים) (Exod 31:3; cf. Gen 1:2), created a microcosm of creation (tabernacle) as the sanctuary where God's image (the high priest) would maintain the priority of worship for a nation called to mediate God's rule to the rest of the world.<sup>185</sup> Israel would only be able to establish God's kingdom (king) by maintaining the privilege of access to God's presence (priest).

### **Conclusion**

The union of the offices of priest and king in a single figure is an integral part of Scripture's metanarrative. By following the covenantal structure of the narrative, this chapter has revealed a unified development of royal priesthood in the Torah. The opening pages of Scripture reveal that God's purpose to establish his kingdom on earth would come through a human royal priest. The reign of God is to be mediated by a king who serves God in the sanctuary (priest). Through procreation, humanity was to build God's temple by expanding the holy ground of his presence to cover the entire earth. Adam failed to fulfill this great commission. Nevertheless, the royal priestly task is recapitulated in several covenantal figures: Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, and Israel. Each of these figures is connected to Adam's role as priest-king in God's creation plan. Adam was a priest-king; Noah was a new Adam; Melchizedek inherited the royal priestly role from

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<sup>185</sup>Crispin Fletcher-Louis has developed the argument for viewing the high priest as the image of God. Crispin H T. Fletcher-Louis, "The Worship of Divine Humanity as God's Image and the Worship of Jesus," in *Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism* (Leiden: E J Brill, 1999), 112–28.

Noah; Abraham was a priest-king like Melchizedek; Israel was a royal priesthood to Yahweh and the last Adam; and Aaron represented the corporate priesthood of the people of Israel. These connections can be stated in different ways, but the point is clear: the concept of royal priesthood is a major biblical-theological theme that begins with Adam in the garden and is tied to each one of the biblical covenants. We would expect, then, that later biblical authors picked up on the importance of the notion of royal priesthood in biblical history as they formulated their messianic expectations.

Looking ahead to Psalm 110, this chapter has not only laid a foundation for the biblical-theological development of the priest-king theme, but has also given historical warrant to David's depiction of a king who is also a priest.<sup>186</sup> By understanding Melchizedek as part of a historical and literary development of royal priesthood tied to both creation and redemption (Abrahamic covenant), we can begin to understand why David understood the roles of מלך and כהן to be part of the messianic ideal. The messiah would be a new Adam, a priest able to mediate the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, and embody the corporate identity of Israel as God's royal priestly viceroy on earth. Dumbrell's comments on this point helpfully summarize the thrust of this chapter and segue into the next,

In its contemplation of priestly kingship (cf. Ps 110:4), the psalm appears to suggest that in the person of the king, the demand contemplated for all Israel in Exod. 19:3b–6 has been embodied. Only kingship of that character, the Psalm seems to imply in its second half will guarantee the political extension of the Jerusalem kingdom, which it anticipates (Ps 110:5–7). David's line is thus to reflect, in the person of the occupant of the throne of Israel, the values which the Sinai covenant had required of the nation as a whole. David therefore is operating as Yahweh's

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<sup>186</sup>Davies explanation of the connection between kingship and priesthood in Israel's history is well put: "The king embodied the people in their standing before the god. If in Israel the people were a priestly nation, then the king embodied that role, and though his cultic functions were circumscribed, he was nevertheless appropriately described as a 'priest.' Speaking of the priestly nature of the Jerusalem kingship, Dumbrell writes, 'The person of the king embodies the expectations of Exodus 19.6 that Israel itself would become a priestly royalty.' Through the occupant of the throne of Israel, Davidic kingship is to reflect the values that the Sinai covenant requires of the nation. So bound up were king and cult that to lack a king implied (in a pre-exilic Israelite context) the cessation of the cult (Hos. 3.4–5)." Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 153.

vice-regent, operating . . . as the ‘divine image.’ For . . . the Davidic covenant as the ‘charter of humanity’ seems to prefigure in political terms the establishment of divine government through a human intermediary, so that the full intentions of the divine purpose for the race, expounded in Gen. 1–2, might be achieved.<sup>187</sup>

In essence, the biblical logic behind the priestly kingship of Psalm 110 is God’s creational purpose for humanity to establish God’s kingdom (king) by mediating God’s covenantal blessings from his temple sanctuary (priest). This purpose will come through a king who embodies Israel’s corporate identity as a royal priesthood, while maintaining an order of priesthood that is not tied to the codification of the Mosaic Law, but rooted in the covenant of creation and able to mediate blessing to Abraham’s seed. To suggest that David’s basis for anticipating a messiah that is both priest and king is found in anything other than the Torah’s robust development of this theme is tantamount to straining credulity. Moving ahead, then, the Torah has created an expectation of a future messianic priest-king who will bring God’s promises to pass. One who will establish God’s kingdom, enjoy access to God’s presence, mediate blessing to Abraham’s offspring, and bring others into the blessing of the dwelling place of God.

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<sup>187</sup>Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 152.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE DAVIDIC PRIEST-KING: PSALM 110 IN OT CONTEXT

#### **Introduction**

In chapter 2, I developed the logic of royal priesthood in the Torah by examining it in relation to the concepts of kingdom and covenant. I argued that Adam's covenantal role as priest-king in establishing the kingdom of God set the trajectory for God's redemption project associated with key covenantal figures. In other words, the covenants with Noah, Abraham, and Israel were expressions of the original covenant God made at creation with Adam and each of these figures adopted the Adamic role as royal priestly figures in their own right. Though not the recipient of covenant promises, the royal priest Melchizedek occupied an important role in the narrative because his royal priesthood was uniquely associated with creation and the Abrahamic covenant of redemption. Specifically, I argued that Melchizedek's royal priesthood was rooted in the terms of the superior creation covenant and that he embodied the order of royal priesthood that would mediate God's blessing (i.e., the promises of the Abrahamic covenant) to Abraham, his progeny, and the world. Moving out of the Torah, the reader is left with the expectation that a royal priest will be the one to establish God's kingdom and bring God's promises to pass.

The Torah is, therefore, the foundation on which my interpretation of Psalm 110 will stand. Yet I must now probe deeper into the question of what would have motivated David to formulate a Melchizedekian priestly theology of the Messiah. In other



words, if we assume that the words of Psalm 110:4<sup>1</sup> were not the product of a divinely dictated inspirational event, how did David interpret the patterns of his life, the promises of the Davidic covenant, and the Torah to arrive at a Melchizedekian messianic theology?<sup>2</sup> Building on the foundation of chapter 2, I will propose a canonical solution to this question. Critical interpretations of Psalm 110:4 tend to remove David completely from the interpretive equation or assume that 110:4 is a political attempt to unite the Jebusite cult of El Elyon with the Israelite monarchy.<sup>3</sup> I propose, however, that from a canonical standpoint, the words of Psalm 110:4 tightly fit the circumstances surrounding David's own life and are theologically—as opposed to politically—motivated. In fact, I will argue that the narrative events of 1–2 Samuel reveal that David interpreted the patterns of his own life in light of the Torah to arrive at a Melchizedekian priestly theology of the messiah. Furthermore, royal priestly messiahship in the vein of Psalm 110 is not an anomaly in the Psalms. In fact, I will argue that Psalms 1–2 describe a messiah that is a royal and priestly figure, thereby casting a messianic vision over the Psalter into which the royal priestly messianism of Psalm 110 makes perfect sense.

This chapter will proceed along five major lines of development. First, I will discuss Psalm 110 in the flow of Psalms 108–111. Second, I will consider the literary structure of Psalm 110. Third, I will highlight the importance of the Davidic covenant for a correct interpretation of Psalm 110. Fourth, I will note the relationship between the Davidic and Abrahamic covenants. Finally, I will conduct a canonical exegesis of the

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<sup>1</sup>For the sake of clarity, unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references follow the English Bible chapter and verse system.

<sup>2</sup>I am not denying the Holy Spirit's inspiration of Ps 110:4 by making this statement. I am simply suggesting (and will argue) that David would have been able to come to the conclusions he makes in Ps 110 without the words of this psalm being a direct word-for-word verbal revelation.

<sup>3</sup>Routledge offers an insightful critique against the common assumption that a correct understanding of Ps 110 is dependent on a pre-existing Jebusite cult of El Elyon in Jerusalem. Robin L. Routledge, "Psalm 110, Melchizedek and David: Blessing (The Descendants Of) Abraham," *Baptistic Theologies* 1, no. 2 (September 1, 2009): 14.

individual verses of Psalm 110.<sup>4</sup> Within this final section, I will consider how Psalms 1–2 function as the interpretive lens of the entire Psalter and how 1–2 Samuel provides the necessary background behind David’s logic in anticipating a messiah that is a royal priest like Melchizedek.

### Translation of MT

- 1 A Psalm of David  
The LORD said to my Lord:  
“Sit at my right hand  
until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”
- 2 The LORD sends the staff of your power from Zion.  
Rule in the midst of your enemies.
- 3 Your people will offer themselves freely in the day of your power.  
In holy garments, from the womb of the dawn, to you belongs the dew of your youth.
- 4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind,  
“You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”
- 5 The Lord is at your right hand;  
he will shatter kings on the day of his anger.
- 6 He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses;  
he will shatter [the] head over the wide earth.
- 7 He will drink from the brook by the way;  
therefore he will lift the head.

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<sup>4</sup>Daniel Owens has helpfully articulated the different ways scholars use the term “canon” or “canonical” in biblical studies. Daniel C. Owens, “The Concept of Canon in Psalms Interpretation,” *TJ* 34, no. 2 (2013): 155–69. In this chapter, I am using the term “canonical” in reference to the literary structure and shape of the Psalter. Owens defines this concept of canon as follows: “A third concept of canon has dominated recent scholarship on the Psalter, namely, canon as literary structure. The canonical approach to the Psalter pioneered by Wilson essentially considers their canonical form of the Psalter in this structural sense.” *Ibid.*, 157. I must also note here that the majority of my exegesis will focus on Ps 110:1 and Ps 110:4. These two verses are the most quoted by New Testament authors and perhaps most significant for the issue of kingship and priesthood in Ps 110.

## Psalm 110 in Immediate Context

Contrary to form critical assumptions, I assume Psalm 110 is part of an intelligently shaped Psalter and must therefore be interpreted in light of its place within the Psalter.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the placement of Psalm 110 in relation to the adjoining Psalms is interpretively significant. Psalm 110 is part of Book V of the Psalter, which begins with Psalm 107 and ends with Psalm 150. Within this section, John Crutchfield has demonstrated that Psalms 107–118 form a “redactional unit” functioning as the opening section of Book V.<sup>6</sup> Zooming in a little more, Psalm 110 is part of a “Davidic triad” beginning with Psalm 108 and ending with Psalm 110.<sup>7</sup>

The theme of impending danger at the hands of violent enemies runs through Psalms 108–110. According to Crutchfield, the final verses of Psalm 108 (vv. 12–13) “*introduce* the concept of enemies; Psalm 109 continues and deals extensively with the concept . . . and the first two verses of Psalm 110 . . . *conclude* the concept of enemies, in both an eschatological and messianic context.”<sup>8</sup> It is also likely that Psalm 108:13 anticipates the victory that God will accomplish through the messianic priest-king of Psalm 110:1.

Psalm 108:13	With God we shall achieve power; He will tread down our foes.
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<sup>5</sup>Despite the compelling evidence for adopting a canonical approach to the Psalter, even some evangelical scholars remain committed to isolating the individual psalms as independent literary units giving little or no interpretive value to the shape of the Psalter. For example, John Aloisi writes with respect to Ps 110, “It seems best to approach Psalm 110 as a self-contained unit with no necessary connection to the psalms around it.” John Aloisi, “Who Is David’s Lord? Another Look at Psalm 110:1,” *DBSJ* no. 10 (2005): 113.

<sup>6</sup>Crutchfield argues for “internal signs” of coherence among Pss 107–118, the most obvious being the apparent *inclusio* between the beginning of Ps 107 and the end of Ps 118. John C. Crutchfield, *Psalms in Their Context: An Interpretation of Psalms 107–118*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs (London: Paternoster, 2011), 13–14.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.* Crutchfield is right in his thematic assessment of these Ps. However, I would suggest that the concept of enemies is actually introduced in Ps 108:6—“That your beloved ones may be delivered, give salvation by your right hand and answer me!” (ESV)

Psalm 110:1            The Lord said to my Lord,  
                                  “Sit at my right hand,  
                                  until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”

In Psalm 108:13, the language of “treading” (בוטס) paints a mental picture of God single-handedly stomping out the Davidic king’s enemies. Psalm 110:1 similarly describes the subjection of the messiah’s enemies in terms of a “footstool for your feet.”

At the textual level, the repetition of the word ימין (“right hand”) throughout Psalms 108–110 hooks these Psalms together. In Psalm 108, David pleads for salvation from the enemies of God’s people by making reference to the “right hand” (ימין) of Yahweh (Ps 108:6). In Psalm 109, ימין occurs in verses 6 and 31. David appeals to God for a wicked accuser to stand at the “right hand” (ימין) of his enemy (Ps 109:6). In the final verse (Ps 109:31), David states that Yahweh stands at the “right hand” (ימין) of the needy one to save him from his enemies. This statement is followed immediately by the opening of Psalm 110, which depicts David’s Lord at the “right hand” (ימין) of Yahweh (Ps 110:1; see below). The term occurs once more in Psalm 110:5 where David’s lord is again depicted at the “right hand” of Yahweh executing judgment on the kings of the earth.

Psalm 109:31–110:1:    For he stands at the right hand (ימין) of the needy one, to deliver his soul from those who condemn. Yahweh said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand (ימין) until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

The close proximity between ימין at the end of Psalm 109 and the beginning of Psalm 110, along with the repeated uses of ימין in Psalms 108–110, demonstrate that these Psalms were intentionally grouped together for interpretive value. In other words, Psalms 108–110 develop a narrative strategy. Jinkyu Kim suggests these three psalms “indicate the stages of the Messiah’s eschatological warfare against his enemies.”<sup>9</sup> Psalm 108 introduces the reality of enemy threat against the Davidic king and the people of God (Ps.

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<sup>9</sup>Jinkyu Kim, “Psalm 110 in Its Literary and Generic Contexts: An Eschatological Interpretation” (PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 2003), 160.

108:6, 12–13). Psalm 109 develops the theme of enemy threat through David’s petitions for deliverance.<sup>10</sup> David is a righteous sufferer (Ps. 109:1–5) in need of vindication from Yahweh (Ps. 109:26–29). David’s word of praise at the end of Psalm 109 coupled with his confidence that Yahweh “stands at the right hand of the needy one” leaves the reader with an expectation that Yahweh will vindicate the Davidic king.<sup>11</sup> But how will vindication come? Psalm 110 provides the answer. The Lord will station a Davidic priest-king at his right hand until he has removed every enemy threat from the face of the earth (Ps. 110:1, 6). In the words of Crutchfield, “The answer given to the expectation created by Psalm 109 is clear: God *will* vindicate the psalmist by putting the psalmist at *his own* right hand and *conquering* the psalmist’s enemies.”<sup>12</sup>

Underlying Yahweh’s actions on behalf of the king in Psalm 108–110 is Yahweh’s own covenantal faithfulness. The covenantal term חסד appears five times in Psalms 108–109.<sup>13</sup> In 109:21 and 109:26, the king’s appeal for deliverance is rooted in Yahweh’s חסד. Yahweh’s answer to the king’s covenantal request is found in Psalm 110 and picks up a theme woven into every biblical covenant thus far: a royal priest will

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<sup>10</sup>Kim suggests that Psalm 109 refers to an individual enemy. He writes, “This individual enemy seems to occupy a significant position among this group of enemies because the psalmist aims his curses at this particular enemy. If this understanding is correct for the present context, the personal enemy in this psalm may be identified as ‘the evil leader of the assembled nations’ as Mitchell contended . . . . This particular enemy in singular corresponds well with the ראש (the chief man) in the singular in the next psalm (Ps 110:6). In this verse, Yahweh is depicted as shattering the chief man over the wider earth.” *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>11</sup>Crutchfield writes, “If our understanding of Psalm 109 is correct, it concludes with an open question. Will God in fact vindicate the psalmist?” John C. Crutchfield, *Psalms in Their Context*, 30.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>13</sup>Psalm 108:5; 109:12, 16, 21, 26. Concerning the use of חסד in these psalms, Robert Wallace writes, “If we understand חסד as more than simple kindness, but rather carrying the sense of covenantal loyalty, one could easily read the cry at the end of Ps 109 to be a plea for YHWH to remember the Davidic covenant that lies in ruins, due in part to the enemies surrounding the psalmist. The use of the word חסד takes the reader back to Ps 89, which asserts that David has been forever entrusted with the divine חסד, but also questions where that חסד has gone in the face of the present distress.” Robert Wallace, “Gerald Wilson and the Characterization of David in Book 5 of the Psalter,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship*, ed. Nancy L. DeClaisse-Walford, Ancient Israel and Its Literature 20 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 199–200.

establish God’s global kingdom by eradicating Yahweh’s enemies from the earth. The response to the priest-king’s victory in Psalm 111 makes explicit the covenantal overtones of the narrative development—Yahweh remembers his “covenant forever” (לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ, Ps 111:5) and commanded his “covenant forever” (לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ, Ps 111:9).<sup>14</sup> God will finally establish his king, who is also a “priest forever” (כֹּהֵן לְעוֹלָם, Ps 110:4), to fulfill the creation project of global dominion instituted in the original covenant given to the primal priest-king in the garden.<sup>15</sup>

### Literary Structure

Psalm 110 forms a chiasm consisting of two stanzas (vv. 1–3 and 4–7) with 74 syllables each.<sup>16</sup> Robert Alden has articulated the chiasm as follows:<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Concerning the covenantal context of Pss 108–110, Kim writes, “The Davidic king’s request for divine help appeals to the covenant by employing the covenantal keyword חסד (covenantal loving-kindness) in Pss 108–109. In Ps 110, however, the actual crushing of enemies is understood as the fulfillment of the covenant promised in 2 Sam 7:11b–16 . . . . The covenantal understanding of the defeat of enemies is further confirmed by the explicit use of the phrase בְּרִיתוֹ in Ps 111:5b after the messiah defeats them in Ps 110. The victory that the Messiah gained in Ps 110 is described as Yahweh remembering his covenant in Ps 111 (cf. 2 Sam 7:11b–16).” Kim, “Psalm 110 in Its Literary and Generic Contexts,” 161–62.

<sup>15</sup>In Ps 111 the language of “forever” appears five times in the ten verses. In Ps 111:3, Yahweh’s righteousness endures “forever” (לְעוֹלָם, 111:3, 9). His precepts are established “forever” (לְעוֹלָם, 111:8) and his praise endures “forever” (לְעוֹלָם, 111:10). The repeated use of “forever” appears to be an intentional link to the pivotal statement of Ps 110—“You are a priest forever . . .” The covenantal logic behind Ps 110 will be further developed below.

<sup>16</sup>Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God’s Saving Promises* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 185.

<sup>17</sup>Robert L Alden, “Chiastic Psalms (III): A Study in the Mechanics of Semitic Poetry in Psalms 101–150,” *JETS* 21, no. 3 (1978): 204. Hahn also adopts this structure: Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 195. Allen accepts a bipartite structure, see Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Rev. ed. WBC 21 (Mexico City: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 83. See also Bruce K. Waltke, “Psalm 110: An Exegetical and Canonical Approach,” in *Resurrection and Eschatology: Theology in Service of the Church: Essays in Honor of Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.*, ed. Lane G. Tipton and Jeffrey C. Waddington (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2008), 66–67. Dahood references D. N. Freedman who observed the 74 syllabic structure. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms III: 101–150*, The Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 113. Anderson modifies Alden’s chiastic structure, but retains verse 4 as the psalm’s central feature. He proposes the following chiasm: A (v. 1); B (vv. 2–3); C (v. 4); B’ (vv. 5–6); A’ (v. 7). David R. Anderson, *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 50–51, 281. For a similar proposal, see Gert J. Jordaan and Pieter Nel, “From Priest-King to King-Priest: Psalm 110 and the Basic Structure of Hebrews,” in *Psalms and Hebrews: Studies in Reception*, ed. Dirk J. Human and Gert J. Steyn, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 527 (New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 236–37.

- 1       A The Lord installs the king
- 2             B The king is sent out to conquer
- 3                    C The day of power
- 4                            D The Lord swears a solemn oath
- 5                    C<sup>1</sup> The day of wrath
- 6             B<sup>1</sup> The king goes out to conquer
- 7       A<sup>1</sup> The Lord installs the king

The chiasmic structure of Psalm 110 highlights the parallels between verses 1–3 and 5–7 while targeting verse four as the central feature of the psalm. Yahweh’s oath concerning the eternal Melchizedekian priesthood of David’s lord is of central importance for understanding the psalm in both its immediate and canonical context. The mention of the oath in Psalm 110:4 uncovers the covenantal logic behind the entire psalm. Up until this point in the Bible’s metanarrative, the concept of royal priesthood has been connected to each of the biblical covenants. We would expect, then, for the logic of royal priesthood to be further developed in the next major covenant in redemptive history, namely the Davidic. In fact, the Davidic covenant will prove to be part of the foundation upon which the royal priestly messianism of Psalm 110 stands.

### **Davidic Covenant**

The Davidic covenant is described in 2 Samuel 7.<sup>18</sup> Prior to 2 Samuel 7, David defeated the Philistines (2 Sam. 5) and brought the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6). In 2 Samuel 7:1, David is in his “house” (בַּיִת) enjoying a period of peace as the Lord had given him “rest” (נוֹחַ) from all of his surrounding enemies. The mention of “rest” at the outset of this chapter is important for several reasons. First, the theme of “rest” recalls Deuteronomy 12:9–11. Here Moses anticipated the rest that Israel would enjoy as a result of the conquest of the Promised Land. Dumbrell notes a contextual parallel between Deuteronomy 12 and 2 Samuel 7: “We cannot overlook the fact that this verse [Deut

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<sup>18</sup>Though the term “covenant” (בְּרִית) never appears in 2 Sam 7, the term does appear in later passages that interpret 2 Sam 7. See 2 Sam 23:5; Ps 89:24; 132:12.

12:10] refers to the promise of rest to be fulfilled, in a key chapter which is devoted to the establishment of a central sanctuary in Israel, and thus to circumstances remarkably parallel to the sequence of 2 Sam. 6 and 7.”<sup>19</sup> Second Samuel 7, therefore, opens with a hint that David might be the one to grant Israel rest and establish the permanent temple of Yahweh.

Second, the concept of rest evokes the conquest narrative of Joshua. Joshua reminded the people of Israel that the goal of the conquest was rest: “Remember the word that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, ‘The Lord your God is providing you a place of rest (נוח) and will give you this land’” (Josh 1:13). Once the conquest was over, the narrative states three times in the closing chapters that the Lord had given Israel rest (נוח) from all her enemies (Josh 21:44; 22:4; 23:1). The experience of rest was, however, never fully realized. Israel failed to drive out the remaining foreign nations during the period of the judges, a reality implied by 2 Samuel 7:11. Thus, the mention of rest at the beginning of 2 Samuel 7 suggests that the conquest that began with Joshua has finally come to completion with David.<sup>20</sup> Dumbrell comments, “What Joshua’s successors in the Judges period had been unable to effect...David had now done.”<sup>21</sup> The connection between Joshua’s conquest and the Davidic covenant will play an important role in formulating the biblical logic undergirding the identity of the priest-

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<sup>19</sup>William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of Old Testament Covenants* (repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2009), 145–46.

<sup>20</sup>Dumbrell similarly writes, “2 Sam. 7:1 . . . indicates, and verse 11 confirms, that the defeat of the Philistines had meant that the occupation of Palestine and therefore the conquest had been completed.” Ibid., 146.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. The literary structure of 2 Sam 7 also implies that there is a rest yet to be achieved by David. In 2 Sam 7:1 the verb נוח appears in the perfect tense marking past time. In 2 Sam 7:11, the verb נוח appears as a *waw*-consecutive perfect marking future time. Gentry has observed that the shift from past tense to future tense occurs in the middle of verse 9 as a literary device that separates the past blessings and the future promises. Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway), 394. The promise of rest given in verse 11 will be achieved during David’s lifetime, but the consummate rest that will come about as a result of an eternal kingdom will be an eschatological reality brought about by one of David’s offspring.



king of Psalm 110.

Finally, the rest theme connects the Davidic covenant to God's purpose at creation. David's desire to build Yahweh's temple (house) arrives in the narrative after a description of David's priestly activity in 2 Samuel 6.<sup>22</sup> This observation is important in light of Scripture's metanarrative. The king (2 Sam 7:1) who is also a priestly figure (2 Sam 6:13–14, 17–19) experiences God-given rest and, in response, decides to build God's temple. David, as priest-king, models the pattern laid out for Adam at creation. Just as God put Adam in the garden to fulfill his royal priestly task of building God's garden-temple into a global reality, the priest-king David responds to his own God given "rest" (נוח) by deciding to build God's temple. Hamilton comments, "The temple building impulse seems to reflect a desire to establish the presence of God among the people of Israel, to recapture a glimmer of Eden's glory."<sup>23</sup>

Before David can begin to fulfill his plan for temple (בית) construction, the Lord puts an end to it, promising instead to build David a house (בית, 2 Sam 7:11). The house that the Lord builds for David will not be a piece of property, but a lineage—a royal dynasty. The terms of the covenant are described in 2 Samuel 7:8–16:

Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the

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<sup>22</sup>I will develop the concept of David as priest from 2 Sam 6 later in this chapter.

<sup>23</sup>James M. Hamilton, "The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham," *TynBul* 58, no. 2 (2007): 267.

stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever. (ESV)

Four important observations surface from this passage.<sup>24</sup> First, Yahweh's plan for Israel will come to fruition through Israel's king. Yahweh promises to "plant" (נטע) Israel in her own place free from enemy threat (2 Sam 7:10). The term נטע echoes Exodus 15:17 where Yahweh promised to "plant" (נטע) Israel on a mountain-sanctuary to live under the eternal reign of Yahweh. 2 Samuel 7:8–16 develops this idea by revealing that Yahweh's reign over his people will be mediated through a Davidic king. According to Dumbrell, "It is generally clear that the covenant with David lies within the framework of the Sinai covenant with Israel."<sup>25</sup> The goal of the Exodus will come to fruition through the Davidic line.

Second, the Lord promises that one of David's own "offspring" (זרע) will build Yahweh's temple and reign from an eternal throne (2 Sam 7:12–13). This "seed" (זרע) of David will exist in a Father-Son relationship to Yahweh (2 Sam 7:14). Yahweh declares, "I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son" (2 Sam 7:14). The covenantal relationship that defined Adam and Israel will now belong to the Davidic king. As Yahweh's own son, the Davidic heir inherits Adam and Israel's role to establish God's kingdom by mediating God's covenant and building God's temple (cf. Gen 1:26–28; 2:4–25; Exod 19:3–6).<sup>26</sup> In this sense the Davidic king will fulfill what it means for humanity to be made in God's image. As the son and image of God, David's heir will establish God's rule in the world by living in a covenantal relationship with God.

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<sup>24</sup>It is beyond the scope of this project to explore all the issues surrounding the Davidic covenant. I will limit my analysis to the issues most relevant to the thesis of this project.

<sup>25</sup>Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 151.

<sup>26</sup>According to Gentry, "Kingship in Israel was to be a means of accomplishing Exodus 19:3b–6: The king would be a devoted servant and son of God and would also function as a priest, instructing the nations in the righteousness of God and inviting them to come under the rule of Yahweh." Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 422.

Third, it is impossible not to see a connection between 2 Samuel 7 and Deuteronomy 17.<sup>27</sup> In Deuteronomy 17:16–20, Moses describes ideal kingship in Israel. Verses 18–20 focus on the king’s responsibility as it pertains to the Torah. The king is to copy the Torah, keep the Torah with him, and read the Torah so that he can learn to fear Yahweh and thus ensure the continuation of his kingdom (Deut 17:18–20). The king is to be, according to Gentry, a “model citizen” by embodying the Torah.<sup>28</sup> Gentry suggests that the king’s identity in relationship to the Torah is “exactly the point of the father-son relationship set out in 2 Samuel 7.”<sup>29</sup> As God’s son, the king will mediate Torah to all the nations and thus bring them under the rule and into the realm of God’s kingdom.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, David’s own response to God’s covenant provides the reader with a glimpse into how David himself understood the covenantal promises. The all-important phrase is found in 2 Samuel 7:19: “this is the instruction for man (תורה האדם), O Lord Yahweh.” David recognized that the covenant would have implications for all of humanity. But what does תורה האדם mean? Walter Kaiser has demonstrated that the phrase תורה האדם means the “charter for humanity.”<sup>31</sup> Kaiser comments, “The ancient promise of blessing to all mankind would continue; only now it would involve David’s dynasty, throne, and kingdom. Indeed, it was a veritable ‘charter’ granted as God’s gift

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<sup>27</sup>The idea that Deuteronomy was written during the seventh century B.C. during the time of king Josiah is widely accepted by critical scholars. J. Robert Vannoy resists the late dating of Deuteronomy maintaining Mosaic authorship of the book. He discusses this issue in relation to the question of whether or not the rise of kingship in Israel was in line with God’s covenant relationship with Israel or a “serious aberration” from it. J. Robert Vannoy, “Kingship and Covenant in 1 and 2 Samuel,” in *Creator, Redeemer, Consummator: A Festschrift for Meredith G. Kline*, ed. Howard Griffith and John R. Muether (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2007).

<sup>28</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 399.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>The king’s role as instructor of Torah also establishes his priestly function.

<sup>31</sup>Walter C. Kaiser, “The Blessing of David: The Charter for Humanity,” in *The Law and the Prophets: Old Testament Studies Prepared in Honor of Oswald Thompson Allis*, ed. John H. Skilton, Milton C. Fisher, and Leslie W. Sloat (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1974), 314–15.

for the future of mankind.”<sup>32</sup> Agreeing with Kaiser, Gentry further develops the logic behind David’s statement:

As the divine son, the Davidic king was to effect the divine instruction or torah in the nation as a whole and was, as a result, a mediator of the Mosaic Torah. However, since the god whom the Davidic king represented was not limited to a local region or territory, but was the creator God and Sovereign of the whole world, the rule of the Davidic king would have repercussions for *all* the nations, not just for Israel. . . . Thus, faithfulness on the part of the Davidic Son would effect the divine rule in the entire world, much as God intended for humanity in the covenant of creation as indicated by the divine image in Genesis 1:26ff.<sup>33</sup>

Gentry’s comments are spot on, but we must also point out that David’s response is not only affirming God’s original plan to establish his rule through a divine Father-son relationship, but that this rule would be inseparably bound to the building of God’s temple (2 Sam 7:13). Hahn comments,

In 7:18–29, David expresses joy over the twofold blessing which will accrue to his son: a divinely established worldwide dynasty and the privilege of building the Temple of Yahweh . . . . David’s prayer shows that his priestly ambition is only surpassed by his fatherly joy at the prospect of one of his sons acquiring the object of his own holy desire.<sup>34</sup>

The contents of the Davidic covenant and David’s response to the covenant provide the basis for David’s messianic expectation in Psalm 110. David came to realize that the messiah would both establish God’s rule as a king and build God’s temple as his viceroy. The biblical-theological logic behind the “charter of mankind” not only begins to answer the question of how David arrived at the messianic vision of Psalm 110, but also, in essence, captures the first half of the thesis of this project: that a canonical reading of David’s depiction of the eschatological Melchizedekian priest-king develops God’s creational purpose for humanity to establish God’s kingdom (king) by mediating God’s covenantal blessings from his temple sanctuary (priest).

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<sup>32</sup>Kaiser, "The Blessing of David," 315.

<sup>33</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 400.

<sup>34</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 183.

## David and Abraham

In chapter 2, I highlighted the importance of the Melchizedek-Abraham-David connection to begin establishing the biblical logic behind Psalm 110:4. David's statement in 2 Samuel 7:19 shows that he understood God's covenant in light of the creation ordinance intended for humanity—an ordinance that began anew in God's covenant with Abraham. Moreover, the contents of the Davidic covenant described in 2 Samuel 7 directly link God's covenant with David to the Abrahamic covenant. There are at least three points of contact between the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants.

First, God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:9 that "I will make for you a great name" (ועשתי לך שם גדול) alludes to Genesis 12:2, where God promised Abraham to "make your name great" (ואגדלה שמך). Second, in 2 Samuel 7:10–11, God promises David that he will give Israel a "place" where they will experience rest from their enemies. Deuteronomy 11:24 defines Israel's "place" in terms that recall the geographical borders promised to Abraham in Genesis 15:8–21, which are eventually occupied by David's son Solomon (1 Kgs 4:20–21). The Davidic covenant, therefore, is the program through which the land promise given to Abraham will come to fruition.<sup>35</sup> Third, the Lord's promise to build David a house is the promise of an enduring dynastic lineage. In 2 Samuel 7:12, Yahweh tells David, "I will raise up your offspring (זרע) after you who will come from your body." The appearance of זרע in 2 Samuel 7:12 evokes God's covenant with Abraham, when he promised to multiply Abraham's seed (זרע) and to give his offspring the land of Canaan (Gen 12:7; 13:15–16; 15:5, 18; 17:7–8; 22:17). Moreover, Hamilton observes that the phrase "who will come from your body" evokes Genesis 15:4 where Yahweh tells Abraham that "one who will come from your body, he will be your heir."<sup>36</sup> As noted by Hamilton, the "phrase used in both texts, 'who will

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<sup>35</sup>Gentry argues along similar lines. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 423–24.

<sup>36</sup>Hamilton, "The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham," 268.

come from your body . . . ,’ appears nowhere else in the OT.”<sup>37</sup>

Taken together, these parallels lead Dumbrell to conclude that the writer of 2 Samuel clearly understood the Davidic covenant in light of “the underlying theology of the Abrahamic covenant.”<sup>38</sup> The Davidic covenant is, in Dumbrell’s words, “presented as being within the process of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.”<sup>39</sup> But would David himself have recognized the Abrahamic overtones of the covenant described in 2 Samuel 7? The answer, again, is found in David’s response to the covenant as “a charter for all mankind” (2 Sam 7:19).<sup>40</sup> Beecher comments, “There is no escaping the conclusion that the narrative represents that David recognized in the promise made to him a renewal of the promise made of old that all the nations should be blessed in Abraham and his seed.”<sup>41</sup> Kaiser agrees, “The ‘blessing’ of Abraham is continued in this ‘blessing’ of David.”<sup>42</sup>

The above evidence supports the conclusion that David and Abraham share a special connection in redemptive history. If David perceived that God’s promise to him would be the program to bring to fruition the promises made to Abraham, then it should be no surprise that Melchizedek, the priest associated with the Abrahamic covenant, played a prominent role in David’s eschatology. Just how Melchizedek rose to

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<sup>37</sup>Hamilton, “The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham,” 268.

<sup>38</sup>Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 149.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>40</sup>Carl Armerding notes the connection between the “charter for humanity” and the Abrahamic covenant this way, “2 Samuel 7 becomes with the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12, 15, and 17), the universal ‘charter’ by which Yahweh will confirm the universal promise of blessing (‘to all nations’) already articulated through Abraham.” Carl E. Armerding, “‘Did I Ever Ask for a House of Cedar?’ The Contribution of 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles 17 to the Theology of the Temple,” in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. D. Alexander and Simon Gathercole (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 41.

<sup>41</sup>Willis Judson Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, 1905), 238.

<sup>42</sup>Kaiser, “The Blessing of David,” 310.

prominence in David's messianic theology remains to be explored. Nevertheless, the biblical-theological foundation for a Davidic and royal priestly messiah has been laid. Moving forward, the individual verses of Psalm 110 will provide the structure for the rest of this chapter so that the major issues relevant to my thesis will be addressed as they arise in the text.

## Canonical Exegesis

### Psalm 110:1a

**A psalm of David.** The superscript attributes Psalm 110 to David. In an attempt to reconstruct Psalm 110 historically, modern scholarship has vociferously denied Davidic authorship of this psalm.<sup>43</sup> It is not my intent to engage in historical arguments defending Davidic authorship.<sup>44</sup> My canonical approach to the psalms evaluates each psalm according to the tradition reflected in the superscription and assumes the interpretive perspective of later biblical authors as they sought to interpret earlier biblical texts.<sup>45</sup> Jesus, the apostles, and New Testament writers always attributed

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<sup>43</sup>Treves, "Two Acrostic Psalms"; Rowley, "Melchizedek and Zadok (Gen 14 and Ps 110)"; John G Gammie, "New Setting for Psalm 110," *ATR* 51, no. 1 (January 1, 1969): 4–17; Godfrey Rolles Driver, "Psalm CX: Its Form, Meaning and Purpose," in *Studies in the Bible*, ed. J. M. Grintz and J. Liver (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1964), 17–31; A. B. Davidson, "Duhm's Die Psalmen: Erklärt," in *The Critical Review of Theological and Philosophical Literature*, ed. S. D. F. Salmond, vol. 10 (Edinburgh: Williams and Northgate, 1900); Elliot Johnson has observed ten different proposals for the historical setting of the Psalm in the history of interpretation. Elliott E. Johnson, "Hermeneutical Principles and the Interpretation of Psalm 110," *BSac* 149, no. 596 (October 1, 1992): 430.

<sup>44</sup>For sources that hold to Davidic authorship of Ps 110, see Paul, "The Order of Melchizedek"; Barry C. Davis, "Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm," *BSac* 157, no. 626 (April 1, 2000): 160–73; H. W. Bateman, "Psalm 110:1 and the New Testament," *BSac* 149, no. 596 (1992): 438–53; Johnson, "Hermeneutical Principles and the Interpretation of Psalm 110," 431; Waltke, "Psalm 110," 67–68.

<sup>45</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 185. The superscription לְדָוִד may be translated "to David," "for David," "by David," "of David," "in regards to David," or "about David." The superscription, therefore, does not necessarily prove Davidic authorship, but the mere mention of David clearly reveals that Ps 110 is meant to be read in light of the history and traditions surrounding David's life. Concerning the Davidic authorship of Ps 110, Kidner writes, "Nowhere in the Psalter does so much hang on the familiar title *A Psalm of David* as it does here; nor is the authorship of any other psalm quite so emphatically endorsed in other parts of Scripture. To amputate this opening phrase, or to allow it no reference to the authorship of the psalm, is to be at odds with the New Testament, which finds King David's acknowledgement of his 'Lord' highly significant." Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers

Psalm 110 to David.<sup>46</sup>

**The Lord said to my Lord.** The opening line of verse one introduces Yahweh as the speaker of this Psalm, “The declaration (גאם) of Yahweh to my Lord” (v. 1a). The most obvious question arising from verse one is, who is David’s Lord? Scholars have put forth many theories regarding the identity of David’s lord (אדני).<sup>47</sup> The primary debate centers on whether or not Psalm 110 is a messianic Psalm. Critical scholarship attempted to rob Psalm 110 of any messianic value. However, recent articles by Davis,<sup>48</sup> Bateman,<sup>49</sup> and Aloisi<sup>50</sup> have defended a messianic interpretation of Psalm 110.<sup>51</sup> Aloisi comments on the major hurdle in defending a messianic reading of Psalm 110:

One of the few difficulties with this view is the fact that it requires David to have a fuller understanding of the Messiah than is often thought possible at his point in history. No OT passage written prior to David indicated that the Messiah would sit at Yahweh’s right hand, rule from Jerusalem, and be a priest after the order of Melchizedek. So how did David know about these messianic truths? . . . As the king of Israel and a writer of Scripture, David may have known more about the Messiah than was recorded in Scripture or revealed to Israelites in general at that

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Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 426.

<sup>46</sup>See Matt 22:43–45; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42–43; Acts 2:34–35

<sup>47</sup>Obviously these theories will vary depending on the position one takes regarding issues of historical setting, date of composition, and authorship. For a survey of some of these positions, see the survey of modern literature on Ps 110 in chapter 1 of the present work. Herbert Bateman identifies five possible options for the recipient of Ps 110 contingent upon the acceptance of Davidic authorship of the Psalm: (1) Saul, (2) Achish, (3) David, (4) Solomon, (5) heavenly King (Messiah). Bateman, “Psalm 110,” 445–52. Rashi observed that many of the Rabbi’s understood “my lord” as a reference to Abraham. See Mayer I. Gruber, *Rashi’s Commentary on Psalms* (Boston: Brill, 2004), 645.

<sup>48</sup>Davis, “Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm.”

<sup>49</sup>Bateman, “Psalm 110.”

<sup>50</sup>Aloisi, “Who Is David’s Lord? Another Look at Psalm 110:1.”

<sup>51</sup>This is not to say that each of these articles takes the same approach regarding how one arrives at messianic interpretation of Psalm 110. Davis and Aloisi argue for a “purely messianic” reading of Ps 110, while Bateman argues for a “typological-prophetic” reading rather than purely prophetic. Their differences boil down to whether or not Solomon should be identified as David’s Lord from Psalm 110:1. Davis denies Solomonic identity, while Bateman argues that Solomon is the referent of the אדני while maintaining that the Psalm is applicable to the messiah. Davis, “Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm”; Bateman, “Psalm 110.”



time. Furthermore, if verses one and four of Psalm 110 introduce prophetic oracles from Yahweh, David may have received new revelation about the Messiah in connection with the composition of this psalm.<sup>52</sup>

Neither of Aloisi's answers to the proposed difficulty regarding a messianic interpretation is ultimately satisfying. According to Aloisi, we must either assume that Scripture does not inform the logic undergirding David's messianic presentation, or default to the position that Psalm 110 was simply the result of "new revelation." The use of אָנָה in verse one does suggest that David writes Psalm 110 as a prophet pointing us toward an eschatological event involving one whom he identifies as "my Lord."<sup>53</sup> This does not mean, however, that David penned this psalm as a result of some visionary glance into the future while in an ecstatic state of being, as BDB implies by the definition of אָנָה.<sup>54</sup> If what I have argued thus far is correct, then David's royal priestly messianism is deeply rooted in the both the metanarrative and covenantal framework of Scripture.<sup>55</sup>

When set against the backdrop of the Davidic covenant, the identity of David's אָנָה begins to surface. In 2 Samuel 7:12–13, God promises David that one of David's own offspring will reign from David's throne forever. David's greater son will establish an eternal kingdom. The אָנָה of Psalm 110 is David's way of describing God's covenantal promise. David's heir apparent will be greater than David, and thus his "Lord." David's greater son will sit at Yahweh's right hand because he will mediate God's rule over the world in a kingdom that will never fail.

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<sup>52</sup>Aloisi, "Who Is David's Lord? Another Look at Psalm 110:1," 119–20.

<sup>53</sup>Waltke notes that אָנָה is used 375 times in the OT and always refers to divine speech. Waltke, "Psalm 110," 68. Jesus identified David as speaking "in the Spirit" when he penned Psalm 110 (Matt 22:43). Many scholars associate Ps 110 with Assyrian prophetic oracles. Hilber argues for twelve points of contact between Ps 110 and the features of Assyrian prophecy. John W. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy in the Psalms*, BZAW (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 77–80.

<sup>54</sup>BDB defines אָנָה as an "utterance, declaration, revelation, of prophet in ecstatic state." Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, BDB (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 610.

<sup>55</sup>I am not denying that David's words in Ps 110 are divinely inspired. I am simply suggesting that David would have arrived at his messianic expectation through the theology of the Torah and, as I argue below, through the content of the Davidic covenant and the patterns of his own life.

From its outset, Psalm 110 is eschatological. David writes about a future messianic figure who will establish God’s kingdom. Contrary to popular opinion, this is not the first time an eschatological royal priest has appeared on the Psalter’s stage. Though rarely developed by modern scholars, I contend that, from a canonical perspective, Psalms 1–2 are essential for understanding the identity of the messianic royal priest in Psalm 110. In what follows, I will digress to demonstrate the importance of Psalms 1–2 for shaping the identity of the מַלְאָכִים in Psalm 110.<sup>56</sup>

### **Psalms 1–2: The Psalter’s Interpretive Lens**

What do Psalms 1–2 have to do with Psalm 110? The answer to this question will hinge on one’s interpretative assumptions regarding the shape of the Psalter. A form-critical approach to the Psalter finds little or no association between Psalms 1–2 and Psalm 110 because it assumes the psalms are tied together only by literary genre. Robert Cole has documented the pervasive influence of form criticism on modern scholarship’s interpretation of the Psalms 1–2.<sup>57</sup> According to Cole, Hermann Gunkel’s form critical method brought any progress toward a canonical reading of the Psalms to a virtual halt for nearly one hundred years.<sup>58</sup> Happily, form criticism’s hundred-year regime has succumbed to the scholarly pursuit of canonical exegesis. A canonical approach to the Psalter assumes intentionality behind its arrangement and expects to find a metanarrative

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<sup>56</sup>I am not suggesting that David had access to Pss 1–2. I am now turning to a discussion of how Pss 1–2 inform a correct interpretation of the Psalter and, therefore, influence how we ought to understand Ps 110.

<sup>57</sup>Robert L. Cole, *Psalms 1–2: Gateway to the Psalter*, Hebrew Bible Monographs (Phoenix: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 7–45.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 7. Cole comments, “Until scholarship is willing to acknowledge the fundamental and irreconcilable opposition that exists between a serious grappling with the canonical shape and Gunkel’s explicit rejection of it, the arrangement and resulting purpose and message of the Psalter’s final designer will be resisted and obscured.” Ibid., 44.

overlying its individual parts.<sup>59</sup> Jamie Grant and Cole have argued at length that Psalms 1–2 are one literary unit that function as the interpretive lens through which the rest of the Psalter is to be read.<sup>60</sup> As such, Psalms 1–2 should be allowed to have an interpretive impact on other psalms, especially messianic and Davidic psalms. This is especially true for Psalm 110 because of the numerous linguistic and thematic parallels between Psalm 110 and Psalm 2.

The relationship between the messianic figures in the respective psalms can be stated thus: the king who reigns from Zion in Psalm 2 is the same messiah who stretches forth his scepter from Zion in Psalm 110—they are one and the same. Therefore, it is not out of line to conclude that the messianic framework of Psalms 1–2 must be applied to Psalm 110 if we are to fully understand Psalm 110 within its own canonical (Psalter) context. Psalms 1–2 reveal the messiah as the Davidic son of God and also hint at his

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<sup>59</sup>For studies on a canonical reading of the Psalms, see Norman Whybray, *Reading the Psalms as a Book*, JSOTSup 222 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); David C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms*, JSOTSup 252 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); Michael Patrick Barber, *Singing in the Reign: The Psalms and the Liturgy of God's Kingdom* (Steubenville: OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2001); Nancy L DeClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning: The Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter* (Macon: GA: Mercer University Press, 1997); Nancy L. DeClaissé-Walford, *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship*, *Ancient Israel and Its Literature* 20 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014); J. Clinton McCann, *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, JSOT 159 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); Erich Zenger, ed., *Composition of the Book of Psalms*, BETL 238 (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010); Owens, "The Concept of Canon in Psalms Interpretation"; Jamie A. Grant, *The King as Exemplar: The Function of Deuteronomy's Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2004).

<sup>60</sup>Cole suggests that Pss 1–2 are eschatological in their orientation. These psalms "were intended as prophecy in the ultimate sense." Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 4. Grant writes, "The eschatological rereading of the royal psalms . . . plays an important role in understanding the function of Pss 1 and 2 as an introduction to the Book of Psalms." He goes on to write, "Ps 2 was included as part of a *Deuteronomic* agenda of future hope in a restored kingdom where Yahweh's reign is represented once more by the co-regency of his kingly messiah on earth . . . This is not a longing for Josiah or Hezekiah or even the great king David. Rather, the introduction to the Psalter presents an eschatological hope for a new leader who would be the fulfillment of the Law of the King." Jamie A. Grant, *The King as Exemplar: The Function of Deuteronomy's Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2004), 66–67. It is beyond the scope of this project to build a case for the literary unity of Pss 1–2. I simply point the reader to the excellent analysis of Cole and Grant. Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 46–141; Grant, *The King as Exemplar*, 60–70. On this matter, Cole concludes, "Psalms 1 and 2, in spite of being discrete and self-contained texts, together open and introduce the Psalter with an integrated and unified message." Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 140. See also Robert L. Cole, "Psalms 1 and 2: The Psalter's Introduction," in *The Psalms: Language for All Seasons of the Soul*, ed. David M. Howard and Andrew J. Schmutzer (Chicago: Moody, 2014).

priestly identity. I will examine these messianic attributes below in Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 respectively before drawing obvious connections to Psalm 110.

**Psalm 1: A royal psalm?** The focus of Psalm 1:1–3 is on “the man” (הַיֵּשׁ). The description of the יֵשׁ as “blessed” (אַשְׁרֵי) indicates the Psalm’s intention to describe life experienced under God’s divine favor. The blessed (אַשְׁרֵי) man flourishes because he lives in accordance with God’s will as expressed in God’s law (הַתּוֹרָה). In Psalm 1:2a, the prepositional phrase בַּתּוֹרָה is the focus of the clause, establishing the Torah’s importance.<sup>61</sup> In 1:2b, the focus shifts to what the blessed man does with the Torah, namely he “meditates” on it continuously. The blessed man is one who delights in Yahweh’s Torah, internalizes Torah, dwells on Torah, and allows Torah to consume him.<sup>62</sup> The verse echoes Moses’ instructions on kingship in Deuteronomy 17:18–20:

And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.

As noted earlier, Israel’s king was to embody the Torah. His life, kingdom, and progeny would prosper if he ordered his life around God’s covenantal instruction. This is exactly the picture of the “blessed man” in Psalm 1:1–3. He is the one who lives out Torah by meditating on Torah constantly. It appears, then, that the blessed man of Psalm 1 embodies and exemplifies the ideal of Israelite kingship.<sup>63</sup> His devotion to Torah sets the stage for his enthronement in Zion (Ps 2:6).

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<sup>61</sup>For a discussion of focal prominence in discourse analysis, see Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Self-Instruction Materials on Non-Narrative Discourse Analysis* (Dallas: SIL International, 2011), 53–64, <http://www.sil.org/~levinsohns>.

<sup>62</sup>I owe these observations on discourse analysis of Ps 1:2 to a conversation I had with my brother, Michael Emadi. He offered these suggestions and pointed me to Levinsohn’s work.

<sup>63</sup>Grant has argued at length for the influence of Deuteronomy’s kingship law (Deut 17:14–20) on Pss 1–2 and the shaping of the Psalter in general. Grant, *The King as Exemplar*.

In addition to Deuteronomy 17, Psalm 1:1–3 strongly alludes to Joshua 1:8, thereby adding the ministry of conquest to the résumé of the royal **איש** (see table 7).<sup>64</sup>

Table 7. Linguistic parallels between Psalm 1:1–3 and Joshua 1:8

Psalm 1:1–3	Joshua 1:8
<p>Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way (ובדרך) of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but in the law of the Lord is his delight, and on his law he meditates day and night (ובתורתו יהגה יומם ולילה). He will be like a tree planted upon streams of water which give its fruit in its season and its leaves will not wither and in all that he does, he will prosper (יצליח).</p>	<p>This Book of the law (תורה) shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night (והגית בו יומם ולילה) . . . For then you will cause your way to prosper (תצליח את־דרכך) and you will understand.</p>

The Joshua allusion at the beginning of Psalm 1 hints that the blessed man will enact a holy war (cf. Ps 2:8–9) on the very ones he resists—the wicked, sinners, and scoffers.<sup>65</sup>

The messiah’s conquest, described in Psalm 1, over the nations to the ends of the earth is, therefore, the logical outflow of Psalm 1’s description of the Joshua-like king who

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<sup>64</sup>For a brief discussion on the connection between Ps 1 and Josh 1:8, see Grant, *The King as Exemplar*, 46–48.

<sup>65</sup>Cole observes a significant difference between the man of Ps 1 and Joshua based upon the grammatical mood of each respective text. He writes, “While the poet has closely characterized this individual according to the pattern of Joshua, there exists one important difference evident in the grammatical mood. The context of Josh 1:7–8 is hortatory in character, with various imperatives directed to the leader of Israel as a condition for his success in conquest, while those of Ps 1:2–3 are expressed solely in the indicative mood. They constitute statements of accomplished fact. Joshua was admonished not to abandon or turn from the Torah but to meditate on it day and night . . . with the accompanying promised result of success . . . . By contrast, this individual does ponder . . . the Torah day and night without fail, and will be . . . successful . . . . He is thus portrayed ideally beyond the historical Joshua, who in fact failed at certain times in what was otherwise a successful campaign against the Canaanites.” Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 58.

prospers by meditating on תורה.<sup>66</sup>

This sequence in Psalms 1–2 of Torah meditation preceding kingly conquest follows the pattern of Joshua’s own ministry. Before Joshua began his conquest, Yahweh commanded him to keep the law in terms similar to the kingship text of Deuteronomy 17:19–20. In Joshua 1:7, Yahweh commanded Joshua to “do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from the right hand or the left in order that you might succeed wherever you go” (see table 8).

Table 8. Linguistic parallels between Joshua 1:7 and Deuteronomy 17:19–20

Joshua 1:7	Deuteronomy 17:19b–20
<p>Only be strong and very courageous, to be careful to do all the law (לשמר לעשות ככל-התורה) that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or to the left (אל-תסור ממנו ימין ושמאל) in order that you might have success wherever you go.</p>	<p>...that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping (לשמר) all the words of this law (תורה) and these statutes to do them (לעשתם), that his heart might not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn from the commandment to the right or to the left (ולבלתי סור מן-המצוה ימין ושמאל) in order that he might lengthen the days of his kingdom, he and his children in Israel.</p>

The purpose of the allusion is to depict Joshua as a kingly leader.<sup>67</sup> Later biblical authors support the evidence for seeing Joshua as a royal figure in that they describe kings such as Solomon and Josiah after the mold of Joshua (2 Kgs 22:2; 1 Chr 22:11–16; 28:3–20; 2

<sup>66</sup>Cole comments, “Evidently Ps. 1:2 intimates a ruler, and Ps 2 will make that association explicit.” Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 59. Like Adam in the garden, the kingly figure of Ps 1 is to learn the instruction of Yahweh before taking dominion over the earth.

<sup>67</sup>Cole suggests that Joshua is consistently portrayed as a second Moses. As such, “the figure Joshua thus represents the roles of prophet and priest, to which can now be added king.” *Ibid.*, 63n73.

Chr 7:11).<sup>68</sup> Putting the pieces together, it is clear that a strong connection exists between kingship (Deut 17), Joshua (conquest), and the “blessed man” of Psalm 1. The parallels between Psalm 1, Deuteronomy 17, and Joshua 1 create a kaleidoscopic picture of the blessed man in Psalm 1 as a Joshua-like king who prospers by meditating on Torah. According to Cole, “Implied is a reading of Joshua in the opening book of the Prophets by the writer of Psalm 1 at the head of the Writings as a harbinger of the future eschatological conqueror to come.”<sup>69</sup>

**The Edenic priest of Psalm 1.** Not only does Psalm 1 portray the blessed man as a royal figure, it also hints at his priestly status. Psalm 1:3 depicts the **אִישׁ** as a flourishing tree (**עֵץ**) planted by streams of water (**פְּלֵגֵי מַיִם**). The imagery of a tree bearing fruit (**פְּרִי**) next to a flowing stream is reminiscent of Eden (Gen 2:9–14).<sup>70</sup> The Edenic subtext is significant for at least two reasons. First, the man of Psalm 1 embodies God’s creational ideal for humanity. This messianic figure flourishes by living in relationship with God as God intended from the beginning. Second, the Edenic imagery situates the setting of Psalm 1 in a garden-sanctuary similar to the primeval temple symbolized in the Garden of Eden. The blessed man flourishes as one who lives and worships in God’s

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<sup>68</sup>On the relationship between Joshua and Israel’s monarchs, see H. G. M. Williamson, “The Accession of Solomon in the Books of Chronicles,” *VT* 26, no. 3 (1976): 351–61; Richard D. Nelson, “Josiah in the Book of Joshua,” *JBL* 100, no. 4 (1981): 531–40; Thomas W. Mann, *Divine Presence and Guidance in Israelite Traditions: The Typology of Exaltation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 196–206; J. Roy Porter, “The Succession of Joshua,” in *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 139–62; Geo Widengren, “King and Covenant,” *JSS* 2, no. 1 (January 1, 1957): 14; Contra Greg Goswell, “Joshua and Kingship,” *BBR* 23, no. 1 (January 1, 2013): 42: “None of the key features of Joshua 1 . . . are essentially royal in nature.”

<sup>69</sup>Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 63.

<sup>70</sup>Terms found in both Ps 1 and Gen 1–2 include “tree” (**עֵץ**) “fruit” (**פְּרִי**) (Gen 1:11–12, 29; 2:9–14, 16). While the term for “streams” (**פְּלֵגֵי**) in Psalm 1 is different than the term for “river” (**נָהָר**) found in Gen 2:10, the imagery is the same. Cole argues that Edenic imagery is prevalent at major junctures of the Psalter. *Ibid.*, 82–85. The opening of Ps 1, the major juncture of Ps 72 just before Book III, and the conclusion of the Psalter in Ps 148 are all punctuated with Edenic imagery. On the relationship of Ps 72 and Ps 1, Cole writes, “The king of Psalm 72 will preside over a restored Eden, just as will the monarch of Psalm 1.” *Ibid.*, 84.

sanctuary. He, therefore, not only occupies a royal status, he also appears to be a priestly figure who meditates on תורה in God’s garden-temple. The linguistic parallels between Psalm 1:3 and the vision of the eschatological temple in Ezekiel 47:12 corroborates the evidence that the setting of Psalm 1 is an arboreal temple (see table 9).

Table 9. Linguistic parallels between Psalm 1:3 and Ezekiel 47:12

Psalm 1:3	Ezekiel 47:12
And he will be like a tree (עץ) planted by streams of water (מים) (פלגי) that gives its fruit (פריו) in its season and its leaf does not wither (ועלהו לא-יבול), but in all that he does he prospers.	And on the banks will grow up...all trees (עץ) for food. Its leaves will not wither (ועלהו לא-יבול) and its fruit will not fail...because its water flows from the sanctuary. And its fruit will be for food and its leaves for healing.

In chapter two, I highlighted the numerous parallels between the description of the eschatological temple and the Garden of Eden. Ezekiel’s temple is an eschatological restoration of the primeval garden-sanctuary. Cole is therefore correct to suggest, “Parallel language between Ezekiel 47 and Psalm 1 and their similar use of Genesis 1–2 indicates a common eschatological thrust. The pious and perfect man at the head of the Psalter will ultimately be established . . . in the eschatological sanctuary garden.”<sup>71</sup> His residence in the sanctuary points to the idea that the “pious and perfect” man occupies the role of the eschatological priest. Indeed, the cumulative evidence of Psalm 1:1–3 read in light of Scripture’s metanarrative suggests that the blessed man is more than a priest; he is a royal priest.

**Psalm 2: Royal priestly Son of God.** The implicit royal identity of the

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<sup>71</sup>Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 66. Cole also observes parallels between Ps 1:3 and Pss 46, 52, and 92 to confirm the sanctuary setting of Psalm 1. *Ibid.*, 66–67.



messianic figure in Psalm 1 is made explicit in Psalm 2.<sup>72</sup> Yahweh’s response to the raging nations and rebellious kings of the earth is described in Psalm 2:6:

Psalm 2:6:        Now as for me, I have installed my king  
                                 on Zion, my holy mountain.

God’s solution to the rebellious nations is to install his “anointed one” (משיח) as king in Zion (Ps 2:2, 6). This messianic king will inherit the nations and the ends of the earth as his possession (Ps 2:7). The picture is consistent with what we have seen throughout the metanarrative of Scripture. God is going to establish his global kingdom through a royal human viceroy who will expand the borders of Israel by conquering the nations to the ends of the earth (Ps 2:8).<sup>73</sup>

Psalm 2:6 also points to the priestly identity of the messiah by revealing the central locale from which he exercises his rule.<sup>74</sup> Yahweh will establish his king in Zion, the “holy mountain” (הר־קדשׁי) of Yahweh himself. The imagery is similar to Exodus 15:17, which describes redeemed Israel dwelling on a mountain-sanctuary under the rule of Yahweh. The messianic king of Psalm 2 now embodies what was to be true of Israel. In Psalm 2:6 “my holy mountain” is appositional to “Zion”—a term pregnant with meaning. Zion often refers to Jerusalem, the city of David and site of the temple. However, Zion can also refer to the heavenly city of God, the dwelling place Yahweh himself (Pss 48:2–3; 110:1–2).<sup>75</sup> If Zion in Psalm 2 is the heavenly Jerusalem, then the

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<sup>72</sup>Cole notes that the משיח of Ps 1 and the messiah of P 2 are one and the same person. Commenting on משיח in Ps 2:2, Cole writes, “The term משיח of v. 2 can refer to a king such as Saul . . . David . . . Cyrus . . . to the high priest . . . or to the future eschatological king . . . . The latter sense is in view here since the textual signals noted above concerning משיח of Ps 1 revealed him to be the eschatological priest, king and conqueror, and now Ps 2 is simply providing a further description of the same individual.” Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 93.

<sup>73</sup>Ps 2:8 might also hint at the priestly role of the messiah because he is one who intercedes for the nations by “asking” Yahweh for them. Dave Schrock pointed me to this observation in a personal conversation.

<sup>74</sup>The author of Hebrews appealed to Ps 2:7 in Heb 5:5 to substantiate the priesthood of Christ.

<sup>75</sup>Cole has argued that “Zion” in Ps 2:6 is to be understood as this heavenly locale. Note the use of “holy hill” (מהר קדשו) in Ps 3:4 as the heavenly locale of Yahweh. For further argumentation on

installation of the messiah on this holy hill is the exact same picture given in Psalm 110:1–3 where David’s Lord (אֲדֹנָי) sits at the right hand of Yahweh to rule the nations from Zion.<sup>76</sup> Perhaps what is explicit in Psalm 110 is implicit in Psalm 2: Yahweh will mediate his rule through a priest-king who will exercise worldwide dominion from the special place of Yahweh’s own presence.<sup>77</sup>

Psalm 2 uncovers one more fundamental component of the messiah’s identity—he is the son of God.<sup>78</sup> Psalm 2:7b describes this filial relationship between the messianic priest-king and Yahweh:

Psalm 2:7b: He said to me, “You are my son,  
today I have begotten you.”

Not only is the messiah enthroned as king, he will exist in a Father-Son relationship with Yahweh himself. This filial relationship clearly has the Davidic covenant in the background. In fact, the reference to the “decree” (חֶקֶק) of Yahweh in 2:7 confirms the

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viewing Zion in Pss 2:6 as the heavenly dwelling place of Yahweh, see Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 108–10. He argues through lexical, phonological, and semantic evidence that the אֲדֹנָי of 2:4 who “sits in the heavens” is not Yahweh, but the שֵׁאִי of Ps 1:1 and the king of Ps 2:6. On the relationship between Ps 1:3, 2:4, and 2:6, Cole writes, “The analysis of Ps. 2.4 demonstrated on many levels that the one seated in heaven was none other than the blessed man of Ps 1. Now that same celestial man is enthroned as king by means of a description containing pointed parallels to Ps. 1:3. The latter portrays him metaphorically as a tree planted over waters in a restored Eden sanctuary, which event is represented in the more concrete terms of 2.6 as his royal installation upon the restored Zion mountain sanctuary. Merging the royal and sacerdotal roles was implied in Ps. 1.2–3 (v. 2, fulfillment of royal duty, v. 3, installation in the restored Edenic sanctuary), and likewise 2.6 represents the installation of the king in a temple setting.” Ibid., 111. Thus, 2:6 in Cole’s argumentation, functions as an explanation of the enthronement of שֵׁאִי as אֲדֹנָי in 2:4. According to Cole, “He was installed on the heavenly holy mountain of Zion . . . by a deliberate act of Yhwh himself.” Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 108. Because of the parallels between Ps 2 and Ps 110, Cole’s analysis is intriguing. However, it should be noted that most interpreters understand the “one who sits in the heavens” to refer to Yahweh.

<sup>76</sup>Cole comments, “The suspicion that the messiah of 2.2 is the subject of divine heavenly session in 2.4 receives confirmation in 110.1. The latter distinguishes between two divine personages quite explicitly (אֲדֹנָי and יְהוָה), and so begins to explain the enigma of Ps. 2.4.” Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 102.

<sup>77</sup>Whether Zion refers to the earthly temple mount or the heavenly Jerusalem in Ps 2 does not change the fact that Zion, in heaven or on earth, is the special dwelling place of God.

<sup>78</sup>The author of Hebrews appeals to Ps 2:7 to support the high priesthood of Jesus Christ (cf. Heb 5:5).

covenantal context.<sup>79</sup> Second Samuel 7:14 describes the covenant relationship between Yahweh and David's heir in familial terms: "I will be to him a father and he will be to me a son" (cf. 1 Chr 17:13; Ps 89:27). The promise of the Davidic covenant will find fulfillment in a royal priestly son of David who reigns over the nations from the heavenly Zion. Furthermore, the familial bond between the king and Yahweh implies that the messiah will bear God's image as he mediates God's rule over the nations. He will be Yahweh's viceroy who will receive the nations as his inheritance and the ends of the earth as his heritage. His eschatological reign will bring others into the state of his own blessedness (אשרי Ps 2:12).<sup>80</sup>

The Psalter, thus, begins by drawing the reader into a story that has been developing since the opening pages of the Bible. God will accomplish his creation project by establishing his kingdom through a royal son with priestly access to God's presence. Cole's conclusion about the function of Psalms 1–2 is right: "Indeed they belong together, not at all as a hypothesized coronation liturgy, but rather to open the entire Psalter with an integrated portrayal of the victorious eschatological priest-king."<sup>81</sup>

### **Parallels Between Psalms 1–2 and Psalm 110**

The analysis of Psalms 1–2 above may not be enough to convince a skeptic that Psalm 110 is to be read in light of Psalms 1–2.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, I turn now to examine specific lexical and thematic points of contact between the two passages. The numerous

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<sup>79</sup>Cole concurs that the "decree" in 2:7 "undoubtedly refers to the covenant with David." Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 113.

<sup>80</sup>The use of אשרי forms an inclusio around the beginning of Ps 1 and the end of Ps 2, further substantiating their literary unity and dependence.

<sup>81</sup>Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 63n75.

<sup>82</sup>It is also important to note that the author of Hebrews juxtaposed Ps 2:7 and Ps 110:4 while arguing for Christ's high priestly role. Clearly the author of Hebrews believed that Ps 2 and Ps 110 were meant to be read in light of each other.

parallels between these texts demonstrate that the messiah in Psalms 1–2 is one and the same as the priest-king of Psalm 110. For the sake of space, these parallels are summarized in table 10.<sup>83</sup>

Table 10. Parallels between Psalms 1–2 and Psalm 110

Psalms 1–2	Psalm 110
The wicked will not stand in the “judgment” (Ps 1:6)	He will execute “judgment” on the nations (Ps 110:6)
The אֲדֹנָי “sits in the heavens” (Ps 2:4)	The אֲדֹנָי sits at the right hand of Yahweh (Ps 110:1)
Yahweh installs his king in “Zion” (Ps 2:6)	Yahweh sends forth from “Zion” the king’s scepter (Ps 110:2)
Reference to the “decree” (חֹק) of Yahweh (Ps 2:7)	Reference to the oath (שְׁבַע) of Yahweh (Ps 110:4)
The messiah will break the nations with a “rod of iron” (Ps 2:9)	The messiah rules with a “mighty scepter” (Ps 110:2)
The messiah will “break” and “shatter” the nations (Ps 2:9)	The messiah will “shatter” kings and chiefs (Ps 110:5–6)
The messiah will execute “his wrath” (אָפֶן), but “his wrath” is easily kindled (Ps 2:5, 12)	The אֲדֹנָי will shatter kings on the day of “his wrath” (אָפֶן, Ps 110:5)
Judgment on “kings” (Ps 2:2–5, 10–12)	Judgment on “kings” (Ps 110:5)
Judgment on “nations” (Ps 2:8–9)	Judgment on “nations” (Ps 110:6)
The messiah will rule the entire earth (Ps 2:8)	The messiah will rule the entire earth (Ps 110:6)

The numerous correspondences between Psalms 1–2 and Psalm 110 mitigate the notion that the messianic theology of Psalm 110 is an anomaly. The apparent novelties of Psalm 110—heavenly session and priestly identity of the messiah—are accounted for in the

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<sup>83</sup>Other scholars have recognized parallels between Ps 2 and Ps 110. See for example Rolf Rendtorff, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 248; Crutchfield, *Psalms in Their Context*, 88; Trygve N. D Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1976), 264–65.

opening pages of the Psalter.<sup>84</sup> Cole is correct to conclude, “The numerous verbal correspondences between Psalms 110 and 2...all confirm that the אֲדֹנָי of 2.4 and 110.1 are one and the same. His heavenly session of Ps. 2.4 is thus revealed in 110.1 to have come about through the decree of YHWH.”<sup>85</sup>

**Summary.** Contained in Psalms 1–2 is a snapshot of the biblical storyline. God’s creation project to establish his kingdom through a royal son sets the trajectory for the entire Psalter. In Psalm 1, the blessed man dwells in what appears to be a restored Eden. He is a royal priestly figure whose existence echoes primal humanity in the garden of God. He is a student of Torah, meditating on God’s instruction in God’s garden palace. Psalm 2 develops the identity and mission of this royal priestly figure by establishing him as a Joshua-like conqueror whose conquest will be global. This messianic king will reign over all the kingdoms of the earth from the heavenly location of God’s sacred mountain. He will live in a covenant relationship to Yahweh as Yahweh’s own son. He therefore appears to embody the role set out for Adam and Israel. Adam bore the image of God in the garden-sanctuary, where he was to learn God’s law before exercising global dominion. Like Adam (and Israel), the messiah must meditate on Torah before mediating God’s rule to the rest of the world. As the covenantal son of God, the messiah is God’s image planted on God’s mountain to establish God’s kingdom by mediating God’s reign. All those who take refuge in the royal son will have the privilege of entering into the state of אֲשֵׁרִי along with the messiah (Ps 2:12). This state of human flourishing is only possible as people live in a right relationship with God. In this sense, the messianic priest-king will accomplish God’s creation plan of extending the borders of divine dwelling space to the ends of the earth to maximize God’s glory as others become willing and blessed

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<sup>84</sup>Granted Pss 1–2 do not say anything specifically about a *Melchizedekian* priesthood.

<sup>85</sup>Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 102.

subjects of God's rule. Psalms 1–2, therefore, look backward and forward. They powerfully draw the reader into the storyline that has been developing since Genesis 1, while simultaneously projecting the messianic shape of the remaining Psalms. When Psalms 1–2 are allowed to fulfill their canonical purpose, the apparent novelties of the messiah's identity in Psalm 110 are already hinted at in the opening of the Psalter. The royal Melchizedekian priest of Psalm 110 is the blessed man and Davidic messiah of Psalms 1–2.

### **Psalm 110:1b**

**Sit at my right hand.** The session of David's lord to the right hand of Yahweh establishes this messianic figure on the highest throne in the universe. The "right hand" metaphorically refers to God's power and authority.<sup>86</sup> The messiah will, therefore, mediate God's reign over the world. He will not rule by his own authority but, according to Allen, "as a vicegerent and representative, deriving authority from his divine counterpart."<sup>87</sup> As God's viceroy, the messiah fulfills what it means to be made in the image of God. He will extend God's kingdom to the ends of the earth.

The language of "right hand" does more than metaphorically communicate authority, power, and kingship; it also highlights the messiah's privileged position of access to Yahweh. David's lord will reign from the very heavenly throne room of God.<sup>88</sup> The spatial connotations of "right hand" find support in the reference to "Zion" in 110:3.

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<sup>86</sup>Allen adopts a metaphorical interpretation of "right hand." He writes, "The metaphor underlines the fact that God is the real king." Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:115. Waltke similarly comments, "To sit at right hand signifies serving I AM as his viceroy." Waltke, "Psalm 110," 69.

<sup>87</sup>Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:115.

<sup>88</sup>Waltke suggests that the "right hand," in its historical context, refers to the king's throne hall or Hall of Judgment located to the right of where the ark of the covenant (God's earthly throne) would have been situated in the temple. Waltke, "Psalm 110," 69. It seems to me that the eschatological thrust of the Psalm suggests that there is more than the earthly spatial connotations of "right hand." David Mitchell suggests that a case can be made for seeing the spatial referent of "right hand" to be the heavenly realm. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, 258–60.

Zion is the heavenly Jerusalem, for Yahweh will be the one to “send forth” (ישלח) the messiah’s “staff of power” (מטה-עזר) from this heavenly locale (cf. Ps 2:6).<sup>89</sup> Thus, we do not have to wait until 110:4 to see the priestly identity of David’s lord. Like the messianic picture in Psalm 2, the Davidic messiah will exercise kingly authority while enjoying priestly access to the very presence of God.<sup>90</sup>

From a canonical perspective, the author of Hebrews appears to have picked up the priestly implications of Psalm 110:1. The author of Hebrews viewed Jesus’ entrance into the true Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem and greater tabernacle (Heb 9:11; 12:25), as a fulfillment of Psalm 110:1. Furthermore, he connected Psalm 110:1 to Jesus’ priestly ministry. Hebrews 1:3b says, “After making purification of sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.” According to the author of Hebrews, Christ’s exalted position of authority, mediation, and access to God’s heavenly abode is the product of his priestly work of purification. Jesus takes his rightful seat at God’s right hand in fulfillment of Psalm 110:1 because he is the successful high priest.

**Until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.** David anticipated a time when all the enemies of אדני and Yahweh will be subjected to the messiah’s reign.<sup>91</sup> They will become a footstool for the feet of the messiah. Why does David describe the

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<sup>89</sup>The heavenly connotations of “right hand” are supported by the New Testament’s use of Ps 110:1 in Heb 1:13 and Acts 2:33–35.

<sup>90</sup>The messiah’s position at the right hand of God suggests that he mediates God’s rule over the earth. This mediatorial role also points to the messiah’s priestly status. Rooke suggests that a “key characteristic of sacral kingship is the understanding of the monarch as in some way either the embodiment of the god or as having been brought into a particularly close relationship with the deity by being chosen or imbued with divine power.” She goes on to argue that this “particularly close relationship” is one of adopted sonship and as such “it was only natural that he [the king] should be answerable to Yahweh for the nation and should fulfill the function of national mediator between people and deity...” Deborah W. Rooke, “Kingship As Priesthood: The Relationship between the High Priesthood and the Monarchy,” in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1998), 193.

<sup>91</sup>Concerning the use of “enemies” in Ps 110:1–2, Davis observes that both uses refer to the enemies of God, not the enemies of a human ruler. He also points out that the remaining seven uses of “your enemies” in the Psalter refer to God’s enemies. Davis, “Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm,” 164.

messiah’s dominion in these terms? Again, a canonical approach helps uncover the biblical logic undergirding the nature of the messiah’s conquest. The imagery of enemies being rendered footstools under the feet of the אֲדֹנָי evokes similar scenes from Psalm 8 and Joshua’s conquest described in Joshua 10.

Psalm 8, a Davidic psalm, describes mankind’s position of authority over creation. The language of 8:6 parallels David’s description of the messiah’s rule in Psalm 110:1 (see table 11).

Table 11. Linguistic parallels between Psalm 8:6 and Psalm 110:1

Psalm 8:6	Psalm 110:1
You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet (כל שתה תהת־רגליו).	The Lord said to my lord, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet” (עֲדֵאֲשִׁית אִיבִיךָ הַדָּם לְרִגְלֶיךָ).

As discussed in chapter 2, Psalm 8 functions as commentary on Genesis 1:26–28. David reflects on man’s regal authority over the created realm. God has placed (שִׁית) all of creation under the feet (רַגְלֵי) of mankind as man exercises kingly dominion over the earth (Ps 8:6). In Psalm 110, David applies the same language to the messiah’s regal authority over his enemies. After sin entered the world, the concept of dominion included the need to exercise rule over the human forces of evil. As Beale has written, “After Adam’s sin, the commission would be expanded to include renewed humanity’s reign over unregenerate human forces arrayed against it.”<sup>92</sup> David’s Lord will be the one to fulfill this worldwide dominion, accomplishing what Adam failed to do even without the

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<sup>92</sup>G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 113.



presence of evil. Yahweh's injunction to the messiah to "rule" (רדה) in Psalm 110:2 is the same command originally given to Adam (cf. Gen 1:26, 28). Dempster suggests that the imperative "powerfully echoes" the creation mandate.<sup>93</sup> The royal priestly messiah, therefore, resembles the prototypical priest-king Adam.<sup>94</sup> However, the Davidic priest-king will accomplish worldwide dominion through the conquest of his enemies.<sup>95</sup>

A second canonical connection informing Psalm 110:1 may be found in the conquest narrative of Joshua.<sup>96</sup> The imagery of the messiah's enemies lying as a collective footstool under his feet thematically picks up a dramatic scene from Joshua

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<sup>93</sup>Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*: (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003) 60.

<sup>94</sup>Dempster writes, "Psalm 110 depicts the installation of a new ruler with his enemies under his feet and he smites them on the head, a resounding echo of the reclaimed dominion of humanity (cf. Gen 1:26–28; 3:15)" (ibid., 200).

<sup>95</sup>The New Testament clearly connects Ps 8 and Ps 110 in 1 Cor 15:25–27, Eph 1:19–23, and Heb 1:13–2:9. Commenting on the relations between Ps 8 and Ps 110 in 1 Cor 15:25–27, Keener writes, "In brief, when one reads Psalm 8, Psalm 110, and 1 Cor 15:20–28 in tandem, one begins to see the tension between king David, king Adam, and king YWHH resolved in the single person of Jesus the Messiah... these texts working together push the reader towards an encounter with the divine reality revealed in the person of Jesus." Hubert James Keener, *A Canonical Exegesis of Psalm 8: YHWH's Maintenance of the Created Order through Divine Reversal*, JTI Sup 9 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 157. Some might argue that seeing a connection between the reference to Ps 110:1 in Heb 1:13 and the author's exegesis of Ps 8 in Heb 2:5–9 is unfounded. However, the author of Hebrews did not randomly select Psalms to make a point. He saw theological connections between the Psalms that were made even in their original context. Keener comments, "It is worth noting that the citation of Psalm 8 in Heb 2:5–8 gestures back towards the briefly interrupted argument of Heb 1:5–14 by a) resuming the conversation of the things 'of which we are speaking' (Heb 2:5), and b) reiterating that God will subject things under the 'feet' of Christ (Heb 1:13=Ps 110:1 and Heb 2:8=Ps 8:7)" (ibid., 174).

<sup>96</sup>It is plausible that the conquest narrative of Joshua helped shape David's understanding of the messiah's identity. I argued earlier that the Davidic covenant serves as the primary biblical-theological logic informing Ps 110. In 2 Sam 7:10–11 God promises David that he will plant his people Israel in the land. No longer shall "sons of injustice" afflict the people "as they did in the former times" when the judges ruled over the people of Israel. There is a loud echo to the conquest in these verses. Joshua brought the people into the land, but the people did not finish the job of clearing out the pagan peoples. The book of Judges highlights this fact. God promises David in 2 Sam 7:11 that he (God) will give David "rest from all your enemies." As noted earlier, the theme of rest is a strong allusion to the book of Joshua (Josh 21:44; 22:3; 23:1; cf. 2 Sam 7:1, 11). The following works at least reference Josh 10:24 in relation to Ps 110:1: C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. F. B. Elland (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 5:695; James M. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: 2010), 152; Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:115; M. D. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return (Book V, Psalms 107–150)*, JSOT Sup 258 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 148; Edmund Kalt, *Herder's Commentary On The Psalms*, trans. Bernard Fritz (Westminster: MD: Newman Press, 1961), 429.

10:24:

And when they brought these kings to Joshua, Joshua called to every man of Israel and he said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, "Come near. Put your feet on the necks of these kings." So they drew near and put their feet on their necks.

Joshua's actions are a dramatic picture of what it means for the people of Israel to take dominion over the Promised Land by subduing and ruling over their enemies.

Joshua 10:24 is possibly the Bible's most literal example of the enemies of God being made footstools for the feet of God's people. The description of neck-stomping appears twice in Joshua 10:24, highlighting the event's prominence.

In canonical context, Joshua 10:24 evokes the promise of Genesis 3:15 that a seed of the woman would crush the head of the seed of the Serpent. Through the conquest of the land, Israel will bring the skull-crushing promise of Genesis 3:15 to fruition. They are priest-kings exercising dominion over God's enemies so that they might prepare a place where God's presence (temple) would reside. All of the nations (represented by the kings in Josh 10:24) will be subject to God's rule mediated through Israel. In Joshua 10:25, Joshua promises the people that this picture of subjugation is what the Lord will do to all of their enemies. The neck-stomping event, coupled with Joshua's promise, drives the promise of Genesis 3:15 forward. The symbol of skull crushing originally promised to the seed of the woman and picked up in the conquest would eventually become the symbol of victory for the messiah (Ps 110:1). The messianic priest-king will make his enemies a footstool for his feet, and, as Psalm 110:6 announces, he will shatter the "head" (שׂר) over the wide earth (cf. Gen 3:15).

Some might argue that the connection between Joshua 10:24 and Psalm 110:1 is a bit tenuous. However, the literary parallels between Joshua 10 and the Melchizedek narrative in Genesis 14 support the notion that Joshua's conquest undergirds the biblical logic behind the conquest of the Melchizedekian priest in Psalm 110. There are at least six points of contact between Joshua 10 and Genesis 14. First, the mention of "Adoni-

zedek, king of Jerusalem” (דקאדני־צ מלך ירושלים) in Joshua 10:1 recalls the figure “Melchizedek, king of Salem” (מלכי־צדק מלך שלם), Gen 14:18). Second, both narratives describe a war with kings. In Joshua 10, five kings of the Amorites make war with Gibeon. Similarly, Genesis 14 describes a battle involving five kings against four kings, and the country of the Amorites is mentioned in Genesis 14:7. Third, in Joshua 10, Joshua and his army go to war in order to save Gibeon; in Genesis 14, Abraham goes to war in order to save his kinsman Lot. Fourth, in both narratives God is the one who gives victory in battle. Fifth, Melchizedek’s blessing upon Abraham in 14:20 is similar to Yahweh’s statements to Joshua in 10:8a:

Genesis 14:20a:	And blessed be God Most High who had delivered (מגן) your enemies into your hand (בידך)
Joshua 10:8a:	The Lord said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have given (נתן) them into your hand” (בידך). <sup>97</sup>

Finally, both narratives include a commission to forsake ongoing fear after experiencing victory in battle. In Genesis 15:1, God tells Abram not to fear, for Yahweh will be his shield and give him a great reward. In Joshua 10:25, Joshua tells the people not fear, for Yahweh will give them victory over all their enemies.

Genesis 15:1:	“Do not fear” (אל־תִּירָא)
Joshua 10:25:	“Do not fear” (אל־תִּירָאוּ)

What is the significance of the parallels between Joshua 10 and Genesis 14–15? Why would the author of Joshua evoke the episode between Melchizedek and Abraham when describing Joshua’s defeat of these pagan kings? I suggest that the link is meant to tie Joshua’s work of conquest to the covenantal blessing of Abraham—a blessing that will have implications for the nations. Joshua’s conquest was the means to

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<sup>97</sup>Joshua’s statement in 10:19b is also similar, “for the Lord your God has given them (נָתַנְם) into your hand (בִּידְכֶם).”

bring the land promise to fruition. Through Joshua's leadership, Abraham's seed (Israel) will possess the gate of her enemies (Gen 22:17) in order to acquire the Promised Land (Gen 12:1; 15:18). Israel can be confident in their holy war because just as Melchizedek pronounced God's blessing of deliverance on Abraham, their father, so too will God's blessing of deliverance be true for them (Josh 10:8, 9; cf. Gen 14:20). Moreover, like Genesis 14, Joshua 10 reveals that the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham's seed would result in blessing for the nations (cf. Gen 22:17–18). Just as Lot received a blessing by being associated with Abraham, Gibeon is spared from warring kings by being in covenant with Israel.

At the very least, the above analysis of Psalm 8, Joshua 10, and Psalm 110 reveals a web of relationships between God's original design for humanity, Melchizedek, Joshua, and David's Lord. The royal priest of Psalm 110 advances God's creation project in a fallen world by subduing and ruling the enemies of Yahweh (Ps 110:1, 6). He is a Joshua-like figure who will fill the nations with corpses (Ps 110:6), just as Joshua devoted everything with breath in the pagan nations to destruction (Josh 10:40).<sup>98</sup> He accomplishes this global dominion as a Melchizedekian priest reigning over the nations

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<sup>98</sup>The connection between Ps 110 and Joshua may have informed the author of Hebrews' logic in Heb 4:8–14. In Heb 3–4, the author exposit Ps 95 (a Psalm attributed to David in Heb 4:7) to encourage his audience to enter the eschatological rest that awaits the people of God. He draws a typological connection between the ministry of Joshua and the ministry of Jesus. Heb 4:8–10 describes the failure of Joshua (Ἰησοῦς) to give the people of God rest in the Promised Land and holds out the promise for a future Sabbath rest. The author interjects a word of exhortation in 4:11–13 before returning to his argument in 4:14. The inferential conjunction οὖν in 4:14 links Jesus' high priestly ministry to the mention of Joshua in verses 8–10. The author establishes the typological connection between Joshua and Jesus by identifying the great high priest in 4:14 as "Jesus" (Ἰησοῦν). The association between Joshua and Jesus is strong in the Greek because they share the same name: "For if Ἰησοῦς had rested them, he would not have spoken about another day after this... Therefore having a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, namely Ἰησοῦν, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." What does any of this have to do with Psalm 110? The significance of the typological association is that Jesus' Joshua-like work is a function of his priesthood. In Hebrews, Jesus' high priesthood is grounded in Ps 110:4—"you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." What biblical basis did the author of Hebrews have for associating the conquest work of Joshua to the priestly work of Jesus? If what I have argued is correct, then it would appear that Ps 110 is the answer. The royal priestly messiah carries out a Joshua-like conquest over the entire earth and lays claim to the heavenly Zion.

from the very presence of God.

### **Psalm 110:2**

**The Lord sends forth the staff of your power from Zion.** The “staff of your power” (מטה-עֹז) conveys the regal authority of the messiah.<sup>99</sup> In verse one, the אֲדֹנָי is simply a passive agent sitting at Yahweh’s right hand while Yahweh brings his enemies into subjection. Here in verse two, the construct phrase מטה-עֹז is placed at the beginning of the clause to emphasize the messiah’s own regal power.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, even the messiah’s power must be derived from Yahweh himself, for it is Yahweh who “sends forth” (להיש) the king’s staff.<sup>101</sup> The messiah’s staff goes forth “from Zion,” which, in light of verse one, must be the heavenly realm of God’s presence. The אֲדֹנָי is a regal figure exercising his rule from the privileged position of priestly access to the throne room of God.<sup>102</sup>

**Rule in the midst of your enemies.** The rule of David’s Lord does not begin once his enemies are brought into subjection under his feet. His rule from Zion is active “in the midst” (בקרבו) of his enemies (110:2). He sits on the highest throne in the universe exercising authority over all the nations while his enemies continue to resist his kingship.

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<sup>99</sup>It signifies “the sceptre...of authority” given to the messiah. Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 5:695. Jinkyu Kim writes, “The meaning of the king’s mighty scepter is subsumed under the symbol of power and authority.” Kim, “Psalm 110 in Its Literary and Generic Contexts,” 319.

<sup>100</sup>Davis similarly writes that the phrase (“your strong scepter”) appears at the beginning of the verse to emphasize “dramatically” the messiah’s right to rule. Davis, “Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm,” 164.

<sup>101</sup>Allen comments, “It will be Yahweh who does the fighting and gains the victory, so that by implication all the glory must go to God.” Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:115. Perhaps the appearance of “staff” here is also meant to imply the messiah’s role as a shepherd of God’s people. In this case, the messianic picture of Ps 110 would support the eschatological messianism of Ezek 34 where the messiah is clearly a shepherd like David (Ezek 34:23–24).

<sup>102</sup>As noted, the picture of the messianic priest-king in Ps 110:2 parallels the messianic picture of Ps 2. The rod by which the messianic king will strike down the nations in Ps 2 is the staff of power by which the אֲדֹנָי of Ps 110 will rule the world.

The imperative “rule” (רדה), as noted above, loudly echoes the creation mandate (cf. Gen 1:28).<sup>103</sup> Like Adam, David’s Lord is a royal priest mediating Yahweh’s rule from the sanctuary of God. He will accomplish the goal of establishing God’s kingdom by extending the borders of God’s dwelling place over the entire earth. He will bring the heavenly kingdom of Zion to bear on a world that is hostile to God. When the enemies of this priest-king are finally made a footstool for his feet, the will of Yahweh will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Zion).

### **Psalm 110:3**

Psalm 110:3 is a notoriously difficult verse to translate and interpret.<sup>104</sup> Numerous studies have been conducted on the text-critical and translational issues involved.<sup>105</sup> It is not my intention to rehearse all of the textual issues or get bogged down in matters not immediately relevant to this study. My comments will be based on the text of the MT. However, at key points I will point out possible emendations to the vowel pointing of the MT. From the outset, it will be helpful to juxtapose a literal rendering of

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<sup>103</sup>Davis suggests that the imperative “rule” closes an *inclusio* begun with the imperative in verse one (“sit at my right hand”). He comments, “This *inclusio* separates the actions of the deity from those of humanity seen in verse 3.” Davis, “Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm,” 165. If he is right, then this would help explain the shift in focus from the messiah in vv. 1–2 and the messiah’s army in v. 3.

<sup>104</sup>Referencing R. Tournay, Allen comments that Psalm 110:3 “has been called the most obscure verse in the whole Psalter.” Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:110. Brown notes the difficulties concerning Ps 110 as a whole and 110:3 in particular. He writes, “Psalm 110 is one of the most difficult of the psalms to interpret. Despite its many textual conundrums, the psalm is widely recognized as a royal liturgy of some sort...Although some level of agreement regarding the psalm’s liturgical nature has been reached, no unanimity has emerged regarding the translation and meaning of 3א–ב, particularly the last five words of the verse.” William P. Brown, “A Royal Performance: Critical Notes on Psalm 110:3א–ב,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117, no. 1 (April 1, 1998): 93. David Hay regards 110:3 in the Hebrew as “virtually unintelligible.” David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Atlanta: Abingdon Press, 1973), 21.

<sup>105</sup>For a smattering of translational options, see William P. Brown, “A Royal Performance: Critical Notes on Psalm 110:3א–ב,” *JBL* 117, no. 1 (March 1, 1998): 93–96; Gary A. Rendsberg, “Psalm CX 3B,” *VT* 49, no. 4 (October 1, 1999): 548–53; Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:110–111; Marianne Grohmann, “Metaphors of God, Nature and Birth in Psalm 90,2 and Psalm 110,3,” in *Metaphors in the Psalms*, ed. Pierre Van Hecke and Antje Labahn (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 23–33; Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament*, vol. 4 (Fribourg, Switzerland: Academic Press Fribourg, 2005), 736–48.

the MT and the LXX since most of the translational variations are apparent in the differences between these two versions (see table 12).<sup>106</sup>

Table 12. Translations of Psalm 110:3

MT	LXX (109:3)
Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the dawn, the dew of your youth belongs to you.	Authority is with you in the day of your power, with the brightness of the holy ones. I have begotten you from the womb before the dawn.

Virtually all of the differences between the MT and LXX concern matters of vowel pointing and not variants in the consonantal text.

**Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power.** The LXX translator interpreted עִמָּךְ as the preposition “with” (עִם) with a 2ms pronominal suffix and נִדְבַת as the noun נְדִיב meaning “noble” or “honor.” The rendering of the LXX is attractive in that it keeps the focus on the messiah. However, Allen believes the MT “has the merit of continuing the military vein of v. 2.”<sup>107</sup> If we adopt the MT, then what are we to make of this clause?<sup>108</sup> The scene shifts from the military prowess of the

<sup>106</sup>Interestingly enough, Barthélemy argues for a reading that more closely follows the LXX. He proposes four corrections to the MT: “Si l’on accepte les quatre corrections que nous proposons pour ce verset, on pourra traduire: ‘Avec toi est le principat au jour ou [se déploie] ta valeur sur les saintes montagnes, du sein de l’aurore sors comme la rosée: je t’ai engender!’” Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament*, 4:748.

<sup>107</sup>Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:110.

<sup>108</sup>Waltke suggests that נִדְבַת could be translated literally as “are volunteerism.” He suggests that נִדְבַת is an abstract plural noun signifying state or condition. Waltke, “Psalm 110,” 61n8. Joüon similarly argues that נִדְבַת is a “substantive expressing an abstract quality.” Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 2nd ed. with corrections, (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2009), sec. 154e.

messiah to the messiah's mighty army. The king will lead a holy war to conquer the nations on the day of his power.<sup>109</sup> The language parallels Judges 5:2 where the people of Israel are said to have “voluntarily” (נדב) joined their leaders to enact holy war against their enemies. A similar scene appears in Psalm 110:3. The messiah's army needs no coercing to engage in war. They fight with loyalty and allegiance. They are a faithful, obedient, and willing group of volunteers ready to do the king's bidding. Allen similarly comments, “The corollary of the divine promise of v 1 is that the king's people will freely volunteer; yet they themselves will be God's blessing to the king, materializing like the mysterious, God-given dew upon the mountains at daybreak.”<sup>110</sup>

**In holy garments from the womb of the dawn.** Scholars dispute the vocalization of every word in the remainder of 110:3. It is quite possible that the MT's בהררי should be rendered בהררי.<sup>111</sup> This reading appears in Symmachus, Jerome, and many medieval manuscripts. The rendering is attractive because Psalm 110 has numerous parallels with Psalm 2. The בהררי-קדש recalls Psalm 2:6 where the messiah reigns from the Lord's holy mountain (הר-קדש).<sup>112</sup> In this sense, we might understand the messiah's

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<sup>109</sup>Concerning holy war, Allen comments, “The sole agency of Yahweh did not in fact preclude the involvement of the Israelite army according to the holy war theme (cf. Deut 20:4; 2 Sam 5:24), and v 3 appears to assume such cooperation.” Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:115.

<sup>110</sup>Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:110.

<sup>111</sup>Allen argues for this rendering. He comments, “MT בהררי-קדש could mean “in holy vestments” (cf. NIV, REB), which would fit better after v 4 than before it. The pl. of הדר is not found elsewhere... An alternative MS reading, also represented in  $\sigma$  and Hier., is בהררי-קדש “on the holy mountains,” with which one may compare הר קדשי “my holy mountain,” in Ps 2:6 and the very phrase in a Zion psalm, 87:11. Barthélemy et al. (*Preliminary and Interim Report*, 3:394) prefer this reading and so does NRSV. The following reference to טל “dew,” suits it (cf. Ps 133:3). It is possible that even more ancient support for this reading is forthcoming from Joel 2:2, set in a passage redolent with echoes of other biblical material, including Ps 97. There the juxtaposition of שהר, “dawn,” הרים, “mountains,” and עם, “people,” in connection with the day of Yahweh (cf. Ps 110:5) may be intended as a prophetic reversal of Ps 110:3, in the light of the reversal of Isa 2:4 in Joel 4(3):10, with the message that the victorious army backed by Yahweh is not Israel but a force directed against Israel.” Ibid., 21:110.

<sup>112</sup>Waltke suggests that if “mountains” were the correct reading, then one would expect the singular “mountain” as in Ps 2. Waltke, “Psalm 110,” 61n10.



army as proceeding from the place of Yahweh's special presence. While the reading is attractive, most of the manuscript evidence supports the consonantal text of the MT.

Perhaps the *הדר־יקדש* of the royal army are meant to recall Aaron's priestly attire (*בגד־קדש*, Exod 28:2).<sup>113</sup> In 2 Chronicles 20:21, the phrase *להדרת־קדש* describes the garb of the Levitical priests who march before Israel's army. This leads Keil and Delitzsch to conclude that the messiah's army in Psalm 110 is "a priestly people which leads forth to holy battle, just as in Apoc. xix. 14 heavenly armies follow the Logos of God upon white horses..."<sup>114</sup> The priestly connotations of "holy garments" might also find support in Psalm 96:5–9. Here the families of the earth are summoned to worship Yahweh in his cosmic temple. Specifically, they are to worship Yahweh in "holy attire" (*בהדרת־קדש*, Ps 96:9).<sup>115</sup> Perhaps the priestly army also serves as a reminder of Israel's collective royal priesthood as described in Exodus 19:6.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, the noun *הדר* could also serve as a subtle allusion to Psalm 8:5, where man (*אדם*) receives regal glory and "honor" (*הדר*) from God at creation (cf. Gen 1:26–28). The messiah's army would, therefore, embody the priestly authority inherent in humanity's original design. This evidence may suggest that the "holy attire" of this messianic army hints that they share,

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<sup>113</sup>Davis writes, "These clothes . . . may be similar to those 'holy garments' worn by Aaron when he entered the Holy Place. Although they might not be the same garments, they are suggestive of priestly garb and thus heighten the reader's awareness of priestly functions, which are noted in verse 4." Davis, "Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm," 165.

<sup>114</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 5:696.

<sup>115</sup>Commenting on the cosmic symbolism of temples in the ANE, Beale writes "The word 'beauty' is also contextually associated with astronomical phenomena in Is. 62:1, 3...and Ps. 110:3 ('Thy people will volunteer . . . in the *beauty* of holiness, from the womb of the dawn'). Ps. 96:5–9 strikingly combines elements of the heavens, beauty, the temple, and priestly attire: directly following mention of the created 'heavens', it says, 'splendor and majesty are before Him, strength and *beauty* are in His *sanctuary*', followed by a command to 'bring an offering into His courts' and to 'worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness' (NASB renders 'holy attire'). Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 43n31.

<sup>116</sup>Briggs and Briggs write that the "sacred ornaments" implies "an army of priests, in accordance with the conception of the nation as a kingdom of priests in the covenant of Horeb Ex. 19:6." Charles A. Briggs and Emilie G. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), 2:377.

to some extent, in the priestly identity of their royal leader (Ps. 110:4).<sup>117</sup>

The next phrase מרחם משחר—vocalized in the MT as “from the womb of the dawn”—poses, yet again, many textual difficulties.<sup>118</sup> However, the debates surrounding this phrase have little impact on the general meaning of the phrase.<sup>119</sup> The imagery here pictures the army as eager to engage in the Messiah’s holy war. They are not latecomers to the battle, but they arrive at dawn, “implying their immediate readiness.”<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup>Allen argues against the “holy attire” reading in 110:3, suggesting that it would make better sense after 110:4. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:110. However, if what I have argued is correct, then the messiah’s priestly identity is already apparent in 110:1.

<sup>118</sup>Allen briefly summarizes the numerous debates concerning מרחם משחר. He writes, “Heb. מרחם is a *hapax legomenon*, though by no means a morphologically impossible form. It may be a corruption of the normal שחר, ‘dawn,’ by dittogr. (*BHS*), as Joel 2:2 perhaps suggests. Hummel (*JBL* 76 [1957] 98) explained the *mem* as enclitic, and Joüon section 129u considers this case “reasonably assured,” but Emerton (“Are There Examples?” 335) has judged this expedient unnecessary. W.P. Brown (*JBL* 117 [1998] 94) takes the *mem* as a prep. with LXX, Origen’s transliterated Hebrew text, Quinta, and Θ’ with the sense “toward the dawn” (cf. *BDB*, 578b [1.c]), but leaves the enigmatic מרחם, “from the womb,” by itself and quite unexplained. A mythological reference to a Canaanite deity Shahar is excluded since he was evidently male, T.N.D. Mettinger (*King and Messiah*, 264 n. 35a) judged J.W. McKay’s attempts to demonstrate a reference to a goddess here (“Helel and the Dawn Goddess,” *VT* 20 [1970] 458) to be “very doubtful.” G.A. Rendsburg (*VT* 49 [1999] 548–51; cf. *VT* 33 [1983] 358) has taken מרחם as “with rain,” appealing to South Arabian *rh*, “rain,” as cognate.” *Ibid.*, 21:110n3e. The full comment of Joüon, referenced by Allen above, is as follows: “Notwithstanding the general principle that nothing can break up a construct chain...some cognate languages, especially Ugaritic, suggest that BH may also have allowed the use of the enclitic Mem with the first noun in a construct chain, though its precise function remains obscure...Out of a list of such possible cases mentioned by Hummel, the following appear reasonably assured...Ps 110.3 מרחם משחר from the womb of the dawn (= מרחמם שחר) . . . Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, sec. ed. (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2009), 129u.

<sup>119</sup>The differences center mainly around whether to translate the phrase with directional movement “out of the womb, towards the dawn” or simply “from womb of the dawn” or “from the rain of the dawn.” In all of these instances, the inherent imagery is retained. For various proposals, see Brown, “A Royal Performance,” March 1, 1998; Rendsburg, “Psalm CX 3B”; Grohmann, “Metaphors of God, Nature and Birth in Psalm 90:2 and Psalm 110:3.”

<sup>120</sup>Rendsburg, “Psalm CX 3B,” 550. According to Mitchell, מרחם משחר evokes multiple associations. He writes, “What can be most simply maintained is that it denotes the army’s place of origin, a place both splendid and supernatural. It may be the place of the dawn. It may also suggest the dawning of a new age, described elsewhere in sunrise imagery (cf. Isa. 60.1; Mal. 3.20 [4.2]). It might even contain a reference to the resurrection of the dead. For there is a striking parallel with the language of Isa. 26.18–19, probably the earliest unmistakable reference to resurrection in Hebrew literature, in the imagery of birth, dew and dawn: *For dew . . . of the dawn . . . is your dew; the earth to the dead . . . will give birth.* The idea that the faithful dead will rise at Messiah’s appearing is, of course, well-attested in later Hebrew literature.” Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, 261–62.

**To you belongs the dew of your youth.** The most significant translational issue centers on the final word of verse 3: יִלְדָתְךָ. Pointed as such, this word is from the feminine noun ילדות in construct with a second person singular masculine suffix. Thus the translation “your youth” is appropriate. What is meant by “your youth” is more difficult to determine. A common proposal is that “youth” connotes prime strength and vitality for either the messiah himself or his army.<sup>121</sup>

A slight repointing of the vowels, however, reveals an intriguing and viable interpretation for the thesis of this project. It is quite possible that ילדתִיך should be taken as a Qal perfect 1cs verb with a 2ms suffix: יִלְדָתִיךָ. In this case, the meaning of ילדתִיך would be “I have begotten you” from the root ילד meaning “to beget.”<sup>122</sup> The only other

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<sup>121</sup>Allen argues that the “dew” represents an army of divine origin that is given to the messiah at just the right time. Thus the “dew of your youth” is a metaphorical description of the messiah’s army who will fight for the messiah during the prime of his strength. Allen writes: “The army is the wonderful gift given to Yahweh’s vicegerent. In support of this interpretation might be cited the traditional reference to the morning . . . as the time when Yahweh comes to Israel’s aid . . . . The royal army will be the instrument of Yahweh’s timely aid and power, crusading to defend God’s sacrosanct land and to fight on its behalf.” Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:116. Walke takes “youth” as a reference to the messiah’s army. He writes, “‘Youth’ connotes freshness, prime strength, prowess, promise and endurance (cf. Lam 4:7). Holy war is a time when God and humans in their true strength join forces against impious and immoral despots.” Waltke, “Psalm 110,” 72–73.

<sup>122</sup>Brown argues for the verbal reading. He writes, “There are questions regarding the Masoretic pointing, which renders the word as an abstract noun that elsewhere occurs only twice in *plene* form in the late text of Eccl 11:9–10. The medial *yod*, to which the possessive pronoun is attached, indicates the plural, which is not normally expected with an already abstract noun. Moreover, if the Masoretic rendering were a true plural reading, the word would be spelled יִלְדֵיִיךָ. Thus, the plural spelling is artificial (GKC 87i,k). Indeed, it may very well be modeled on the common abstract term for youth and vigor גְּעוּרִים, which is consistently plural . . . . In short, probability suggests that the Greek reading preserves the original verbal sense of the word, a graphic reference to birth, while the Masoretic vocalization renders it as an abstract reference.” Brown, “A Royal Performance,” March 1, 1998, 95. See also Philip J. Nel, “Psalm 110 and the Melchizedek Tradition,” *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 22, no. 1 (January 1, 1996): 3–4. Kraus also adopts the verbal reading. He translates verse 3, “On the holy mountains, out of the womb of the dawn I have begotten you like dew.” Commenting on this rendering, he writes, “In Ps 2:7 the transformation into ‘son of God’ takes place through the declaration of adoption, while in Ps 110:3 the begetting of the king is described in mysterious figures of speech. It took place ‘on the holy mountains,’ out of the ‘womb of the dawn,’ and ‘like dew.’ There are possibilities of interpretation by association with other figures in the Old Testament and the ancient Near East. In Isa 14:12, for example, the king of Babylon is termed ‘son of dawn.’ But reference to the *heiros gamos* (‘sacral marriage’) does not advance our understanding . . . . On the contrary, Ps 110:3 is to be interpreted by archaic metaphors. In Josh 8:20 and Isa 58:8 the dawn is a symbol of hope and a turn for the better, comparable with the star that arises out of Jacob (Num 24:17). The intention of the mysterious statement in Ps 110 seems to be to ascribe the location and process of begetting to the heavenly sphere. The king comes forth from heights beyond this

occurrences of ילדות in the OT appear in Ecclesiastes 11:9 and 11:10. In Ecclesiastes 11:9, ילדות also ends with a 2ms suffix (בְּיִלְדוֹתָיָהּ). The inseparable preposition ב clearly identifies the form as a noun. In both 11:9 and 11:10 the context clearly indicates that a young man is being addressed. Thus, in the only other uses of ילדות in the OT, the context and syntax clearly identify them as nouns. Psalm 110:3 lacks both syntactical and contextual indicators that ילדתִיךָ must be from the noun ילדות. Also of significance is the fact that the LXX, Origen, and the Syriac Peshitta rendered ילדתִיךָ as the verbal form. The LXX supplies the verb ἐξέγεννησά meaning “I have begotten.” It is noteworthy that Barthélemy argued for ילְדָתִיךָ as the original reading—“je t’ai engendré!”<sup>123</sup>

From a canonical standpoint, I have already pointed out the numerous parallels between Psalm 110 and Psalm 2. Interestingly enough, the verb ילְדָתִיךָ appears in Psalm 2:7—“today I have begotten you.” The appearance of the verbal form of ילדתִיךָ in Psalm 2 might suggest that the LXX translator’s use of ἐξέγεννησά in Psalm 110:3 was an attempt at harmonization. However, harmonization may not be the best explanation because the verbal forms of γεννάω differ between the two psalms. Psalm 2:7 employs the perfect γεγέννηκά while Psalm 110:3 employs the aorist compound form ἐξέγεννησά from ἐκγεννάω. Instead, the numerous parallels between Psalm 2 and Psalm 110 may actually strengthen the notion that ילדתִיךָ should be rendered as the verbal form (“I have begotten you”) in Psalm 110:3.

If ילדתִיךָ is the verbal form from the root ילד, then the question remains as to how the syntax of this final clause fits together. In other words, how does ט and לך fit syntactically with the verb ילדתִיךָ? I suggest that ט could be read as an adverbial

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world, from the world of God. His appearance is like something that will ‘dawn upon us from on high’ (Luke 1:78). Thus in Ps 110:3 on the day when the ruler ascends the throne he is ascribed miraculous origin from on high and the hope of a dawning light, birth from the ‘heavenly world.’” Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, trans. Keith R. Crim (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 114.

<sup>123</sup>Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament*, 4:748.

modifier of ילדתיך—“I have begotten you *as the dew*.” If this reading is correct, then what becomes of לך? לך does not fit as a prepositional phrase with the proposed reading. However, if the vowels are repointed from לְךָ to לָךְ, then we end up with the imperative form of הלך meaning “Go!” The imperative at the beginning of the clause would parallel the imperative רדה at the beginning of the final clause of verse two. Thus, final clause of verse three would read, “Go forth! I have begotten you as the dew.” However, if we read לך as an imperative, then it is possible that טל adverbially modifies לך, which would render the phrase, “Go forth as the dew.” Either possibility makes little difference for the general meaning of the passage.

Though hard to prove beyond reasonable doubt, rendering ילדתיך as “I have begotten you” is an attractive proposal in light of the Bible’s robust development of royal priestly theology thus far. How so? I have already demonstrated the interconnectedness between the office of royal priesthood and the concepts of covenant, image of God, and sonship. Furthermore, the language of “begotten” in 110:3 would further link the messianic theology of Psalm 110 with Psalm 2.<sup>124</sup> Cole argues that “begetting,” in Psalm 2, refers “to the official act of installation or enthronement.”<sup>125</sup> With respect to Psalm 110, he concludes, “Certainly Ps. 110.2–3 with its similar vocabulary (ילדתיך... מציון... ביום... בהדר) likewise (קדש-Zion, a special day, holy place, birth) likewise

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<sup>124</sup>From a canonical standpoint it is interesting to note that the author of Hebrews juxtaposes Ps 2:7 and Ps 110:4 in Heb 5:5–6. Both verses are used by the author of Hebrews as support for the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Ps 2:7 says nothing about priesthood. It only mentions the sonship of the messiah. Furthermore, Ps 110:4 appears to have nothing in common with Ps 2:7; it mentions nothing of sonship. However, if we allow the contexts of each passage to inform the author of Hebrews’ logic, we discover that Ps 2:6 describes the priestly access and installation of the messiah in the holy dwelling place of Yahweh before describing the messiah’s sonship (Ps 2:7). Similarly, Ps 110:3 describes the messiah’s sonship (“begotten”) before moving into a statement concerning his priesthood. Obviously this line of reasoning assumes that the author of Hebrews read ילדתיך in Ps 110:3 as “begotten.” But this is exactly what we would expect since the author of Hebrews relies heavily on the LXX and the LXX supplies ἐξεγέννησά for ילדתיך in Ps 110:3.

<sup>125</sup>Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 115.

portrays the same coronation and establishment of this king.”<sup>126</sup> When David’s Lord is installed (begotten) at the right hand of Yahweh, he is anointed (messiah) as king and exists in a father-son relationship with Yahweh.<sup>127</sup> The royal priest of Psalm 110 therefore exists as the true image of God. He is God’s son, mediating God’s rule from God’s very own presence.

#### **Psalm 110:4**

If Psalm 110:3 is one of the most difficult verses in the OT at the textual level, then Psalm 110:4 presents some of the most challenging interpretational issues. Even a cursory glance at 110:4 raises immediate questions about the oath, eternal priesthood, and the order of Melchizedek. It will be necessary to linger over verse 4 so that the strands of biblical logic undergirding Psalm 110:4 can be woven together to present a compelling case for how David arrived at his messianic Melchizedekian theology. In what follows, my objective is to answer more specifically the question of why David applied the Melchizedekian priesthood to the messiah. I will analyze the concept of Yahweh’s oath (שבוע) and the narratives of 1–2 Samuel to argue that David understood himself to be, in some sense, a new Abraham and new Melchizedek. I will demonstrate this by arguing for typological correspondences between David and Melchizedek, and David and Abraham.

**The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind.** The priesthood of the Messiah is grounded in a divine oath: “The Lord has sworn.” The question immediately

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<sup>126</sup>Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 115. Cole observes an interesting connection between dew and the oil used for anointing the priest Aaron in Psalm 133:2–3. He writes, “The enigmatic “dew” of 110 (טל ילדתיד) would appear to be metaphorical for oil as in Ps 133.2–3 . . . . Consequently, there would appear to be a connection between נסבתי of 2.6, in the sense of anointing, and the begetting (ילדתיד) of 2.7.” *Ibid.*, 115 n. 133. Perhaps, then, the “dew” (anointing) of Psalm 110:3 describes the installation (begetting) of the king in terms of a father-son relationship.

<sup>127</sup>Rowe similarly suggests that “it is quite possible that the verse refers to the king as Yahweh’s adopted son.” Robert D. Rowe, *God’s Kingdom and God’s Son: The Background in Mark’s Christology from Concepts of Kingship in the Psalms* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 46.

risers: on what basis does David claim that the Lord swore an oath? In other words, when did Yahweh ever swear an oath to David? More specifically, how did David arrive at the conclusion that the messiah's priesthood would be a function of this unchangeable oath? The answer is likely bound up in the nature of the Davidic covenant. While no mention is made of an oath in 2 Samuel 7:1–16, Psalms 89 and 132 reflect on God's covenant with David in terms of oath-taking. Following Hahn's lead here, I will briefly discuss each of these Psalms to get at the meaning of Yahweh's oath in Psalm 110:4.<sup>128</sup>

**Psalm 89.** Psalm 89:3 references the Davidic covenant in terms of an oath: "I have made a covenant with my chosen; I have sworn (שבַּע) to David my servant." Nowhere does this Psalm state that the Lord's oath conferred upon David the status of a Melchizedekian priest. Nevertheless, in Psalm 89:20, Yahweh anoints David with "holy oil" (בשמן קדש). The Torah reserved holy anointing oil for the priests alone (Exod 30:32). Aaron and his sons were anointed with "holy anointing oil" (שמן משחת־קדש, Exod 30:25). Numbers 35:25 also mentions the "holy oil" (בשמן הקדש) in reference to the high priest's anointing. The close relationship between holy oil and the priestly anointing suggests that David's anointing in Psalm 89:20 has priestly connotations.<sup>129</sup> According to Psalm 89, then, the oath (Davidic covenant), at the very least, colors David in priestly overtones.

Psalm 89 also establishes David as the firstborn, servant, and highest of the kings of the earth (Ps 89:27).<sup>130</sup> As David's covenantal Father (Ps 89:26), Yahweh will

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<sup>128</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 184–94.

<sup>129</sup>It must be noted that the language of "anointing" or "anointed one" (messiah) can also refer to kingship in the Bible. 1 Samuel 2:10 ends with the statement, "He [Yahweh] will give strength to his king and he will exalt the horn of his anointed." Commenting on this verse, Alexander writes, "From the poetic nature of this passage it is clear that the expression 'his anointed' is another way of saying 'his king.'" He also writes, "Since anointing designates an individual as God's choice to rule over Israel, the designation 'anointed one' is often used as a synonym for 'king.'" T. Desmond Alexander, *The Servant King: The Bible's Portrait of the Messiah* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2003), 69.

<sup>130</sup>Hahn observes that the "notion of royal primogeniture reemerges here, a theme seen

grant worldwide dominion to his firstborn son (Ps 89:23, 24, 27). A Davidic king will subdue the sea and the rivers with his own hands (Ps 89:25). Psalm 89's description of David's regal authority echoes Adam's original royal commission as the divine image-bearer. Just as Adam was to exercise dominion over the earth as Yahweh's firstborn son, servant, and viceroy, David now inherits this creational commission.<sup>131</sup> At the very least Psalm 89 weaves together the concepts of a divine oath (covenant) and kingship. The priestly anointing may also belong to David in this particular Psalm. We can conclude, then, that Yahweh's oath to David establishes David and his offspring as the inheritors of the Adamic role. A Davidide will function as God's viceroy to usher in God's own kingdom across the earth.

**Psalm 132.** Hahn points out that scholars commonly read Psalm 132 “against the backdrop of God's covenant with David, along with the procession of the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem that David led in 2 Samuel 6.”<sup>132</sup> Seow has shown that Psalm 132 possesses a bipartite structure that reflects the narrative progression of 2 Samuel 6–7.<sup>133</sup> According to Seow, the psalm divides into two halves of ten lines each. The first

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elsewhere in the Pentateuchal narratives (see Exod 4:22; Deut 32:43 [LXX]).” Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 184.

<sup>131</sup>Hamilton observes a possible allusion to Gen 3:15 in Ps 89:10. The phrase, “You crushed Rahab like one who is slain,” evokes the head-crushing ministry of the seed of the woman. Hamilton writes, “Rahab is elsewhere identified with Leviathan (Ps 74:14) and the dragon (Isa 51:9). If Rahab is a crushed serpent, an allusion to Gen 3:15 seems plausible.” Hamilton, “The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham,” 270. Granted, in Ps 89:10, the head-crushing is an act of Yahweh, not the Davidic king. Nevertheless, the allusion serves as another link between Ps 89 and the early chapters of Genesis.

<sup>132</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 187. My discussion of Psalm 132 is largely dependent on Hahn's analysis of this psalm in *ibid.*, 187–89. Routledge helpfully describes the relationship between 2 Sam 6 and Ps 110: “Psalm 110 focuses on the enthronement of the king not of Yahweh, and there is nothing in the psalm that indicates the progression of the Ark into the city. Consequently, the psalm is unlikely to be directly associated with that event. That said, it is not impossible that, while pointing to David as the true heir of Melchizedek and as such the one through whom God's blessing flows to the people, the psalmist might also reflect on David's priestly role and the divine blessing that comes through him in 2 Samuel 6.” Routledge, “Psalm 110, Melchizedek and David,” 15.

<sup>133</sup>C. L. Seow, *Myth, Drama, and the Politics of David's Dance* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 148.



half (132:1–10) pertains to David’s oath to Yahweh, while the second half (132:11–18) pertains to Yahweh’s oath to David.<sup>134</sup> David swore (שבַּע) to build a “dwelling place” (משכן) for Yahweh (Ps 132:2–5). In response, Yahweh swore (שבַּע) to build David a dynasty in Zion (132:11–18). The first half of Psalm 132 points to the procession of the ark into Jerusalem described in 2 Samuel 6, and David’s desire to make Jerusalem the place where Yahweh’s temple would reside (2 Sam 7:1–3).<sup>135</sup> The second half points to Yahweh’s response to the events of 2 Samuel 6:1–7:4. Yahweh responds with the covenantal promises of 2 Samuel 7:4–16. According to Hahn,

Psalm 132 reveals that God refused David’s request in order to grant him something far greater: an everlasting dynasty established by a divine covenant oath with one of his sons, who was destined to build the “Temple-house” of Yahweh. According to Psalm 132, all of this was in response to David faithfully executing his oath to bring the ark into Jerusalem.<sup>136</sup>

Thus Psalm 132 establishes an important connection between the divine oath, Zion, and the narrative events of 2 Samuel 6–7—events that, I will argue, reveal that David behaved as a royal priest after the order of Melchizedek.

To sum up, Psalms 89 and 132 clearly identify the Davidic covenant with a divine oath. In Psalm 89, the oath establishes a Davidide as the royal (priestly?) messiah and inheritor of the Adamic role. In Psalm 132, the Davidic heir will rule from Jerusalem.

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<sup>134</sup>Seow writes, “As it stands, the poem may be divided into two halves of ten lines each (Part A: vv 1–10; Part B: vv 11–18). The first half concerns the fulfillment of David’s oath to YHWH; the second half concerns YHWH’s oath to David. In vocabulary and themes, the two halves mirror one another, indicating an intricate structure that must have been the work of a skillful composer.” Seow, *Myth, Drama, and the Politics of David’s Dance*, 148.

<sup>135</sup>Hahn writes, “The procession of the ark in the first half of the psalm represented a sworn act of public piety on David’s part, something not even alluded to in 2 Samuel 6.” Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 189.

<sup>136</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, The oath of Psalm 132:11 clearly has the seed promise of the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7:12–13) in view: “The Lord has sworn (שבַּע) in faithfulness; he will not turn back from it. From the fruit of your body, I will set on your throne.” Furthermore, Psalm 132:13 implies that Zion’s special role in redemptive history came about as the result of Yahweh’s election of the city at some undisclosed point in history. We might say that Ps 132 functions as a commentary on the events surrounding the procession of the ark into Jerusalem. It helps explain why David desired to establish Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God and the impetus for God’s covenantal promises to David.

When read against the backdrop of 2 Samuel 6–7, Psalm 132 reveals that the divine oath established Zion as the throne-city of the Davidic kingdom in response to David’s own priestly behavior. The composite picture is that of a royal priestly figure who will build God’s temple and reign from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. By virtue of an oath, a royal priest of Jerusalem (new Melchizedek?) will fulfill God’s creation project (cf. Gen 14:18). By connecting the divine oath to royal priesthood and Zion (Jerusalem), Psalms 89 and 132 further inform the biblical logic undergirding Psalm 110:4. Yet the question remains: is there evidence in the biblical narratives that reveal how David himself would have made the connections between Jerusalem, priesthood, and Melchizedek?

**You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.** The narratives of 1–2 Samuel point to two instances where David acted as a priest. The first is found in 2 Samuel 24 and the Chronicler’s description of the same event in 1 Chronicles 21. The narrative describes David’s sinful census of Israel and the consequences of that sin. After the census, the Lord comes to David through the prophet Gad and offers David a choice between one of three punishments. David, knowing that Yahweh is merciful, abounding in steadfast love, and forgiving (Exod 34:6–7), chooses to fall into the hand of Yahweh, “for his mercy is great” (2 Sam 24:14). David’s choice brings three days of pestilence upon the people and 70,000 men die (2 Sam 24:15). When the angel of the Lord stretches out his hand towards Jerusalem, Yahweh intervenes and prevents any further destruction (2 Sam 24:16). The Lord’s mercy appears to be the result of David’s desperate plea: “Please let your hand be against me and the house of my father” (2 Sam 24:17). David previously faced the giant Goliath on behalf of his people and now he is ready and willing to face Yahweh’s wrath in their stead. Yahweh’s mercy is only fully realized when David builds an altar and offers sacrifices to Yahweh at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (2 Sam 24:18–25). The Chronicler documents David’s response to Yahweh’s mercy: “This here shall be the house of the Lord God and here the altar of

burnt offering for Israel” (1 Chr 22:1).

The events of 2 Samuel 24 recall Abraham’s faithful obedience to offer up Isaac at Mount Moriah (cf. Gen 22). Numerous parallels exist between these two episodes. In both episodes the events unfold at Mount Moriah, the future site of the Jerusalem temple. 2 Chronicles 3:1 identifies the threshing floor of “Ornan” (“Araunah” in 2 Sam 24) the Jebusite as Mount Moriah. In both narratives the chosen seed is under the threat of extinction. In Genesis 22, Isaac, the heir of the promises of God, is threatened with death. In 2 Samuel 24, David himself is ready to endure extinction to save the people of Jerusalem. In both narratives, disaster is thwarted by God’s intervention at the last minute. God spares Isaac after Abraham stretched out his hand to take hold of the knife (Gen 22:10–11), while in 2 Samuel 24, God prevents the angel of the Lord from destroying Jerusalem after the angel had stretched out his hand to destroy the city (2 Sam 24:16). In both texts, the “angel of the Lord” is a prominent character in the narrative. Furthermore, several intertextual connections exist between Genesis 22 and the narratives of 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21 (see table 13).

Table 13. Linguistic parallels between Genesis 22 and 2 Samuel 24 (1 Chron 21)

Genesis 22	2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21
Abraham “stretched forth his hand” (ישלח . . . את־ידו) and took the knife “to slaughter” (לשחט) his son (Gen 22:10)	The angel “stretched forth his hand” (וישלח ידו) toward Jerusalem “to destroy” (לשחתה) it (2 Sam 24:16)
Yahweh will provide (יהוה יראה) (Gen 22:14)	The Lord saw (ראה יהוה) (1 Chr 21:15)
Abraham “lifted up his eyes and saw” (וישא אברהם את־עיניו וירא) (Gen 22:13)	David “lifted up his eyes and saw” (וישא דויד את־עיניו וירא) (1 Chr 21:16)

What is the point of these connections between David’s actions and Genesis

22? First, David's sacrifice at Araunah is the only place in the OT—other than 2 Samuel 6—that depicts David performing priest-like behavior in connection with the future site of the temple. According to Hahn, “this incident represents both the cause for and the occasion of David coming to know that God had chosen Jerusalem.”<sup>137</sup> Second, the typological association between David and Abraham reveals that the promises made to Abraham will come to pass through David. Just as the seed of promise was spared in Genesis 22, the holy city of Jerusalem and the chosen line of David are spared from death. God has not forgotten his promise, or shall we say his oath (שבוע), to Abraham (cf. Gen 22:16).<sup>138</sup> Third, if the David-Abraham typology identifies David as a *new* Abraham, then we gain more insight into David's understanding of a Melchizedekian messiah. Just as Abraham submitted to the priest-king Melchizedek by paying him tithes and receiving Melchizedek's blessing, so too will David submit to his greater “lord,” the priest-king after the Melchizedekian order.<sup>139</sup> Finally, David's own involvement in offering sacrifices (2 Sam 24:18–25; cf. 2 Sam 6:13, 17) makes it hard to believe that David would not have considered the offering of sacrifices to be an integral part of the Melchizedekian priest's ministry. Such notions of sacrifice are not apparent in the text of Psalm 110, but may be assumed as an integral part of David's perception of the office of the priesthood.<sup>140</sup> Moving forward, the final and perhaps most important narrative

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<sup>137</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 192.

<sup>138</sup>Hahn comments, “This older oath bears a striking resemblance to the substance of God's covenant pledge to David regarding his seed.” Ibid.

<sup>139</sup>Haney writes, “Melchizedek is comprehended as the ancient priest of Yahweh in pre-davidic Jerusalem. What we witness in Gen 14 is the portrayal of the patriarch's submission to Melchizedek that was designed to show the patriarch's acceptance of Jerusalem as the sanctuary of Yahweh. Understood in this way, Yahweh's king would then be understood as submitting to a *new* ‘Melchizedek’ in the person of the davidide.” Randy G. Haney, *Text and Concept Analysis in Royal Psalms* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 117.

<sup>140</sup>Rowe states that the Davidic king may have “taken a leading role” in ceremonies involving sacrifice (i.e., Day of Atonement) on the basis of his priestly office (Ps 110:4). Rowe, *God's Kingdom and God's Son*, 77. The author of Hebrews develops Christ's self-sacrifice as integral part of his Melchizedekian priesthood (Heb 8:3; 9:11–28; 10:1–14).

informing Psalm 110:4 is the episode recorded in 2 Samuel 6.

## **2 Samuel 6: David as a New Melchizedek**

2 Samuel 6 describe the events involving the return of the ark to Jerusalem. The author of 2 Samuel accompanies the mention of the ark with this important editorial comment: “[the ark] which is called by the name of Yahweh who sits above the Cherubim” (2 Sam 6:2). This is a loud reminder that the ark symbolizes the very presence of God. Dumbrell comments, “The ark came to be brought into connection with the concept of God as enthroned and God was conceived to be seated as King upon the cherubim which overshadowed the ark (cf. Ps 18:10; 1 Sam 4:4).”<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, the ark housed the Decalogue. God’s word would, therefore, regulate Israel’s identity. According to Dumbrell,

Where God’s word was, there was the divine presence, and as we well know in other connections, the Old Testament gave great prominence to the power of God expressed through his word as well as to his presence mediated by the word. Thus a close association between the ark and sanctuary (i.e., the demands which kingship made, and the symbol of divine rule itself), was always maintained.<sup>142</sup>

From the outset of this narrative, the themes of God’s presence, God’s rule, and God’s law set the stage for what will prove to be the actions of a royal priest (David) who desires to establish God’s kingdom and build God’s temple (2 Sam 7:1–2).

The episode in 2 Samuel 6 contains the greatest evidence for David’s priestly identity. At least four observations bear this out. First, David sacrificed several oxen and fattened animals to the Lord (2 Sam 6:13). Second, David wore the “linen ephod” (2 Sam 6:14), which was among the priestly garments assigned to Aaron in the book of Exodus (Exod 28:4; 29:5). The author of 1 Samuel also mentions the ephod in several passages pertaining to priests (1 Sam 2:18, 28; 14:3; 22:18). By choosing to mention David’s

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<sup>141</sup>Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 143.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid.

ephod in 2 Samuel 6:14, the author of 2 Samuel identifies David in a priestly role.<sup>143</sup> Third, David offered “burnt offerings” and “peace offerings” before Yahweh (2 Sam 6:17; cf. Lev 6:5). Finally, David pronounces a priestly blessing (ברך) on the people “in the name of the Lord of armies” (בשם יהוה צאבֹות) and distributes to them a gift of bread, meat, and raisins (2 Sam 6:18–19). David’s blessing evokes Yahweh’s instructions to the Levitical priests to “bless in the name of the Lord” (לְבַרֵךְ בַּשֵּׁם הוֹהִי, Deut 21:5; cf. Deut 10:8).<sup>144</sup> David’s blessing accompanied by the distribution of gifts also mirrors Melchizedek’s encounter with Abraham. The ancient priest-king gave the battle-tested Abraham gifts of bread and wine and pronounced a blessing on him (Gen 14:18–19).

David’s priest-like behavior in 2 Samuel 6 is the clue that opens the door into David’s own interpretation of the ark’s procession into Jerusalem. King David’s priestly behavior reveals that David understood himself to be a royal priest who would mediate God’s rule from Jerusalem, the place chosen by Yahweh for a dwelling place (cf. Ps 132:13). According to Merrill,

The strongest suggestion of Davidic royal priesthood occurs in 2 Samuel 6... The entire enterprise was at the initiative of David and though the regular Aaronic order of priests and Levites was involved, David himself was in charge, leading the entourage and, clothed in priestly attire, offering sacrifice and issuing priestly benedictions.<sup>145</sup>

Putting the pieces together, we can conclude that David viewed himself as a royal priest similar to the ancient priest-king Melchizedek. In Hahn’s words, “King David’s priestlike behavior in 2 Samuel 6–7 may be interpreted in terms of his aspiration

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<sup>143</sup>Gentry writes, “We see the priestly role of David in that he wears an ephod.” Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 422.

<sup>144</sup>In Deut 10:8, mention is made of the Levites role to carry the ark and to bless in the name of Yahweh. The care of the ark and the duty to bless appear together as marks of the priestly office. Routledge argues that the relationship between David and Melchizedek centers on ‘blessing.’ To be a priest after the order of Melchizedek is, according to Routledge, to be a channel of divine blessing. In Psalm 110, “...the emphasis is on the Davidic king as a channel of divine blessing to the descendants of Abraham.” Routledge, “Psalm 110, Melchizedek and David,” 15.

<sup>145</sup>Eugene H. Merrill, “Royal Priesthood: An Old Testament Messianic Motif,” *BSac* 150 (1993): 60.

to be a ‘new Melchizedek.’”<sup>146</sup> Melchizedek was the priest-king of (Jeru)salem (Gen 14:18; cf. Ps 76:2). Melchizedek’s place in redemptive history tied him directly to Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant. Melchizedek’s blessing on Abraham implied that Melchizedek was the priest of the Abrahamic covenant. In other words, Melchizedek was the priest that would mediate the blessings of Abrahamic covenant.<sup>147</sup> Similarly, David acts as a priest-king of Jerusalem who, like Melchizedek, blesses the people of Israel (Abraham’s seed).<sup>148</sup> The composite picture we get of David is that of a priest-king like Melchizedek mediating blessing to the children of Abraham.<sup>149</sup>

Up to this point, my focus in analyzing key narratives in 2 Samuel has been, admittedly, to arrive at a “behind-the-text” conclusion. I have attempted to argue, to some

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<sup>146</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 193.

<sup>147</sup>See my discussion of this point in chapter 2.

<sup>148</sup>Routledge’s commentary on Psalm 110:4 and its relationship to “blessing.” He writes, “It is in this more general sense, of being a vehicle through which Israel is blessed, that Psalm 110:4 might then refer to the king as a priest after the order of Melchizedek. That would include the blessing associated with assurance of Yahweh’s presence in the context of holy war, which is closely linked with the special relationship between the king and Yahweh. This appears to be the specific context envisaged in Psalm 110, and thus verse 4 can be related to the rest of the passage. Viewing the Davidic king as the bestower of blessing may have particular significance following the capture of Jerusalem. With the establishment of the former Jebusite city as the political and religious capital of Israel, there may well be a need to reassure the people of the place of Jerusalem in God’s purposes for the nation. By linking the king with Melchizedek, and particularly with his role as priest, which in the primary tradition is associated principally with blessing, the psalm points to David as the true heir of the former ruler of Jerusalem through whom the blessing pronounced by Melchizedek will continue to flow to the descendants of Abraham . . . the Davidic king functions as a priest in the way we see Melchizedek functioning as a priest in Genesis 14:18–20, that is as a means of blessing (the descendants of) Abraham.” Routledge, “Psalm 110, Melchizedek and David,” 14.

<sup>149</sup>If this is true, then how do we make sense of the point made in Heb 7:13–14 that no one from the tribe of Judah “has ever served at the altar?” The point I am arguing is not that David was appointed a priest under the Mosaic covenant. David was not appointed to the office of priesthood for that would have required a change in the law (cf. Heb 7:12). As the author of Hebrews makes clear, the law could not be put aside without a sufficient sacrifice (Heb 9:16–10:14). The point is that David was a model and type of the Melchizedekian priest that would fulfill Psalm 110. David’s priest-like behavior does not mean he served at the altar under the same terms and conditions as the Levites. His priestly behavior does show, however, that he may have viewed himself as a type of the Melchizedekian priest that would fulfill Psalm 110. Indeed, David himself appears to have recognized the insufficiency of Israel’s cultic system in Ps 40:6–8: “In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart’” (ESV). David of course recognized that he was not the promised priest of Psalm 110.

degree, for David's historical self-awareness of a messianic Melchizedekian typology that lies behind the narratives. Such a behind-the-text approach is necessary and appropriate assuming David was the author of Psalm 110. Nevertheless, a canonical study must ask the question, did the author of 1–2 Samuel intend to depict David as a royal priest of the Melchizedekian order? To this question, I briefly turn.

### **The Priest-King of 1–2 Samuel**

The best treatment of the priest-king concept in 1–2 Samuel is Karl Deenick's article, "Priest And King Or Priest-King in 1 Samuel 2:35."<sup>150</sup> Deenick argues that the narratives of 1–2 Samuel unfold the promise of 1 Samuel 2:35 to present David as a model of "what the ultimate priest-king would be."<sup>151</sup>

Deenick's argument begins with the promise of 1 Samuel 2:35. He proposes a repointing of the MT with respect to the last clause of 1 Samuel 2:35. He emends the MT from *וְהִתְהַלַּךְ לְפָנַי-מְשִׁיחִי* to *וְהִתְהַלַּךְ לְפָנַי-מְשִׁיחִי* so that *מְשִׁיחִי* becomes the subject of the verb. Deenick's translation of 1 Samuel 2:35 in its entirety is thus: "And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, he will do just as in my heart and my soul. And I will build for him a sure house and *my anointed one will walk before me all the days*."<sup>152</sup> Unlike the standard interpretation of 1 Samuel 2:35, Deenick's translation identifies the faithful priest and the anointed one as the same person. The major weakness of Deenick's proposed emendation is that it lacks textual support. The strength of his argument for seeing David as a priest-king in the narrative of 1–2 Samuel, however, does not hinge on

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<sup>150</sup>Karl Deenick, "Priest and King or Priest-King in 1 Samuel 2:35," *WTJ* 73, no. 2 (Fall 2011).

<sup>151</sup>*Ibid.*, 338.

<sup>152</sup>*Ibid.*, 325. Deenick is reasonable about the strength of this proposal. He states, "...the existence of examples where the construction *לְפָנַי* + a suffix occurs with suffixes other than the first common singular is probably sufficient to suggest at least the possibility of understanding *מְשִׁיחִי* as the subject of the verb in 1 Sam 2:35 and . . . there is a considerable amount of other evidence that supports this translation. In short, while the grammatical evidence is only slender, the contextual and literary evidence is much more decisive." *Ibid.*, 327.



the emendation. It is quite possible that even if the promise of 1 Samuel 2:35 differentiates the priest and the messiah, the author of 1–2 Samuel could have crafted his narrative to hint that the priest and messiah would be one and the same person.<sup>153</sup>

The remainder of Deenick’s article is an attempt to develop how the narrative of 1–2 Samuel unfolds the promise of 1 Samuel 2:35. He concludes that author of 1–2 Samuel presents David as a model of the “kind of priest-king about which 1 Samuel 2:35 was prophesying.”<sup>154</sup> At least three observations from Deenick’s essay are worth highlighting for the purpose of this project.

First, Deenick rightly argues that 1 Samuel 2:27–35 begins the demise of the Aaronic priesthood. The promise of a new “faithful priest” in 1 Samuel 2:35 is Yahweh’s response to the disobedience of Eli and his sons. Since Eli and his sons were of the lineage of Aaron, their disobedience “has consequences not only for Eli’s house, but for the whole house of Aaron.”<sup>155</sup> The faithful priest of 1 Samuel 2:35 will, therefore, come neither from Eli’s house nor Aaron’s house.<sup>156</sup> It is commonly suggested that the transfer of priestly authority from Eli and his house to the Zadokites fulfills the prophecy concerning Eli’s demise.<sup>157</sup> This is true, but it is not the whole picture. Zadok cannot be

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<sup>153</sup>Deenick’s proposal is not the only way to justify a reading that brings together the messiah and the priest in 1 Sam 2:35. Mary D’Angelo analyzed the same passage (1 Sam 2:35) in her discussion of Heb 3:1–6. She argues that 1 Sam 2:35 could be translated: “I will build him a sure house and *it* shall go in and out before my anointed always.” In this case, the house is the priestly line that serves in the sanctuary before the Lord and the messianic priest. D’Angelo’s reading is not unreasonable because, as she notes, in the immediate context the “house” of 1 Sam 2:30 is the priestly line that goes in and out before Yahweh forever. Mary Rose D’Angelo, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), 84–85. See my discussion of Heb 3:1–6 in chapter 5 of this project where I quote D’Angelo at length to show how her reading of 1 Sam 2:35 fits well with the logic of Heb 3:1–6.

<sup>154</sup>Deenick, “Priest and King or Priest-King in I Samuel 2,” 339.

<sup>155</sup>*Ibid.*, 329.

<sup>156</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup>This is only partially accurate. 1 Kgs 2:27 indicates that Solomon’s removal of Abiathar (Eli’s descendant) from the high priesthood fulfilled the word of the Lord that he had spoken concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh. But this does not necessarily mean that Zadok is the fulfillment of the promised priest of 1 Sam 2:35. Nor should 1 Kgs 2:27 be taken to mean that all of the events depicted in 1 Sam 2:27–

the “faithful priest” since he is of the house of Aaron.<sup>158</sup> Who then is the recipient of the promise in 1 Samuel 2:35? As Deenick writes, “Given the disinterest throughout the books of Samuel in connecting the promise of a faithful priest with either Samuel or Zadok, are these early chapters and the promise of 1 Sam 2:35 to be taken as a kind of useless appendage, a kind of banal distraction before the real meat of the kingship issue arises?”<sup>159</sup> Deenick’s point is well taken. The reality is that 1 Samuel 2:35 is not a “banal distraction.” Instead, as we shall see, it finds partial fulfillment in David and ultimate fulfillment in David’s greater Lord.

Second, Deenick develops his argument by demonstrating how 1 Samuel 2:35 shares “strong connections” with David and the Davidic covenant.<sup>160</sup> In brief, the parallels include, (1) The language of “walking before,”<sup>161</sup> (2) the theme of establishing a

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36 are fulfilled once Abiathar is rejected. In 1 Sam 2:31, the Lord promises to cut down the strength of Eli and the strength of his father’s house. Eli’s father in this context is Aaron, who was chosen to wear the ephod after Israel’s exodus from Egypt (1 Sam 2:27–28; cf. Exod 28:1–4). The promise of 1 Sam 2:35 is, therefore, not a promise to raise up a new Aaronic priest—i.e., Zadok—but a priest of a different order entirely, for it is the house of Eli *and the house of Aaron* that is rejected. Thus, 1 Kgs 2:27 cannot mean that 1 Sam 2:35 is fulfilled in Zadok because Zadok is of the lineage of Aaron. Instead, 1 Kgs 2:27 indicates that the Lord’s rejection of Eli’s lineage (house) has now been fulfilled once Abiathar is rejected, yet the dismantling of the Aaronic priesthood—the house of Eli’s father—will have to wait for a future fulfillment. See Deenick, “Priest and King or Priest-King in I Samuel 2,” 328–30.

<sup>158</sup>Concerning the Zadokite priesthood, Tomoo Ishida writes, “If our interpretation is correct, it is self-evident that this divine promise cannot be regarded as the legitimization of the Canaanite type of sacral kingship for the Davidides, let alone as the legitimization of the Zadokite priesthood. The purpose of the psalm is twofold. On the one hand, by mentioning ‘the order of Melchizedek’ as Yahweh’s designation, it shows that the kingship and the priesthood of Jerusalem have been associated with Yahweh since the days of Melchizedek, who was contemporaneous with Abraham. On the other, it serves to justify the priestly function of the Davidic kings . . . . It appears that David tried to defend his priestly authority by claiming succession to ‘the order of Melchizedek,’ a mysterious priest-king of Jerusalem in the past.” Tomoo Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel: A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-Dynastic Ideology* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1977), 139–40.

<sup>159</sup>Deenick, “Priest and King or Priest-King in I Samuel 2,” 331.

<sup>160</sup>Deenick asserts, “Even a fairly superficial reading of the rest of Samuel reveals that the promise Yahweh made in 1 Sam 2:35 has strong connections with David and the Davidic covenant.” Ibid.

<sup>161</sup>Deenick writes, “The language of ‘walking before’ Yahweh is used often in connection with the Davidic covenant (2 Kgs 2:4; 8:23, 25; 9:4; 2 Chr 6:14, 16; 7:17).” Deenick admits that this language does not appear in Samuel in connection to the Davidic covenant. Ibid.

“house,”<sup>162</sup> (3) David’s faithfulness as the one who does “according to what is in my heart and mind,”<sup>163</sup> and (4) David’s priestly activity in 2 Samuel 6. Deenick concludes, “When all the evidence is pulled together it certainly suggests that the writer is trying to make a strong link between David and the promised priest of 1 Sam 2:35.”<sup>164</sup>

Finally, Deenick observes that while everything up until 2 Samuel 6 points to David as the promised priest, the Davidic covenant and the remainder of 2 Samuel reveal that David falls short of fulfilling the prophecy. David will not live forever (2 Sam 7:12) even though his throne will be eternal. Furthermore, David falls into sin proving himself not to be the “faithful” promised priest of 1 Samuel 2:35. Why, then, the connections between the promise of 1 Samuel 2:35 and David? Deenick suggests that while David is not the promised priest, the connections between 1 Samuel 2:35 and the Davidic covenant reveal that “God intends to fulfill the promise of 1 Sam 2:35 through David and his line.”<sup>165</sup> David serves as a type of the “kind of priest-king about which 1 Sam 2:35 was prophesying. The flawed David is held up as a model, as a picture, albeit still a shadowy one, of what the ultimate priest-king would be.”<sup>166</sup>

The books of Samuel are, therefore, pivotal for understanding the development of royal priesthood in both historical and canonical contexts. I quote Deenick’s

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<sup>162</sup>The promise of Yahweh to establish David’s “house” appears twice in 2 Sam 7 (2 Sam 7:16, 27). Deenick writes, “Both are clear reflections on the same idea in 1 Sam 2:35 where Yahweh will ‘build him a sure house.’” Interestingly enough, Deenick notes that “the promise of a ‘sure house’ is never again mentioned in connection with a priest.” Deenick, “Priest and King or Priest-King in I Samuel 2,” 331–32.

<sup>163</sup>Deenick observes a parallel between the description of the faithful priest in 1 Sam 2:35 as the one who does “according to what is in my heart and in my mind” and the description given of David in 1 Sam 13:14 as a man “after his [Yahweh’s] own heart.” He also notes how the theme of David’s faithfulness is developed in 1 Sam 16:7; 25:28, and even outside of Sam in 1 Kgs 11:38. Deenick therefore concludes, “...the books of Samuel, and the Bible more broadly, portray David as the one who does, at least for the most part, all that is in Yahweh’s heart and mind.” Ibid.

<sup>164</sup>Ibid., 334.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid., 335.

<sup>166</sup>Ibid., 338.

conclusion at length,

Part of the purpose of the books of Samuel, then, appears to be identifying what kind of priest will fulfill the promise of 1 Sam 2:35. Perhaps most surprising to the careful reader is that it is a king who is intended to function as a priest not after the mold of Aaron, but, as Ps 110 and the writer of Hebrews make clear (Heb 7), after the mold of a superior priesthood (Heb 5:1–7:28), after the mold of Melchizedek. Melchizedek, the writer of Hebrews tells us, means “king of righteousness.” In fact, the writer of Hebrews points out, “the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath [i.e., Ps 110:4], which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever” (Heb 7:28). In Heb 5:1–2 the “weakness” of the earthly high priests is identified as their sinfulness. In contrast, the oath of Ps 110:4 appointed Jesus as a priest who is without such weakness. This is the central thought of the Melchizedekian priesthood. So, although the books of Samuel show that the fulfillment of the promise of 1 Sam 2:35 was to be found in the house of David, they also show that the ultimate fulfillment of the “anointed priest” lay not in David, but in Jesus Christ.<sup>167</sup>

One can conclude that David’s statement in Psalm 110:4—“The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek’”<sup>168</sup>—is in perfect harmony with the Davidic covenant, the evidence of David’s understanding of his own priestly identity, the David-Abraham typology (2 Sam 24), and 1–2 Samuel’s narrative development of royal priestly ideology. There is no need to reduce Psalm 110:4 to political propaganda.<sup>169</sup> Instead, the royal priestly messianism

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<sup>167</sup>Deenick, *Priest and King or Priest-King in I Samuel 2*, 337. Deenick also helpfully comments, “At another level, it makes perfect sense that if the kind of priest being promised in 1 Sam 2:35 is not a Levitical priest, then neither David nor any of his descendants could be appointed without some major adjustments to the law. They are from the tribe of Judah and “in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests” (Heb 7:14). In fact, no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar (Heb 7:13–14). If there is to be a change of priesthood, then there must be a change of the law, since the law required that only Levites could be priests, and more specifically only sons of Aaron (Heb 7:12; cf. Num 16–18). The only way someone from the tribe of Judah could be appointed is if the law covenant could be put aside. It is that very idea that the writer of Hebrews goes on to discuss after having mentioned the high priesthood of Jesus; he discusses the putting aside of the Mosaic covenant and the establishment of the new covenant. Thus, neither David nor any of his descendants could function as another kind of priest until something was done about the Mosaic covenant, and it could not be put aside without death (Heb 9:16–17).” *Ibid.*, 338.

<sup>168</sup>Exactly what is meant by the phrase “after the order of” (על־דברתי)? M.J. Paul persuasively argues from Heb 7:3 that the phrase “after the order of” in Ps 110:4 refers to the fact that the divine oath serves as the basis for the Melchizedekian priesthood. He writes, “The meaning is: You are a priest not by descent but by oath, as was the case with Melchizedek.” Paul, “The Order of Melchizedek,” 209. However, I don’t think that the phrase “after the order of” should be limited to the concept of the oath. As the author of Hebrews argues, fundamental to Melchizedek’s priesthood was its enduring nature (Heb 7:3, 15–17).

<sup>169</sup>The idea that Ps 110:4 drives a political agenda is reflected in Allen’s comment that the

of Psalm 110 is built on a massive biblical-theological foundation.

### **Psalm 110:5**

**The Lord is at your right hand.** After the explicit statement concerning the priesthood in verse four, David returns to the theme of global conquest and the imagery of the “right hand” of Yahweh. Debate exists as to whether the אֲדֹנָי of verse five is Yahweh or the messiah.<sup>170</sup> It is appropriate to take the messiah as the subject of the sentence. The parallels between verses 5 and 1 are strong enough to identify the אֲדֹנָי of both verses as the messianic priest-king, even if they are pointed differently. Both verses refer to the אֲדֹנָי as occupying the position of authority at Yahweh’s right hand. We would have expected the subject in verse five to be יהוה if a clear distinction was intended. Also of significance is the fact that the third person singular subject of the verbs in verse 7 clearly refers to the messiah. If the subject of the verbs in verse 7 is the messiah, then we must conclude that the subject of the third person singular verbs in 110:5b–7 is also the messiah. In this case, it would be a virtually unintelligible use of language to suggest that the second person singular pronoun “your” of יְמִינֶךָ refers to the messiah and the third person singular subject of the very next word (מִחוּץ) also refers to the messiah.<sup>171</sup> The

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Melchizedek reference serves “the purpose of legitimating both Jerusalem in the Yahwistic tradition of Israel and the priestly prerogative of the Davidic monarchy.” Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:116.

<sup>170</sup>Some of those who take “the Lord” in verse 5 to refer to Yahweh include: Willem A. VanGemeren, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, Revised edition, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 816; Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:117; Zenger and Hossfeld, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150* Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011) For those who argue that “the Lord” refers to the messianic priest-king, see Davis, “Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm,” 166; Edward J. Kissane, *The Book of Psalms*, vol. 2 (Dublin: The Richview Press, 1954), 193–94; Anderson, *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews*, 58–59; Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, 261–62.

<sup>171</sup>Anderson writes, “The other problem with this approach is the third person singular subject of every verb from Ps 110:5b–7. This ‘he’ must certainly be the Messiah since that is the clear picture of verse seven. If the ‘he’ of verse six is the Messiah, then so is the ‘he’ of the last half of verse five. To have the second person singular suffix of יְמִינֶךָ refer to the Messiah and the very next word have a third person singular subject (מִחוּץ), which also refers to the Messiah, is too big a leap for normal language to bear. Anderson, *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews*, 59.

resulting translation would be, “The Lord (Yahweh) is at your (messiah) right hand. He (messiah) will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.” Clearly such a construction would be a strain on the normal use of language.<sup>172</sup> Finally, the “day of” language in verse five parallels the “day of” language in verse three, which, in the latter, is a clear reference to a messianic eschatological day.

Commentators are quick to suggest that verse 5 is a transition away from priesthood and a resumption of the messiah’s ministry as king. For example, Allen writes, “Comparatively little use seems to have been made of the honor of v 4 in a cultic capacity, and it may be for this reason that the poet does not proceed to give a direct exposition of this oracle. It reminds him rather of the capture of Jerusalem that made historically possible the endowment of Jebusite kingship.”<sup>173</sup> However, David does not appear to be dividing the messiah’s activity into royal and priestly categories. Instead, as in 110:1, the “right hand” of Yahweh is the place the ideal priest would be expected to occupy. He has direct and immediate access to the throne room of Yahweh. Everything the messiah accomplishes, he does so as priest-king. Schrock is right to conclude, “...it seems better to understand verses 5–7 not as a royal explanation hermetically sealed off from the Messiah’s priestly duties, but as a royal victory accomplished by the holy warfare of a Melchizedekian priest-king (cf. Rev 19:11–16).”<sup>174</sup>

**He will shatter kings on the day of his anger.** Verse 5 parallels verse 3 in that both refer to an eschatological “day.” In verse 5, the “day of anger” is the day the

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<sup>172</sup>Perhaps the ambiguity is intentional. Mitchell proposes, “There seems to be a conflation of Yhwh and the king, in a way not dissimilar to what was noted in Zech 12.8, 10 and Ps 45.7 [6]. This is presumably to stress their oneness of will and purpose. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, 263.

<sup>173</sup>Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:117.

<sup>174</sup>David Stephen Schrock, “A Biblical-Theological Investigation of Christ’s Priesthood and Covenant Mediation with Respect to the Extent of the Atonement” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), 217.

priest-king will “shatter” (מחץ) kings of the earth.<sup>175</sup> Davis notes that the “day of” phrases on either side of 110:4 “highlight the fact that a Melchizedekian priest is more than one who performs worshipful ritual. He is, in fact, one who does powerful and successful battle for the glory of Yahweh.”<sup>176</sup> The imagery here echoes Psalm 2 where the Messiah conquers the kings (מלך) who take counsel against him (Ps 2:2). I argued earlier that the messiah of Psalms 1–2 was a royal priestly Joshua-like figure embarking on the ministry of global conquest. Since the royal priest of Psalm 110 shares the same identity with the messiah of Psalms 1–2, it is no surprise that Psalm 110 also ascribes to the messiah a Joshua-like conquest. The book of Joshua repeatedly describes Joshua’s conquest as warfare against “kings.” The word מלך actually appears 109 times in Joshua with virtually every occurrence serving as a reference to the recipients of Joshua’s conquest.<sup>177</sup> In canonical perspective, it would be difficult not to see a connection between the royal priest’s global conquest over the kings of the nations and Joshua’s conquest of the pagan kings occupying the Promised Land.

### **Psalm 110:6**

**He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses.**

The eschatological priest-king will have the authority to “judge” (דן) among the nations. The authority to judge the nations is an attribute that is regularly assigned to God in the OT.<sup>178</sup> In Psalm 110, the messiah wields the authority to execute judgment on the nations by virtue of his being at the right hand of Yahweh (110:5). He mediates the judgment of God upon the world by sharing in God’s own authority. Once again, the messiah’s ministry of judgment and conquest cannot be separated from his priestly position of

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<sup>175</sup>The perfect verb מחץ should be understood as proleptic perfect.

<sup>176</sup>Davis, “Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm,” 166.

<sup>177</sup>Josh 12:7–24 specifically catalogues 31 kings whom Joshua defeated.

<sup>178</sup>See for example Gen 15:14; Deut 32:6; Ps 50:4, 135:14; Isa 3:13.

access to God. All that he accomplishes in Psalm 110, he accomplishes as a priest-king.

The second half of verse 6 explains and clarifies what it means for the royal priest to execute judgment.<sup>179</sup> His judgment will result in the death of his enemies. The imagery is graphic: he will fill the nations with “corpses” (גויה). The messiah’s holy war recalls the conquest of Joshua who was to put to death everything that breathed in the land of Canaan (Josh 10:40; 11:11; cf. Deut 20:16, 17).

**He will shatter [the] head over the wide earth.** The verb *מחץ* appears in both verses 5 and 6. In verse 5, the messiah shattered (*מחץ*) kings, but now he shatters (*מחץ*) the “head” (*ראש*). Some English versions render *ראש* as “chiefs” or “the chief.” The translation “chief” makes sense in light of its parallelism with “kings” in verse 5. However, the more literal rendering of “head” is to be preferred. The priest-king’s ministry of conquest has now reached its climax. He smote individual kings in verse 5 and entire nations in the first half of verse 6, but now he smites the supreme ruler of all evil forces, namely the *ראש*. Anderson observes, “The climax of this eschatological triumph is the Messiah’s victory over his human arch rival, the head over all the earth.”<sup>180</sup> The head crushing victory of the priest-king strongly alludes to the promise of Genesis 3:15.<sup>181</sup> The royal priest of Psalm 110 will be the one to crush the head of the serpent and thereby accomplish what Adam failed to do. He will be a new and better Adam who fulfills his royal priestly role to eradicate the serpent’s power from the earth. His kingdom will be a global kingdom as the entire earth (*ארץ*) will be subject to his

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<sup>179</sup>Davis identifies the relationship between the parallel lines in verse 6 as the poetic device of disambiguation. Davis, “Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm,” 166–67.

<sup>180</sup>Anderson, *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews*, 59.

<sup>181</sup>Hamilton writes, “The statement that the enemies will be made a footstool for the feet of the Davidic king (110:1) seems to draw on the connection between the damaged heel and head in Gen 3:15.” James M. Hamilton, “The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15,” *SBJT* 10, no. 2 (2006): 37.



dominion.<sup>182</sup>

### **Psalm 110:7**

**He will drink from the brook by the way.** The first line of verse 7 is relatively obscure. Allen identifies a common interpretation, “Reference is frequently seen to a rite of drinking from a Gihon spring as part of the enthronement ceremony (cf. 1 Kgs 1:38).”<sup>183</sup> Davis finds the notion of “refreshment” in the imagery. He writes, “Here in verse 7 . . . the refreshment comes after the battle when, victorious and ‘tired’ from the battle, Messiah stoops to drink water from a flowing stream.”<sup>184</sup> Anderson proposes that the imagery of verse 7 captures the dual nature of the coming messiah as both human and divine. He suggests, “Could not the drinking by the way be an expression of his humanity and humiliation, while the lifting of the head would symbolize his deity and exaltation.”<sup>185</sup> Indeed, none of these proposals is mutually exclusive and probably all

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<sup>182</sup>Peter Gentry informed me in a conversation that he thinks Ps 110:4–6 is a sustained meditation on Gen 14. Clearly the mention of Melchizedek in Ps 110:4 evokes the setting of Gen 14, but how do verses 5 and 6 relate to Gen 14. The mention of “kings” in Ps 110:5 evokes the context of Gen 14, where a battle is fought by numerous kings (Gen 14:1–12). In Gen 14, Chedorlaomer is a leader among the kings who conquers a broad land. In this sense, David’s description of the “head over the wide earth” in Ps 110:6 is his way of reflecting on Chedorlaomer and recasting him as the eschatological enemy of the messiah.

<sup>183</sup>Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:118. Kraus also mentions Gihon as the referent of the גִּיחֹן. He writes, “גִּיחֹן ist wahrscheinlich die am Fuße des alten Stadthügels entspringende gihon Quelle . . . die im Licht mythischer Vorstellungen als Lebensquell schlechthin gilt.” Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalmen 60–150*, ed. Siegfried Herrmann and Hans Walter Wolff BKAT 15 (Neukirchen-Vlyun: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 936. See also Nel, “Psalm 110 and the Melchizedek Tradition,” 5; Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 112.

<sup>184</sup>Davis, “Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm,” 167. Eaton similarly writes, “But we might rather find an allusion to a symbolic drink, a cup of life and salvation, given to the king from the Gihon source.” John Eaton, *The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation* (New York: T. & T. Clark Publishers, 2004), 386. Jordaan and Nel agree: “Drinking water from a brook is an indication that the long and tiring battle is over and that finally the priest-king can take the luxury of taking refreshment.” Jordaan and Nel, “From Priest-King to King-Priest,” 238.

<sup>185</sup>Anderson, *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews*, 61. A similar interpretation is found in Chrysostom’s commentary: “Here he shows the lowliness of his lifestyle, the meanness of his existence, no swagger about him no bodyguards in attendance, no visible display when he performs this; instead, his way of life was simple to the extent of his drinking from a torrent . . . These words refer not to divinity, however, but to humanity—drinking from a torrent, being raised up.” John Chrysostom, *St. John Chrysostom Commentary on the Psalms*, trans. Robert C Hill, vol. 2 (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox

contain truth in their own right.

The imagery of drinking by the brook after a victorious battle likely alludes to the scene from Judges 15:9–20.<sup>186</sup> In this passage, Samson, empowered by the Spirit of Yahweh, defeats 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey (Judg 15:14–16). After his victorious battle, God provides Samson with water and Samson drinks (שתה) so that his soul is revived (Judg 15:19).

Another possible interpretation is that the imagery of verse 7 may serve as a subtle echo to Psalms 1–2. The “brook” (נחל) by the “way” (דרך) recalls the “streams” (פליג) of water in Psalm 1. The noun דרך appears four times in Psalms 1–2. I argued earlier that the imagery in Psalm 1 of the flourishing fruit-bearing tree by a flowing stream situated the messiah in an Edenic sanctuary. Perhaps the imagery of Psalm 110:7 is similar.<sup>187</sup> If this is the case, then the royal priest finds refreshment in the brook flowing out of the garden-sanctuary. His source of strength comes from being in the presence of the source of life himself. He dwells in Yahweh’s temple at Yahweh’s own right hand. Therefore, as the righteous one, he will be exalted in the final day.

**Therefore he will lift up [his] head.** The contrast between the “head” of verse 6 and the “head” of verse 7 cannot be missed. The messiah crushes the head of his archenemy in verse 6 and, as a result, he now has his head exalted in triumph.<sup>188</sup> He is the final and victorious priest-king who will turn God’s enemies into a footstool and crush

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Press, 1998), 29.

<sup>186</sup>Peter Gentry pointed me to the parallel between Ps 110:7 and Judg 15.

<sup>187</sup>Mitchell concurs, “Some mythological river may be indicated, possibly the eschatological stream that the prophets envisage flowing from the latter-day house of Yhwh (Ezek. 47; Joel 4 [3] 2a; Zech. 14.8). Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, 263.

<sup>188</sup>Davis comments, “In verse 6 the enemy, viewed as ראש (“the head”), is cut down and destroyed; in verse 7 the Messiah, in a totally opposite situation, lifts up His head (ראש), thereby signifying that He has secured complete victory.” Davis, “Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm,” 167.

the head of Satan himself. According to Waltke, the *lifting of his head* signals “that he has distinguished himself, is worthy of honor and dominion (cf. Gen 40:13; Judg 8:28; 1 Sam 2:10; Ps 3:3 [4]; 27:6), and is full of joy (Ps 27:4, 9).”<sup>189</sup> The emphasis on the messiah’s victory in verse 7 is a fitting conclusion to the psalm and likely forms an *inclusio* with verse 1. In verse 1, Yahweh promised the messiah victory through the metaphor of turning enemies into a footstool for his feet. In verse 7, the victory is accomplished as the messiah lifts his head in triumph.<sup>190</sup>

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued for a canonical interpretation of Psalm 110 that situates David’s royal priestly messianism in the unfolding storyline of Scripture. I demonstrated that the theology of the Torah, the Davidic and Abrahamic covenants, and the patterns of David’s own life all undergird the logic behind Psalm 110. I developed the canonical harmony between Psalms 1–2 and Psalm 110 in order to dig deeper into the Psalter’s messianic priest-king theology. This analysis of Psalms 1–2 and Psalm 110 added the theme of Joshua-like conquest to the résumé of David’s Lord. Furthermore, I relied heavily on the narratives of 1–2 Samuel in order to highlight the typological connections between David and Abraham, and David and Melchizedek, in order to determine why the messiah would need to be a priest of the Melchizedekian order. At every point, Psalm 110 has been shown to fit perfectly into the metanarrative of Scripture. Having examined the theology of the Torah and Psalm 110 in OT context, the thesis of this project still stands: a canonical reading of David’s depiction of the eschatological Melchizedekian priest-king develops God’s creational purpose for humanity to establish God’s kingdom (king) by mediating God’s covenantal blessings

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<sup>189</sup>Waltke, “Psalm 110,” 79.

<sup>190</sup>So Jordaan and Nel, “From Priest-King to King-Priest,” 238. Nel suggests that the victory of the priest-king is the central motif of the entire psalm.

from his temple sanctuary (priest), and simultaneously advances God's redemption project by depicting the order of royal priesthood that would bring the promises of the Abrahamic covenant to fruition.

Psalm 110 is a masterpiece of biblical theology. How unfortunate in the modern period that such a beautiful symphony of biblical theology has been reduced to a solo of one politically motivated performer. Psalm 110 is much more than political propaganda of the Israelite monarchy. It is the sound of several major biblical-theological themes coming together in perfect harmony. Kingship, priesthood, covenant, sonship, and conquest all find their part in the textual orchestra bringing unity and harmony to David's eschatological messianism.

## CHAPTER 4

### ROYAL PRIESTLY MESSIANISM: PSALM 110 IN THE INTERTESTAMENTAL LITERATURE

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is briefly to explore the influence of Psalm 110 on the Jewish intertestamental literature. More specifically, I will attempt to discover how the authors of the intertestamental literature interpreted and applied David's conception of a *royal priestly* messiah to their own messianic expectations. Before moving forward, I must explain why I would devote an entire chapter to extra-canonical literature in a project of biblical theology. First, the intertestamental literature reveals the Jewish interpretive perspective of the Old Testament leading up to the arrival of Jesus Christ. By examining these Jewish writings, we gain greater insight into how ancient writers understood the priest-king theology of Psalm 110 in light of the entire Old Testament. Does their reading of Psalm 110 support the thesis I am arguing in this project? Second, the intertestamental literature reveals the theological convictions and worldview of the historical culture from which the New Testament was birthed. Thus, an examination of these writings should shed more light on the interpretive perspective and historical background of the New Testament texts.

Surprisingly, explicit use of Psalm 110 is almost non-existent in the intertestamental Jewish documents. Lange and Weigold do not list a single reference to Psalm 110 in their book, *Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Jewish Literature*.<sup>1</sup> Hay similarly writes, "Evidence for pre-Christian interpretations of Ps 110 is

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<sup>1</sup>Armin Lange and Matthias Weigold, *Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Jewish Literature* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 175. So also Bauckham who writes,

ambiguous.”<sup>2</sup> Yet, Hay and others have pointed out several places in the intertestamental literature where Psalm 110 appears have had a significant influence on the theology and worldview of a given text.<sup>3</sup>

### **Messianic Portraits in the Second Temple Period: Priest, King and Priest, or Priest-King?**

Fletcher-Louis has helpfully summarized Jewish messianic expectations during the second temple period. He has observed three possible forms of messianic identity and national rule in the second temple literature. The nation of Israel would be ruled by: (1) a high priest alone, (2) an anointed priest-king, or (3) an anointed priest and an anointed king.<sup>4</sup> Evidence for each of these messianic expectations exists in the Jewish literature, although the union of priesthood and kingship in a single figure is the least attested.<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of this project, I am most concerned with option #2 in Fletcher-Louis’ taxonomy. What role did Psalm 110 play on these documents that anticipated the messiah to be both a priest and king over the people of God?

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine every possible allusion to

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“There is no convincing case of allusion to Psalm 110:1 (or to any other part of the psalm) in Second Temple Jewish literature, apart from Testament Job 33:3, where it used quite differently.” Richard Bauckham, “The Throne of God and the Worship of Jesus,” in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus* (Boston: Brill, 1999), 62.

<sup>2</sup>David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in early Christianity* (Atlanta: Abingdon Press, 1973), 23.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 19–33.

<sup>4</sup>Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1,” *JSHJ* 4, no. 2 (2006): 164–67.

<sup>5</sup>Some of the sources listed by Fletcher-Louis to support each form of government include: (1) High priest alone: Ben Sira, Judith, the *Animal Apocalypse*, the *Epistle of Aristeas*, the *Testament of Moses*, and Samaritan sources, (2) Priest-king: The *Aramaic Levi Document*, some material in the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, the Hasmonians, Josephus’ preferred state, *The Similitudes of Enoch*, and *2 Enoch*, (3) Priest and king: *Jubilees* 31:11–20, Qumran-Essenism, some material in the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Pseudo-Philo’s *Biblical Antiquities*, and Sirach. Ibid., 164–66.

Psalm 110 in the intertestamental documents or to offer a detailed exegesis of every Jewish text that unifies priesthood and kingship in a single figure. Instead, my objective is to focus more narrowly on those texts that may have been influenced by the royal priestly ideology of Psalm 110. With this in mind, I will limit my analysis to the following sources: the *Testament of Reuben*, the *Testament of Levi*, *1 Enoch*, *2 Enoch*, and *11QMelchizedek*. The lengthiest treatment will be given to *11QMelchizedek*. This short scroll is by far the most important source of information pertaining to this project from the intertestamental period. Before diving into these texts, a word needs to be said on the relationship of Psalm 110 to the Hasmonean dynasty.

### **Hasmonean Rule**

The Hasmoneans were high priests in Jerusalem from roughly 152 to 37 B.C.<sup>6</sup> They ruled Jerusalem not merely as priests, but as royal monarchs.<sup>7</sup> According to Rooke, the Hasmoneans “epitomized the combination of kingship and priesthood.”<sup>8</sup> Their claim to both the priesthood and kingship has led many scholars to believe that Psalm 110 was used to support their rise to power. Again Rooke writes, “Their acceptance of the high priesthood followed their rise to prominence, and can perhaps be compared with the way

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<sup>6</sup>Vasile Babota, *The Institution of the Hasmonean High Priesthood* (Boston: Brill, 2014), 1. For a detailed treatment of the development of the priesthood leading up to the Hasmonean period, see Maria Brutti, *The Development of the High Priesthood During the Pre-Hasmonean Period: History, Ideology, Theology*, ed. John J. Collins, vol. 108, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism (Boston: Brill, 2006).

<sup>7</sup>Nickelsburg describes the Hasmonean rise to power as an occupation of both the priesthood and “princely” authority. He writes, “Simon succeeded in ending the Gentiles’ twenty-seven-year occupation of the citadel in Jerusalem. The following year “the people” formally acclaimed him high priest, military commander, and ethnarch of the Jews, and it was decreed that he (and perhaps his family) should be high priest(s)—at least until God should send a prophet to declare otherwise (1 Macc 14:41). As matters evolved, the high priestly and princely dynasty of the Hasmoneans was being founded. For a few years the country was at peace.” George W. E Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 92.

<sup>8</sup>Deborah W. Rooke, “Kingship As Priesthood: The Relationship between the High Priesthood and the Monarchy,” in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1998), 206.

in which the king of Psalm 110 is also granted priesthood as a function of kingship.”<sup>9</sup> For these reasons some critical scholarship reasons that Psalm 110 was actually written during the Hasmonean era.<sup>10</sup> Hay is on firmer ground to suggest that the Hasmoneans probably used Psalm 110 “to defend their claims to priestly and royal prerogatives.”<sup>11</sup>

The Hasmoneans chose for themselves the title “priests of the Most High God.”<sup>12</sup> Commenting on this loaded title, Hay writes, “If the Hasmoneans deliberately selected a title recalling the precedent of Melchizedek, they probably also appropriated the one scriptural passage besides Gen 14 which mentions him—Ps. 110.”<sup>13</sup> An allusion to Psalm 110:4 is found in 1 Maccabees 14:41. In this passage, Simon is appointed ἀρχιερέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (cf. Psalm 110:4). The application of Psalm 110 to the Hasmonean dynasty does not necessarily add any biblical-theological insight to the interpretation of the royal priestly theology of Psalm 110. It does, however, provide one example of how Psalm 110 was applied to a historical dynasty before the coming of Jesus. The application of Psalm 110 to the Hasmoneans may have influenced the way early Christians applied the Psalm to Jesus. According to Hay,

Probably the psalm entered the NT age trailing associations of the dusty glory of the Hasmoneans. When early Christians employed it, at least some will have consciously compared their kingship with that of Jesus. Conceivably a wish to repudiate those old memories led the primitive church to disregard the psalm’s more militant passages, confining its quotations and allusions to vss 1 and 4.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Deborah W. Rooke, “Kingship As Priesthood: The Relationship between the High Priesthood and the Monarchy,” in *King and Messiah in Israel in the Ancient Near East* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1998), 207.

<sup>10</sup>See for example A. B. Davidson, “Duhm’s Die Psalmen: Erklärt,” in *The Critical Review of Theological and Philosophical Literature*, ed. S. D. F. Salmond, vol. 10 (Edinburgh: Williams and Northgate, 1900).

<sup>11</sup>Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand*, 24.

<sup>12</sup>Hay suggests that the language of “priest of the Most High God” in *As. Moses* 6:1 and *Jub.* 32:1 are allusions to the Hasmonean rulers. *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 25–26.



## Testament of Reuben

The *Testament of Reuben* describes Levi as an anointed priest and king:

It is for this reason that I command you to give heed to Levi, because he will know the law of God and will give instructions concerning justice and concerning sacrifice for Israel until the consummation of times; he is the anointed priest of whom the Lord spoke . . . . For he will bless Israel and Judah, since it is through him that the Lord has chosen to reign in the presence of all the people. Prostrate yourselves before his posterity, because (his offspring) will die in your behalf in wars visible and invisible. And he shall be among you as an eternal king.<sup>15</sup> (*T. Reub.* 6:8, 11–12)

Beale identifies this text as one of the Jewish texts that merge the offices of priesthood and kingship into one figure “on the basis of Psalm 110.”<sup>16</sup> Beale does not develop the reasons why he sees Psalm 110 as providing the logical basis for *T. Reuben* 6:8, 11–12.<sup>17</sup> The mere fact that kingship and priesthood both find expression in the person of Levi might be enough to assign dependence on Psalm 110 since no other biblical text so clearly unites these two roles in a single figure. Furthermore, the eternity (*αἰών*) of Levi’s kingship may have been influenced by Psalm 110:4 and Melchizedek’s eternal (*αἰών*) status as priest-king (*T. Reub.* 6:12). Beale may be correct to assert that Psalm 110 is the biblical basis that gave rise to the union of priesthood and kingship in *T. Reub.* 6:8–12, but without any direct citations, linguistic parallels, or more robust thematic parallels, any attempt to connect the two must be considered tenuous.

## Testament of Levi

Psalm 110 may have played a significant influence on the messianism of the *Testament of Levi*. When Levi is clothed in priestly garments, he and his progeny are promised an eternal priesthood:

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<sup>15</sup>This translation is adapted from H.C. Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A New Translation and Introduction,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983), 784–85.

<sup>16</sup>G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 319n4.

<sup>17</sup>His is a passing comment made in a footnote.

And they severally carried (these things) and put (them) on me, and said unto me: From henceforth become a priest of the Lord, thou and thy seed forever. And the first anointed me with holy oil, and gave to me the staff of judgment. The second washed me with pure water, and fed me with bread and wine (even) the most holy things, and clad me with a holy and glorious robe.<sup>18</sup> (*T. Lev.* 8:3–5)

Several parallels exist between this verse and Psalm 110. First, Levi and his progeny receive the priesthood “forever” (αἰών), just as the Melchizedekian messiah of Psalm 110 receives the priesthood “forever” (αἰών). Second, like David’s greater son, Levi wields a “staff” (ῥάβδος) representing his authority to judge (cf. Ps 110:2, 6). Furthermore, Levi is fed with bread and wine, the same elements Melchizedek offered to Abraham in Genesis 14:18 (cf. Ps 110:4).

Later on in chapter 8 of the *Testament of Levi*, reference is made to a king from Judah who will establish a new priesthood according to the pattern of the Gentiles (*T. Lev.* 8:14). Here, the roles of kingship and priesthood are unified in the same individual. This priest-king is also identified as a beloved “prophet of the Most High” and seed of Abraham (*T. Lev.* 8:15). Kee asserts that this “new role...may allude to the Maccabean priest-kings, with their increasingly secular discharge of the dual role.”<sup>19</sup> Perhaps this royal figure who receives a new priesthood “after the pattern of the Gentiles” (κατὰ τὸν τύπον τῶν ἐθνῶν) is meant to recall the Davidic king who receives a priesthood “after the order of” (κατὰ τὴν τάξιν) the Gentile priest-king Melchizedek. The fact that the *Testament of Levi* 8:14–15 describes this figure as a prophet in the service of the “Most High” in conjunction with his familial tie to Abraham only strengthens the likelihood that the Melchizedek narrative of Genesis 14:18–24, and by extension Psalm 110:4, had an influence on the author’s messianic expectation.

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<sup>18</sup>R. H. Charles, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 2:308–9.

<sup>19</sup>H. C. Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” 791 (d). R. H. Charles is more convinced that vv. 14–15 situate *T. Lev.* in the era of the Maccabean dynasty. He suggests that v. 15 refers to the Hasmonean ruler John Hyrcanus. R. H. Charles, *Commentary on the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2005), 2:309. Hay also relates *T. Lev.* 8 to the Hasmonean period. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand*, 24–25.

Chapter 18 of the *Testament of Levi* also speaks of a coming priest who embodies the role of king. The two roles come together in 18:2–3:

Then shall the Lord raise up a new priest. And to him all the words of the Lord shall be revealed; And he shall execute a righteous judgment upon the earth for a multitude of days. And his star shall arise in heaven as of a king. Lighting up the light of knowledge as the sun the day.<sup>20</sup>

With a subtle echo of 1 Samuel 2:35, the *Testament of Levi* anticipates the day when the Lord will raise up a new priest.<sup>21</sup> This new priest will never have a successor, for he will remain a priest “forever” (αἰῶν, *T. Levi* 18:8). He will exercise global dominion by executing judgment over the entire earth (*T. Levi* 18:2). An allusion to Numbers 24:17 in *T. Levi* 18:3 establishes the future kingship of the priest. The priest’s “star” shall ascend in heaven as that of a king to emanate the light of knowledge over the earth. The allusion evokes the broader context of Numbers 24:17, where the “scepter of Judah” crushes the head of Moab, thus fulfilling the promise of Genesis 3:15 that a seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. In a similar manner, the priest-king of *T. Levi* 18 will be the one to conquer the demonic Beliar (*T. Levi* 18:12) and will enable his children “to tread” (τοῦ πατεῖν) upon evil spirits (*T. Levi* 18:12; cf. Ps 110:6). His eschatological success will reopen the gates of the garden paradise. The flaming sword that kept Adam out of the garden will be removed and the saints will be free to eat from the tree of life once more (*T. Levi* 18:10–11). Finally, the ministry of the priest-king is directly connected to the heavenly temple, for it is from the “temple of glory” in the heavens that the priest-king is made holy (*T. Levi* 18:6).

Though direct verbal correspondences are lacking, several thematic parallels exist between Psalm 110 and chapter 18 of the *Testament of Levi*. First, both texts expect the eschatological messiah to be both priest and king (*T. Levi* 18:2–3; Ps 110:1, 4).

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<sup>20</sup>Charles, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2:314.

<sup>21</sup>The verbiage in 1 Sam 2:35 and *T. Levi* 18:2 is different, but the Lord, in both texts, will “raise up” a priest.

Second, both texts speak of the eternal priesthood of the messiah (*T. Levi* 18:8, Ps 110:4). Third, both passages assign the rule of judgment to the priest-king (*T. Levi* 18:2; Ps 110:6). Fourth, the respective priest-kings are victorious over the demonic world (*T. Levi* 18:12; Ps 110:6). Fifth, both of these figures are connected to the heavenly realm (*T. Levi* 18:6; Ps 110:1).

## Enochic Literature

### 1 Enoch

Scholars such as Martin Hengel, Fletcher-Louis, and Hay believe that Psalm 110 influenced the Enochic literature.<sup>22</sup> According to Hay, “There is no strong verbal parallelism, but the possibility of allusion is undeniable.”<sup>23</sup> Hengel argues that 1 Enoch combines the imagery of Daniel 7 and Psalm 110 to describe the heavenly enthronement of the messiah over the nations.<sup>24</sup> Several verses in 1 Enoch describe the eschatological reign of the messiah in terms of him sitting on God’s throne and executing judgment over the earth.<sup>25</sup>

45:3 On that day Mine Elect One shall sit on the throne of glory  
And shall try their works,  
And their places of rest shall be innumerable.

51:3 And the Elect One shall in those days sit on My throne,  
And his mouth shall pour forth all the secrets of wisdom and counsel:  
For the Lord of Spirits hath given (them) to him and hath glorified him.

55:4 Ye mighty kings who dwell on the earth, ye shall have to behold Mine Elect One, how he sits on the throne of glory and judges Azazel, and all his associates, and all his hosts in the name of the Lord of Spirits.

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<sup>22</sup>Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah,” 164–66; Martin Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (London: T. & T. Clark, 1995), 185–86; David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand*, 26.

<sup>23</sup>Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand*, 26.

<sup>24</sup>Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology*, 185–86.

<sup>25</sup>The following quotations are taken from R. H. Charles, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2:214–35.

61:8 And the Lord of Spirits placed the Elect One on the throne of glory.  
And he shall judge all the works of the holy above in the heaven,  
And in the balance shall their deeds be weighed.

62:2 And the Lord of Spirits seated him on the throne of His glory,  
And the spirit of righteousness was poured out upon him,  
And the word of his mouth slays all the sinners,  
And all the unrighteous are destroyed from before his face.

69:27 And he sat on the throne of his glory,  
And the sum of judgment was given unto the Son of Man,  
And he caused the sinners to pass away and be destroyed from off the face of the  
earth, And those who have led the world astray.

In these verses, the Son of Man is a king reigning from the throne of God at the end of time. The picture of this heavenly king is very similar to the royal ideology of Psalm 110, where the messiah sits at God's right hand to execute his righteous judgment over the nations. Though verbal connections to Psalm 110 are lacking in these verses, it is quite likely that the author combined the imagery of Daniel 7 and Psalm 110 to describe the messiah's eschatological dominion.<sup>26</sup> Such a combined reading of Psalm 110 and Daniel 7 is not without parallel. For example in Mark 14:61, Jesus responds to the high priest's question concerning his messiahship by applying Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13 to his own eschatological ministry. My point is not to suggest that Mark 14:61 was influenced by 1 Enoch; instead, Mark 14:61 simply functions as a hermeneutical parallel to the reading I am suggesting of 1 Enoch. Namely, that 1 Enoch combined the imagery of Psalm 110 and Daniel 7 to describe the end-time reign of the messiah.

## **2 Enoch**

Second Enoch 68–72 develops the establishment of the priesthood after

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<sup>26</sup>Commenting on 1 Enoch 62:2, Hamilton writes, "Here the Chosen One is enthroned with the Lord of Spirits, calling to mind Daniel 7 and Psalm 110." James M. Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 174.

Enoch's departure.<sup>27</sup> Enoch's ascent to heaven leaves his family without a priest. Methusalam, Enoch's son, asks the Lord to raise up a priest in Enoch's absence, implying that Enoch himself held the priestly office during his earthly existence (2 Enoch 69:4). The priesthood is transferred to Methusalam (2 Enoch 69:15) and eventually transferred to a child named Melchizedek (2 Enoch 71:21). This child will be preserved from the great flood that is coming to the earth. He will be placed in the paradise of Eden, the center of the earth, where Adam was created (2 Enoch 71:35; 72:1). Melchizedek will arise in the last generation as the final priest. He "will be the head of all, a great archpriest, the Word and Power of God, who will perform miracles greater and more glorious than all the previous ones" (2 Enoch 71:34).<sup>28</sup>

Although, once again, direct verbal correspondences are lacking between the Enochic literature and Psalm 110, the imagery of an enthroned messiah in 1 Enoch and the priestly messiah of 2 Enoch both draw from the logic of Psalm 110. The fact that the eschatological figure is a priest-king named Melchizedek in 2 Enoch only strengthens the likelihood that the royal priestly ideology of Psalm 110 shaped the messianic expectation of 2 Enoch. It is also interesting that Melchizedek's royal priesthood appears to be an expression of Adam's prototypical reign as a priest-king in God's sanctuary (2 Enoch 71:35; 72:5).<sup>29</sup> Perhaps, for the author of 2 Enoch, the logic of Psalm 110 begins with the story of creation and Adam's role in establishing the kingdom of God.

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<sup>27</sup>All references to 2 Enoch are taken from James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009).

<sup>28</sup>It seems that this eschatological Melchizedek is different than the priest-king of Salem we meet in Gen 14. The Melchizedek that is preserved in the paradise of Eden is said to remain there forever (2 Enoch 72:5). A "righteous man" is born in the 12<sup>th</sup> generation who will go to the mountain where stands the ark of Noe. This righteous man will meet "another Melchizedek." He will bring this Melchizedek out of hiding to be a priest and king in Salem in the style of the other Melchizedek, "the originator of the priests" (2 Enoch 72:6).

<sup>29</sup>Fletcher-Louis has written that Enoch is the seventh from Adam and, as such, he possesses Adam's divine kingship (2 Enoch 30:12). Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah," 166n45.

### *11QMelchizedek*

A. S. van der Woude first published *11QMelchizedek* (11QMelch) in 1965.<sup>30</sup> Paul Kobelski dates *11QMelchizedek* approximately to 50 B.C.<sup>31</sup> The text itself is a commentary on several different OT texts. For this reason, 11QMelch is often labeled as a thematic pesharim similar to other Qumran documents.<sup>32</sup> As the title suggests, the main character in this Qumran scroll is an eschatological figure bearing the name Melchizedek.

Surprisingly, 11QMelch contains no single citation or clear allusion to Psalm 110.<sup>33</sup> Yet the simple fact that the central figure in this document is a hero named *Melchizedek* is evidence enough that Melchizedek in 11QMelch was “consciously modeled” after the biblical portraits of Melchizedek in Genesis 14:18–20 and Psalm 110.<sup>34</sup> According to Anders Aschim, “These scriptural texts are certainly a formative impulse behind the Melchizedek image of 11QMelch.”<sup>35</sup> Hay puts it this way,

Still, could any Jew acquainted with those scriptural passages fail to think of them when mentioning Melchizedek? If the author of this Qumran writing did have the psalm in mind, he must have applied at least its fourth verse to the heavenly Melchizedek; and he may have taken its first verse as a testimony to Melchizedek’s celestial enthronement.<sup>36</sup>

Aschim’s conclusion also seems right,

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<sup>30</sup>Adam S van der Woude, “Melchizedek Als Himmlische Erlösergestalt in Den Neugefundenen Eschatologischen Midraschim Aus Qumran Höhle XI,” in *Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap in Nederland*, vol. 25 (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 354–73.

<sup>31</sup>Paul J. Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchiresa* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981), 3.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>“In all the Qumran writings thus far published, including this one, no clear reference to Ps 110 is to be found.” Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand*, 27.

<sup>34</sup>I borrowed the language of “consciously modeled” from Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchiresa*, 54.

<sup>35</sup>Anders Aschim, “Melchizedek and Jesus: 11QMelchizedek and the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus*, ed. Carey C. Newman, James R. Davila, and Gladys S. Lewis, JSJSup, vol. 63 (Boston: BRILL, 1999), 140.

<sup>36</sup>Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand*, 27.

While the state of preservation precludes certainty, there are nevertheless enough clues extant in 11QMelch to indicate probable dependence on Psalm 110. Like the ‘you’ of the Psalm, Melchizedek occupies a position close to God in heaven (Ps 110:1; 11QMelch II 9–14). He ‘rules’ from ‘Zion’ (Ps 110:2; 11QMelch II 23–25). He is involved in battle (Ps 110:1.3.5–6; 11QMelch II 13–14) and judgment (Ps 110:6; 11QMelch II 9–13.23).<sup>37</sup>

These parallels, and others, are enough to establish the influence of Psalm 110 on 11QMelch.<sup>38</sup> After a brief overview of 11QMelch, I will show how the priest-king ideology of Psalm 110 shaped the royal priestly messianism of 11QMelch.

### **Overview**

The narrative of 11QMelch describes a messianic figure (Melchizedek) who liberates a people in captivity to Belial and his evil spirits. The captives are the prisoners described in Isaiah 61:1–3 as the “brokenhearted” and those who “mourn in Zion” (11QMelch 2:4). Melchizedek will proclaim liberty to these captives on the Day of Atonement at the end of the tenth jubilee (2:7). He will liberate them from Belial’s power by freeing them from the debt of all their iniquities (2:6, 25). The Day of Atonement in 11QMelch is an eschatological event when Melchizedek will “carry out the vengeance of God’s judgments” on Belial and his evil spirits (2:13). Melchizedek’s judgment will usher in the rule of God in accordance with Isaiah 52:7—“Your God reigns!” (2:16; cf. 2:23). The success of Melchizedek’s eschatological victory appears to be the fruit of his role as both king and priest. Each of these anointed offices deserves a closer look.

### **Kingship in 11QMelchizedek**

Various proposals have been put forth regarding the identity of Melchizedek in

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<sup>37</sup>Aschim, “Melchizedek and Jesus,” 136.

<sup>38</sup>Kobelski identifies several other points of contact between 11QMelch and Ps 110. Based on his analysis, he concludes, “These similarities between Psalm 110 and 11QMelch are too numerous and too basic to the interpretation of each document to be coincidental, and the occurrence of the name Melchizedek in Ps 110:4 strongly suggests that the Melchizedek presented in 11QMelch was consciously modeled after the figure addressed in v 1 of Psalm 110 as *’dny*. The exaltation with Yahweh, the promise of victory to a king, the mention of Melchizedek, the eschatological setting represented by the ‘day of wrath,’ and the theme of judgment on the enemies are all elements that form the basis for the presentation of Melchizedek in 11QMelch.” Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchiresa*, 54–55.



11QMelch. The majority of scholars take the position that Melchizedek is an angelic being, possibly the archangel Michael.<sup>39</sup> Others, like Jean Carmignac and Paul Rainbow, have argued that Melchizedek is a messianic human being.<sup>40</sup> In fact, Rainbow posits that the Melchizedek figure is a Davidic messiah. Franco Manzi argues that *צדק מלכי* is not a personal name in 11QMelch, but is a title for Yahweh himself—“King of Justice.”<sup>41</sup> At the very least, these discrepancies reveal that the identity of Melchizedek in 11QMelch is not easily discerned.

The problem may be attributed to the fact that Melchizedek appears to occupy a dual identity in 11QMelch. He is both identified with God and distinct from God at the same time. The author picks up two biblical passages referring to God and applies them to Melchizedek. The words of Psalm 82:1–2 and Psalm 7:8–9 shape Melchizedek’s identity in 11QMelch 2:9b–11:

As is written about him in the songs of David, who said: Elohim will stand up in the assem[bly of God,] in the midst of the gods he judges. And about him he said: Above it return to the heights, God will judge the peoples. As for what he sa[id]: How long will yo[u] judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah.<sup>42</sup>

The “gods” and the “wicked” in this passage are Belial and his evil spirits (2:12). The title “Elohim,” however, is applied to Melchizedek as the one who wields the authority to judge evil spirits. Another link between Melchizedek and God appears in 11QMelch 2:9. Here, the author substitutes Melchizedek’s name for Yahweh’s name in a line taken from

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<sup>39</sup>Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchiresa*, 71–74; David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand*, 137n37; Marinus de Jonge and Adam S van der Woude, “11Q Melchizedek and the New Testament,” *NTS* 12, no. 4 (July 1, 1966): 301–26.

<sup>40</sup>Paul A. Rainbow, “Melchizedek as a Messiah at Qumran,” *BBR* 7 (January 1, 1997): 179–94; Jean Carmignac, “Le Document de Qumran Sur Melkisédeq,” *Revue de Qumran* 7, no. 3 (December 1, 1970): 365–69.

<sup>41</sup>Franco Manzi, *Melchisedek E L’angelologia nell’Epistola Agli Ebrei E a Qumran*, AnBib (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1997). I am relying on Aschim’s essay for this observation on Manzi’s interpretation. Aschim, “Melchizedek and Jesus,” 134–35.

<sup>42</sup>Florentino Garcia Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 140.

Isaiah 61:2 (see table 14).

Table 14. Comparison of 11QMelch 2:9 and Isaiah 61:2

11QMelch 2:9	Isaiah 61:2
לשנת הרצון למלכי צדק	שנת־רצון ליהוה

The year of “Yahweh’s favor” becomes in 11QMelch, the year of “Melchizedek’s favor.” For these reasons, scholars have identified Melchizedek as a heavenly being or Yahweh himself.

Yet, it is also clear that Melchizedek is distinct from God in his ministry as the eschatological judge. According to 11QMelch 2:13, Melchizedek mediates God’s authority as the one who “carries out the vengeance of God’s judgments.” Here, Melchizedek executes the eschatological judgment, not as God, but as one who is separate and distinct from God. How can Melchizedek be both identified with God and distinct from God? The answer, I suggest, may be found in Melchizedek’s role as king. The king in the ancient world represented God to the people and mediated God’s authority on earth. As the king, Melchizedek mediates the divine rule of God at the eschatological judgment. His authority is therefore closely associated with God’s authority, but remains distinct from God as God’s viceroy, not God himself.<sup>43</sup>

Knohl has proposed that Melchizedek in 11QMelch is a human messianic king and that the identification of Melchizedek with God is based on Jeremiah 23:5–6: “I shall

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<sup>43</sup>Commenting on the relationship between God and Melchizedek, Mason writes, “The point of the text seems to be that Melchizedek actually is the person carrying out—on God’s behalf—those things ascribed to God in the passages of Scripture cited; if God indeed is acting directly, one would question the need for a peshar explanation of the obvious.” Eric Mason, *You Are a Priest Forever: Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden, Brill, 2008), 190.

raise unto David a righteous shoot and he shall reign as king and prosper, and execute judgment and justice in the land...and this is the name whereby he shall be called: ‘YHWH is our righteousness.’<sup>44</sup> Knohl’s proposal has some merit. Jeremiah 23:5–6 directly identifies the righteous king and messianic “shoot of David” with God himself. To call the future king “Yahweh is our righteousness” implies representational authority and, to some extent, shared identity. Furthermore, like Melchizedek, this messianic king, executes a ministry of judgment by establishing justice and righteousness in the land (Jer. 23:5). However, the problem with Knohl’s proposal is that nothing in the text of 11QMelch establishes a direct link to the Jeremiah passage. Jeremiah’s influence on the identity of Melchizedek cannot move beyond the realm of speculation.

Alternatively, why not let one Melchizedek inform the identity of the other Melchizedek? In other words, I submit that the Melchizedek of Psalm 110 was probably the primary influence on the messianic portrait of Melchizedek in 11QMelch. After all, they share a name only twice mentioned in the entire OT. Hamilton agrees. He points out that the author of 11QMelch chose Davidic passages to describe Melchizedek and his ministry (i.e., Isa 61; Isa 52:7; Dan 9:25). He writes,

These texts are heavily Davidic, with Isaiah 61 speaking of the Spirit-anointed Messiah and the anointed of Daniel 9:25 being spoken of in the same terms. This seems to indicate that the reference to ‘Melchizedek’ in this passage should be understood along the lines of the Davidic Psalm 110.<sup>45</sup>

As I argued in chapter three, the royal priestly messiah of Psalm 110 is one who reigns from the heavenly Zion (Ps 110:1–2; cf. Heb 1:13). He mediates the rule of God from the location of God’s own right hand (Ps 110:1, 5). In this sense, the author of 11QMelch may have viewed the priest-king of Psalm 110 as a heavenly figure or as one

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<sup>44</sup>The citation of this verse is taken directly from Knohl’s essay. Israel Knohl, “Melchizedek: A Model for the Union of Kingship and Priesthood in the Hebrew Bible, 11QMelchizedek, and the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity* (Leiden, Brill: 2009), 261.

<sup>45</sup>Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, 162.

who shares in God's royal authority. Furthermore, Melchizedek in Psalm 110 wields the authority of heaven from heaven over both human and spiritual forces of evil. From the position of God's right hand, he "executes judgment" on the eschatological day of his wrath (Ps 110:5–6). The final object of the messiah's judgment is the satanic "head" (Ps 110:6; cf. Gen 3:15). This archenemy (Belial in 11QMelch?) of God is the last casualty of the messiah's eschatological conquest.<sup>46</sup> Thus, both Psalm 110 and 11QMelch depict a messianic figure named Melchizedek who shares in the divine rule of God and judges the spiritual forces of evil.

As the eschatological king and judge, 11QMelch implies that Melchizedek will be the one to usher in the kingdom of God. The author mentions the final "day" ("this day," הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוֹאֵה יוֹם) of judgment in reference to Isaiah 52:7: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, of the messenger of good who announces salvation,] saying to Zion: 'your God [reigns']" (2:15–16).<sup>47</sup> The messenger, according to 11QMelch, is the Spirit anointed messenger of Isaiah 61:1–3 (2:19). The righteous king Melchizedek proclaims liberty to the captives in the power of the Spirit by announcing that the reign of God has finally arrived (2:16–20). He will destroy Belial and thereby usher in an era of peace under the rule of God's glorious kingdom.

### **Priesthood in 11QMelchizedek**

Melchizedek is never specifically identified as a priest in 11QMelch. This lack of clear reference to the priesthood in 11QMelch has led some scholars to conclude that

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<sup>46</sup>Hamilton sees a connection between Belial and the seed of the serpent in 11QMelch. He writes, "The liberation of the sons of light comes through the defeat of 'Belial and the spirits of his lot' who show partiality to the wicked (Col II, 11–12; Ps 82:2), and the mention of Belial calls to mind the way that the wicked are sometimes referred to as 'sons of Belial', that is, seed of the serpent, in the Old Testament (e.g. Deut 13:13 [MT 13:14]; Judg 19:22; 1 Sam 2:12; 1 Kgs 21:10; 2 Chr 13:17). Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, 163.

<sup>47</sup>Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, 140.

Melchizedek should not be considered a priest.<sup>48</sup> I contend, however, that the priesthood is fundamental to Melchizedek's program of eschatological salvation.

Melchizedek's ministry is to free the community from the rule of Belial. He accomplishes this redemption on the Day of Atonement (2:7). The Day of Atonement evokes Leviticus 16 and the high priest's role of making atonement for the sins of Israel. Like the high priest, Melchizedek will liberate his community by freeing them "from [the debt of] all their iniquities" (2:6). Concerning the Day of Atonement in 11QMelch, Aschim writes,

In the context of 11QMelch, this is much more than a date notice. It is a matter of great importance that the eschatological liberation takes place on this very day. Probably, Melchizedek is the subject of the verb "to atone" (כפר) in the following sentence (II 7–8). If so, he enacts the role of the high priest in the Day of Atonement ritual according to Leviticus 16: "And the 'D[ay of Aton]ement' i[s] the e[nd] of the tenth [ju]bilee, to atone that (day) for all the sons [of light and] men of the lot of Mel[chi]zedek."<sup>49</sup>

Melchizedek's eschatological liberation is, therefore, a function of his priesthood. As a priest, he provides atonement for the sins of the community. According to Rainbow, "In all likelihood the ascription of a sacerdotal role to the coming Davidic king at least partly explains the author's choice of the name 'Melchizedek' to designate him in this work (cf. Ps. 110:4)."<sup>50</sup>

11QMelch also alludes to Leviticus 16 by mentioning two lots: the "lot of Melchizedek" (2:8) and "Belial and the spirits of his lot" (2:12). On the Day of Atonement, the high priest was to cast lots over the two goats, "one lot for Yahweh and the other lot for Azazel" (Lev 16:8). According to Knohl, the lots that were given to Yahweh and Azazel in Leviticus 16 are reassigned to Melchizedek and Belial in

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<sup>48</sup>David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand*, 27; Franz Laub, *Bekennnis und Auslegung: Die Paranetische Funktion der Christologie im Hebraerbrief* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1980), 39. Laub's work is cited in this regard by Aschim in Aschim, "Melchizedek and Jesus," 139.

<sup>49</sup>Aschim, "Melchizedek and Jesus," 132.

<sup>50</sup>Rainbow, "Melchizedek as a Messiah at Qumran," 192.

11QMelch.<sup>51</sup> On the eschatological Day of Atonement, the high priest Melchizedek will atone for the sins of the people and destroy Belial and his lot forever. In Aschim's words,

Appearing in the final phase of history as a heavenly warrior, judge, and high priest, he is expected to complete a series of actions on God's behalf. He will conquer evil powers, liberate the human "sons of light" from the dominion of evil, act as a high priest on their behalf in the Yom Kippur ritual, and pronounce judgment on their enemies, "Belial and his lot."<sup>52</sup>

Kobelski offers one of the most extensive and persuasive arguments for the priesthood of Melchizedek in 11QMelch. He observed several similarities between 11QMelch and the "new priest" *T. Levi* 18:2–14. Melchizedek in 11QMelch and the "new priest" of *T. Levi* 18 are eschatological judges who defeat Belial, usher in the new age, and dispel the darkness by illuminating the world with "light." Kobelski concluded that Melchizedek must be considered both a king and priest,

He reigns as king and his dominion is characterized as a time of peace and joy (11QMelch 2:9–16). With the destruction of Belial's power the period of sin and evil, which had affected even the righteous, is at an end; and the sons of light are restored to their position among the sons of heaven. Although the priesthood of Melchizedek is not explicitly referred to in 11QMelch, the identification of him as a priest of El Elyon in Genesis 14, the mention of the everlasting priesthood of Melchizedek in Psalm 110, and the use of Genesis 14:18b–19 in 1QapGen 22:15, make it impossible to separate the mention of him from the thought of his priesthood.<sup>53</sup>

## Summary

Though specific references to Psalm 110 are lacking in 11QMelch, the connection between the two texts cannot be missed. As Knohl writes,

We have seen that Melchizedek of Psalm 110 is a priestly King, who rules over his people and judges the nations. The same combination is developed in *11Q Melchizedek*. The hero of this *peshar* is a messianic king who rules over his community, judges the evil spirits and atones for his people on the eschatological Day of Atonement.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Knohl, "Melchizedek," 161.

<sup>52</sup>Aschim, "Melchizedek and Jesus," 133.

<sup>53</sup>Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchiresa*, 68.

<sup>54</sup>Knohl, "Melchizedek," 263.

While it is clear that some intertestamental literature anticipated a messianic diarchic rule, where an anointed priest and an anointed king would establish God's kingdom, 11QMelch is one text that clearly brought kingship and priesthood together in a central figure. Knohl again comments, "11QMelchizedek, however, rejects the separation of kingship and priesthood. The savior and redeemer of the eschatological Day of Atonement combines kingship and priesthood within a single personality. Thus, it is no wonder that he is described as heir to the biblical figure Melchizedek."<sup>55</sup>

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I have singled out a small body of intertestamental literature whose royal priestly messianism was influenced by the priest-king ideology of Psalm 110. The evidence from the *Testament of Levi*, *1 Enoch*, *2 Enoch*, and *11QMelchizedek*, in particular, strongly suggests that their authors interpreted Psalm 110 as an eschatological text describing God's anointed priest-king who would usher in God's kingdom. *2 Enoch* appeared to attach the messianic Melchizedek's eschatological ministry to Adam's prototypical royal priestly identity in God's garden paradise, thus hinting at a reading of Psalm 110 similar to the thesis being advanced here. 11QMelch most fully developed Psalm 110 by unfolding Melchizedek's end-time conquest in royal and priestly categories connected to major biblical themes: eschatological judgment, atonement, the establishment of God's global kingdom, and triumph over the spiritual forces of evil. At the very least, we may conclude that these intertestamental works understood the royal priestly messianism of Psalm 110 to be grounded in the larger biblical narrative, even if just at the thematic level. For these authors, Psalm 110 was clearly not a novel prophecy devoid of any biblical-theological connections or merely a political charter isolated to a single event—David's rule in Jerusalem—in Israel's history.

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<sup>55</sup>Knohl, "Melchizedek," 263.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE ROYAL PRIEST: THE MELCHIZEDEKIAN PRIEST-KING OF PSALM 110 IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

#### **Introduction**

The New Testament continues to unfold the Old Testament's story of the kingdom of God. Jesus appears in human history to bring the story of the Old Testament to an end. His life and ministry is the beginning of the final chapter in the story of God's reign over the world—a reign that began with creation in the life of Adam and was later passed on to the people of Israel. As I demonstrated in chapters 2–3, the notion that a priest-king would bring about the fulfillment of God's kingdom is fundamental to the Bible's storyline and intricately bound up with the covenantal framework of Scripture. We would expect, then, for Jesus to occupy both a kingly and priestly identity in the pages of the New Testament. While the kingship of Jesus pervades the pages of the New Testament, it appears, at least on the surface, that only the epistle to the Hebrews provides any developed treatment of the priesthood of Christ, and that on the basis of Psalm 110. Yet scholars like Fletcher-Louis,<sup>1</sup> Perrin,<sup>2</sup> and Broadhead<sup>3</sup> have argued that

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<sup>1</sup>Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1," *JSHJ* 4, no. 2 (2006): 155–75; Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," *JSHJ* 5, no. 1 (2007): 57–79; Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus Inspects His Priestly War Party (Luke 14.25–35)," in *Old Testament in the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 126–43.

<sup>2</sup>Nicholas Perrin, "The Temple, A Davidic Messiah, and a Case of Mistaken Priestly Identity (Mark 2:26)," in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2013).

<sup>3</sup>Edwin K. Broadhead, "Christology as Polemic and Apologetic: The Priestly Portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark," *JSNT* 47 (September 1992): 21–34.



the Gospels depict the person of Christ and much of his work in priestly overtones.<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the New Testament's presentation of Jesus as the royal priest of Psalm 110. The New Testament authors cite Psalm 110 more than any other Old Testament passage. A whole dissertation could easily be devoted to the New Testament's use of Psalm 110. My intention is not to examine every occurrence of Psalm 110 in the New Testament. Instead, my analysis will focus on the New Testament's development of both priesthood and kingship in the life and ministry of Jesus on the basis of the royal priestly ideology of Psalm 110. This chapter is not an attempt to explore the offices of Christ's kingship and priesthood as concepts that are neatly divided in the realm of systematic theology. Instead, it is a biblical-theological and redemptive-historical development of royal priesthood rooted in the logic of Psalm 110—a logic I have been developing thus far. With this in mind, this chapter will give attention to two New Testament books: the Gospel of Mark and the epistle to the Hebrews.

### **Gospel of Mark**

The Gospel of Mark references Psalm 110 twice during Jesus' last days in Jerusalem. In Mark 12:36, Jesus, in the temple, quotes Psalm 110:1 in reference to the identity of the Christ as the Davidic son. In Mark 14:62, Jesus responds to the questioning of the high priest by conflating the imagery of Daniel 7:13 and Psalm 110:1 to reveal his own messianic identity. Psalm 110:4, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek," never appears in Mark. Nevertheless, Mark's use of Psalm 110 in settings associated with the temple and the Jerusalem high priesthood naturally evoke the broader context of Psalm 110. In fact, Mark's use of Psalm 110 in the closing narrative is, as I hope to demonstrate, the climactic conclusion to the development of Jesus' royal

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<sup>4</sup>See also David Stephen Schrock, "A Biblical-Theological Investigation of Christ's Priesthood and Covenant Mediation with Respect to the Extent of the Atonement" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), 258–97.

priestly identity already begun in act one of Mark's Gospel (Mark 1:1–8:26).<sup>5</sup> In what follows, I will argue that Mark intended for his readers to identify Jesus with the Melchizedekian royal priest of Psalm 110. I will build a cumulative case for the priestly role of Jesus by presenting multiple lines of evidence. No single strand of evidence in Mark 1:1–8:26 proves that Mark intended to portray Jesus' ministry as a priestly ministry. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect of pulling the individual strands of evidence together should present a compelling case that Jesus' earthly ministry is, to some degree, a priestly ministry. Along the way, I will also make a few brief comments on Jesus' priestly identity in relation to the temple.

### **The Kingdom of God is Near**

Jesus arrives on the scene in Mark's Gospel proclaiming the gospel of God and the nearness of God's kingdom (Mark 1:14–15).<sup>6</sup> No explanation of the meaning of the kingdom of God is given and none is needed.<sup>7</sup> The announcement of God's kingdom

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<sup>5</sup>Edwin Broadhead comments on the relationship between Mark's literary style and the priestly development of Jesus' identity in four scenes in Mark's opening narrative. He writes, "The fourfold repetition of priestly images in 1.1–3.7a belongs to this pattern of reinforcement and intensification. Thus, the priestly image is established early and is etched deeply into the story of Jesus." Broadhead, "Christology as Polemic and Apologetic," 23n5.

<sup>6</sup>What exactly is meant by Jesus' statement, "The Kingdom of God is near (ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ)"? There have been many proposals regarding the exact meaning of ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. Is it possible that temple and priestly imagery inform, at least in part, the meaning of ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ? Fletcher-Louis thinks so. He writes, "I suggest that for Mark the point is that the reality of God's presence that has hitherto been present primarily in the temple and her priest-hood is now available not (just) in Jerusalem but also in the towns and villages of Galilee. Those who go to the temple to worship 'draw near . . .'" (Exod 16.9; Lev. 9.5; Deut. 4.11; Ps. 65.5 [4]; cf. Exod 12.48; 4Q400 1 I 6). And those who are ordained are similarly drawn near (Priests: Exod. 40.12, 14; Lev. 7.35; 8.6, 13, 24; Leviticus: Num 3.6; 8.9, 10). So, in a narrow sense, only those ordained can draw near to God (Num 16.5, 9, 10; 17.5; Lev 21.17). Now, according to Mark's Jesus, with the eschatological arrival of the Kingdom of God, the potent reality of God's presence has proactively drawn near to his people. They no longer need to go to him in Jerusalem to encounter the Kingdom because its reality (forgiveness of sins, the temple's experience of Sabbath rest and contagious healing holiness) are coming to them." Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," 78.

<sup>7</sup>Goldsworthy writes, "The fact that Jesus announces the kingdom without explaining what he means by it suggests that he spoke of an already existing idea in the minds of the Jews. Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2002), 73. For an excellent analysis of the theme of the kingdom of God in Mark, see Brian

begins the final chapter of the story that began on the first page of the Old Testament. The opening words of Mark's gospel connect the "beginning" (ἀρχή) of Jesus' arrival in human history to what God did in Genesis in the "beginning" (ἀρχή) of the world (cf. Gen 1:1). The creation of the world described in Genesis 1–2 and the initial establishment of God's kingdom through Adam, God's covenantal son, has now reached its fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ, the "Son of God" (υἱοῦ θεοῦ).<sup>8</sup>

As Son of God, Jesus is not only the new Adam, he is the new Israel (Exod 4:22–23). His life and ministry will bring to pass God's promises to Israel concerning redemption and the establishment of God's worldwide reign over the earth. At the outset of his Gospel, Mark conflates two important Old Testament passages anticipating the coming reign of God from heaven to earth. First, Malachi 3:1 anticipated a forerunner who would prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. The Lord's coming in Malachi 3:1–4 is his coming to the temple to exercise judgment. He will occupy sacred space to refine his own people from the epicenter of his presence on earth. The second Old Testament citation comes from Isaiah 40:3. The reference to Isaiah evokes the broader context of Isaiah 40–55 and the themes of new exodus, new creation, and the establishment of the kingdom of God.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Treat is certainly right to observe that "the influence of Isaiah 40–55 on Mark includes not only the Isaianic new exodus, which culminates in God's enthronement in Jerusalem (Isa 52:7) but also its agent and means—the servant and his atoning death (Isa 52:13–53:12)." The importance of this

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Vickers, "Mark's Good News of the Kingdom of God," *SBJT* 8, no. 3 (2004): 12–35.

<sup>8</sup>According to Treat, "Mark's first word (ἀρχή) is not simply telling the reader where to begin, but is rather a reference to Gen 1:1 (ἐν ἀρχῇ LXX), which places Mark's story about Jesus within the story of the world from creation (Gen 1–2) to new creation (Isa 65:17–25), and more specifically (as is clear in the next verse) within the story of Israel." Jeremy R. Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 89.

<sup>9</sup>For a full development of the influence of the Isaianic new Exodus in Mark's narrative, see Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000).

redemptive historical framework—kingdom through cross (death)—for the remainder of Mark’s Gospel cannot be overstated.<sup>10</sup> Jesus will establish God’s kingdom by leading a new exodus through his death on the cross, which, in the theology of the narrative, is a covenant sacrifice making atonement for sins.<sup>11</sup> The establishment of the reign of God on earth in and through the cross-work of Jesus Christ becomes the thrust of Mark’s narrative. In other words, the kingdom comes through covenant sacrifice.

If kingdom and cross (covenant sacrifice) are so intricately linked in Mark’s Gospel, then perhaps we should also expect the office of both king (kingdom) and priest (covenant sacrifice/r) to be central to Jesus’ identity. The broader narrative of the Old Testament—Psalm 110 in particular—attached the arrival and establishment of God’s kingdom to a figure who was both a king and a priest. Jesus appealed to Psalm 110 twice in Mark’s temple narrative implying that the Melchizedekian priest-king had arrived in his own person. But how does the explicit application of Psalm 110 to Jesus in the final section of Mark’s narrative fit with all that has come before? Do these references to Psalm 110 on the lips of Jesus come as a surprise or sudden twist in the story? Or rather, has Mark been preparing his readers to understand Jesus’ identity as a Melchizedekian priest-king all along?

There is little doubt that Jesus is the royal Son of God in Mark’s Gospel.<sup>12</sup> The

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<sup>10</sup>Treat has offered the best analysis I have seen on the interplay between kingdom and cross in Mark’s Gospel. He asserts, “Mark’s presentation of the kingdom-cross interplay, therefore, is not primarily conceptual but redemptive-historical. In other words, Mark seeks not to synthesize kingship and suffering in the abstract but to weave together prophetic strands such as the Davidic king and the suffering servant. While coalescing the concepts of “authority and servanthood” or “power and weakness” is helpful . . . it is not the primary way Mark explains this paradox. Rather, Mark does so by revealing Jesus as the Davidic/Danielic king who reigns by taking on the suffering of the servant.” Treat, *The Crucified King*, 91.

<sup>11</sup>Mark 14:12–25 identifies the Passover meal with Jesus’ own sacrifice as the “blood of the covenant.” In Matthew’s account of the Lord’s Supper, Jesus’ blood is specifically identified as the means to effect the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:28).

<sup>12</sup>On the development of royal Christology in the Gospel of Mark, see Robert D. Rowe, *God’s Kingdom and God’s Son: The Background in Mark’s Christology from Concepts of Kingship in the Psalms* (Boston: Brill, 2002); John R. Donahue, “Temple, Trial and Royal Christology (Mark 14:53–65,” in *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14–16*, ed. Werner H. Kelber (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 72–

opening verse establishes him as the “Christ” (Χριστός) and “Son of God” (Mark 1:1). Both titles are pregnant with royalty. The Χριστός was an anointed king who would rule on behalf of God. God’s promise to David was that the messiah-king would exist in a Father-son relationship with Yahweh (2 Sam 7:12–16). Upon ascending from the waters of baptism, the voice from heaven affirms Jesus’ messianic identity: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased” (Mark 1:11). Psalm 2:7 functions as the basis for the declaration of Jesus’ sonship. At his baptism, Jesus is anointed with the Spirit and declared to be the Davidic king and Son of God.<sup>13</sup> On the outskirts of Jericho, blind Bartimaeus accurately assesses Jesus’ identity as the “Son of David” (Mark 10:47–48). Similarly, the crowds hailed him as the one who would bring the coming kingdom of David (Mark 11:10).

More difficult to discern than his royalty, is the priestly identity of Jesus in Mark’s gospel.<sup>14</sup> Jesus is never identified as a priest in Mark’s Gospel, but this would be expected since Jesus was not of the lineage of Levi. To call Jesus a priest would have made Jesus not a fulfiller of the law, but a changer of the law (cf. Heb 7:12). But simply because the Gospel writers did not call him “priest” does not mean that Jesus did not embody a priestly identity during his earthly ministry. According to Broadhead, “This priestly image, though briefly-developed, has been woven into the larger tapestry of the Gospel of Mark and contributes to its wider Christological portrait.”<sup>15</sup> Act one of Mark’s

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79; Vickers, “Mark’s Good News of the Kingdom of God,” 21–23.

<sup>13</sup>Treat again helpfully comments, “The Ps 2:7 allusion refers not only to Jesus’ sonship, but to his anointing (2:2), enthronement (2:6), and victory over enemies (2:9); all of these draw from the tradition of 2 Sam 7:12–14.” Treat, *The Crucified King*, 91.

<sup>14</sup>Commenting on the priestly imagery of Jesus in the Gospels, Fletcher-Louis writes, “Although . . . there is priestly language in the Gospels, it is not obvious and the average modern reader of the New Testament knows little of the material in the Pentateuch that brings it to light. Priestly categories have played a significant role in Eastern Christianity, but in the (especially Protestant) West, they have all but disappeared.” Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1,” 162.

<sup>15</sup>Broadhead, “Christology as Polemic and Apologetic,” 22.

Gospel (1:1–8:26), in particular, develops the arrival and outworking of the kingdom of God in Jesus’ ministry not just in regard to his kingship, but also as a component of his priestly authority. In what follows, I will discuss Jesus’ priestly identity from six passages within the first eight chapters of Mark’s Gospel in order to demonstrate their relationship to the two Psalm 110 references in Mark 11–16.

### **Jesus the Priest**

#### **Mark 1:21–28 and 5:1–20**

Jesus’ first exorcism appears in Mark 1:21–28. Jesus is in the synagogue on the Sabbath and a man possessed with an unclean spirit confronts him. The fact that Mark describes this evil spirit as “unclean” (*ἀκάθαρτος*) is significant (Mark 1:23, 26). The concept of clean and unclean evokes the holiness code of Leviticus:

Leviticus 10:10–11 You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean, and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the Lord has spoken to them by Moses.” (ESV)

Leviticus 13:6 And the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day, and if the diseased area has faded and the disease has not spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only an eruption. And he shall wash his clothes and be clean. (ESV)

The priests were responsible for regulating Israel’s worship by separating the clean from the unclean. By exorcising the unclean spirit, Jesus exercises a priestly authority over the demonic world.<sup>16</sup>

In its narrative context, Jesus’ encounter with the unclean spirit in Mark 1:21–28 is meant to address the issue of Jesus’ identity. As the narrative begins, Jesus’ authoritative teaching is set in contrast with the scribes (Mark 1:22). Jesus is in a different class altogether than the religious authorities of Israel. When the unclean spirit appears on the stage, it immediately makes a statement concerning Jesus’ identity—“the Holy One

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<sup>16</sup>As I argued in the previous chapter, Jewish texts such as *Testament of Levi*, *1 Enoch*, *2 Enoch*, and *11QMelchizedek* demonstrate that many in Jesus’ day were expecting a royal priestly messiah to destroy the spiritual forces of evil.

of God” (ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ, Mark 1:24). ὁ ἅγιος is a title repeatedly used of God in the Old Testament, especially in the book of Isaiah (Ps 70:22; Hab 1:12, 3:3; Isa 12:6, 30:12, 15, 40:25, 41:20, 43:3, 14, 15, 45:11, 48:17, 49:7).<sup>17</sup> However, the title “the Holy One of God” on the lips of an *unclean* spirit suggests another possible Old Testament backdrop, namely the priesthood. Moses gave instructions concerning the priesthood in Leviticus 21:6–8, grounding their responsibilities for maintaining cleanness in the holiness of their office:

Leviticus 21:6–9 They shall be holy to their God (LXX ἅγιοι ἔσονται τῷ θεῷ αὐτῶν) and not profane the name of their God. For they offer the Lord’s food offerings, the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy. They shall not marry a prostitute or a woman who has been defiled, neither shall they marry a woman divorced from her husband, for the priest is holy to his God (LXX ἅγιός ἐστιν τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ αὐτοῦ). You shall sanctify him, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I, the Lord, who sanctify you, am holy. (ESV)

The priests were to be “holy to their God” as they followed the ordinances for maintaining cleanness. Even the garb of the high priest reflected the standard of holiness attached to the office. Fastened to his turban was a plate of pure gold with the engraving, “Holy to the Lord” (Ἁγίασμα κυρίου) (Exod 28:36). Furthermore, Aaron is twice identified as “the holy one” (Num 16:7; Ps 106:16).<sup>18</sup> In Psalm 106:16 (LXX Ps 105:16), he is “the holy one *of the Lord*” (τὸν ἅγιον κυρίου). Holiness, in the Old Testament, was a fundamental component of priestly identity. In Mark’s narrative, the unclean spirit knows

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<sup>17</sup>Most of the uses of ὁ ἅγιος refer to “the Holy One of Israel.”

<sup>18</sup>Fletcher-Louis observes, “The only precedent for a singular ‘the Holy One of God’ is Aaron (Ps. 106.16; Numb. 16.7 ‘the holy one (of the Lord)’).” Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2,” 63. Joel Marcus comments, “‘Holy,’ *hagios*, a term of cultic origin, is roughly synonymous with ‘clean’ (*katharos*) and the antonym of ‘unclean’ (*akathartos*...). As used in the Bible, its basic meaning is ‘separated from the profane realm’ and hence from sin; the intrinsic relation between holiness, separation, and cleanness can be seen in Lev 20:24–26; 1QS 9:5–9, and throughout the Temple Scroll... In the OT itself the Messiah is never called a ‘holy one,’ but Aaron, the prototypical priest, is termed ‘the holy one of the Lord’ (Ps 106:16). One fragmentary Qumran text, 1Q30, appears to speak of ‘the holy Messiah’; this may be a reference to the sect’s expected priestly Messiah, who for them is more important than the Davidic Messiah; cf. *T. Levi* 18:6–12, in which the eschatological high priest is a holy being who, in the end-time, and through the Holy Spirit, will have authority over Beliar (=Satan), the king of the evil spirits, and will grant the same authority to his ‘children’ (cf. Mark 3:15). Perhaps, therefore, some of the priestly associations of ‘holy one’ carry over to Mark.” Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 188.

Jesus' true identity. Jesus is the eschatological holy priest with authority over all things unclean, even unclean spirits.

A similar scene appears in Mark 5:1–20. A man with an “unclean spirit” confronts Jesus (Mark. 5:2, 8, 13). Again, the confrontation reveals something about Jesus' identity. The unclean spirit identifies Jesus as “Son of the Most High God” (Mark 5:7). The phrase *υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου* is nearly identical to the description of Melchizedek's priesthood in Genesis 14:18:

Genesis 14:18:	<i>ἱερεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου</i>
Mark 5:7:	<i>υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου</i>

Once again an unclean spirit rightly recognizes Jesus' true identity. Jesus is the Son of God who has authority over the demonic world. Yet, more than that, the parallel to Genesis 14:18 may imply that Jesus is the eschatological warrior-priest after the order of Melchizedek (Ps 110; cf. 11QMelch). Before Jesus identifies himself as the messianic priest-king of Psalm 110 in the temple narrative (Mark 11:35–37, 14:62), he absorbs eschatological (Melchizedekian?) warfare in his own ministry.<sup>19</sup>

### **Mark 1:40–45**

Jesus' interaction with the leper at the end of Mark 1 continues the development of Jesus' priestly identity in the context of ceremonial uncleanness. The leper begs Jesus to be made “clean” (Mark 1:40). As noted from Leviticus, it was the priests who were responsible to pronounce someone or something as clean or unclean (Lev 13:6).<sup>20</sup> Jesus, however, is a greater priest than those reflected in the Levitical order. Jesus not only pronounces clean, he actually makes clean. He responds to the leper's

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<sup>19</sup>Perrin argues that Jesus' exorcisms substantiate his role as the eschatological Melchizedek. Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 168.

<sup>20</sup>Lane writes, “In the firm conviction, ‘If you will you can make me clean,’ he is asking for healing, not for the pronouncement that he is clean ritually, which only a priest could declare.” William Lane, *The Gospel of Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 85.



request by touching (ἄπτω) him and making him clean (Mark 1:41). Anyone who came into contact with a leper, including priests, would have himself become unclean. Yet Jesus is able to touch the leper and not only remain clean himself, but make that which was unclean clean. Similarly, in Mark 5, Jesus comes into contact with two others who should have rendered him ceremonial unclean: the woman with the issue of blood and the dead body of Jairus' daughter (cf. Lev 15:27; Num 19). Yet, in none of these cases does Jesus become unclean, but instead power goes forth from Jesus to heal each of these people.<sup>21</sup> In this respect, scholars are right to refer to Jesus' healing power as his contagious holiness. There is no Old Testament precedent for a priest (or anyone for that matter) ever making an unclean person clean. Yet, as Fletcher-Louis has observed, Ezekiel 44:19 suggests that the priestly vestments could communicate holiness to the people:<sup>22</sup>

Ezekiel 44:19 And when they go out into the outer court to the people, they shall put off the garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers. And they shall put on other garments, lest they transmit holiness to the people with their garments.

By touching unclean persons, Jesus transmits holy healing power. He is thus able to do what the priests under the Mosaic Law could never do, thereby establishing himself as a superior kind of priest.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Mark 5:30 says that Jesus perceived that "power had gone out from him" when the woman touched his garment.

<sup>22</sup>Fletcher-Louis also appeals to Lev 21:10–12, Exod 30:29, and Wisdom of Solomon 18 to build his case for the priestly background of Jesus' contagious holiness. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," 64–70.

<sup>23</sup>Broadhead argues that the phrase μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς in Mark 1:44 should be translated "as a testimony against them." Broadhead, "Christology as Polemic and Apologetic," 25. This means that Jesus commands the leper to present himself to the priests as a testimony that their ministry is insufficient. Lane agrees with this translation, but does not want to see Jesus' pronouncement of cleanliness as a "priestly pronouncement...but a declaration that healing would follow immediately and completely." Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 87–88.

## Mark 2:1–12

Mark 2:1–12 describes a confrontation between Jesus and the scribes. The issue of Jesus' identity is at the heart of the controversy because Jesus claims the authority as "the Son of Man" to forgive sins (Mark 2:5). The religious elites question Jesus' ability to forgive sins by asking in their hearts, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mark 2:7). In the Old Testament, God's forgiveness of sins was mediated through the priest. Broadhead asserts, "In the worship of Israel, the offer of God's forgiveness belongs to the priesthood."<sup>24</sup> The priest's role in the Day of Atonement bears this out (cf. Lev 16:32–34). Through the atonement ritual, Israel's priest was able to offer the forgiveness of sins on behalf of God. This leads Broadhead to conclude, "Jesus does in Mark 2:1–13 what only a priest of God can do—offer God's forgiveness for sin."<sup>25</sup> Joel Marcus similarly writes, "Part of Jesus' offense, then, may be his usurpation of priestly prerogatives, and this makes particularly good sense if scribes were priests."<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, in Israel's worship, forgiveness happened at the temple, but Jesus now offers forgiveness apart from the temple and its priesthood.<sup>27</sup> What are we to make of this? I think Beale accurately answers the question when he writes,

The temple was the divinely instituted place where sacrifices were offered for the forgiveness of sins, but now Jesus has become the divinely instituted location where forgiveness is to be found, since he himself is also the sin offering. Matthew 9:2–6 (=Mark 2:1; Luke 5:18–26) says that 'the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins', which may suggest that this pardoning of sins, formerly obtained at

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<sup>24</sup>Broadhead, "Christology as Polemic and Apologetic," 27.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid. Perrin similarly concludes, "The pronouncement of forgiveness was an activity that had traditionally been reserved for the priesthood." Nicholas Perrin, "The Temple, A Davidic Messiah, and a Case of Mistaken Priestly Identity (Mark 2:26)," 171.

<sup>26</sup>Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 216. Commenting on the phrase "your sins are forgiven," Marcus also writes, "'Are forgiven' can be interpreted as a divine passive... If this were the case, the declaration would be very much like that of a priest, who according to Lev 4:26, 31, etc. 'shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin, and he shall be forgiven' (NRSV)—the implied forgiver being God. Although there is no explicit statement that such atonement rituals were accompanied by the priest's declaration of divine forgiveness, it can be assumed that they were . . ." Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>On the relationship between the temple and forgiveness, see N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 406–12.

the temple, is part of his work as the priestly last Adam. Hence, again, we have the close association of temple function (albeit echoed) with the Adamic commission to have authority over the earth.<sup>28</sup>

### **Mark 2:23–3:6**

Mark 2:23–3:6 unfolds two confrontations between Jesus and the religious authorities over the issue of the Sabbath. In Mark 2:23–28, the Pharisees accuse Jesus and his disciples of breaking the law for plucking heads of grain. Jesus responds by appealing to David’s actions during the time of Abiathar the high priest.<sup>29</sup> David entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which was reserved by law for the “priests” alone (Mark 2:26). Is Jesus here stating that he and his disciples were exceptions to the “priest-only” regulation regarding the bread in the same way David and his men were? Or, rather, is Jesus saying that he and his disciples could pluck heads of grain on the Sabbath because, like David and his men, they were in some sense priests? The latter better accounts for the cultic dimensions of 1 Samuel 21:1–9 and Mark 2:23–28, and the shared priest-king typology between David and Jesus. Just as David’s royal priestly identity had its roots in a covenant superior to that of the Mosaic covenant and its Levitical priestly program—namely the Melchizedekian and by extension the covenant at creation—so too did Jesus’ royal priesthood transcend Mosaic law.<sup>30</sup> For Jesus did not

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<sup>28</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 177–78. Beale points to the Great Commission in Matt 28 as another example of the association between the temple and Adamic authority. *Ibid.*, 176–77.

<sup>29</sup>It is not necessary to address the Abiathar problem here. For an excellent treatment of the Abiathar problem in Mark 2:23–28, see Nicholas Perrin, “The Temple, A Davidic Messiah, and a Case of Mistaken Priestly Identity (Mark 2:26).”

<sup>30</sup>I developed the arguments for seeing David as a kind of Melchizedekian royal priest in chapter 3. Commenting on the relationship between David and his warriors and Jesus and his disciples, Perrin writes, “Reading the pericope of the disciples’ plucking grain in anticipation of the subsequent narrative, it becomes clear that Jesus permits the disciples to ‘desecrate the Sabbath’ precisely because, like David’s men, they had priestly prerogatives as part of a new temple regime. If as a rule the temple showbread was reserved for the priests, then David’s men and the disciples were both exceptions that proved the rule. The scene contained in 2:23–28, then, is not to be understood as Jesus’ attempt to engage in casuistic discussion over the scope of the Law (as it is so often taken) but rather an eschatological announcement that YHWH is about to transfer the priestly mantle from the official cult leadership, who in

appeal to Sabbath regulations instituted at Sinai to justify his priestly prerogative. He reminded his audience that the Sabbath was a creation ordinance—“the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). The Sabbath rest lost through Adam’s failure to exercise his royal priestly authority over the earth is now being restored in a priest-king better than Adam himself. For the “Son of Man [Adam] is lord even of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:28).<sup>31</sup>

Once again, Jesus’ priestly behavior occurs outside of temple confines. In 1 Samuel 21, David acted as a royal priest at the “house of God,” a setting proper for priestly activity. Jesus and his disciples, however, are in a grainfield, a setting not proper for priestly activity and out of sync with the precedent set by David in 1 Samuel 21. If Jesus, however, is the final eschatological high priest, then it is his prerogative to establish the boundaries of God’s presence. In the words of Fletcher-Louis, “If Jesus is the true eschatological high priest, then it stands to reason that wherever he may be there rests the sacred space of the true temple. And if David’s men can eat the bread of the presence at a sanctuary in Nob (1 Sam. 21.1), why cannot Jesus set up a new sanctuary for his disciples in the Galilean countryside?”<sup>32</sup> Might we conclude, then, that a priest-king is redefining the boundaries of sacred space?

In Mark 3:1–6, Jesus, as Lord of the Sabbath, does on the Sabbath what would be expected from the eschatological priest-king, he overcomes the effects of the curse by

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their resistance to the true Son of David were liable to judgment.” Perrin, “The Temple, A Davidic Messiah, and a Case of Mistaken Priestly Identity (Mark 2:26),” 175.

<sup>31</sup>Fletcher-Louis writes, “Mark 2.27 relates the Son of Man figure to the Adam for whose benefit the Sabbath came about according to Genesis 1. The conceptual transition between verse 27 and 28 is natural with the cultic worldview, where the God-intended humanity of Genesis 1 is recapitulated, and sacramentally reconstituted, in Israel’s priesthood, in the temple-as-microcosm. As true high priest  $\delta \nu\iota\delta\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\omicron\upsilon$  is both ‘Son of Man’ and ‘Son of Adam’; the one who extends the Sabbath rest for the good of his fellows.” Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2,” 76–77. For a well balanced discussion of the meaning of “the Son of Man” in Mark’s Gospel, see Simon Gathercole, “The Son of Man in Mark’s Gospel,” *The Expository Times* 115, no. 11 (2004): 365–72.

<sup>32</sup>Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2,” 76.

healing a man with a withered hand, thereby restoring him to creational harmony reflected in the original Edenic state of Sabbath rest (Mark 3:1–6; cf. Gen 2:1–3).<sup>33</sup> Like the previous confrontation, Jesus heals the man with the withered hand in the context of opposition. Broadhead draws out the irony in these confrontational encounters. He writes, “Jesus does what any good priest should do—he ministers to the people on the Sabbath. In contrast, the priests of Israel use the Sabbath to plot the death of Jesus (3.6).”<sup>34</sup>

### **Mark 7:14–23**

One final narrative with priestly overtones worth noting in Mark’s Gospel is Mark 7:14–23. Here Jesus teaches on food laws as they relate to personal holiness. The old covenant law clearly identified clean and unclean foods (cf. Lev 11). Jesus, however, redefines such notions of cleanness and uncleanness as they relate to food. For Jesus, the difference between purity and defilement is not a matter of eating and drinking, but a matter of the heart. By redefining the nature of purity codes, Jesus embodies priestly authority: He declares all foods “clean” (*καθαρίζω*) (Mark 7:19). The implications of such a declaration are massive. If Jesus redefined ceremonial cleanness in relation to food laws, then he also de facto redefined the nature of temple worship. On this point, Perrin writes:

When Mark later recounts Jesus declaring that “nothing outside a man can make him unclean” (Mark 7:15), the Evangelist is not seeking, as so many interpreters want us to believe, to prioritize a warm, inner spirituality over cold, external rites. More to the point, Mark’s intention is to recount a Jesus who, in revising the existent purity codes, is also redefining who may and who may not have legitimate access to the temple. Apparently possessing an authority that allows him to either circumvent or preempt standing temple regulations, Jesus is redefining temple

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<sup>33</sup>Commenting on the relationship between the Sabbath and work in this text, Fletcher-Louis writes, “What the priests do on the Sabbath in the temple, including their preparation and eating of the bread of the presence, is a work. This is perfectly legitimate because the temple is a time and space with an ontology that transcends that of the world outside. Work in the temple is allowed on the Sabbath, because, at least according to some, it is God’s own work in an Eden free of the curse imposed on labour.” *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>34</sup>Broadhead, “Christology as Polemic and Apologetic,” 28.

membership along the lines of a new more radical ethic (Mark 7:18–23).<sup>35</sup>

### **The Temple Narrative**

In light of the discussion of Jesus' priestly identity in the early chapters of Mark's narrative, the use of Psalm 110 in the temple narrative takes on much greater meaning and significance. Jesus enters the temple in Jerusalem only to be received with opposition from the temple authorities. The religious leaders repeatedly challenge Jesus until their opposition reaches its climatic confrontation in Mark 14:53–65.<sup>36</sup> Here the high priest is Jesus' final adversary and Jesus' self-referential application of Daniel 7 and Psalm 110 becomes the final statement of self-identification that leads to his crucifixion.

The hostility that characterizes Jesus' reception in Jerusalem comes as no surprise because Mark had already shown his readers that Jesus' ministry grew in the soils of escalating conflict (cf. 2:1–3:6).<sup>37</sup> Joanna Dewey has demonstrated that the controversy stories of Mark 2:1–3:6 form a single literary unit with a chiasmic structure.<sup>38</sup> Dewey asserts that "Mark employed the conflict stories theologically to place Jesus' life in the context of his death, and he used them in his narrative construction to show how Jesus' death historically was to come about."<sup>39</sup> Jesus' early controversies with "temple-based leadership" are therefore linked in the narrative to his run-ins with temple-based leadership at the Jerusalem temple.<sup>40</sup> In both cases, Jesus's identity is central to the

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<sup>35</sup>Nicholas Perrin, "The Temple, A Davidic Messiah, and a Case of Mistaken Priestly Identity (Mark 2:26)," 171–72.

<sup>36</sup>Vickers asserts, "The opposition to Jesus reaches its climax at Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion." Brian Vickers, "Mark's Good News of the Kingdom of God," 28.

<sup>37</sup>Fletcher-Louis similarly writes, "After passion week and his trial, Jesus' claim to be both messianic king and priest can be seen to have grown straightforwardly from the character of his first acts of ministry." Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," 78.

<sup>38</sup>Joanna Dewey, "Literary Structure of the Controversy Stories in Mark 2:1–3:6," *JBL* 92, no. 3 (1973): 394–401.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 400.

<sup>40</sup>Broadhead has argued more extensively for the connection between the priestly portrait of

conflict. In three of the controversy scenes Jesus' priestly identity is set over and against the religious authorities (Mark 2:1–12, 23–28; 3:1–6). The superior priesthood of Jesus in contrast to the hostile religious establishment in Mark's early narrative prepares the reader for Jesus' more explicit self-referential use of Psalm 110 and for his controversial encounters in the temple that lead to his death. Over and against the false priests of the temple, Jesus is the eschatological priest-king who will establish God's kingdom through his sacrificial death on the cross.

This backdrop sheds light on the timing of Jesus' use of Psalm 110:1 in Mark 12:35–37. Now that Jesus has entered the temple as the Davidic messiah, he explicitly states what his actions have already demonstrated—he is the Davidic priest-king of Psalm 110.<sup>41</sup> In the words of Watts,

It is intriguing that although Jesus has been engaged throughout in the priestly activities of teaching (often on purity) and declaring individuals clean, it is only after his Davidic entry and his actions and masterfully confounding teaching in the temple precincts that he appeals to Psalm 110—the one text that explicitly speaks of

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Jesus and the religious controversy theme in Mark. He writes, “The religious controversy theme and the priestly Christology emerge from the same literary soil. A strong pattern of conflict is developed in 1.1–3.7a and serves as the backdrop for the Jerusalem conflict in chs. 11–16 . . . . Thus, religious controversy and priestly Christology are intricately linked in their development.” Broadhead, “Christology as Polemic and Apologetic,” 29. Broadhead does not include Mark 1:21–28 and 5:1–20 as part of the priestly portrait of Jesus as I do. Thus, he is able to conclude that “the development of priestly images for Jesus is never separated from the context of the controversy with the religious leaders. Consequently, a crucial literary standard has been isolated: the Gospel of Mark employs priestly Christological images solely in correlation with and in response to the theme of Jesus' controversy with the religious leaders of Israel.” Ibid., 30. I don't think his conclusion is accurate that the priestly images of Jesus are never separated from the context of controversy. However, the point still stands that the frequent association between Jesus' priestly identity and controversy in the early chapters of Mark serves as the background for Jesus' use of Psalm 110 and controversial encounters with temple-based leadership in chapters 11 and following.

<sup>41</sup>Though Jesus only quotes verse one of Ps 110, the larger context is clearly in view. Fletcher-Louis states, “It is absurd to imagine that Jesus' audience (and implied readers of the Gospels) did not have in mind the rest of the Psalm that Jesus cites.” Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah,” 174. It is interesting that Mark 12:36 employs the verb *ὑποκάτω* instead the *ὑποπόδιον* when citing Psalm 110:1 (LXX 109:1). It is possible that the use of *ὑποκάτω* is the result of a conflation of Psalm 110:1 and Psalm 8:6 (LXX 8:7) where *ὑποκάτω* appears. Psalm 8 is a commentary on Gen 1:28 and the meaning of the image of God. At the very least, Mark 12:36 might reflect a tradition that held the royalty of the Davidic messiah (Ps 110) and the royalty of Adam (Ps 8) in close connection. Moreover, Adam's royalty was attached to his priestly identity in the same way that the Davidic messiah embodied a priestly royalty.

a Davidic priest-king.<sup>42</sup>

Jesus' use of Psalm 110 in this narrative is quite stunning. In the city of David, in the temple, Jesus claims the highest authoritative offices the Old Testament had to offer: Davidic kingship and Melchizedekian priesthood.<sup>43</sup> By virtue of his kingly authority and superior priesthood, he will render the temple, its leadership, and the entire Mosaic program null and void.

The timing of Jesus' appeal to Psalm 110:1 may also anticipate the conquest he is about to enact that will subject his enemies to his rule (Mark 12:36).<sup>44</sup> Mark cites Psalm 110:1 on the heels of the temple cleansing and several of Jesus' hostile encounters with the religious authorities (Mark 11:12–12:35). Jesus has silenced all of his opponents so that even before his cross-work, he appears to be ruling in the midst of his enemies, and that from Zion no less (Mark 12:34; Ps 110:2). Upon silencing all of his enemies (Mark 12:34), Jesus issues a stunning threat to all who oppose him: The Melchizedekian priest-king will subject his enemies to his authoritative rule (Mark 12:25–36). These enemies of Jesus are not just the religious authorities occupying the temple but the satanic spirits behind them. As Perrin notes, "wherever you find false leaders in Israel, an unclean spirit and ensnaring idols are not far below the surface."<sup>45</sup> Here in Jerusalem, in the temple, the place of God's own sacred presence, the seed of the serpent has set up

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<sup>42</sup>Rikki E. Watts, "The Lord's House and David's Lord: The Psalms and Mark's Perspective on Jesus and the Temple," *BibInt* 15, no. 3 (January 1, 2007): 319.

<sup>43</sup>Commenting on Mark 12:35–37, Fletcher-Louis writes, "In isolation, therefore, Mark 12:35–37 is Jesus' thinly veiled public statement on the question of Israel's God-intended eschatological constitution: the nation should, and will, he thinks, be led by a king who is also a priest." Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1," 174.

<sup>44</sup>For an insightful discussion of the use of Ps 110:1 in Mark 12:35–37 and its implications for Jesus' eschatological holy war, see Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 130–52. Commenting on Ps 110:1 in Mark 12:35–37, Rowe writes, "Jesus' use of Psalm 110:1 therefore in the context of Mark 12:35–37 represents first, a claim that his authority as Messiah comes from God who will raise him to the highest position next to God himself, and secondly, a warning that God's judgment will fall on those who make themselves the enemies of Jesus." Rowe, *God's Kingdom and God's Son*, 283.

<sup>45</sup>Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 163.



camp. Jesus won the skirmishes with the unclean spirits on his way to Jerusalem, but now the climactic battle will ensue. Jesus will cast the serpent out of the garden by crushing its head through his death on the cross (cf. Ps 110:6).

Psalm 110 appears a second time in act three of Mark's Gospel as part of the climactic controversy confrontation concerning Jesus' identity.<sup>46</sup> Jesus is brought before the council of temple-based leadership. Not surprisingly, the trial opens with statements concerning Jesus' relationship to the temple (Mark 14:58). So much of Jesus' earlier ministry stirred up controversy, in part, because he did temple-based actions outside of temple confines (Mark 2:1–12, 23–28; 3:1–6). According to Wright, in this final encounter between Jesus and the council, the temple and Jesus' identity come to a head: "Together they said that Jesus, not the Temple, was the clue to, and the location of, the presence of Israel's god with his people."<sup>47</sup> Wright is right, but I suggest that Jesus' *priesthood*—an office inseparable from the temple—is an underlying concept in the narrative function of the trial scene. How so? The irony of this final confrontation between Jesus and the religious authorities is that the high priest of Israel is the primary prosecutor in the case. The high priest appears to wield authority over Jesus, yet it is Jesus who is the true messianic priest and king—a fact substantiated by Jesus' self-referential appeal to Psalm 110 and Daniel 7 in Mark 14:62. Hamilton agrees:

Jesus declared to the wicked high priest of Israel that he was indeed the Christ, the Son of God, and at the same time Jesus asserted himself to be the Son of Man who would come on the clouds of heaven to receive everlasting dominion (Dan. 7:13) as the Melchizedekian high priest (Ps. 110:4). Naturally, the rebel holding the role would not appreciate Jesus declaring himself the true high priest king of Israel.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>For a discussion of Ps 110 and Dan 7 in Mark 14:62, see Rowe, *God's Kingdom and God's Son*, 282–95.

<sup>47</sup>Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 644.

<sup>48</sup>James M. Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology, NSBT* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 190. Commenting on Jesus' trial before the Jewish leaders, Watts says, "To assert that one will sit at God's right hand and thereby arrogate God's prerogatives to oneself is offensive enough. But, after all the preceding tension, to do so at one's own trial by citing Dan 7 which itself presupposes a courtroom confrontation, whereby a cloud-riding son of man is vindicated

By conflating the imagery of Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13 in response to the high priest's question concerning his identity, Jesus does not simply combine what appear to be two very different, yet important, Old Testament messianic texts. Instead, as Hamilton asserts, "In his reply . . . Jesus made a profound biblical-theological connection."<sup>49</sup> The profundity of Jesus' biblical-theological insight is amplified if the Son of Man in Daniel 7 is himself both king and *priest* like the Melchizedekian messiah of Psalm 110. This does indeed appear to be the case. Hamilton has argued that Psalm 110 is part of the biblical-theological logic informing Daniel's vision of the son of man in Daniel 7:9–14.<sup>50</sup> He asserts that "Daniel understood his vision as an enactment of what David described in Psalm 110:1, connecting the Daniel 7 vision with the hope for a king from David's line and validating the way that Matthew [also Mark] presents Jesus interpreting these texts."<sup>51</sup> If Hamilton is right that Daniel 7 is an enactment of Psalm 110:1, then I would add that David's lord and Daniel's son of man share more than a royal identity; they share a priestly identity as well. Fletcher-Louis has offered the most

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over beast-like and idolatrous nations is incendiary. Add to this Ps 110's Melchizedekian promise with its implications of a change of polity (read demise of the present Temple leadership; cf. 11QMelch [13]) and Yahweh's crushing of the Messiah's enemies, and the lines could hardly be more clearly drawn. Mark's Jesus not only claims the highest possible status for himself but accuses his opponents not only of being Yahweh's enemies but of effectively playing the role of the fourth beast with the High Priest as the little horn." R. E. Watts, "The Psalms in Mark's Gospel," in *The Psalms in the New Testament* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 41. Cited in Dale A. Brueggemann, "The Evangelists and the Psalms," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. Philip Johnston and David G. Firth (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 268.

<sup>49</sup>Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, 190.

<sup>50</sup>Hamilton highlights Daniel's use of plural "thrones" in Dan 7:9. This prompts him to ask, "Why would 'thrones'—more than one—be placed in the vision of Daniel 7:9–10? Assuming Daniel had access to the Davidic Psalm 110 . . . his perception and interpretation of what he saw in the vision could have been influenced by the statement in Psalm 110:1 . . . The fact that Jesus connected the Daniel 7:13 son of man with Psalm 110:1 strengthens this possibility . . . Rather than simply one throne for the Ancient of Days, Daniel saw 'thrones', and in view of what takes place in the vision, where the one like a son of man receives the kingdom (cf. Dan. 7:14), the natural conclusion is that there is a throne for the one like a son of man." Ibid., 148–49. Hay also believed that the use of "thrones" in Dan 7 was informed by Ps 110:1. David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Atlanta: Abingdon Press, 1973), 26.

<sup>51</sup>Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, 149.

extensive argumentation for the high priestly character of Daniel's son of man.<sup>52</sup> I simply point out that the imagery of Daniel 7:13 evokes the Day of Atonement ritual when the high priest entered the Most Holy Place where the ark (God's throne on earth) was located and where the cloud of God's presence rested (Lev 16:2). The scene is similar in Daniel 7:13. The son of man enters God's heavenly throne room (Most Holy Place), with the clouds of heaven, to be "presented" (קָרַב) before God.<sup>53</sup> According to Fletcher-Louis, "The implicit liturgical scene fits the text's life setting: the day that the high priest fully comes to God is Yom Kippur and this is also the day that provides a cosmic purification of the world that has been defiled by pagan impurities."<sup>54</sup> Daniel's royal priestly son of man is ultimately given the global dominion that the priest-king Adam failed to achieve (Dan 7:14), and he receives the eternal kingdom promised to David's greater son (2 Sam 7:12–14). Therefore, the son of man in Daniel 7 is a priest-king much like the messiah of Psalm 110. Both exercise royal authority over all the nations; both enjoy priestly access to God's throne room; both are expressions of the Adamic prototype.

When the high priest asked Jesus, "Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed ['son of God,' cf. Matt 26:63]," Jesus replied by pulling together two Old Testament passages that most clearly embodied God's eschatological program begun from the creation of the world: a son of God who is a royal priest with access to the presence of God will establish God's kingdom over the earth.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Crispin H T. Fletcher-Louis, "The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7.13 as a Test Case," *SBLSP*, no. 36 (January 1, 1997): 161–93; Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," 58–60.

<sup>53</sup>As one who "draws near" (קָרַב), the son of man has priestly access to God. Notice the use of קָרַב in texts related to the priest's privileged position of access to the tabernacle and temple. See for example Ezek 40:46; 45:4; Num 3:6, 10, 38; Lev 8:13, 24.

<sup>54</sup>Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," 59.

<sup>55</sup>Hamilton also observes the massive biblical-theological import apparent in Jesus' response. He writes, "The use of Daniel 7:13 in Matthew 26:64 and Mark 14:62 does not explore the chronological relationship between events of the end, but it does engage with the profound biblical-theological theme of the royal priest whose ultimate manifestation is Jesus. Adam in the garden was a royal figure with priestly

## Conclusion

If Mark wanted us to see Jesus' royal priestly identity in the early chapters of the narrative, it was because Jesus' rightful claim to be Israel's eschatological priest-king at the end of the narrative is what ultimately leads to his enthronement on the cross. Herein lies the irony that inundates Mark's Gospel. The warrior priest-king conquers through his own sacrificial death. The cross is his kingly throne and the blood shed there is his priestly sacrifice. The royal priest who cast out unclean spirits, made a leper clean, claimed authority over the Sabbath, reconstituted sacred space (temple), and redefined purity codes finally establishes the kingdom through the supreme covenantal sacrifice of his own body (Mark 14:22–25).<sup>56</sup> Melchizedek's bread and wine that blessed Abraham have become a symbol for the body and blood of a new Melchizedek that will bring covenantal blessing to Abraham's descendants (Mark 11:22–25). The kingdom will finally come through a covenant mediator. A priest-king will at last succeed when Jesus takes his kingly throne at the cross to usher in God's kingdom through the priestly

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overtone . . . Melchizedek was king and priest in Salem (Gen. 14:18). The priest-kings Adam and Melchizedek prepare the way for a nation of king-priests: God announced that the nation of Israel was his son (Exod 4:22), and brought Israel out of Egypt to be a kingdom of priests (19:6). The anointing oil flowed over both kings and priests: though the only people Moses was instructed to anoint in the Torah were the priests (Exod 28:41; 29:7; 30:30, etc.), God instructed Samuel to anoint David king over Israel, giving the anointed king a kind of priestly overtone. As king, David wore a linen ephod not unlike that of the priests (2 Sam. 6:14), and in Psalm 110 he spoke of his Lord being made a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchizedek . . . . These themes are significant because Jesus, 'the son of David, the son of Abraham' (Matt 1:1), was hailed before the high priest of Israel, who asked if he was claiming to be king: 'the high priest said to him, 'I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the son of God'' (Matt 26:63; cf. Mark 14:61). The 'son of God' language here has passages like 2 Samuel 7:14 and Psalm 2:7 in the foreground, but in the near background is the reality that Adam (Luke 3:38) and Israel (Exod 4:22) were also 'son of God'. The high priest asked Jesus if he claimed to be that long-awaited anointed king of Israel who descended from and fulfilled everything to which Adam and David pointed as the one who would relate to God the Father as the divine son. In his reply to this question, Jesus made a profound biblical-theological connection." Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, 189–90. That profound biblical-theological connection is that Jesus unites Ps 110 and Dan 7 in reference to his own person as the Son of God who brings God's program of the kingdom through a royal priestly viceroy to its eschatological head.

<sup>56</sup>Fletcher-Louis writes, "The tradition that Jesus is *both* sacrificial victim *and* priest that is found, for example, in Hebrews and Revelation (victim: Rev. 5.6; priest: Rev. 1.13–16) is not simply the product of later theological reflection. Once Jesus is viewed as a sacrifice, within the historical context of his life story, the question, 'which priest offers that sacrifice?', follows immediately." Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1," 171n65.

covenant-sacrifice of his own blood. The royal priest after the order of Melchizedek has arrived.

## Hebrews

The epistle to the Hebrews might be the New Testament's finest expression of biblical theology. The author of Hebrews was a biblical theologian par excellence. The Old Testament saturates every page of the epistle and Christ absorbs it all as the one who fulfills and gives meaning to all previous revelation (Heb 1:1–2). No Old Testament passage has a greater influence on the theology of Hebrews than Psalm 110.<sup>57</sup> Royal priestly Christology rooted in David's articulation of a royal Melchizedekian priest undergirds the argument of the entire epistle. Therefore, it is probably safe to say that Hebrews is the interpretive trump card regarding the meaning of Psalm 110 in the context of Scripture.

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how the author of Hebrews interpreted Psalm 110 as a part of the canonical story. The question under investigation is, simply, how did the author of Hebrews understand the royal priestly logic of Psalm 110 in light of the biblical storyline and in reference to its culmination in Jesus Christ? Is there evidence that the author of Hebrews interpreted the priest-king theology of Psalm 110 as part of the canonical and covenantal metanarrative I have developed thus far? In what follows, I will walk through the major theological sections of Hebrews to

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<sup>57</sup>The following sources develop the significance of Psalm 110 in the logic of Hebrews: Jared Compton, *Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews*, LNTS (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015); Simon J. Kistemaker, "Psalm 110 in the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *The Hope Fulfilled: Essays in Honor of O. Palmer Robertson* (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2008), 138–49; David Wallace, "The Use of Psalms in the Shaping of a Text: Psalm 2:7 and Psalm 110:1 in Hebrews 1," *Restoration Quarterly* 45, no. 1–2 (2003): 41–50; Simon Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Eugene: OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2010); James Kurianal, *Jesus Our High Priest: Ps 110,4 as The Substructure of Heb 5, 1–7, 28*, vol. 693, EUS, XXIII (New York: Peter Lang, 2000); Steve Stanley, "The Structure of Hebrews from Three Perspectives," *TynBul* 45, no. 2 (November 1994): 245–71; Gert J. Jordaan and Pieter Nel, "From Priest-King to King-Priest: Psalm 110 and the Basic Structure of Hebrews" in *Psalms and Hebrews: Studies in Reception*, ed. Dirk J. Human and Gert J. Steyn, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 527 (New York: T & T Clark, 2010); Buchanan described Hebrews as basically a midrash on Psalm 110. George Wesley Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, AB 36 (Garden City: NY: Doubleday, 1972), xix.

demonstrate how the royal priestly theology of Psalm 110 shapes the Christological and soteriological logic of the epistle at nearly every stage of the author's argument. Along the way, I will argue the following points: first, the author of Hebrews understands Psalm 110 as part of the covenantal storyline of Scripture that began with Adam—the archetypal Son, priest, and king—and was picked up in Israel, God's firstborn son and kingdom of priests (cf. Exod 19:6).<sup>58</sup> In the logic of Hebrews, Christ's universal reign from the heavenly tabernacle as the king and priest of Psalm 110 is the fulfillment of God's original design for humanity (Adam) to rule the world from the place of God's own presence. Second, the temporal framework of Psalm 110:1—"Sit...*until*"—is the logic that shapes the eschatological, soteriological, and cosmological argument of Hebrews. Third, the Melchizedekian priesthood as described in Psalm 110 is what informs the Joshua-Jesus typology in Hebrews 4. Fourth, Christ's covenant faithfulness manifested in his *priestly* self-sacrifice is what qualifies him to receive the eternal priesthood of the Melchizedekian order. Fifth, the soteriological argument of Hebrews cannot be separated from the Christological fulfillment of Psalm 110:4—"The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.'" In other words, believers receive salvation through Christ's role as the mediator (priest) of a new and better covenant. This new and better covenant is a covenant better than the Mosaic (Old) because the new covenant is identified with covenants associated with a priesthood superior to that of the Aaronic. These covenants are the Abrahamic and Davidic, and their superior priesthood is the Melchizedekian

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<sup>58</sup>The concept of Christ as son, king, and priest is what Hahn calls "royal priestly primogeniture." He writes, "For the author of Hebrews, Christ's threefold role as firstborn son, king, and high priest (i.e., Christ's royal priestly primogeniture) represents the restoration of an original and superior form of covenant mediation that has been lost since the institution of the Levitical priesthood in response to Israel's covenant infidelity." Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 278. Contra Hahn, I do not agree that the Levitical priesthood replaced Israel's status as a kingdom of priests after the gold calf incident. See my discussion in chapter 2 on the relationship between Israel's royal priesthood and the Aaronic priesthood.

priesthood. Sixth, and related to the previous point, the significance of the Melchizedekian priesthood is, for the author of Hebrews, bound up in its permanent nature and association with Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. By becoming a priest after the order of Melchizedek, Christ receives an eternal priesthood and therefore inaugurates the blessing of Abraham to the world—something the Levitical priests could never do as mortal men—as David’s Lord and greater Son. On the basis of his Melchizedekian priesthood, Christ therefore not only captures God’s creation project begun with Adam, he also enacts God’s redemption project embodied in the promises to Abraham and carried along by the Davidic program.<sup>59</sup>

### **Hebrews 1: The Enthronement of the Royal Priestly Son of God**

**Hebrews 1:1–4.** From the outset, the thrust of Hebrews could be summed up in one phrase: You name it, Jesus is better. The epistle opens with a discussion of the supremacy of Jesus Christ over angels as the final revelation of God (1:1–14; 2:5–18). Hebrews 1:1–4 sets the stage for the remainder of the epistle by laying the groundwork for a Son-priest-king Christology rooted in the logic of Scripture. As the royal Son who has made atonement for sins, Christ has become the climax of God’s revelation in human history (1:1–3). In Hebrews 1:1–3, Christ’s revelatory character is a product of both his divine nature and human nature. He is the divine Son who was the agent of creation in the beginning and even now is its providential sustainer (1:2–3). Furthermore, he shares in God’s essence as the “radiance” (*ἀπαύγασμα*) of God’s glory and the “exact imprint”

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<sup>59</sup>Hahn’s comments on the relationship between the Abraham-David-New Covenant and Adam-Israel-Old Covenant are probably right. He writes, “The Old Covenant is associated with faithlessness and curse—in particular, Adam’s faithlessness and the divine curse after the Fall (Heb 2:8–9, 15; 6:8), and Israel’s faithlessness and the divine curse after the wilderness rebellion (Heb 3:15–4:7). By contrast, the New Covenant is associated with faithfulness and blessing, in particular, the faithfulness of Abraham who received divinely-sworn blessings after the Aqedah (Gen 22:15–18) and the faithfulness of David who received divinely-sworn blessing after conquering Jerusalem and attempting to build the Temple . . . . To summarize, in Hebrews the Old Covenant is associated with faithless Adam and Israel, and the New with faithful Abraham and David.” Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 280.

(*χαρακτήρ*) of God's nature (1:3).<sup>60</sup>

This description of Jesus as a reflection of God's glory and nature also functions to establish his humanity in categories reminiscent of God's design for humanity as the image of God (Gen 1:26–28).<sup>61</sup> Jesus, as the true image of God, embodies the roles of son, king, and priest originally given to Adam, and he fulfills the creation project that Adam failed to complete (cf. Heb 2:5–11). He therefore rules the cosmos, not only as its divine creator (1:2), but also by virtue of his success as the royal man made in God's image. He has achieved human vice-regency over creation and thus becomes the “heir of all things” (*κληρονόμον πάντων*) (1:2). By alluding to Psalm 2:8—“heir of all things”—in Hebrews 1:2, the author situates the Son's kingship in the context of Davidic royalty.<sup>62</sup> A Davidic king bearing God's image, and ruling from the heavenly Zion receives universal dominion as God's viceroy (cf. Ps 2:6–8).

The royal Son takes his seat at God's right hand only after his priestly work of purification is complete (1:3).<sup>63</sup> In the logic of Hebrews, royal enthronement cannot be

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<sup>60</sup>On the ontological and Trinitarian implications of Heb 1:3, see Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Commentary*, vol. 36, AB (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 188–90. Steven Muir argues that Heb 1:3 contains a hint of anti-imperial rhetoric aimed at Rome and her emperor. Steven Muir, “The Anti-Imperial Rhetoric of Hebrews 1.3: *χαρακτήρ* as a ‘Double-Edged Sword,’” in *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in Its Ancient Contexts*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al., Library of New Testament Studies 387 (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 170–86.

<sup>61</sup>Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 317. Beale suggests that Heb 1:1–4 contains “classic Adamic language.” This language, he argues, consists in: “1. God's ‘son’ (who is the first Adam) has come ‘in these last days,’ 2. As the image of God, 3. As a ruler, 4. Inheritor of the earth, and 5. As a new creation . . . .” *Ibid.*, 317–18.

<sup>62</sup>For the sake of simplicity, unless otherwise indicated I will refer to the English Old Testament chapter and verse system when referring to Old Testament citations in Hebrews. It is widely recognized that the LXX was the source text for the author of Hebrews. See for example Susan E. Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation*, WUNT 260 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 23; Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 37.

<sup>63</sup>*καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος* evokes the priest's work on the Day of Atonement.



separated from priestly purification.<sup>64</sup> Or, to put it another way, priestly faithfulness gives rise to universal kingship. We would expect, then, for Psalm 110—the most explicit text on the union and interplay of kingship and priesthood in the Old Testament—to play an integral role in the author’s argument, and that’s exactly what’s hinted at in the exordium. Hebrews 1:3: ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς—the first reference to Psalm 110 in the epistle—is the product of the Son’s priestly work of purification. By connecting the kingly imagery of Psalm 110:1 to the priestly work of atonement, the author hints at what will become two of his primary Christological categories for the remainder of the epistle, namely priesthood and kingship. It was these two roles (priesthood and kingship) that defined the original image bearer’s (Adam) task at creation. Thus, from a biblical-theological perspective, we can conclude that Hebrews 1:1–4 situates the exaltation of Christ within the progress of redemptive history from Adam to the Davidic Melchizedekian priest-king. Just as Adam was made in the image of God to be God’s son and royal priest, and just as David’s Lord later embodied that role, Jesus now brings the progress of God’s revelation to its climax: he is the true image of God, the true Son of God, and the successful royal priest.

**Hebrews 1:5–13.** The exordium is followed by a catena of seven Old Testament quotations in Hebrews 1:5–13.<sup>65</sup> According to Joshua Jipp, the allusion to

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<sup>64</sup>Much debate exists on the timing of Christ’s high priesthood in the epistle to the Hebrews. Was Christ a priest on earth? Did he become a priest at the time of his self-sacrifice? Or did he only become a high priest upon his entry into the heavenly realm? I take the view that Hebrews presents Jesus’ earthly ministry as a priestly ministry, but he only takes on the office of the eternal Melchizedekian priesthood after his resurrection and ascension. Richardson is right when he writes, “The epistle carefully distinguishes Jesus’ high priesthood on earth from his eternal service in heaven; and, while he recapitulates the actions of the Day of Atonement, insofar as the slaying of the victim was followed by the high priest’s entrance into the Most Holy Place . . . his actions are both distinct *and analogous* to those performed by former high priests, revealing the author’s concern to illustrate continuity and discontinuity in redemptive history. Christopher A. Richardson, *Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith: Jesus’ Faith as the Climax of Israel’s History in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, WUNT 338 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 32–33. Koester suggests that there is simply no clear indication in Hebrews on when Christ became a high priest. Koester, *Hebrews*, 36:109–10.

<sup>65</sup>For various studies on the structure and interpretation of Heb 1:5–13, see John P. Meier, 208

Psalm 110:1 in Hebrews 1:3 “sets the theme for the rest of Heb 1.5–14 as the catena centers upon the Son’s enthronement and entrance into the Father’s heavenly throne room.”<sup>66</sup> The catena amplifies the imagery of Psalm 110:1 in order establish Christ’s superiority over angels as the royal Son of God who has been enthroned over the universe. A heavy emphasis on Davidic royalty surfaces from these Old Testament texts (see table 15).

Table 15. Davidic Passages referenced in Hebrews 1:5–13

Old Testament Passage	Theme
Psalm 2:7 (Heb 1:5)	The Davidic king is begotten as the covenantal son of God upon his enthronement in Zion.
2 Samuel 7:14 (Heb 1:5)	The promise of the Davidic covenant that David’s heir would exist in a father-son relationship with God.
Psalm 89:27 (Heb 1:6)	This Davidic passage is not cited in the catena of quotations, but it is alluded to in 1:6 through the use of <i>πρωτότοκον</i> . God would establish David’s son as the “firstborn” ( <i>πρωτότοκον</i> , LXX Ps 89:28), the highest of the kings of the earth.
Psalm 45:6–7 (Heb 1:8–9)	An anointed righteous king will rule from an eternal throne over the nations.
Psalm 110:1 (Heb 1:13)	David’s lord and eschatological priest-king will rule from God’s right hand.

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“Structure and Theology in Heb 1:1–14,” *Bib* 66, no. 2 (1985): 168–89; John P. Meier, “Symmetry and Theology in the Old Testament Citations of Heb 1:5–14,” *Bib* 66, no. 4 (1985): 504–33; Herbert W. Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics and Hebrews 1:5–13: The Impact of Early Jewish Exegesis on the Interpretation of a Significant New Testament Passage*, vol. 193, American University Studies, VII (New York: Peter Lang, 1997); Joshua W. Jipp, “The Son’s Entrance into the Heavenly World: The Soteriological Necessity of the Scriptural Catena in Hebrews 1.5–14,” *NTS* 56, no. 04 (2010): 557–75.

<sup>66</sup>Jipp, “The Son’s Entrance into the Heavenly World,” 559. Jipp argues that the catena “depicts a hymnic celebration of the Father’s declaration of Jesus’ sonship and his royal enthronement to the heavenly world.” *Ibid.*, 558.

Christ's exaltation is, for the author of Hebrews, the fulfillment of God's covenant promises to David. Each of these Davidic passages deserves a few brief comments.

Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14 appear first in the catena. In their original context, both of these texts ascribe the promise of universal dominion to a royal Davidic son of God. The filial relationship between the king and God in these passages is covenantal.<sup>67</sup> In Israel's messianic ideology, the messiah became God's covenantal son upon his enthronement as king (cf. Ps 2:6–7). The Christological application of these texts in Hebrews 1:5 means that Christ was “begotten today” upon his resurrection and ascension when he took his seat at God's right hand (1:3; cf. Ps 110:1).<sup>68</sup> His exalted status was awarded him only after he had successfully fulfilled his mission to provide purification for sins through his own covenant-keeping faithfulness (cf. 1:3; 5:7–10; 12:2). This makes sense of the temporal framework of Psalm 2:7 applied to the resurrection and ascension of Christ in Hebrews 1:5: “*today* I have begotten you” (ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε).<sup>69</sup> Upon his resurrection and ascension, God enthroned Jesus in the heavenly Zion as the true expression of the image of God in man—an image that was intended from the beginning to convey royalty and sonship. No angel was ever given

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<sup>67</sup>See my discussion of the Davidic covenant in chap. 3 of this project.

<sup>68</sup>That these Old Texts should be applied to Christ's resurrection state is consistent with their use by other New Testament writers. See for example Acts 13:33 and Rom 1:1–4. See also Jipp, “The Son's Entrance into the Heavenly World,” 560–61; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews, Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2015), 65–66; Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 318; Jared Compton, *Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews*, 20.

<sup>69</sup>To suggest that Jesus was begotten as the “Son” upon his resurrection and ascension is not to deny that he was the divine Son of God ontologically from eternity past. The Son of God, the second person of the trinity, has always been and always will be the Son. But in his humanity, the divine Son of God achieves an exalted status by virtue of his covenant faithfulness as a man. Schreiner similarly argues, “The reference is not to the eternal begetting of the Son by the Father, though this reading is rather common in the history of interpretation. Nor is it a reference to the virgin birth. The author of Hebrews actually interprets the verse in light of the entire message of Psalm 2. In context the verse refers to the reign of the messianic king, which Hebrews sees as commencing at Jesus' resurrection and ascension.” Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 65.

such authority or familial solidarity.<sup>70</sup>

Christ's resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of God solidifies his status as the "firstborn" (*πρωτότοκον*) of a new creation (1:6).<sup>71</sup> The reference to *πρωτότοκον* evokes Psalm 89 and God's promise to establish a Davidide as the *πρωτότοκον* and highest of the kings of the earth (LXX Ps 88:28). But it also situates Christ's royal exaltation over the universe within the framework of the story begun with Adam and developed in Israel.<sup>72</sup> Both Adam and Israel were to usher in the reign of God over the entire cosmos by exercising their covenantal role as royal priestly sons of God. They were to mediate God's rule and reign to the world by virtue of their privileged position of access to the presence of God himself. Jesus has proved successful where they both failed. His royal procession into the heavenly realm (*οίκουμένη*) reveals that he has gone where no man has gone before.<sup>73</sup> He is the firstborn Son of God because he is the first human to inherit (son) cosmic authority (king) at the place of God's own presence (priest) by virtue of his own covenant faithfulness (1:3; 2:9; 5:7–9).

In Hebrews 1:8–9 the author cites Psalm 45:6–7 to contrast the exalted, divine, and permanent nature of the Son and his kingdom over and against the role of angels mentioned in 1:7 as "servants" (*λειτουργούς*), and their transient nature as "winds" (*πνεύματα*) and "flames of fire" (*πυρός φλόγα*).<sup>74</sup> In its original context, Psalm 45

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<sup>70</sup>For an insightful discussion on the relationship of Heb 1:5 to Heb 1:1–4, see Amy L. B. Peeler, *You Are My Son: The Family of God in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, LNTS 486 (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 41–42.

<sup>71</sup>For a discussion of the issues regarding the source of the Old Testament quotation in Heb 1:6, see Gareth Lee Cockerill, "Hebrews 1:6: Source and Significance," *BBR* 9 (1999): 51–64.

<sup>72</sup>Israel was God's *πρωτότοκον* in Exod 4:22. The term *πρωτότοκον* is never applied to Adam, but he clearly occupied the role as the first man, image of God and covenantal son of Yahweh.

<sup>73</sup>See my comments on Heb 2:5 for understanding *οίκουμένη* as the heavenly realm.

<sup>74</sup>The contrast between the permanency of the Son's kingdom and the incorporeal nature of angels is important for understanding why the author chooses to involve angels in his argument in the first place. Jipp's statement on this point is worth quoting at length: "Hebrews 1.7–12 continues the celebration of the enthroned Son by comparing the eternal and virtuous character of his throne and rule with the

celebrates the marriage of the Davidic King. Like Psalm 2 and 2 Samuel 7, Psalm 45 describes God’s kingdom mediated through a human king. The anointed king advances his kingdom for the cause of truth, humility, and righteousness (δικαιοσύνης, LXX 44:5).<sup>75</sup> His throne will endure forever (LXX Ps. 44:7), his name will never be forgotten, and the nations will sing his praises (LXX Ps. 44:18).

Psalm 45:6–7 advances the Christological argument of the Son’s royal exaltation by grounding his exaltation in the faithfulness of his earthly life. God anointed the Son to his right hand to reign on an eternal throne because (διὰ) the Son loved righteousness and hated lawlessness (1:9). The connection here between Christ’s exaltation and his earthly righteousness anticipates the author’s fuller discussion of Christ

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fleeting and perishing order of the material world with which the author surprisingly connects the angels. In 1.7 the author refers to God as making the angels as ‘winds’ or ‘spirits’ (πνεύματα) and ‘flames of fire’ (πυρὸς φλόγα). The angels are, in other words, associated with the sensual material world . . . . Reference to the angels as ‘winds’ and ‘flames of fire’ likely evokes a connection between the angels and the Sinai theophany . . . . That an association with Sinai as physical is intended by the author is evident from 12.18 . . . . While the created order associated with angels will disappear and is even now disappearing, the Son’s throne and rule will last forever (1.10–12). The author quotes LXX Ps 101.26–28 in order to establish the Son’s rule over all of creation, including the angels (1.10), something hinted at already in 1.3 where the author claimed that the Son was active in creation. The heavens and the earth will perish and be rolled up like a garment but the Son’s years will never come to an end (1.11–12). Whereas the angels are associated with the transience of the created world (1.7), the enthroned Son’s share in the Father’s throne ensures that his years will never cease (1.12b).” Jipp, “The Son’s Entrance into the Heavenly World,” 563–64. Jipp draws three conclusions from these observations regarding the role of angels in the author’s argument: First, “Insofar . . . as the angels are associated with the Torah, they are inferior to the heavenly Zion (1.5–14). Second, the author’s establishment of the relationship between the angels and the created order which is temporal, mutable, and ultimately destined to perish functions as a contrast with the heavenly Zion and the Son’s throne, which is eternal and unchanging. Finally, given that the angels inhabit the heavenly Jerusalem . . . it is necessary that the author establish that it is humanity—not angels—which occupies the attention of God’s salvific purposes.” Jipp, “The Son's Entrance into the Heavenly World,” 564–65.

<sup>75</sup>Christ’s kingdom (τῆς βασιλείας σου, 1:8) reflects the ethical characteristics of its king. His scepter is a scepter of “uprightness” (εὐθύτης). In the LXX Psalm 44:7, the term εὐθύτης renders the Hebrew מִישׁוֹר from the root ישר. Both the Hebrew term and the Greek equivalent are inherently ethical. See Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd Edition, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2001), 406; Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 449. The “scepter of uprightness” describes a kingdom characterized by righteousness, uprightness, justice, and equity (cf. 1 Kgs 9:4; Ps 9:9; 75:2; 96:10; 99:4). In Christ’s kingdom, there will be no evil or moral imperfection. Perfected people (Heb 12:23) will dwell with their perfected king of righteousness (Heb 2:10; 5:9) in a kingdom of righteousness. Herbert Bateman also argues that this text is describing the ethical nature of Christ’s kingdom. Herbert W. Bateman, “Psalm 45:6–7 and Its Christological Contributions to Hebrews,” *TJ* 22, no. 1 (2001): 12–15.

as the faithful priest after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek, after all, means “king of righteousness” as the author will later make plain (7:2). Jesus was designated a priest after the order of Melchizedek by being made perfect through obedience (5:8–10). He has been exalted to the right hand of God because he faithfully endured the cross, despising the shame (12:2). Furthermore, the author presents Jesus’ earthly career throughout Hebrews as an act of priestly faithfulness. He is a high priest who sympathizes with our weaknesses because he experienced temptation, but remained without sin (4:15). He is the high priest of our confession because he was faithful to him who appointed him (3:1–2). He learned obedience through suffering and remained faithful knowing that he would face his own sacrificial death (5:7–8). Thus, Hebrews 1:8–9 foreshadows the fuller development of the priestly faithfulness of Jesus that leads to his exaltation as a priest-king after the order of Melchizedek.<sup>76</sup>

The catena of Old Testament passages culminates in the seventh and final Old Testament citation in Hebrews 1:13. The author cites Yahweh’s words to David’s Lord in Psalm 110:1: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.” If it was not explicit enough already, this verse confirms Christ’s superiority over angels because he is the Melchizedekian priest-king ruling from the right hand of God. The author introduces this final Old Testament citation with the same introductory formula that began the catena in Hebrews 1:5:

Hebrews 1:5a:           Τίτι γὰρ εἶπέν ποτε τῶν ἀγγέλων  
 Hebrews 1:13a:       πρὸς τίνα δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἴρηκέν ποτε

This literary technique forms an *inclusio* around the catena and establishes a conceptual link between Psalm 2 and Psalm 110.<sup>77</sup> I argued in chapter three that these two Psalms

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<sup>76</sup>Again, we have already seen a similar logic in Heb 1:3, where priestly atonement leads to exaltation in fulfillment of Psalm 110:1.

<sup>77</sup>For a detailed discussion of the influence and function of Psalm 2 and Psalm 110, see David Wallace, “The Use of Psalms in the Shaping of a Text.”

share numerous parallels and are, to some degree, mutually interpretive. The author of Hebrews appears to share the same presupposition. He employs Psalm 2 to support all three of his primary Christological categories—Sonship, priesthood, and kingship (1:2, 5; 5:5). He uses Psalm 110 toward the same end (1:3, 15; 5:6; 7:17, 21, etc.).<sup>78</sup> This was already implied in the epistle’s exordium where allusions to Psalm 2:8 (1:2) and Psalm 110:1 (1:4) bracketed the description of the Son as the true image of God (1:3). The allusion to Psalm 2:8 in Hebrews 1:2 emphasized Christ’s royal status as the “heir of all things,” while the allusion to Psalm 110:1 in Hebrews 1:4 grounded Christ’s royal enthronement in his priestly faithfulness. It is no surprise, then, that the catena immediately following the exordium begins with Psalm 2 and ends with Psalm 110. The two Psalms clearly substantiate the royal enthronement of the resurrected Son, but they also anticipate the fuller discussion of Christ as Melchizedekian high priest. This is made obvious in Hebrews 5:5–6 where these same two Psalms appear in juxtaposition to establish the God-given nature of the Son’s appointment to the high priesthood.

What is the function of the catena in the context of Hebrews? According to Joshua Jipp, the Christological argument in Hebrews 1:5–14 frames the soteriological argument of the entire epistle. In other words, Christology dictates soteriology. Jipp writes, “At the very least, the Son’s exaltation, depicted in Heb. 1:5–14, functions as the means whereby God secures his promises to humanity (2.5–18), is the basis for the argument that Jesus is humanity’s Melchizedekian high priest (5.5–6; 7.1–28), and establishes the narrative goal or pattern which God’s children follow (12.1–3).”<sup>79</sup> Jipp’s point is well taken. Inheritance language frames the catena of Old Testament citations.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Wallace similarly suggests, “As used in the first chapter of Hebrews, both Psalm 2 and Psalm 110 serve as precursors for the central theological themes in the epistle as a whole.” Wallace, “The Use of Psalms in the Shaping of a Text,” 44.

<sup>79</sup>Jipp, “The Son’s Entrance into the Heavenly World,” 558–59.

<sup>80</sup>The γὰρ in Heb 1:5 indicates that the catena functions as supporting argumentation for the statement in 1:4: “having become so much greater than angels by as much as the name he has inherited is

In Hebrews 1:4, Christ has “inherited” (κεκληρονόμηκεν) a name superior to angels, which, in light of 1:3, was a name he received upon his enthronement to the right hand of God in fulfillment of Psalm 110.<sup>81</sup> As the one who has been made “heir” (κληρονόμον) of all things upon his appointment to the right hand of God, Christ will bring others to share in his inheritance. According to 1:14, the inheritance given to faithful humanity is the inheritance of “salvation” (σωτηρίαν). Thus, from the outset, the author wants his readers to see Jesus as the Son-priest-king not just because that was God’s ideal for humanity from the beginning, but because it is as the true Son-priest-king that Christ has been able to accomplish redemption on behalf of mankind. To use the language of Hebrews, the royal priest after the order of Melchizedek has become the mediator of a new covenant by virtue of his exalted Sonship (7:21–22; 9:15). Christology cannot be separated from soteriology and neither should be severed from the logic of Psalm 110.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that the author chose to cite *seven* Old Testament passages to establish the royal enthronement of the resurrected Son. The author may have chosen to cite seven Old Testament passages in order to recall the creation narrative, where God creates the world in six days and rests on the seventh (Gen 1–2). In Genesis 1, God creates man in his own image as the apex of his creation and assigns him royal dominion over the earth. As the image of God, Adam was to rule the world as God’s own son. Hebrews 1 similarly describes the royal enthronement of God’s

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more excellent than theirs.” On the theme of inheritance in Hebrews, see Dana M. Harris, “The Eternal Inheritance in Hebrews: The Appropriation of the Old Testament Inheritance Motif by the Author of Hebrews” (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2009).

<sup>81</sup>The most obvious referent for the “name” which Christ inherited is that of “Son.” See Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 60–61; Jipp, “The Son’s Entrance into the Heavenly World,” 559–60; David Wallace, “The Use of Psalms in the Shaping of a Text,” 46; Moisés Silva, “Perfection and Eschatology in Hebrews,” *WTJ* 39, no. 1 (1976): 63. Hahn suggests the “name” Christ inherited is “firstborn” on the basis of Heb 1:6. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 283. Others, like Bauckham, suggest the “name” is Yahweh, the Tetragrammaton. Richard Bauckham, “The Divinity of Jesus Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 21–22.



true image, namely Jesus the Son of God. The author takes the reader through seven Old Testament citations culminating in the promise of the Son's universal dominion—"Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet" (1:13, cf. Ps 110:1).<sup>82</sup> Jesus is the firstborn son who inherited the Adamic role of priest-king and has excelled even beyond Adam by accomplishing redemption as David's Lord and Melchizedekian priest-king in a world hostile to God (1:13). Jesus, now the royal Son, reigns from his privileged priestly position of access to God's heavenly temple. He will rule from the heavenly temple until his conquest over evil is complete (1:13).<sup>83</sup>

### **Hebrews 2: Adam's Dominion Restored by a New and Better Adam**

Hebrews 1 ended with a quotation of Psalm 110:1b and a comment from the author on the future inheritance of salvation for Christians (1:13–14). Moving into Hebrews 2, Psalm 110:1 and the promise of a future inheritance become the basis for understanding the eschatological, cosmological, and soteriological argument of Hebrews 2:5–9, and the author's appeal to Psalm 8 to establish the human vice-regency of the resurrected Christ.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>If Heb 1:5–13 is intended to evoke the Gen 1 narrative, then perhaps the seventh Old Testament citation—Ps 110:1—parallels the seventh day of creation. On the seventh day, God rested from all his works. The picture of Ps 110:1 is that of the king who has achieved rest from his works by taking his seat at God's right hand. In light of the Joshua typology developed later in the epistle, it would not be outside the realm of possibility to see the theme of rest in the heavenly session of Jesus Christ. In fact, Heb 4:14 depicts Jesus' entry into the heavenly realm in the context of Joshua's failure to achieve rest for the people of God (4:8–10). As a great high priest, Jesus is the Melchizedekian warrior who conquers heaven to enter the state of God's rest as a forerunner for the people of God (4:14; cf. 620).

<sup>83</sup>Jesus' conquest will subjugate the enemies of God to the reign of God so that those who are about to "inherit salvation" (Heb 1:14) will experience rest from all their enemies.

<sup>84</sup>For various insightful treatments of eschatology in Hebrews, see Kenneth L. Schenck, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Hebrews: The Settings of the Sacrifice*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2010); C. K. Barret, "The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology*, ed. W. D. Davies and David Daube (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 363–93; Scott D. Mackie, *Eschatology and Exhortation in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, WUNT 223 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, NovTSup 141 (Brill, 2011), 45–142; Alexander Stewart, "Cosmology, Eschatology, and Soteriology in Hebrews: A Synthetic Analysis," *BBR* 20, no. 4 (2010): 545–60.

After interjecting a brief warning in 2:1–4, the author resumes his discussion of Christ’s superiority over angels in 2:5. The γὰρ of 2:5 connects the author’s exposition of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2:5–9 directly to Psalm 110:1 and the idea of salvation as an inheritance in Hebrews 1:13–14.<sup>85</sup>

And to which of the angels did he ever say, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’? Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve on behalf of those about (τοὺς μέλλοντας) to inherit salvation? (Heb 1:13–14)...For (γὰρ) it was not to angels that he subjected the world to come (τὴν μέλλουσαν) of which we are speaking” (Heb 2:5).

The already-not yet eschatological framework of Psalm 110:1—“Sit at my right hand [already] until I make your enemies a footstool [not yet]...”—becomes the basis for the already-not yet cosmological framework of Hebrews: “For it was not to angels that he subjected [already] the *world to come* [not yet]” (2:5).<sup>86</sup> In other words, the heavenly realm that has already been subjected to the reign of Christ will one day characterize the earthly realm (new creation) when all of Christ’s enemies are subjected to his rule (Ps 110:1).<sup>87</sup> Eschatology and cosmology are intertwined in Hebrews and both on the basis of Psalm 110:1.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>Jipp similarly asserts, “The quotation of Psalm 8 ends with the promise ‘you have subjected all things under his . . . feet . . . ; attentive readers will recognize that the author has, just a mere half-dozen verses before, claimed that God has placed all of the Son’s enemies under his feet . . . .” Jipp, “The Son’s Entrance into the Heavenly World,” 569.

<sup>86</sup>The participle τὴν μέλλουσαν in 2:5 gives the οἰκούμενη an eschatological orientation. BDAG states that μέλλω identifies something that is to take place at a future point in time. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd Edition, 627.

<sup>87</sup>Craig Bartholomew accurately states, “If there is one New Testament book which might appear to be a firewall against the idea of a new creation, Hebrews is that book.” Craig G. Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell: A Christian View of Place for Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 141. Bartholomew, however, deconstructs such a notion in his chapter on “place” in Hebrews. If read against the backdrop of a Platonic worldview, then Hebrews would appear to have no concept of an eschatological new heavens and new earth. However, as Bartholomew and others argue, the proper worldview background of the author of Hebrews is not Platonism but Apocalyptic Judaism. As Barrett has written, “The heavenly tabernacle in Hebrews is not the product of Platonic idealism, but the eschatological temple of apocalyptic Judaism, the temple which is in heaven primarily in order that it be manifested on earth.” C. K. Barret, “The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” 389. This quote is cited in Graig G. Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell: A Christian View of Place for Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 149.

<sup>88</sup>In the verses that follow (2:6–9), the author attaches the concept of redemption to Psalm 8

This fact is substantiated by the author's use of *οἰκουμένη* in 2:5 and 1:6.<sup>89</sup> The *οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν* ("world to come") in Hebrews 2:5 is the same *οἰκουμένη* that Christ, as *πρωτότοκος*, received as a royal inheritance in 1:6.<sup>90</sup> The *οἰκουμένη* in 1:6 and 2:5 is, therefore, the eschatological world ("world to come") already present in heaven.<sup>91</sup> It is not the earthly realm of humanity, which Christ enters at his incarnation<sup>92</sup> or the world at the time of his parousia,<sup>93</sup> but the heavenly realm where he took his seat as the

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and the creation mandate to take dominion over the earth. By doing so, he further weds soteriology to eschatology and cosmology.

<sup>89</sup>David Moffitt has offered the most thorough treatment of the meaning of *οἰκουμένη* in Hebrews. David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Brill, 2011), 53–142. He argues that *οἰκουμένη* in 1:6 must be understood in light of its use in 2:5 and concludes that the *Οἰκουμένη* is to be equated with the heavenly realm. For others who take the same view, see Ardel B. Caneday, "The Eschatological World Already Subjected to The Son: The *Οἰκουμένη* of Hebrews 1:6 and The Son's Enthronement," in *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in Its Ancient Contexts*, Library of New Testament Studies (New York: Clark, 2008), 28–39; George H. Guthrie, "Hebrews," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Baker Books, 2007), 930; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 69; Jipp, "The Son's Entrance into the Heavenly World," 562–63.

<sup>90</sup>When (*ἔταν*) Christ is "led" (*εἰσαγάγη*) into the heavenly *οἰκουμένη*, the angels, who reside in heaven, are summoned to worship him (1:6). Scholars have observed that the phrase *ἔταν . . . εἰσαγάγη* in Heb 1:6 recalls similar language in the LXX used to describe Israel's entry into the Promised Land (cf. Deut 6:10; 11:29). Gareth Lee Cockerill, "Hebrews 1:6," 63. Cockerill also sees a priestly subtext in Heb 1:6. He writes, "*ἔταν* is often used in the OT to refer to the priest or high priests entering into the tabernacle to minister (Exod 28:26 [LXX 28:30]; 30:8, 20–21; 43:32 [LXX 38:27]. Hebrews uses both entrance into the Promised Land and into the Holy of Holies as images of God's people entering into the promised blessings of salvation now provided by Christ. Thus in Hebrews Christ is the *ἀρχηγός* (2:10) who brings His people to the true Promised Land and the *ἀρχιερέυς* (10:19–21) who brings them into the real Holy of Holies." Ibid. Cockerill is right to point out Christ's heavenly session as an entry into both the true Promised Land and the true tabernacle. What scholars do not often observe, however, is that Psalm 110 serves as the basis for seeing Christ's heavenly session in terms of priestly access and Joshua-like conquest. Christ storms the heavenly Promised Land as a Melchizedekian priestly warrior entering God's sanctuary. See my comments below on Heb 4.

<sup>91</sup>The *οἰκουμένη* is thus both a spatial (world) and temporal (eschatological) reality.

<sup>92</sup>Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 56. Bateman nuances the incarnation view by arguing that the title "firstborn" in Heb 1:6 should be applied to Christ at his baptism. Herbert W. Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics and Hebrews 1:5–13*, 193:222.

<sup>93</sup>William L Lane, *Hebrews 1–8* (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 27; David Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection: An Examination of the Concept of Perfection in the "Epistle to the Hebrews"* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 214.

resurrected Christ in fulfillment of Psalm 110:1.<sup>94</sup> Yet as Psalm 110:1 indicates, there is both an inauguration and consummation of the fulfillment of Psalm 110:1—“Sit” (inauguration)...“until” (consummation). The implication is that at the time of consummation, the *οίκουμένη* will come from heaven to earth when Christ puts an end to all of his enemies so that the entire cosmos will exist as God’s sacred sanctuary. This future new heavens and new earth are surely what the author has in mind when he refers to the inheritance of salvation (1:14) belonging to “those about to” (*τὴν μέλλουσαν*) receive it.<sup>95</sup> Clearly the salvific blessings of atonement, forgiveness, the gift of the Holy Spirit are already benefits enjoyed by believers (1:3; 2:17; 6:4). But the inheritance they await to possess in the future is the sacred space that they will enjoy in God’s presence in the new heavens and new earth. This sacred space already belongs to the royal Son who stormed heaven as the Melchizedekian priest-king, and he guarantees that “many sons” (*πολλοὺς υἱοὺς*) will share in his inheritance (cf. 2:10).

**A king like Adam.** The reign of Christ over the heavenly realm and its soteriological implications is not disconnected from the Bible’s storyline. Psalm 110:1b—“Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet” (*τῶν ποδῶν*)—flows naturally into the author’s Christological application of Psalm 8, which in its original context describes humanity’s rulership over the earth in terms of creation under the “feet” (*τῶν ποδῶν*) of mankind (2:6–8; cf. Gen 1:26–28; Ps 8:4–6).<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>This eschatological world will experience the undisputed reign of Christ when all of his enemies are made a footstool for his feet. For now, the “world to come” presently exists in heaven for that is the place where the resurrected Christ sits enthroned above the angels and the place where his reign is undisputed.

<sup>95</sup>The repetition of the participial form of *μέλλω* in 1:14 and 2:5 ties the believer’s future inheritance of salvation to the spatial reality of eschatological world to come. The author is not simply saying that this inheritance of salvation is the heavenly realm believers receive upon death. It is a heavenly realm that is coming. In other words, it is the realm of the new heavens and new earth that will characterize the cosmos once the earth under the curse of sin is removed (cf. Heb 1:10–12; 12:26–27).

<sup>96</sup>Much debate exists over whether the use of Psalm 8 in Heb 2 should be read Christologically or anthropologically. Matthew Easter’s assessment of Psalm 8 in Hebrews is right. He argues, “The author

According to Psalm 8:4–6, God created men, not angels, to rule the earth (Heb 2:5–8). As I argued in chapter two, Psalm 8 is a commentary on Genesis 1:26–28, which describes man being made in the image of God and mankind’s mandate to take dominion over the earth. The image of God in Adam meant that Adam was to exercise kingly rule over the world as God’s covenantal son.<sup>97</sup> God “crowned” (ἐστεφάνωσας) him with glory and honor, putting everything in “subjection” (ὑποτάσσω) under his “feet” (ποδῶν) (Heb 2:7–8; cf. Ps. 8:6). Yet by disobeying the command of God, Adam failed in this role, and as a result at the present time (νῦν) we do not see all things “subjected” (ἀνυπότακτον) to humanity (Heb 2:8). But we do see Jesus who fulfilled humanity’s original design. At his incarnation he was made for a little while lower than the angels (2:9). He is now crowned (ἐστεφανωμένον) with “glory” (δόξῃ) and “honor” (τιμῇ) because he restored to humanity the glory that Adam lost (2:10).

The author’s use of Psalm 110 and Psalm 8 in tandem develops the argument of Hebrews 1 for the Son’s royal enthronement in the heavenly realm and more explicitly identifies the purpose of his enthronement as a soteriological necessity.<sup>98</sup> Psalm 8, which

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reads the psalm (in 2:6–8) anthropologically within a wider Christological framework (2:9–16). The psalm quotation, I will argue is wholly anthropological, but the author adopts it into a Christological context. That is, the author expects humanity to receive its divinely intended glory, honor, and dominion (as expected in Ps 8), but the means by which they will receive this is via the *fully human Christ*.” Matthew C. Easter, *Faith and the Faithfulness of Jesus in Hebrews*, SNTSMS 160 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 36.

<sup>97</sup>Interestingly enough, Adam is never mentioned in Heb 2 or in the rest of the epistle. However, the author’s use of Psalm 8 justifies a reading of Heb 2 that finds the Adam-Jesus contrast as an implicit part of the argument. Moffitt says, “Nevertheless, while Adam is not named, the logic of the argument in Heb 2:10–18 suggests that an implicit reliance on the traditions about Adam, along with a number of other biblical characters, is intended.” Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 2011, 133.

<sup>98</sup>By weaving together these two Psalms, the author reveals more clearly his interpretive presuppositions with regard to the meaning of Psalm 110. In other words, Psalm 110 is to be read as part of the story of God’s creation project (Ps 8), while simultaneously superseding God’s creation project because the Melchizedekian priest-king had to ‘win-back’ (redemption) what Adam lost. In other words, Christ had to achieve Adam’s dominion and Abraham’s redemption. Christ’s successful ministry is even greater than Adam’s because Christ had to take dominion over a world under a curse. He had to overcome sin, the flesh, and the devil to restore human vice-regency to the world (Heb 2:14–18).

describes humanity's design to rule the world, is a natural counterpart to Psalm 110 and the messiah's exaltation over the world to come.<sup>99</sup> In order to fulfill God's original design for humanity and simultaneously to accomplish their redemption, the Son of God had to be a man, not an angel. In the author's logic, the pattern of creation and the pattern of redemption cannot, therefore, be separated.

Jesus, the firstborn and new Adam, has become the "founder" (ἀρχηγός) of humanity's salvation (σωτηρίας, 2:10). He is able to "lead" (ἄγω, 2:10) "many sons" (πολλοὺς υἱοὺς) "to glory" (εἰς δόξαν) because God has already led (εἰσάγω, 1:6) him into οἰκουμένη where he sits crowned with glory (δόξη, 2:9). Christ had to be made like his brothers in every respect to become their high priest and atone for their sins (2:17).<sup>100</sup> As "flesh and blood" (2:14), Christ was made perfect through suffering in order to accomplish what angels could never do as "winds" (πνεύματα, 1:7, 1:14) and "flames of fire" (πυρὸς φλόγα, 1:7), namely the salvation of humanity (2:10). For Christ did not come to help angels, but the offspring of Abraham (2:16).<sup>101</sup> Christ's solidarity with his brothers is the reason he is able to sanctify them, for they are all of one source (ἐξ ἑνὸς) (2:11).<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>Hahn suggests that Heb 2:5–9 indicates that God's original intention was for man to rule this age and the age to come ("world to come"). Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 285. The implication is that there was an eschatology built in to God's original creation project.

<sup>100</sup>Genesis 1–2 describes Adam in both kingly (image of God) and priestly roles. Beale suggests that a conceptual link exists between Adam the priest-king and Hebrews' presentation of Christ as the new Adam (2:5–9), priest (1:3; 2:17), and king (1:5–13). Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 318.

<sup>101</sup>The identification of the recipients of Jesus' ministry as "seed of Abraham" (2:16) and the association of salvation with inheritance (κληρονομεῖν, 2:1) suggests that the realm Jesus entered is to be identified as the eschatological realization of the Promised Land. Jesus, the representative of God's people, has blazed a trail into their eternal inheritance.

<sup>102</sup>I take ὁ ἁγιάζων to refer to Christ as the one who sanctifies. Hebrews 13:12 makes it clear that Jesus is the one who sanctifies his people. In Heb 13:12 that sanctification comes about through the shedding of Christ's blood. It would appear then, that there are priestly overtones behind the sanctifying work of Christ. As the author will make plain in Heb 2:17, the nature of the priesthood demands solidarity with humanity in order for the ministry of the priest to be effective. There is much debate over the meaning of ἐξ ἑνὸς in Heb 2:10. The phrase can refer to Adam, humanity in general, God, or Abraham. According to

**A priest like Adam.** The author’s portrayal of Christ as a new Adam may inform why he chooses to move out of the theme of regal dominion and directly into the theme of priestly salvation (2:10–17). Concerning the “narrative” flow of Hebrews 2:5–17, Beale suggests, “The earlier Adamic depiction leads directly into the first discussion in the epistle of Christ as ‘high priest’ (2:10–17). Could this echo the pattern that we have seen in Genesis 1–2, where Adam is first portrayed as a ‘king’ (1:26–28) and then as a priestly figure, ruling and worshipping in a temple (Gen. 2:15)?” The author has already used a similar logic in Hebrews 1:2–4, where the description of Christ as the image of God receiving a regal inheritance (1:2–3) precedes the description of his priestly work of purification for the sins of humanity (1:4).

The flow of thought from kingship to priesthood in both Genesis 1–2 and Hebrews 2 is striking. In Genesis 1–2, God made Adam as the royal image bearer and then placed him in the garden-sanctuary as priest, where he would be confronted by the serpent (Gen 3). Similarly, after the discussion of Christ’s royal authority as the new Adam in Hebrews 2:5–9, the author of Hebrews describes Christ’s work of salvation in terms of his priesthood and confrontation with the devil (2:14–17).<sup>103</sup> Christ’s priestly work supersedes even what God designed for Adam at creation because Christ actually had to undo the curse of Adam’s fall. He conquered the serpent’s power over death by defeating death through his own death (2:14). He is, therefore, able to deliver those who were subjected by fear of death to slavery. In context, their slavery should be seen as

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Moffitt, “The ‘one’ from whom the one who is holy and all those who are being made holy come (2:11) ought to be identified with Adam.” Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 133. Richardson makes a compelling case for viewing the “one source” as Abraham. Richardson, *Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith*, 17–20. If Richardson is right, then we have here another link in the chain connecting the Abrahamic covenant to the royal priestly work of Christ.

<sup>103</sup>Hahn makes an interesting comment on the “fear of death” language in Heb 2:15. He writes, “This striking statement seems to imply that the fall of mankind was caused by the fear of death, and thus that Adam and Eve were in some way intimidated by the serpent’s (i.e., the devil’s) potentially lethal power over them. Be that as it may, the author does not elaborate on his view of the temptation narrative.” Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 287.

bondage to the one who had power over death, namely the devil. For Christ to fulfill God's creation project, he would, unlike Adam, first have to accomplish the project of redemption in a world enslaved to the power of Satan. This is why he had to be "made like" (*ὁμοιωθῆναι*) his brothers (2:17), for it was humanity that was made in the image and likeness of God and it was humanity that needed redemption. Therefore, Christ did not come to help angels; he came to help the "offspring of Abraham" (2:16).<sup>104</sup> By identifying the recipients of Christ's salvific work as the *σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ*, the author makes it clear that Christ's salvific work as the Davidic priest-king overturns Adam's curse by effecting the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant.

The inheritance of salvation (1:14) that the offspring of Abraham waits to enjoy is the typological fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham (cf. 6:12–20).<sup>105</sup> In order for Jesus to mediate the promises of the Abrahamic covenant, he had to become a merciful and faithful high priest of an order even greater than the priesthoods of Adam and the Levites. His priesthood had to embody not only the creational ideal of Adam's priesthood, but also be a priesthood that could effectively propitiate the sins of a fallen humanity to reverse Adam's curse and provide redemption to the offspring of Abraham, and that in a way that the Levitical priesthood could never do (2:16–17, cf. 7:11). What order of priesthood could possibly capture both the creational ideal of Adam's priestly order and the redemptive blessings of the Abrahamic covenant? As the author of Hebrews has already hinted from Psalm 110 and will make plain in Hebrews 5–7, only a

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<sup>104</sup>For a brief discussion of the translational issues involved in Heb 2:16, see Michael E. Gudorf, "Through a Classical Lens: Hebrews 2:16," *JBL* 119, no. 1 (2000): 105–8. Gudorf offers a compelling case that Heb 2:16 should be translated, "For it [the fear of death] clearly does not seize angels, but it does indeed take hold of the seed of Abraham." If Gudorf is right, my point still stands. Jesus had to have a human nature in order to deliver humanity from the fear of death.

<sup>105</sup>Harris argues that the inheritance motif in Hebrews cannot be separated from the Abrahamic covenant. She writes, "The inheritance motif in Hebrews must be understood in terms of the Abrahamic promises, which became interwoven with a rich cluster of related themes, such as covenant, the tabernacle, and God's holy mountain . . . Moreover, inheritance is an inherently future-oriented concept, which is indicated by the several typological trajectories, such as the Sabbath rest and God's presence in Zion, that are developed significantly with the OT." Harris, "The Eternal Inheritance in Hebrews," iv–v.



priest *after the order of Melchizedek*.

### **Hebrews 3:1–6: The Davidic Priest-King Over God’s House**

There is no allusion to Psalm 110 in these verses. However, whenever the author of Hebrews mentions the high priesthood of Christ, it is fair to assume that he has the Melchizedekian priesthood in mind. In Hebrews 3:1, the author refers to Jesus as the “high priest of our confession, who was faithful (πιστόν) to him who appointed him.” As we have already seen, Christ’s appointment to the high priesthood occurred at the time of his resurrection when he was begotten as the Son of God and appointed a priest after the order of Melchizedek (1:5, 13; cf. 5:5–6; Ps 110:4).<sup>106</sup>

In Hebrews 3:1–6, royal priestly sonship Christology continues to inform the author’s logic as he now emphasizes the superiority of Christ over Moses. Moving out of Hebrews 1–2, it is fairly obvious why the author singles out Moses here. Hebrews 1–2 set up the epistle’s soteriological argument by contrasting Christ with angels because angels were mediators of God’s revelation in the old covenant (2:2), and because angels are not the objects of God’s plan of salvation—humanity is (2:16–17). Christ is superior to angels because he mediates forgiveness (i.e., new covenant blessing) to humanity—not angels—as the royal Son of David (1:5–6), new and better Adam (2:5–9), and faithful (πιστός) high priest (2:17). Like the angels, Moses is associated with the old covenant—a covenant unable to provide forgiveness for sins (cf. 8:6–13; 9:6–27). Therefore, the

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<sup>106</sup>This does not contradict my earlier statement that Jesus also functioned as a priest during his earthly career. He embodied a Melchizedekian priestly ministry on earth (cf. Mk 12:36), but was “appointed” a high priest of the Melchizedekian order upon his resurrection and ascension. This is similar to the nature of Jesus’ kingship during his earthly life and after his resurrection. During his earthly life, he is the Davidic king, but only after his death and resurrection is he enthroned (appointed) as the Davidic king over his kingdom. Perhaps the character Aragorn from *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy is an appropriate illustration here. Aragorn is the king throughout the narrative. He is rightful king and the heir to the throne of Gondor. But Aragorn is not appointed/enthroned over his kingdom until the enemy forces of Sauron are defeated. Similarly, Jesus is appointed the Son of God (Heb 1:5; cf. Rom 1:4)—and therefore king and priest—upon his resurrection after he had conquered sin and death at the cross.

argument of Hebrews 3:1–6 hinges on the relationship between Moses and Christ to their respective covenants. In other words, Christ is superior to Moses because Christ mediates a covenant better than the one Moses mediated. As I will argue below, this better covenant, according to Hebrews 3:1–6, is the Davidic covenant because its mediator (the Son) is superior to the mediator of the old covenant (i.e., Moses, the servant).

Both 1 Samuel 2:35 and the promises of the Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17 make up the subtext of the author’s argument in this section.<sup>107</sup> The mention of Christ’s high priesthood in the context of his *faithfulness* (3:1–2) echoes the promise of 1 Samuel 2:35—“I will raise up for myself a *faithful* priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build for him a faithful house...” The likelihood that 1 Samuel 2:35 informs the logic here is strengthened by the fact that God promises to build this priest a “faithful house” (1 Sam 2:35, cf. Heb 3:3–4). That “faithful house” in the context of 1–2 Samuel is the dynasty promised to David in the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7:11). Furthermore, God promised David that one of his offspring would reign over this dynasty from an eternal throne (2 Sam 7:13). This king would have God as his father and be to God a son (2 Sam 7:14). Moses only existed in God’s house as a “servant” (θεράπων) with a unique prophetic ministry to bear witness to God’s better redemptive revelation still future (3:5).<sup>108</sup> The better redemptive revelation

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<sup>107</sup>Following D’Angelo, Hahn argues that the author of Hebrews in 3:1–6 “employs the rabbinical principle of *gezera šewa*—in which Old Testament texts are cited and evoked through the use of certain ‘hook-words’—to construct ‘a very complex midrashic treatment of a number of texts,’ most prominently the covenant oracle to David through Nathan (2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 17) but also Numbers 12:7 and 1 Samuel 2:35.” Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 288. See also Mary Rose D’Angelo, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979). Whether or not we must resort to the complex system of *gezera šewa* to explain the author’s use of the Old Testament in 3:1–6 is debatable. However, Num 12:7, 1 Sam 2:35, and 2 Sam 7 (1 Chr 17) are clearly the texts informing the subtext of the author’s argument. The allusion to these texts in 1–2 Samuel functions to highlight the contrast between the Davidic and Mosaic covenants. The mediator of the Davidic covenant is superior to the mediator of the Mosaic covenant. This logic flows out of Heb 1–2, where Christ—the Davidic Son—was shown to be superior to angels, who were also mediators of the old covenant (Heb 2:2).

<sup>108</sup>As Schreiner says, “Moses is not the terminus and goal of revelation but a pointer along the way to something better.” Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 118. The identification of Moses here as a “servant” may evoke Moses’ relationship to the tabernacle. In Heb 8:2, Christ is identified as a “servant”

has been fulfilled in Christ, who has fulfilled God’s covenant promises to David not as a servant, but as a son (3:6). His sonship here is Davidic sonship. As David’s heir, Christ is the Davidic *king* of 2 Samuel 7:11–16 and the faithful (Davidic) *priest* of 1 Samuel 2:35—offices that would be occupied by David’s lord in Psalm 110.<sup>109</sup> It appears that Psalm 110 may have influenced the author’s reading of 1–2 Samuel so that he understood the priestly promise of 1 Samuel 2:35 and the royal sonship promise of 2 Samuel 7 to be referring to a single Davidic figure.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, the royal priestly logic of Psalm 110 again appears to function as the basis for the author’s Christological and soteriological

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(λειτουργός) in the true heavenly tabernacle, which makes him a better priest than those who served in the tabernacle built by Moses (8:5). Granted the terms translated “servant” to describe Moses and Jesus are different in 3:3 and 8:2. Nevertheless, the relationship between these two ‘servants’ to their respective tabernacles should not be missed in Heb 3:3. Jesus ministers in the true heavenly tabernacle where he is building God’s house (people) by mediating forgiveness of sins. Moses was a servant in God’s house (tabernacle), which was a copy of the heavenly reality and a typological pointer to the house (people) that would become the dwelling place of God. See also D’Angelo, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews*, 144–45.

<sup>109</sup>See my comments in chapter 3 on how David embodies the role of the faithful priest in the narrative of 1–2 Samuel.

<sup>110</sup>Perhaps the author is operating on the logic that the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7 (1 Chr 17) is the means to bring the promise of 1 Sam 2:35 to fulfillment. In this case, the author of Hebrews validates the reading of 1 Sam 2:35 that I adopted from Karl Deenick in chapter 3 of this project. In other words, the faithful priest of 1 Sam 2:35 is the messianic king of 2 Sam 7. D’Angelo similarly suggests that the priest of 1 Sam 2:35 is to be understood as one and the same figure as the Davidic king of 2 Sam 7. Her interpretation of 1 Sam 2:35 is different than Deenick’s, but it adds another possibility for how the “two” figures of 1 Sam 2:35—priest and messiah—might actually be one. She writes, “An examination of the context of the oracle helps to clear up the difficulty of applying to a single messianic figure, the royal priest, the second half of 1 Sm. 2:35 LXX: ‘...I will raise up for him a sure house, and he will go in and out before my anointed forever’ (...οικοδομήσω αὐτῷ οἶκον πιστόν, καὶ διελεύσεται ἐνώπιον χριστοῦ μου πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας). So read, the verse speaks of a second figure, the messiah, before whom the priest will serve in the house of the Lord. However, it is also possible to read the verse: ‘I will build him a sure house and *it* shall go in and out before my anointed always.’ Such a reading might easily be either inspired by or justified from the immediate context: ‘Your house and your father’s house will go in and out before me forever’ (2.30). In both verses 30 and 35, διελεύσεται refers to the priestly service in the sanctuary. The house is the priestly line, which serves in the sanctuary before the Lord and his Christ—by our reading, his anointed priest. Such a reading would of course admirably suit the purposes of the author of Hebrews. In He. 3.7–4.16, we, who are Christ’s house if we stand firm, are exhorted to hear and to enter. This exhortation is summarized by the call to draw near after the example of our great high priest, Jesus who has ‘traversed’ (διεληλυθότα) the heavens, entering through the veil into the eternal sanctuary (4.14–16; cf. 6.19–20, 10.20–22). The other biblical meaning of the word διελεῖν, ‘to lead,’ also comes into play here: Christ traverses the heavens as ‘the captain of our salvation’ (2.9), making for us the way by which we ‘with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need’ (4.16).” D’Angelo, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews*, 84–85.

argument. Since Christ, the Son of David, has ascended to the right hand of God (cf. Ps 110:1) as an eternal royal priest (cf. Ps 110:4), he occupies the unique privilege of building God’s house (i.e., “bringing many sons to glory,” 2:10).<sup>111</sup> He is over God’s house because he is responsible for building it as the first and only man to make propitiation for sins through his faithful priestly self-sacrifice (2:17), ascend to the throne room of God as Davidic king (1:3), and mediate salvation (new covenant blessings) as an eternal Melchizedekian priest to his people (7:20–22). Therefore, the author exhorts his readers to remain faithful as God’s house (3:6). If they don’t, they will have moved beyond the realm of the royal son’s rule and his priestly covenantal blessings.

**Hebrews 4:8–5:10: Joshua, Melchizedekian Conquest, and Christ our Great High Priest**

**Hebrews 4:8–16.** In Hebrews 4:1–7, the author expounds Psalm 95 in order to encourage his readers to strive to enter the eschatological rest that awaits the people of God (4:1–7). As a part of his argument, the author draws a typological connection between Joshua and Jesus (4:8–14). He introduces Joshua in 4:8–10, transitions to a paraenetic section in 4:11–13, and then resumes his argument with the inferential conjunction οὖν in 4:14. By removing the parenetic section, the flow of the argument and the Joshua-Jesus typology become more obvious:

For if Ἰησοῦς (Joshua) had rested them, he would not have spoken of a day after these things... Therefore (οὖν) having a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Ἰησοῦν (Jesus) the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession.” (4:8, 14)

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<sup>111</sup>In Heb 3:3, the author contrasts the greatness of Christ as the builder of God’s house with lesser Moses who is a member of the house. The author applies the language of “glory” (δόξα) and “honor” (τιμή) to Christ as the builder of the house. These terms—glory and honor—recall Heb 2:5–9, where Christ is presented, on the basis of Psalm 8, as humanity’s faithful representative who has achieved the royal dominion intended for humanity from the creation of the world. Christ has been crowned with “glory” (δόξα) and “honor” (τιμή) (2:9). What Heb 2:9 makes explicit is that Christ is worthy of this royal glory and honor *because* he faithfully enduring the suffering of death. We can conclude, then, that Christ is worthy of more glory than Moses because he (Christ) builds God’s house through his priestly work of self-sacrifice that makes propitiation for the sins of the people. Royal priestly Christology is a necessary component of soteriology.

The typological connection between Joshua and Jesus is more apparent in the Greek, since Joshua and Jesus are both translations of the same Greek name. Joshua did not provide rest through the conquest of the land, but Jesus has provided rest through the conquest of heaven.<sup>112</sup> What is not so obvious is how the mention of Jesus as “high priest” fits into the logic of the Joshua typology. In other words, on what basis does the author describe Jesus’ Joshua-like conquest of heaven as a function of his priesthood (4:14)? Some scholars have tried to answer this question by appealing to Zechariah 3, where Ἰησοῦν (Joshua) the high priest stands before the divine council and receives pure vestments and the promise of rulership over Yahweh’s house if he remains faithful (Zech 3:1–7).<sup>113</sup> I suggest, however, that the connection between Joshua and Jesus’ priesthood is found in the logic of Psalm 110.<sup>114</sup> After all, Jesus’ priesthood in Hebrews is of the Melchizedekian order—a fact the author will make explicit for the first time in just a few verses when he quotes Psalm 110:4 (5:6). In chapter three, I argued for inner-biblical connections between the conquest imagery of Psalm 110, Joshua’s defeat of the pagan kings in Joshua 10, and the Melchizedek episode in Genesis 14. My conclusion was that the Melchizedekian priest-king of Psalm 110 carries out his own Joshua-like conquest.

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<sup>112</sup>Concerning the Joshua typology in Hebrews, see Richard Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology in the New Testament*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 328 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); Bryan J. Whitfield, “A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in Its Ancient Contexts,” in *Pioneer and Perfecter: Joshua Traditions and the Christology of Hebrews*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al., LNTS 387 (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 80–87; Bryan J. Whitfield, *Joshua Traditions and the Argument of Hebrews 3 and 4* (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013).

<sup>113</sup>See for example Bryan J. Whitfield, “Pioneer and Perfecter,” 83–87. This suggestion has some merit and is strengthened by the fact that Joshua is promised rule over Yahweh’s “house” if he remains faithful (Zech 3:6–7; cf. Heb 3:1–6).

<sup>114</sup>Though I am not dealing with Heb 4:10 in the discussion above, Nicholas Moore has argued that the aorist participle ὁ εἰσελθὼν is best translated “the one who entered,” and therefore a reference to Christ. If he is right, the Joshua-Jesus typology in this section is even more apparent. The main reason I highlight Moore’s essay, however, is because Moore argues that such a rendering “coheres with Hebrews’ strong emphasis on the completed nature of Christ’s salvific work, expressed in particular with the image of Christ’s enthronement or session using Ps. 110.1” Moore believes that the logic of Psalm 110:1 informs and supports his reading of Heb 4:10. Nicholas J. Moore, “Jesus as ‘The One Who Entered His Rest’: The Christological Reading of Hebrews 4.10,” *JSNT* 36, no. 4 (2014): 383–400.

He enacts a global conquest by ruling as priest from the place of God's right hand in Zion.<sup>115</sup> If Psalm 110 buttresses the logic of the Joshua-Jesus typology, then it makes sense why a *priestly* (Melchizedek) Jesus “passes through” (διεληλυθότα) heaven to provide the rest that Joshua could not (4:14).<sup>116</sup> Jesus, the royal priestly Melchizedek, has begun his work of global conquest—“Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”—by passing through the borders of the Promised Land (heavenly Zion, cf. Heb 12:22–24) as the forerunner of the people of God (6:20).<sup>117</sup> Joshua was to be the agent to bring to pass the land promise given to Abraham, but he was unable to provide the people with rest in the land (4:8). Jesus, however, has successfully obtained the fulfillment of the land promise (inheritance) given to Abraham by entering into the Promised Land's antitype—the heavenly realm—as a forerunner of the people of God and priest after the order of Melchizedek (cf. 6:20).<sup>118</sup> Believers are therefore encouraged

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<sup>115</sup>See my discussion on “until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet,” in chap. 3.

<sup>116</sup>The Joshua-Jesus typology is likely the reason the author of Hebrews chose to use the verb *διέρχομαι* to describe Jesus' journey through the heavens. The same verb appears 13 times in Joshua almost always in contexts describing the boundaries of the Promised Land. It also appears in Psalm 66:6 [LXX 65:6], which references Israel's passage through the Jordan River before occupying the land (cf. Josh 3). Some might argue that I am forcing the logic of conquest into the argument of Heb 3–4 since Heb 3–4 is about rest and lacks conquest motifs. I, however, simply suggest that the theme of rest is related to warfare/conquest in the biblical record. Yahweh entered into a state of rest after creating the world and overcoming the forces of chaos (Gen 1:2; 2:1–4). Joshua's goal was to provide people with rest in the land only after conquering the pagan people who occupied the land. Hence Josh 11:23b: “And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war” (ESV). Furthermore, 2 Sam 7:1 also attaches the theme of rest to David's victory over his enemies.

<sup>117</sup>Schrock's comments on the conquest imagery of Psalm 110 and its relationship to the Christology of Hebrews are insightful: “It is my contention that in shattering kings and executing judgment (Ps 110:5–6), Jesus, as a priest-king like Melchizedek functions as the perfect agent of cleansing in God's cosmic temple. He is clearly not an earthly priest to a temple made by human hands (Heb 8:4). He is better. He is the long awaited royal priest who has now been exalted and permitted to sit at God's right hand. Because his atoning work is complete (Heb 1:3), he has been given the keys to the kingdom and an iron scepter to rule the nations. Thus, from heaven, he cleanses his people and clothes them in holy attire (Ps 110:3), but he also purges the heavens and the earth of every defiling creature. Just as the law of the covenant instructs the people of Israel to “devote to destruction” all those who are devoted to idolatry and wickedness (Exod 22:20; Lev 27:29; Num 21:23; Deut 7:1–2; 20:17; Josh 2:10ff), so Christ will finally purge the world of all its defiling inhabitants. Schrock, “A Biblical-Theological Investigation,” 329.

<sup>118</sup>For a more in-depth discussion of the Joshua typology in Heb 3–4, see Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology in the New Testament*, 55–97. Summarizing the typological relationship, Ounsworth writes, “Hebrews draws attention therefore to the parallel between Joshua and Jesus—both exceed Moses in terms

to draw near to the throne of grace because Jesus, as the new Joshua, has blazed a trail into the heavenly realm and, as a priest, grants the people of God access to follow him there (4:16).<sup>119</sup>

**Hebrews 5:1–10.** Psalm 110:4 appears twice in Hebrews 5:1–10. Hebrews 5:6 contains the first citation of Psalm 110:4 in the epistle. In the broader context of these verses, the author now appeals to Psalm 110:4 to demonstrate that Christ’s appointment to the high priesthood was a God-given appointment (5:5).<sup>120</sup> In 5:1–4, the author reminds his readers that priests in the Levitical order were men in solidarity with sinful men (5:1–3). As a man, the priest stood between God and men, mediating God’s forgiveness to sinful people (5:2–3). Under the Mosaic covenant, no man had the right to appoint himself to such an honorable task. Only God could establish someone as a priest, as was the case with Aaron (5:4).

The inference (Οὕτως καί), then, is that God also appointed Christ to the high priesthood (5:5). The language the author uses to describe the appointment of Aaron and Christ to the high priesthood is carefully selected. In 5:4, the author describes the appointment of the Aaronic priest in terms of taking on a position of “honor” (τιμῆν). Then in 5:5, the author refers to Christ’s appointment to the high priesthood using the language of “glory”: “Thus also Christ *glorified* (ἐδόξασεν) not himself to be made a high

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of faithfulness, and both succeed where Moses did not in leading the People of God into the Promised Land; and yet there is difference as well as similarity, as typology requires. In the first situation, the People had the opportunity to enter the Land of Canaan; in the present situation, the People have the opportunity to enter that of which Canaan is a type, the ‘rest’ of God which is shown by *gezara shawa* to be nothing less than a participation in the primordial rest of God the Creator; the weekly celebration of the Sabbath and the temple are both types of this rest . . .” Ibid., 96.

<sup>119</sup>In context, this throne should probably not be regarded as God the Father’s throne, but the throne of the sympathetic priest reigning from the right hand of God (4:15–16).

<sup>120</sup>On what basis does the author of Hebrews connect the Melchizedekian priesthood to the *high* priesthood of Christ? The author appears to view Jesus’ exaltation to God’s right hand as a privilege of priestly access to God. In this sense, Jesus’ Melchizedekian priesthood is a high priesthood because it grants him access to the throne room of God (Ps 110:1; cf. Heb 1:3–4; 4:14; 6:19–20; 7:26). Only the high priest had access to the Holy of Holies where God’s earthly throne (the ark) resided.

priest.” Why the language of *honor* and *glory* with respect to the office of the priesthood? I suggest that *τιμὴ* and *δοξάζω* recall the author’s exposition of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2:5–9, which, in its broader context, is the same exposition that makes the first explicit reference to Christ’s high priesthood (2:17). According to Psalm 8, God created humanity (Adam) to be his viceroy. He crowned them with *δόξα* and *τιμὴ* to bring the entire world into subjection—a task in which they failed (2:7–8; cf. Ps 8:5). Jesus, however, because of the suffering of his death, is now crowned with *δόξα* and *τιμὴ* (2:9). His priestly faithfulness—sacrificial death—qualified him to receive honor and glory upon his resurrection as the royal priest who has taken dominion over the world to come (2:5, cf. 5:5). By using the language of “honor” and “glory” in Hebrews 5:4–5 to describe the Aaronic and Melchizedekian priesthoods, the author establishes a logical connection between primal humanity and the priesthoods of Aaron and Melchizedek. In other words, the logic appears to work like this: in the outflow of redemptive history, both the Aaronic and Melchizedekian priesthoods are expressions of the Adamic priesthood.

This fits with the broader priestly Christology of Hebrews. For the author of Hebrews, Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, but his priestly ministry reflects the duties of the Aaronic priesthood with respect to sacrifice and atonement (Heb 9–10). Since both the Melchizedekian priesthood and the Aaronic priesthood were expressions of the creational ideal, Christ is able to fulfill both of them without actually holding both offices.<sup>121</sup> In other words, Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek (not Aaron) who typologically fulfills the refined priestly duties of the Aaronic order. Christ could not hold the office of the Aaronic priesthood because he was not of the tribe of Levi, but more importantly, because the Aaronic priesthood under the Mosaic

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<sup>121</sup>Kistemaker asserts, “Christ fulfilled the priesthood of Aaron and Melchizedek yet he has his prototype in the latter.” Kistemaker, “Psalm 110 in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” 147. See my discussion of Melchizedek and the Aaronic priesthood in chapter 2 of this project to see how both of these priesthoods were expressions of Adam’s prototypical priesthood.



covenant could never fulfill God's promises made to Abraham (7:11–19; cf. 2:16). For Christ actually to effect what the Aaronic order could never do, namely make atonement for sin, and thus mediate God's covenantal promises to Abraham, he had to be a priest who would simultaneously fulfill God's creation project (Adam) and God's redemption project (Abraham). Again, there is only one priest in the biblical narrative that is associated with the archetypal priesthood given to primal humanity at creation and the covenantal blessing of Abraham, and that priest is Melchizedek.

Perhaps now it is easier to see why the author cites Psalm 2:7 as the justification for Christ's appointment to the high priesthood in Hebrews 5:5. At first glance, the appeal to Psalm 2:7—"You are my Son, today I have begotten you"—appears to have nothing to do with Christ's appointment to the office of high priest. Psalm 2:7 is about the enthronement of the messianic king who rules over the world as God's son. But that's just it. Upon his resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God, Christ was crowned with glory and honor as the firstborn Son—"Today I have begotten you"—of the new creation. He inherited the *glory* and *honor* that was meant for Adam, the first son-priest-king. Psalm 2:7 is, therefore, a logical choice for the author to make in supporting Christ's appointment to the high priesthood because it builds on the blueprint of God's creation project, which was to establish his kingdom through royal priestly sons of God mediating his rule and blessing to the entire world.<sup>122</sup>

It is no surprise, then, for the author to plow forward with his argument by introducing Psalm 110:4 with an adverbial comparative conjunction *καθὼς καί*—"just as also" (Heb 5:6). In other words, Psalm 2:7 supports the God-given nature of Christ's priesthood "just as also" does Psalm 110:4. Psalm 2 and Psalm 110 are, in the author's

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<sup>122</sup>Contra Jipp, "The Son's Entrance into the Heavenly World," 571. The use of Psalm 2:7 here to support the high priesthood of Christ is not merely an analogical way of assigning the declaration of Psalm 110:4—"You are a Priest Forever"—to the same moment of time the Father declared the words of Psalm 2:7—"You are my Son."

mind, mutually interpretive because they grow out of the soil of Scripture’s metanarrative where sonship, kingship, and priesthood are inseparable roles.<sup>123</sup>

In Hebrews 5:7–10, we begin to learn what it is about the nature of the Melchizedekian priesthood that enables it to succeed where the Levitical priesthood failed and why Jesus was worthy of the office. These verses suggest that the significance of the Melchizedekian priesthood is its permanence—a fact that the author will develop in chapter 7—and that Christ was awarded Melchizedek’s office upon his resurrection as a result of his faithful *priestly* ministry during his earthly career (cf. 2:17).<sup>124</sup> What did this faithfulness look like for Jesus during his earthly life? Jesus manifested faithfulness to God through his willingness to endure the suffering of death as a priestly self-sacrifice for sins. Hebrews 4:14–5:2 implies that Jesus’ earthly ministry was a *priestly* ministry

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<sup>123</sup>Of course the author’s juxtaposition of Ps 2:7 and Ps 110:4 makes even more sense if we assume that he was operating with the LXX, which is most likely the case. As noted in chapter three of this project, the LXX of Ps 110:3b (LXX 109:3b) reads, “I have begotten you” (ἐξέγεννησά σε).

<sup>124</sup>I have already mentioned that debate exists over the timing of Christ’s priesthood in the epistle to the Hebrews. Moffit has made a compelling case that Jesus was appointed to the priesthood only after the resurrection. Jesus, therefore, did not act as a priest during his earthly career in Moffit’s view. See Moffit, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 2011, 194–208; See also Kurianal, *Jesus Our High Priest*, 693:219–34. Moffit is only partially correct. As I have indicated, we are meant to see that Jesus occupies a priestly ministry during his earthly life, but is only appointed to the *office* of the Melchizedekian priesthood upon his resurrection. The logic is similar to the nature of Jesus’ sonship. Jesus was the Son of God during his earthly career (Heb 5:8), but he was also appointed as the Son upon the successful completion of his mission and ethronement in heaven (Heb 1:5; 5:5–6; cf. Rom 1:4). Aubrey Sequeira critiques Moffit by describing this distinction as priesthood *vindicated* versus priesthood *obtained*. Aubrey Sequeira, “Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Review),” *Credo Magazine*, January 16, 2014, <http://www.credomag.com/2014/01/16/atonement-and-the-logic-of-resurrection-in-the-epistle-to-the-hebrews-review/>. It is difficult to escape the fact that the author of Hebrews depicts Christ’s earthly ministry as a priestly ministry. He stood in solidarity with his brothers just as the priests of the Mosaic order did. Heb 2:17 makes faithfulness (πιστός) a characteristic of Jesus’ earthly priesthood. On the argument that Heb 2:17 refers to Jesus’ earthly priesthood, see Richardson, *Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith*, 29–49. R. J. McKelvey also sees Jesus’ earthly career as a priestly ministry in Hebrews. Concerning the priestly overtones in Heb 5, he writes, “The cultic character of the language in 5:7 (*prospherein*) very likely means that we should find anticipated here the idea of Christ’s self-offering (5:1–2). Against this is the fact that the thought of priestly self-offering does not become explicit till 7:27. However, in the mind of the author Gethsemane, the crucifixion, and exaltation are all intimately connected. Thus we find the high priestly and pioneer motifs merging in 5:9: “he became the source (*aitios*) of eternal salvation for all who obey him.” R. J. McKelvey, *Pioneer and Priest: Jesus Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Eugene: OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013), 61.

because Jesus' earthly career is compared to that of the Levitical priests.<sup>125</sup> Former priests were able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward because of their own "weakness" (*ἀσθένειαν*, 5:2). Similarly, in the days of his flesh, Christ suffered so that he might be able to sympathize with our "weaknesses" (*ἀσθενείαις*) (4:15; 5:7–8). Although he was a son, he had to learn obedience through suffering (5:8). When facing the suffering of death, he had to put his faith in God—the only one who was able to deliver him from death (2:7).

The priestly faithfulness of Jesus during his earthly career described in these verses may have Adam's probationary state as the subtext. Adam was the son of God who was to order his life around the priority of worship as a priest before God. Before he could fulfill his commission for royal dominion, he had to obey God's command concerning the tree and its penalty of death. If Adam had been faithful, God would have spared him from the experience of death.

Jesus similarly had to learn obedience, although he was a son (5:8). Jesus, however, learned obedience by trusting God, not to spare him from death, but to deliver him from death. If Hebrews 5:7 evokes Jesus' agony in the garden of Gethsemane, then Jesus displayed his obedience by obeying God's command concerning the cross (tree) and its curse of death.<sup>126</sup> As a faithful priest, Jesus entered into death to conquer death (2:14), trusting that God would "save him out of death" (*σώζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου*; 5:7). God "heard" (*εἰσακούω*) Jesus' prayers by raising him from the dead (5:7).<sup>127</sup> Having

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<sup>125</sup>Susan Haber, "From Priestly Torah to Christ Cultus: The Re-Vision of Covenant and Cult in Hebrews," *JSNT* 28, no. 1 (2005): 114.

<sup>126</sup>Most scholars argue that Heb 5:7–8 evoke Jesus actions at Gethsemane. For sources, see Richardson, *Pioneer and Perfector of Faith*, 75. Against this majority opinion, Richardson argues that Golgotha is the subtext of Heb 5:7–8. *Ibid.*, 75–89.

<sup>127</sup>That these verses refer to the resurrection, see Jipp, "The Son's Entrance into the Heavenly World," 572; David M. Moffitt, "If Another Priest Arises': Jesus' Resurrection and the High Priestly Christology of Hebrews," in *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in Its Ancient Contexts*, ed. Richard Bauckham (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 70–71.

been made “perfect” (τελειωθείς) upon his resurrection and exaltation, he thereby became the source of “eternal salvation” (σωτηρίας αἰωνίου) to all who obey him (5:9).<sup>128</sup> By passing through death in faith and being raised from the dead, Jesus achieved a state of perfection that qualifies him to occupy a priesthood of an eternal order, enabling him to mediate eternal salvation (5:9; cf. Ps 110:4). Perfection warrants an eternal priesthood (Ps 110:4) in the same way that faithful priestly sacrifice (atonement) warrants royal exaltation to the right hand of God (Ps 110:1).<sup>129</sup> Therefore, according to 5:10, the perfected, resurrected, and exalted Christ has been “designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek” because the nature of Melchizedek’s priesthood is everlasting (cf. 7:28).<sup>130</sup>

### **Hebrews 6:13–7:28: The Blessing of Abraham Fulfilled in the Melchizedekian Priest-King**

After an extended parenthesis in 5:11–6:12, the author resumes his exposition in 6:13. The argument of 6:13–20 focuses on the certainty of God’s promise to Abraham. The γὰρ in 6:13, in immediate context, establishes 6:13–20 as supporting argumentation to the exhortation in 6:9–12. Here, the author encourages his readers to endure as those “who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (6:12). The language of “faith,” “inherit,” and “promises” evokes the story of Abraham and God’s covenantal promises to

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<sup>128</sup>On the meaning of “perfect” in Hebrews, see Moisés Silva, “Perfection and Eschatology in Hebrews”; Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*. Silva argues that “perfection” in Hebrews carries eschatological connotations. That is, it refers to the time of fulfillment, the new epoch inaugurated by the Messiah through his death, resurrection and exaltation. Peterson’s analysis is widely recognized as the best treatment on the subject of perfection in Hebrews. He argues that perfection in Hebrews is “vocational.” Vocational perfecting is the process by which Christ was made qualified to enter the heavenly tabernacle as a man. This process included his incarnation, testing, suffering, sacrificial death, and resurrection.

<sup>129</sup>As we have seen in other places, Jesus’ exaltation to universal dominion is the result of his priestly work of atonement (cf. Heb 1:1–3; 2:9).

<sup>130</sup>The citation of Psalm 110:4 in Heb 5:10 anticipates the author’s discussion of Melchizedek in Heb 7, where the permanency and eternity are the fundamental characteristics of Melchizedek’s priesthood (7:3, 16–17, 24, 28).

Abraham and his seed. The exposition of God’s promise and oath to Abraham in 6:13–20 is the grounds for engendering faithfulness in the readers. But these verses should not be divorced from the exposition of Christ’s priesthood in 5:1–10 either. The argument in 5:1–10 culminates in the reality that Jesus became the source of “eternal salvation” to all who submit to his rule as the Melchizedekian priest-king (5:9–10). Since Jesus imparts that salvation to “the offspring of Abraham” (2:16), the author now encourages those who are about to inherit salvation to remain faithful by reminding them of the certainty of God’s promise to Abraham. And just as the discussion of Christ’s priesthood in 5:1–10 culminates in Psalm 110:4, so also 6:13–20 culminates in Psalm 110:4 and the Melchizedekian priesthood of Jesus (6:20). Moving forward it will become evident that, in the author’s mind, Melchizedek’s significance in redemptive history lies in his association with Abraham. In what follows, I will demonstrate that in the logic of Hebrews 7, the promises to Abraham come to fruition through the Melchizedekian priesthood—a fact foreshadowed in Abraham’s encounter with Melchizedek in Genesis 14 and later recognized by David in Psalm 110.<sup>131</sup>

**Hebrews 7:1–28.** Hebrews 7 is an exegetical and redemptive-historical analysis of the Melchizedek episode recorded in Genesis 14:18–20. The purpose of Hebrews 7 is to demonstrate the superiority of the Melchizedekian priesthood over the Aaronic and, as a result, the superiority of the new covenant over the old. In 7:1–3, the author simply introduces Melchizedek and his relationship to Abraham by commenting on the narrative of Genesis 14:18–20. Five primary observations surface: 1) Melchizedek is king of Salem and priest of the Most High God (7:1); 2) Melchizedek met Abraham

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<sup>131</sup>For more in-depth treatments of Heb 7, see Gareth Lee Cockerill, “The Melchizedek Christology in Hebrews 7:1–28” (Union Theological Seminary, 1976); Demarest, *A History of Interpretation of Hebrews 7, 1–10 from the Reformation to the Present* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1976); Gareth Lee Cockerill, “Melchizedek Without Speculation: Hebrews 7.1–25 and Genesis 14.17–24,” in *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in Its Ancient Contexts*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al., LNTS 387 (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 128–44.

and pronounced a blessing on him after Abraham was victorious in battle (7:1); 3) Abraham paid a tenth of his spoils to Melchizedek (7:2); 4) Melchizedek is king of righteousness and king of peace (7:2); 5) Melchizedek, like the Son of God, held a permanent priesthood for he was without father or mother, genealogy, or record of birth and death in the Genesis narrative (7:3).

In Hebrews 7:4–10, the author draws one primary conclusion based on his brief exposition of Genesis 14:18–20. He argues that the Melchizedekian priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood because Melchizedek blessed Abraham and received a tithe from Abraham (7:6–7, 9–10). Abraham, the father of Israel (and thus the tribe of Levi) and recipient of the promises of God, submitted to the superior Melchizedek through the tithe and also received a priestly blessing from Melchizedek. It does not appear that Melchizedek’s superiority over Abraham and the Levites is, for the author of Hebrews, simply a byproduct of redemptive-historical priority. There is something about the nature of Melchizedek’s priesthood that causes it to supersede the Levitical priesthood. But what is it? The answer has to do with the nature of Melchizedek’s priesthood as an eternal priesthood. Hebrews 7:3 and 7:8 provide the clue to this line of reasoning. According to Hebrews 7:3, Melchizedek is “without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but being similar to the Son of God, he remains a priest for all time.” The language of this verse does not have to be taken to mean that Melchizedek was pre-existent (without beginning of days) and that he never died (without end of life). In that case, we would assume that the author of Hebrews believed that Melchizedek was either the pre-incarnate Christ, still alive on earth somewhere, or taken into heaven.<sup>132</sup> Instead, Hebrews 7:3 is simply a description of the manner in which Melchizedek appears and disappears in the Genesis narrative.

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<sup>132</sup>If this were the case, then there would be two men occupying the Melchizedekian office. Such a conclusion is contrary to the Christological argument of Hebrews.

When Melchizedek arrives in Genesis 14:18, he has no genealogical record—no record of father, mother, birth, or death. This fact is stunning since every person in Genesis is always tied to a genealogical record. It is significant, then, as the author of Hebrews points out, that Genesis attaches no genealogy to Melchizedek. The literary portrait of Melchizedek in Genesis 14 also makes sense of Hebrews 7:8: “In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, it is being testified (μαρτυρούμενος) there that he lives.” This should not be taken to mean that Melchizedek lived forever. Instead, the author employs the passive participle μαρτυρούμενος to describe the manner in which the Genesis narrative bore *witness* to Melchizedek—he is simply there, existing, living, no predecessors or successors. In other words, the only witness we have of Melchizedek in the Genesis narrative is that he lives.

In light of these observations, the author’s comment about Melchizedek “resembling the Son of God” (ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ) in 7:3 also makes more sense. What exactly is meant by the phrase ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ? The meaning of this phrase has caused quite a few problems in the history of interpretation.<sup>133</sup> If the referent of τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ is the eternal Son of God, then perhaps interpreters are right to view Melchizedek as a pre-incarnate Christ.<sup>134</sup> However, the permanency of Melchizedek’s priesthood is what resembles the Son of God.<sup>135</sup> Furthermore, the author’s intent in 7:1–3 is to describe Melchizedek in the context of Genesis, which would make a passing comment to the eternal Son (Christ) seem out of place. Perhaps, then, we should

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<sup>133</sup>Ellingworth describes the difficulties in interpreting Heb 7:3 and various proposals in his essay, Paul Ellingworth, “‘Like the Son of God’: Form and Content in Hebrews 7,1–10,” *Bib* 64, no. 2 (1983): 255–62.

<sup>134</sup>See Gareth Lee Cockerill, “The Melchizedek Christology in Hebrews 7:1–28,” 484–93. Bauckham thinks that Heb 7:3 describes Melchizedek as a divine figure. Though he qualifies that by saying, “What is said about Melchizedek himself in Heb. 7 need not be taken too seriously as a statement about the historical figure in Genesis.” Richard Bauckham, “The Divinity of Jesus Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” 28. Neither of these proposals is ultimately attractive in my opinion.

<sup>135</sup>The participle ἀφωμοιωμένος modifies the matrix sentence, “he remains a priest forever”. Thus, “He remains a priest forever, resembling the son of God.”

not assume that τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ is a direct reference to Jesus, but only an indirect one. In other words, the reference to the τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ is not only a reference to the *Son* of God, but also a reference to the *son* of God. This would mean that Melchizedek resembles the son of God in Genesis and throughout the narrative of Scripture. The concept of sonship in Hebrews—and in Genesis—and its relationship to the priesthood cannot be divorced from the covenantal storyline of the Old Testament.<sup>136</sup> Melchizedek embodied the Old Testament’s archetypal form of covenant mediation: He was like the son of God because he mediated God’s blessing to the entire world—via Abraham—as a royal priest of God Most High (Yahweh, cf. Gen 14:22). Similarly, Adam was not a royal priest by virtue of the law; he was a royal priest by virtue of his familial relationship to God as one made in God’s image.<sup>137</sup> Adam was to mediate God’s blessing to the entire world by exercising his royal priestly prerogative as God’s covenantal son. Perhaps “resembling τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ” is the author of Hebrews’ way of saying that Melchizedek’s priesthood was tied to and in succession with the stipulations of a superior covenant.<sup>138</sup> This covenant would have been woven into the fabric of creation so that even Abraham—the recipient of the covenant promises—recognized Melchizedek as a superior kind of

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<sup>136</sup>Hahn’s comments about the priesthood in Genesis help to elucidate the close relationship between the priesthood and sonship. He writes, “Throughout Genesis, the Patriarchs—not a professional class of priests—perform the cultic duties of building altars (Gen 12:7–8; 13:18), calling on the Lord in prayer (Gen 21:33; 26:25), consecrating natural landmarks (Gen 28:18–22), pouring out libations (Gen 35:14), pronouncing blessings (Gen 27:23–29; 28:1; 47:7, 10; 48:15, 20, 28), and offering sacrifice on behalf of the family (Gen 8:20; 46:1; cf. Job 1:5). Genesis portrays a pre-Levitical form of priesthood rooted in the patriarchal family, particularly in the idealized relationship of the father and firstborn son.” Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 298.

<sup>137</sup>The same would have been true for Israel’s kings. They possessed a priestly identity not by virtue of the law but by virtue of their status as sons of God. They were mediators between God and the people and were anointed with the anointing oil reserved for priests in the Torah. On the monarch’s role as priest, see Rooke, “Jesus as Royal Priest,” 81–82.

<sup>138</sup>According to Hahn, “To the author of Hebrews, the exaltation of Jesus as the firstborn Son and royal high priest—prefigured by Melchizedek—represents the restoration of a more perfect form of covenant mediation originally intended for Adam and Israel and practiced to some extent prior to the Sinai rebellion.” Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 280.



priest-king in succession with Adam and Noah (7:6).<sup>139</sup> Because of Melchizedek's resemblance "τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ," the author of Hebrews asserts that when the Lord swore an oath in Psalm 110:4—"The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek"—he was not just appointing a priest, he was appointing a υἱόν. (7:28).<sup>140</sup>

With this logic in mind, the author advances his argument for the permanency—and thus superiority—of the Melchizedekian priesthood in 7:11–28 over and against the temporariness of the Levitical priesthood. He observes a profound difference in the nature of the Melchizedekian and Levitical priesthoods. The Levitical priests were many in number. They were made priests by virtue of the Mosaic covenant. It was necessary that there be many of them because they each succumbed to death and a new priest would have to take their place (7:23). No Levitical priest could bring about perfection because the law could make nothing perfect (7:18–19). The very nature of the Levitical program was insufficient and temporal.

The nature of the Melchizedekian priesthood is different. Melchizedek's priesthood was singular. He did not belong to a tribe, and he was not replaced by any descendants in the Genesis narrative. Everything about the Melchizedekian priesthood suggests permanence and superiority. It is for this reason that a priest had to arrive in the "likeness" (ὁμοιότητα) of Melchizedek (7:15).<sup>141</sup> Unlike the Levites, Jesus did not receive

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<sup>139</sup>See my discussion in chapter three of this project for the literary connections between Melchizedek and Adam and Noah in Genesis.

<sup>140</sup>Though Schreiner does not make the same argument I make here, he is right to suggest that Melchizedek's identity as it relates to Jesus Christ is to be understood typologically. He writes, "Melchizedek's priesthood foreshadows and anticipates Jesus' Melchizedekian priesthood. Second, the author describes Melchizedek as 'resembling the Son of God' . . . . The author doesn't say that Melchizedek *is* the Son of God but that he was *like* him. The two are compared, not identified. Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 210.

<sup>141</sup>Rooke argues that Heb 7:15—κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα Μελχισέδεκ—is the author's interpretation of על־דברתי מלכ־צדק (Ps 110:4). In this respect, Rooke insists, "Melchizedek serves as a model for sacral kingship and as its definition, rather than being some sort of progenitor or ancestor figure from whom the kings claim descent, which is what 'after the order of Melchizedek' would imply." Rooke,

his priesthood through genealogical descent or legal inheritance (7:16). Instead, like Melchizedek in the literary context of Genesis, Jesus became a priest by the power of an “indestructible life” (ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου). For it was “testified” (μαρτυρούμενος) concerning Melchizedek that he lives (7:8), and it was “testified” (μαρτυρεῖται) concerning Jesus upon his resurrection that, “You are a priest forever, after the *order* of Melchizedek” (7:17). Unlike the Levites, whose death prevented them from “remaining” (παραμένειν) in their office, Jesus, like Melchizedek in the literary context of Genesis, “remains” (μένειν) a priest forever because he lives forever (7:23, cf. 7:3).<sup>142</sup>

**The oath.** In Hebrews 7:20–28, the author builds his case for the superiority of the Melchizedekian priesthood by emphasizing God’s “oath” in Psalm 110:4—“The Lord has sworn.” The discussion of God’s oath in these verses builds on the logic of 6:13–20, where God’s oath and promise were the “two unchangeable things” that guaranteed to Abraham that God would be faithful to his word.<sup>143</sup> The oath, therefore, is another link in

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“Jesus as Royal Priest,” 91.

<sup>142</sup>The same verb μένω is used in 7:3 to describe Melchizedek’s priesthood. I am not suggesting, however, that Melchizedek lived forever. In fact, Hahn has argued that the phrase εἰς τὸ διηνεχές applied to Melchizedek in 7:3 is weaker than the phrase εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα applied to Christ in 7:28. According to Hahn, “Melchizedek was not immortal but remained a priest for the duration of his life.” Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 303.

<sup>143</sup>The thrust of Heb 6:13–20 is the absolute certainty of God’s promise to Abraham. The specific promise in mind is God’s promise made to Abraham at Mt. Moriah after Abraham faithfully offered up Isaac to God (Heb 6:14). As the author of Hebrews points out, it was at Moriah that God confirmed the certainty of his promise with an oath (Heb 6:16–18, cf. Gen 22:16–17). God’s promise and oath to Abraham are the two “unchangeable things” that guarantee the blessing of Abraham will come to pass in the lives of Abraham’s offspring (6:18; cf. 2:16). These two unchangeable things—the promise and the oath—are the same two things that guarantee the eternal Melchizedekian priesthood: “The Lord has sworn” (oath), and “you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek” (promise). By virtue of these two unchangeable things, believers are exhorted to lay hold of the hope (ἐλπίδος) set before them. This hope enters into the most holy place in the heavenly realm where Jesus has already entered as a “forerunner” and priest after the order of Melchizedek (6:19–20). Hope, therefore, cannot be separated from the priestly work of Jesus. The discussion of hope in relation to the promise and oath in 6:13–20 proleptically anticipates the authors discussion of Psalm 110:4 in Heb 7:18–22. Through Jesus, the Melchizedekian high priest, a “better hope” (κρείττονος ἐλπίδος) has been “introduced” (ἐπεισαγωγή) (7:19). The verb ἐπεισαγωγή recalls Heb 1:6, where God “leads” (εἰσαγάγει) the firstborn Jesus into the heavenly realm. This better hope, then, is to be identified with Jesus, the priest after the order of

the chain that attaches Psalm 110:4 and the Melchizedekian priesthood to God's covenant with Abraham. Under the Mosaic legislation, the priests became priests without an oath (7:20). But Christ became a priest by the power of God's oath—"The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever'" (7:21). The significance of the oath in establishing Christ's priesthood, according to the author of Hebrews, is that it (the oath) makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant (7:22). But why? Why does the oath make Jesus the guarantor of a covenant better than the Mosaic covenant? Is it simply because the Levitical priests were made priests without an oath? It would seem, rather, that in the author's logic the oath establishes Jesus as the guarantor of a better covenant not because of the oath in and of itself, but because the oath connects Jesus' work of priestly mediation to covenants superior to that of the Mosaic covenant and its priests, namely the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants.<sup>144</sup> God's covenants with Abraham and David are the only two Old Testament covenants identified with a divine oath (Gen 22:17; Ps 89).<sup>145</sup> By fulfilling the Davidic covenant as David's Lord and the Melchizedekian priest, Jesus inaugurates the blessing of Abraham while simultaneously rendering the law-covenant obsolete (7:12, 18, 27–28; 8:13).<sup>146</sup>

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Melchizedek who has entered into the most holy place in heaven and has therefore actually brought the blessing of Abraham to fruition (6:19–20; 7:19). Jesus is the guarantor of a covenant better than the Mosaic covenant (7:22). Why is the covenant he mediates better? Because this covenant brings to fruition the promises of the Abrahamic covenant through the program of the Davidic covenant (i.e., Ps 110) to inaugurate the new covenant era.

<sup>144</sup>I am not suggesting that the Mosaic law-covenant was in and of itself deficient. The law is holy, righteous, and good. The inferiority of the Mosaic law-covenant must be attributed to its sinful, weak mediators. The law-covenant revealed sin and it revealed the fact that sinful men could never satisfy its demands. This is why priests had to make sacrifices continually (10:11). The Abrahamic and Davidic covenants are superior to the Mosaic-law covenant in that they are attached to a superior form of priestly mediation, namely the eternal priesthood of the Melchizedekian order.

<sup>145</sup>See my discussion in chapter three on the oath of Ps 110:4 and its relationship to the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants.

<sup>146</sup>Commenting on 7:12, Hahn argues that the change in the priesthood and the change in the law refer to the time when the Levitical priesthood replaced the natural priesthood of the firstborn sons in Israel after the golden calf incident. The change in the law is therefore, according to Hahn, "the large body of mostly cultic regulations (Exod 34–40; Lev 1–26) added to the original Sinai law (Exod 20–24)

The old covenant law was inferior to God’s covenants with Abraham and David because weak and sinful men were appointed to be its priestly mediators (7:28). The Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, however, were not identified with the weakness of the Levitical priests. Melchizedek and his permanent priesthood mediated blessing to Abraham, and the word of the oath given to David in Psalm 110:4 was that a priest after the order of Melchizedek would forever mediate the covenant promises God made to David. As 7:27–28 suggests, the word of the oath—“You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek”—which came later than the law, was rooted in the stipulations of a superior covenant because its priesthood was derived not on the basis of legal requirement. Instead, its priesthood was derived on the basis of a familial bond. For the word of the oath “appoints a Son”—a Davidic Son who will be a priest and king before God forever, fulfilling God’s charter for humanity (cf. 2 Sam 7:19).<sup>147</sup>

### **Hebrews 8:1–10:18: A Better Priest Inaugurates a Better Covenant through a Better Sacrifice**

The overarching theme of Hebrews 8:1–10:18 is the perfect sacrifice of Jesus, the high priest.<sup>148</sup> In this section, Psalm 110 is only alluded to in 8:1 and 10:12–13. Nevertheless, Psalm 110 continues to play a major role informing the logic of the

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simultaneously with the appointment of the Levites as priests.” Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 304. Hahn’s interpretation here fails to satisfy. The context of Heb 7:11–12 suggests that the author is referring to a period of redemption history that would take place after the establishment of the Levitical priesthood. The context indicates that the “change in the priesthood” refers to Christ’s Melchizedekian priesthood and the “change in the law” refers to the new covenant.

<sup>147</sup>Rooke suggests that Davidic sonship informs the logic of Heb 7. She argues, “It should . . . be no surprise to find royal elements in the more detailed exposition of Jesus’s high priesthood in Heb 7, especially since the ancient royal ideology was a major defining component of messianism. The result is thus a presentation which despite its apparently overwhelmingly priestly character is consistent with the traditional messianic expectation of a son of David, that is, a royal figure, even if it is not expressed in terms of explicitly Davidic categories.” Rooke, “Jesus as Royal Priest,” 83.

<sup>148</sup>Gareth Lee Cockerill, “Structure and Interpretation in Hebrews 8:1–10:18: A Symphony in Three Movements,” *BBR* 11, no. 2 (2001): 179–201.

author's argument.<sup>149</sup> The central argument of Hebrews 8–10 is that Christ is the mediator of a better covenant by virtue of his sacrificial death and priestly position in the heavenly tabernacle. I will briefly discuss how Psalm 110 supports and informs the logic of this argument.

**Hebrews 8:1–13.** Hebrews 8:1–2 opens with a summary statement of the essence of the author's argument thus far:

The main point of the things which have been said is this: we have such a high priest who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the holy things and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man.

The author rehearses his argument in these opening verses of Hebrews 8 to set up his forthcoming argument for the superiority of the new covenant sacrifice over the old covenant sacrifices (8:3–13). On the basis of Psalm 110:1 and 110:4, the author positions Jesus, the high priest, in the true and heavenly tabernacle as a result of his superior sacrifice (8:2–3).<sup>150</sup> His position in the heavenly tabernacle solidifies him as the mediator of a better covenant (8:5–6). The earthly tabernacle of the Old Covenant was merely a replica of its archetype—the heavenly tabernacle (8:5). Thus, from its inception, the earthly tabernacle, and by implication the priesthood and the covenant it served, had to be temporary. They were merely copies and shadows of their true substance (8:5). When Christ entered the heavenly tabernacle (Zion, cf. Ps 110:2) in fulfillment of Psalm 110:1 and 110:4 as a priest after the order of Melchizedek, he became the mediator of a better covenant (8:6). This “better covenant” is, according to the author of Hebrews, the new

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<sup>149</sup>According to Cockerill, Heb 8:1–10:18 is “closely associated with the writer’s interpretation of Ps 110:4 in Heb 7:1–28, in which he describes the Son as a priest according to Melchizedek’s order.” Cockerill, “Structure and Interpretation in Hebrews 8:1–10:18,” 179–80.

<sup>150</sup>Concerning Heb 8:1–13, Cockerill writes, “The first movement (8:1–13) laid a foundation by establishing the fact, based on the oracles of Ps 110:1 and Jer 31:31–34, that Christ’s sacrifice was different from and superior to the Aaronic sacrifice.” *Ibid.*, 190–91.

covenant promised by Jeremiah in Jeremiah 31:31–34.<sup>151</sup> The point is that even the Old Testament anticipated the abrogation of the Old Covenant to make way for a superior covenant (8:7). But someone or some order of priests had to mediate the blessing of forgiveness promised in this new covenant. Clearly the Levitical priests would not suffice because they were imperfect mediators of a transient covenant, made obvious by the fact that they “served” (λατρεύουσιν) in a tabernacle that was only a “copy” (ὑποδείγματι) and “shadow” (σκιᾷ) of the heavenly things.<sup>152</sup> A change in the priesthood would be necessary—and thus a change in the law—to mediate the promises of this better covenant

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<sup>151</sup>It is beyond the scope of this project to engage in a detailed discussion of the concept of “covenant” in Hebrews. Numerous works have addressed the issue of covenant in Hebrews. See Susan Haber, “From Priestly Torah to Christ Cultus”; Susanne Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews*, JSNTSup 44 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1990); John Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews*, Society for New Testament Studies 75 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>152</sup>It is likely that the author of Hebrews delayed his discussion of the new covenant so that he could first establish a royal Melchizedekian priestly Christology on the basis of Ps 110. But why would the development of Ps 110 and Christ’s Melchizedekian priesthood need to come first? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that the readers may have come to the conclusion that the promises of the new covenant might have been mediated through the Levitical priesthood; hence, the author’s discussion of a change in the priesthood necessitating a change in the law as well (7:12) prior to the explicit quotation of Jer 31:31–34. After all, the broader context of Jeremiah gives the impression that the blessings of the new covenant will come through a Davidic king and the Levitical priests. Jer 33:17–22 states, ‘For thus says the Lord: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever.’ The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ‘Thus says the Lord: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me’ (ESV). What are we to make of this text from Jeremiah in light of the fact that Hebrews presents the Levitical priesthood as obsolete and the Melchizedekian priesthood of Jesus as the mediatorial office of the new covenant blessings? At the very least, Jer 33:17–22 suggests that the blessings of the new covenant will come through Davidic kingship and a permanent priesthood. Granted that priesthood in Jer 33 is the Levitical priesthood, but we have seen in Hebrews that Christ simultaneously fulfills both the Melchizedekian and Aaronic priesthoods even though he does not occupy both offices. As a Melchizedekian priest, Christ fulfills the duties prescribed to the Levitical priests under the Mosaic Law. The Levitical priests were to minister before the Lord by making sacrifices. Jesus as the permanent Melchizedekian priest transcends their priesthood while fulfilling their sacrificial duties by offering his own body as a sacrifice for sin. In this sense, Jesus typologically fulfills the duties of the Levitical priesthood while holding the office of Melchizedek. Furthermore, it is worthy of note that Jeremiah elsewhere envisioned a king with priestly access to God as the ruler of God’s new covenant people: ‘Their prince shall be one of themselves; their ruler shall come out from their midst; I will make him draw near, and he shall approach me, for who would dare of himself to approach me?’ (Jer 30:21). This statement about a royal priestly figure is followed immediately by the covenant formula: “And you shall be my people, and I will be your God” (Jer 30:22).

(7:12). In the logic of Hebrews, the royal Melchizedekian priest of Psalm 110 is the mediator of the blessings of the new covenant promised in Jeremiah 31:31–34 because this priest became a “minister” (λειτουργός) in the permanent heavenly tabernacle, not the transient shadow of this tabernacle on earth (8:2, 4–5, 13).<sup>153</sup> But how does Christ enact the better promises of the new and better covenant? This is the question the author turns to in chapters 9–10.

**Hebrews 9:11–27.** The author answers the question by grounding the permanency of new covenant forgiveness in the perfect self-sacrifice of Christ, which awarded him (Christ) access to the presence of God in the heavenly tabernacle and established him as the permanent mediator of a new covenant (9:11–12, 15).<sup>154</sup> Again, Psalm 110 does not appear in Hebrews 9, but the royal procession of the messiah to the right hand of God in Psalm 110:1 and his identity as an eternal priest in Psalm 110:4 is clearly the logic behind much of the argument of this chapter (see table 16).

Though explicit references to Psalm 110 are lacking, Compton insists that Psalm 110 is more fundamental to the author’s argument concerning the superiority of Christ’s self-sacrifice than even the promise of the new covenant found in Jeremiah 31.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup>Commenting on the role of Ps 110 in the argument of Heb 8:1–13, Compton writes, “What we see at once, however, in the present exposition is the continuing and, now, fundamental influence of Ps. 110.1 and 4 on the author’s argument. The author’s main point in the exposition, along with the implication he draws from it, turns on the connection he has already established between Jesus and Ps. 110.1 and 4. Only because Jesus is the exalted son can he be the heavenly priest (8.1–2). And, since he is the heavenly priest, the one promised in the psalm (and, as the present exposition suggests, foreshadowed in Exod. 25), he must and *was expected to* bring a superior sacrifice to those required by the law (8.3–6a; cf. 5.1–3).” Compton, *Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews*, 105.

<sup>154</sup>The author sets up the argument for Christ’s superior self-sacrifice in 9:1–10 by emphasizing the inadequacy of animal sacrifices to perfect the consciences of the worshipers.

<sup>155</sup>Compton rightly asks if Ps 110 is more fundamental than Jer 31 to the author’s argument in this section, then why cite Jer 31 at all, “if all of these ideas were already present in Psalm 110.” Compton, *Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews*, 142. Compton’s answer is insightful and worth quoting at length: “The answer, I suspect, lies along the following four lines. First, the covenantal framework helps the author explain the connection between messiah’s heavenly status and the necessity of superior sacrifices (cf. 9.15–24). Related, this covenantal framework also helps explain why messiah is in heaven and, thus absent (cf. 8.3–5): the true tent needed to be consecrated so that the new covenant could be inaugurated. Second, the

Table 16. Places in Hebrews 9 where Psalms 110:1 and 110:4 inform the logic of the author’s Christological argument without being explicitly referenced

Hebrews 9	Psalm 110
Hebrews 9:11a: But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come...(ESV)	Psalm 110:4 is the basis for Christ’s high priesthood
Hebrews 9:11b–12: ...then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. (ESV)	Psalm 110:1 and 110:4 function as the basis for Christ’s royal procession into the holy places and his priestly sacrifice
Hebrews 9:15a: Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant...(ESV)	Psalm 110:4 is the basis for Christ’s priestly mediation
Hebrews 9:23–26: Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (ESV)	Psalm 110:1 and 110:4 inform Christ’s heavenly procession and the permanency of his priesthood by virtue of his perfect self-sacrifice

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covenantal framework assures the elect that they will receive the benefits secured through messiah’s sacrifice (ὄπις, 9.15), which is a point the author hinted at earlier when he connected the oath of Ps 110.4 with the sure fulfillment of the new (lit. ‘better’, *κρείττονος*) covenant (7.22). Perhaps this assurance was needed as a result of messiah’s absence, which, as just noted, the covenantal framework also helps to explain. Third, it was probably impossible for the author to talk about a cult, with its priesthood and sacred space, without at once thinking about the covenantal framework it served . . . Fourth, as already noted, Jer 31 shows that the Old Testament already recognized the inadequacy of the Mosaic covenant (8.6b–13) and, therefore, of the cult that served it (see, esp., 9.8–10). The author, in other words, wants the audience to see that his argument is, as everywhere else, based on expectations present in the Hebrew Scriptures.” Compton, *Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews*, 142.



On the role of Psalm 110 in the argument of Hebrews 9, Compton writes,

Once more Psalm 110 is not explicitly cited, but its influence is still present, something seen, especially, in the author's interpretation of messiah's exaltation (Ps. 110.1; cf. Heb. 8.1–2 with 9.11–12) as his consecration of the heavenly tabernacle that serves the new covenant (9.23). The author, in fact, infers from Psalm 110 that messiah must consecrate this new sacred space with superior sacrifices, the kind that can provide the sort of perfection such heavenly access requires, which is to say, the kind that can ratify a covenant that promises full forgiveness and such access. He then explains, as we noted, that messiah's self-sacrifice was precisely the sort of sacrifice Ps. 110.1 and 4 required and, therefore, anticipated. After all, it was unrepeatable and, thus, unrepeated, which suggests, in light of Jesus' resurrection (also implied in Ps. 110.4; cf. Heb. 7.16), that it thoroughly perfects.<sup>156</sup>

**Hebrews 10:1–18.** In Hebrews 10:1–18, the author continues to build the case for the superiority of Christ's singular priestly self-sacrifice and entrance into the heavenly tabernacle over and against the insufficient and repetitious sacrifices of the Old Covenant system performed on earth. In 10:11–14, the author appeals to Psalm 110 to make his point.<sup>157</sup> The priests of the old covenant “stand” (ἔστηκεν) daily in the service of God, offering the same sacrifices repeatedly because they cannot take away sins (10:11). But when Christ had offered himself as a perfect sacrifice once and for all, he “sat down” (ἐκάθισεν) at the right hand of God (10:12; cf. Ps 110:1). Clearly, the fact that Psalm 110:1 depicts the messiah “sitting” at the right hand of God is significant for the author of Hebrew's priestly Christology. Sitting suggests completion, finality, and sufficiency, whereas standing implied insufficiency and repetition with no end in sight.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup>Compton, *Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews*, 141.

<sup>157</sup>Cockerill helpfully compares the micro-structure of Heb 9:25–10:14 to a sandwich. He suggests that 9:25–10:4 is the top piece of bread and focuses on the “once-for-all” nature of Christ's sacrifice. Hebrews 10:11–14 is the bottom piece of bread and it explains the significance of the fact that Christ sat down after he offered his sacrifice. Hebrews 10:5–10 is the meat of the sandwich and it gives the reason for the effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice, namely obedient sacrifice. Both of the themes developed in the top and bottom pieces of bread are, according to Cockerill, “based on the author's application of Ps 110:1 to Christ in the parallel phrases ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς (“he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 1:3) and ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς (“who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,” 8:1). Cockerill, “Structure and Interpretation in Hebrews 8:1–10:18,” 194.

<sup>158</sup>Koester puts it this way, “The image of the standing priest is now juxtaposed with the image of the seated Christ (10:12; cf. Ps 110:1). When compared with ordinary worshipers, who could not enter

The logic here reflects that of the exordium where Christ's royal enthronement was the result of his priestly purification for sins (1:3). Only here the author clarifies the nature of Christ's priestly purification for sins as a component of his own self-sacrificial death (9:12, 26; 10:10–12). Christ brought the cultic ceremonies prescribed under the Old Covenant to an end by offering his own body as a sacrifice, qualifying him to take his *seat* in the heavenly tabernacle. Yet the author reminds his readers, on the basis of Psalm 110:1, that the finality of Christ's atoning work does not mean the eschaton has arrived. Christ has finished his work—he sat down at the right hand of God—but he now awaits the time when all of his enemies will be made a footstool for his feet (10:13, cf. Ps 110:1). This already-not yet tension in the completed work of Christ—on the basis of Psalm 110:1—gives meaning to the Christian's present experience of the blessings of the new covenant mediated through Christ (10:14–18). For by Christ's single sacrifice he has “perfected” (τετελείωκεν) for all time (already) those who are “being sanctified” (τοὺς ἁγιαζομένους) (not-yet) (1:14).<sup>159</sup>

### **Hebrews 12: The Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith Leads Many Royal Priestly Sons to Glory**

The final reference to Psalm 110 in the epistle is found in the allusion to Psalm

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the sanctuary, priests were in a position of honor (cf. 5:4), since they stood before the Lord, but when compared with one seated at God's right hand, the seated priest has the superior honor. Moreover, a priest who is seated, unlike those who stand to offer sacrifice, can be said to have entered God's rest, for his labors have ended (4:10). Koester, *Hebrews*, 36:440.

<sup>159</sup>The influence of Ps 110 on Heb 8–10 extends, perhaps, beyond the boundaries of Ps 110:1 and 110:4 alone. Jordaan and Nel argue that the thought-structure of Ps 110 forms the entire shape and structure of Hebrews. They suggest that the author of Hebrews developed his argument to parallel the form of Ps 110. I will not rehearse all the parallels here. I simply point out that they suggest that Ps 110:5–6 serves as blueprint for the author's argument in Heb 8–10. In their words, “Then follows Ps 110:5, 6, in which the promise of victory is repeated, though now it will be in the day of wrath. The parallel to this is found in Heb 8:1–10:18, the section dealing with Jesus as Minister of the new covenant, who gave himself as final offering as atonement for the wrath of God over all our sins. Christ's victory in this respect is exclaimed in the quotation from Jer 31:34 in Heb 10:17: ‘Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.’ *Jesus died to bring about God's judgment for all believing sinners.*” Jordaan and Nel, “From Priest-King to King-Priest,” 239.

110:1 in Hebrews 12:2—ἐν δεξιᾷ τε τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ κεκάθικεν.<sup>160</sup> Coming off the heels of the numerous imperfect, yet admirable, expressions of faithfulness in redemption history (11:1–40), Hebrews 12:1–2 presents Jesus as the climactic expression of faith for all of human kind.<sup>161</sup> By using the name “Jesus” (Ἰησοῦν), the author highlights Christ’s humanity to emphasize what he achieved on behalf of mankind (12:2). The terms ἀρχηγόν and τελειωτήν recall the author’s exposition of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2:5–11, where Christ was shown to have received royal dominion over the cosmos as humanity’s representative. He leads many sons to glory because he became the ἀρχηγόν of salvation by being made *perfect* (τελειόω) through suffering (2:10). Hebrews 12:2 paints a similar picture: Christ is the “founder” (ἀρχηγόν) and “perfecter” (τελειωτήν) of faith because he faithfully endured the suffering of the cross, trusting that God would raise him from the dead—“for the joy set before him”—leading ultimately to his exaltation to the right hand of God (cf. 5:7–10). Here in 12:2 we discover a pattern we have seen throughout the epistle: self-sacrificial death leads to royal exaltation. Except, here in 12:2, Christ’s sacrifice is more explicitly depicted as the climactic expression of faithfulness. In other words, through his faithful cross-work, Christ has “perfected” or “completed” faith. As we have seen at other points in the epistle, faithfulness, perfection and self-sacrifice are all characteristics of Christ’s priesthood (cf. 2:17; 5:7–10; 7:28; 9:12–15; 9:24–28). Thus, here in Hebrews 12:1–2, royalty (Ps 110:1) and priesthood (Ps 110:4) are the author’s fundamental Christological categories. Or to put it another way, the priest’s self-sacrifice was the climactic expression of human faith that qualified Jesus for the royal honor of

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<sup>160</sup>So Koester, *Hebrews*, 36:536; Donald A. Hagner, *Encountering the Book of Hebrews: An Exposition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 159; David Arthur DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 438.

<sup>161</sup>On the basis of the literary context and rhetorical form of Heb 11, Richardson argues that Heb 12:1–3 functions as the rhetorical climax to the heroes of the faith in chapter 11. Richardson, *Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith*, 109–66.

Psalm 110:1, and by implication the eternal priesthood of Psalm 110:4.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>162</sup>Commenting on Heb 12:2, Moffit asserts, “The crucial point is that, having faithfully endured this trial, he *received* the promises toward which he looked—in particular, he was brought out of death and invited to sit on the throne promised to David’s heir in Ps 110:4 (cf. 2:9).” Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 2011, 288. Though not developed here, we should probably also see the logic of Ps 110 informing Heb 12:22. The reference to “Mount Zion” in this verse, evokes the imagery of Ps 110:2, where the messianic priest-king reigns at the right hand of God. According to 12:24, this heavenly realm is the dwelling place of Jesus, the royal priest and “mediator of a new covenant.” Jesus’ new covenant mediation from the heavenly Zion (tabernacle, cf. 8:1–2) is, as we have seen, rooted in the logic of Ps 110:4 and his Melchizedekian priesthood. The broader context of 12:18–24 sets up a contrast between Mount Sinai (old covenant) and Mount Zion (new covenant). In the context of the epistle thus far, the futility of the old covenant and the success of the new covenant cannot be separated from their respective priesthoods—Levitical and Melchizedekian. As members of the new covenant community, believers have already come to Mount Zion (12:22). How have they come if they remain on earth? They have come in a real sense through their great high priest, Jesus Christ, who is mediating the blessings of the new covenant from the heavenly tabernacle on their behalf (12:24). Those who have already died and now dwell spiritually with Jesus in heaven (12:23), now share in Jesus’ identity. They are the assembly of the “firstborn” (πρωτοτόκων), the spirits of the “righteous made perfect” (δικαίων τετελειωμένων, 12:23). These faithful believers share in the characteristics that defined Jesus’ royal priesthood. Jesus was appointed a priest after the order of Melchizedek after being made perfect (τελειωθείς, 5:9–10). His royal priesthood is characterized by “righteousness” (δικαιοσύνης, 7:2; cf. 1:9) and cannot be separated from his identity as the “firstborn” (πρωτότοκον) son of God (1:6). While believers do not share in Christ’s Melchizedekian office, they do share in his identity as royal priestly sons of God. As such, they are to offer to God acceptable “worship” (λατρεύωμεν) with “reverence” (εὐλαβείας, cf. 5:7). Furthermore, they will reign with Christ in the world to come (inheritance) because they have been awarded access to the presence of God (priests) and dominion over the “kingdom” (i.e., new heavens and new earth) that cannot be shaken (kings) (12:25–28; cf. 1:14; 2:5). Finally, it should also be noted that the author appeals to Haggai 2:6 in 12:25–29 to describe the cataclysmic shaking of heaven and earth to make way for the eternal kingdom of God. A noteworthy observation about the context of Haggai is that it describes the rebuilding of the temple (1:14–2:8) by a Davidic king (Zerubbabel) and a high priest (Joshua). The Lord promises to be with them according to the covenant he made with them when he brought them out of Egypt (Hg. 2:5). He assures them of his presence and promises them that he will fill his temple with a greater degree of glory than that experienced by the first temple (Hg. 2:9). After the first exodus, the Lord instituted his covenant at Sinai to establish a kingdom of priests. The formation of this new people was accompanied by the shaking of the earth at the voice and presence of the Lord. Haggai describes a second exodus in similar terminology. According to Haggai, the shaking that is going to accompany this second exodus is one that will be cosmic in scope. The cosmic nature of this shaking is an act of judgment upon the nations (Hg. 2:7, 22). Just as the Israelites plundered the Egyptians upon their Exodus, so also the Lord will bring the treasures of the nations to his temple. Similarly, the Lord is going to overthrow the throne of kingdoms and the strength of the kingdoms of the nations. Just as the horses and chariots of Egypt were destroyed in the sea, the Lord is going to destroy the horses, chariots, and riders of the nations. All the kingdoms of the world will be destroyed so that the Lord can establish his Davidic King over his kingdom to establish peace on the earth (2:23, cf. 2:9). The author of Hebrews’ use of Haggai is entirely appropriate. In Haggai, the cataclysmic shaking serves God’s purpose to establish his Davidic king over the nations. The author of Hebrews has a similar end in mind. The final cataclysmic shaking will be the means whereby God judges the earth and establishes the “unshakable kingdom” of his Davidic king (1:5, 1:13) for all eternity. In the logic of Hebrews, this will be fulfilled when God judges the world by subjecting all of his enemies as a footstool to Jesus, the Melchizedekian priest-king (cf. Ps 110:1, 4).

## **Conclusion**

Hebrews is a *tour de force* of biblical theology. In this chapter I have attempted to arrive at the meaning of the union of priesthood and kingship in Psalm 110 according to the author of Hebrews. In the process, I have tried to demonstrate that Psalm 110 is the author's most fundamental text and that royal Melchizedekian priesthood—as qualities of covenantal sonship—are his most fundamental Christological categories. As the Melchizedekian high priest (new covenant mediator) and Davidic king at the right hand of God in the heavenly Zion, Jesus has restored to humanity universal dominion and access to God's presence through his redemptive sacrificial death to secure their present forgiveness and future inheritance of salvation in the eschatological world to come. In the logic of Hebrews, God's purpose in creation (Adamic kingdom) and redemption (Abrahamic covenant) has culminated in a royal priest of the Melchizedekian order (Ps 110). In fulfillment of Psalm 110 and by virtue of the Melchizedekian royal priesthood, God's kingdom has been inaugurated through a royal covenant mediator (priest).

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have attempted to offer the biblical-theological rationale for the union of kingship and priesthood in Psalm 110 in the context of the entire canon. The impetus for this project arose from the fact that modern scholarship has given no clear consensus on how to handle this union in Psalm 110. Proposals in the modern era have ranged from reassigning Psalm 110 to the Maccabean era to suggesting that the psalm addresses two different people—the king in verses 1–3 and the priest in verses 4–7. By situating Psalm 110 in biblical-theological and canonical context, I demonstrated that the union of kingship and priesthood in a single figure is a significant part of the Scripture’s covenantal metanarrative unfolding the story of the establishment of God’s kingdom on earth. By analyzing royal priesthood in the Torah, Psalm 110 in Old Testament context, the influence of Psalm 110 on the intertestamental expectation for a messianic royal priest, and the New Testament’s Christological interpretation of Melchizedekian royal priesthood, I set out to prove that a canonical reading of David’s depiction of the eschatological Melchizedekian priest-king develops God’s creational purpose for humanity to establish God’s kingdom (king) by mediating God’s covenantal blessings from his temple sanctuary (priest), and simultaneously advances God’s redemption project by depicting the order of royal priesthood that would bring the promises of the Abrahamic covenant to fruition. In what follows, I will briefly recap the argument and suggest some theological implications from this study.

## Summary

### Chapter 1

In chapter 1, I argued for the necessity of a project that examines the union of kingship and priesthood in Psalm 110 from a biblical-theological perspective. Much of modern scholarship has tried to answer the question of how David's Lord could be both a priest and king by reconstructing the history of Israelite kingship.<sup>1</sup> Higher critical scholarship never moved beyond historical reconstruction when trying to discern the meaning of David's royal priestly ideology. Such an approach led many scholars to the conclusion that Psalm 110 was nothing more than a piece of political propaganda attempting to unite the Jebusite cult with the Davidic monarchy.

This is not to say that biblical-theological scholarship with respect to royal priesthood in general is lacking. I noted in this chapter that many works of biblical theology have developed the concept of royal priesthood in the context of the canon. These works were the foundation on which this project was built. However, I tried to show that many of these biblical-theological works did not develop the union of priesthood and kingship in Psalm 110 in particular. Therefore, I set out to demonstrate how David's royal priestly Melchizedek fits within the scriptural logic and development of royal priesthood beginning with Adam and culminating in Christ.

In this chapter I also briefly outlined my methodological presuppositions about the nature of Scripture and the meaning of a biblical theological investigation. I indicated that my intention was to interpret Psalm 110 through the framework of "progressive covenantalism" recently advocated by Gentry and Wellum in *Kingdom through Covenant*. The goal was that such an approach would give a fresh reading to a popular text (Ps 110).

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<sup>1</sup>Many of these historical studies would not agree that David was the author of Ps 110.

## **Chapter 2**

In chapter 2, I examined the Torah's development of the concept of royal priesthood. I argued that the union of kingship and priesthood finds its origin in God's purpose for Adam—his covenantal son—at creation. God's creation project was to establish his kingdom through his human viceroy (king) who would mediate God's covenantal blessings from the place of God's sanctuary (priest) to the entire world. After Adam's fall into sin, the concept of royal priesthood continues to be an integral component of God's redemption project. Adam's royal priestly role is recapitulated in key covenantal figures: Noah, Abraham, Melchizedek, Israel, and Aaron. Melchizedek, in particular, is of special importance because his royal priesthood is associated not only with God's purpose for creation, but with God's purpose for redemption manifest in the covenant with Abraham. The blessings of the Abrahamic covenant are channeled (mediated) through the Melchizedekian priesthood. Melchizedek's relationship to Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant is a fundamental reason why David chose Melchizedek's priesthood as the order of royal priesthood that would mediate God's rule and reign over the earth.

## **Chapter 3**

In chapter 3, I attempted to situate Psalm 110 in its Old Testament context. I argued that David's royal priestly ideology advances the development of royal priesthood in the Torah as it pertained to the establishment of God's kingdom through a covenant mediator ruling from the sacred space of God's sanctuary. Specifically, I honed in on the patterns of David's own life experience—revealed in 1–2 Samuel—and the content of the Davidic covenant to show how David would have arrived at the conclusion that the messiah was to be a royal priest after the order of Melchizedek. An analysis of 1–2 Samuel also exposed how the narratives depicted David himself as a partial fulfillment of the promised priest of 1 Samuel 2:35. Furthermore, I demonstrated that the Davidic



covenant was the program that would bring the Abrahamic covenant to fruition, and hence requires an order of priesthood that could overcome the inadequacies and insufficiencies of the Levitical order. Finally, I examined Psalm 110 in light of the Psalter's canonical context in order to demonstrate the literary and theological harmony between the royal priesthood of Psalm 110 and the messianism of Psalms 1–2—the Psalter's own messianic interpretive lens. This analysis also revealed that a canonical reading of Psalm 110 colors the eschatological warfare of the Melchizedekian priest in Joshua-like overtones.

#### **Chapter 4**

Chapter 4 was a brief investigation into the influence of the royal priestly theology of Psalm 110 on the intertestamental literature. Surprisingly, the intertestamental literature never explicitly cites Psalm 110. Nevertheless, the union of priesthood and kingship in Psalm 110 significantly influenced the *Testament of Levi*, *1 Enoch*, *2 Enoch*, and *11QMelchizedek*. *11QMelchizedek* in particular spoke of an eschatological priest-king named Melchizedek who would rule the nations, conquer satanic forces of evil, and provide atonement for the sins of his people on the eschatological Day of Atonement. The combined evidence of these writings suggests that messianic expectations in intertestamental Judaism did not always neatly divide into either royal or priestly messianic hopes. At least in some Jewish circles, the messianic expectation was built on the logic of Psalm 110 and a royal priestly Melchizedekian messiah.

#### **Chapter 5**

In this final chapter, I attempted to articulate how the New Testament developed the union of priesthood and kingship in the person and work of Jesus Christ on the basis of Psalm 110. As a biblical-theological investigation (as opposed to a systematic

one), I narrowed my analysis to places where the inner-biblical logic of Psalm 110 appeared to be shaping a New Testament author's narrative portrayal of Christ or informing the substance of his Christological argument. With that in mind, I turned to the Gospel of Mark and the epistle to the Hebrews.

Psalm 110:1 appears twice in the final chapters of Mark's Gospel (Mark 12:36; 14:62). In their narrative context—the temple setting (12:36) and before the high priest (14:62)—Jesus' self-referential use of Psalm 110 evokes the psalm's broader royal priestly context to inform Jesus' identity. The application of Psalm 110 to Jesus in his final confrontational encounters functions as the climax to Jesus' earlier confrontations with religious leaders over the issue of his identity. Though Jesus is never explicitly identified as a priest in Mark's Gospel, he occupies a priestly ministry in the early stages of Mark's narrative. By casting out unclean spirits (Mark 1:21–28; 5:1–20), cleansing the leper (Mark 1:40–45), forgiving sins (Mark 2:1–12), ruling the Sabbath (Mark 2:23–3:6), reconstituting sacred space (Mark 2:23–3:6), and redefining purity codes (Mark 7:14–23) Jesus' priestly identity is a subtext in the beginning of Mark's Gospel. Jesus is a new type of priest not of the Levitical order. When Psalm 110 is applied to Jesus in the closing narrative, the order of his priesthood becomes more explicit—Jesus is a royal priest after the order of Melchizedek. As the royal priest, Jesus establishes the kingdom he preached early in his ministry (Mark 1:15). The irony, however, is that he establishes this kingdom through his own self-offering on the cross. In the Gospel of Mark, the king ascends to his throne (cross) to establish God's kingdom through his own covenant sacrifice.

The epistle to the Hebrews indisputably contains the most thorough exposition of Psalm 110 in the entire New Testament. By analyzing the argument of Hebrews, I attempted to show how the author interpreted the royal priestly logic of Psalm 110 as part of the covenantal storyline of culminating in Christ. Several observations surfaced from this investigation: (1) Christ's dominion over the universe as the Davidic Son, priest, and

king of Psalm 110 fulfills God's creational design for humanity to rule (king) the world from the place of God's presence (priest). (2) Psalm 110:1 shapes the eschatological, soteriological, and cosmological argument of Hebrews. (3) The logic of Psalm 110 informs the Joshua-Jesus typology in the epistle. (4) Christ's priestly role on earth is to be distinguished from the eternal Melchizedekian office awarded him upon his resurrection. (5) Christ mediates the blessings of the new covenant as the Melchizedekian priest of Psalm 110:4. (6) The superiority of the new covenant is a product of the superior priesthood that mediates its covenantal blessings. This superior priesthood is the Melchizedekian priesthood because it is associated with the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. The old covenant could not enact the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant because the Levitical priests were weak, mortal, sinful men. Jesus, however, is able to mediate the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant as the Davidic royal Son and priest after the order of Melchizedek.

### **Theological Implications**

#### **Soteriology**

Jeremy Treat's recent book, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* masterfully handles the nature of the often-disputed relationship between the kingdom of God and the cross of Christ.<sup>2</sup> At the risk of overestimating the quality of this project, perhaps it is fair to say that this dissertation complements Treat's excellent thesis. The biblical-theological development of royal priesthood informs the biblical-theological and systematic relationship between kingdom (royal) and cross (priest). In the biblical narrative, kingdom and cross are not at odds with each other, just as the union of kingship and priesthood in a single individual is not an

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<sup>2</sup>Jeremy R. Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014).

isolated theme. Instead, God's kingdom comes through the cross. Or to put it in categories consistent with this project, kingship is achieved through priestly self-sacrifice; God's kingdom comes through God's covenant mediator. The kingdom is inaugurated through the king's priestly self-sacrifice, and the kingdom grows through the royal priest's ongoing work of mediation. More work needs to be done in the area of Christology that resists the convenient categorical systemization of Christ's offices into prophet, priest, and king. By examining the person and work of Christ through the biblical-theological union of priest and king as it unfolds in the storyline of Scripture, scholars will pave the way for fresh and exciting insights into the life and ministry of Jesus that do justice to his royal priestly identity.<sup>3</sup>

### **Eschatology**

Psalm 110 is one of the most disputed texts by dispensational and covenant theologians, premillennialists and amillennialists. The debate between these camps tends to hinge on whether or not the Christological fulfillment of Psalm 110 means that Jesus is reigning on David's throne and ruling over David's kingdom. How one answers that question obviously has implications for eschatology and the nature of the millennium. A question rarely explored, if at all, is how the Christological fulfillment of Psalm 110 and its relationship to cosmology should influence these debates. Specifically, I am thinking of how the author of Hebrews uses Psalm 110 as it pertains to the exaltation and ascension of Christ and his work of new covenant mediation, and their relationship to his overall understanding of cosmology. Here is what I mean: The royal priestly logic of Psalm 110 in Hebrews adds more clarity on the reason for Christ's absence (ascension)

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<sup>3</sup>Dave Schrock shares this conviction. He writes, "Sadly, theologians who usually conceive of Christ's priesthood in systematic categories (prophet, priest, and king) are most heavily influenced by Calvin in Geneva instead of Adam in the garden." David Stephen Schrock, "A Biblical-Theological Investigation of Christ's Priesthood and Covenant Mediation with Respect to the Extent of the Atonement," (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), 373.

during these last days of human history. Christ had to ascend to heaven to mediate salvific blessings to the nations because only a priest in the true tabernacle could accomplish effective and eternal forgiveness (Heb. 8–10). If Christ were on earth, he could not be a priest at all because this earth is subjected to the curse and the futility of the old covenant administration (Heb 8:4). He had to ascend to heaven to enact redemption for humanity because only from this curse-free locale can full and final forgiveness be mediated to mankind.

This angle on the ascension and present ministry of Christ in the heavenly tabernacle may have profound implications for pre-millennial eschatology and the concept of a millennial reign of Christ on earth. In the logic of Hebrews, how does the royal priest continue to exercise his new covenant mediation if he returns to earth without bringing heaven to bear on this earthly realm? In other words, if Christ is going to reign as the Melchizedekian priest-king on earth, then must his return be accompanied by the transformation (destruction?) of this earth-under-curse, so that the new heavens and new earth become the new temple (tabernacle) where the royal priest continues to mediate his eternal salvific blessings?<sup>4</sup> Based on the author of Hebrews' interpretation of Psalm 110, it seems like a step backward in redemption history for Christ to leave the heavenly tabernacle *in heaven* and exercise his royal rule and priestly covenant mediation on the earth that is associated with the old covenant, while the true tabernacle (world to come)—from whence the blessings of the new covenant are mediated—remains in another dimension. More work needs to be done to determine if the concept of an earthly millennial reign of Christ is at odds with the eschatological and cosmological argument of Hebrews and its use of Psalm 110.

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<sup>4</sup>To this it might be added that Hebrews appears to describe Christ's second coming as the decisive and final event of salvation for his people (Heb 9:28).

## **Ecclesiology**

What does this study have to do with the church? Christ has achieved for humanity the dominion lost by Adam after the Fall. By virtue of Christ's work, believers are made royal priestly sons of God. While the people of God do not share in Christ's Melchizedekian office, they do occupy the status of a royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:9) and exist as a kingdom and priests to God (Rev 5:10; cf. Rev 1:6). In the time between Christ's first coming and second coming, Christ rules from heaven (Ps 110:1), but his rule is mediated through his church. In Johnson's words, "Christ's authority as King-Priest is mediated through the Holy Spirit in His body, the church."<sup>5</sup> By recognizing that the church exercises authority (rule) on earth and that this authority is a mediated authority, we maintain both the royal and priestly components of the church's identity. The church is royal in that she is authorized to wield the keys to the kingdom on earth (Matt 18:15–20). The church is priestly because her authority is not ultimate; she exercises this authority on behalf of another (mediation).

So how does the church exercise her royal priestly authority in the world before Christ comes again? Local churches are outposts of God's kingdom on earth. They are embassies of a future kingdom. Churches that preach the gospel, administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and practice church discipline wield the keys of God's kingdom on earth. In other words, the church has been authorized to proclaim and guard sound doctrine that accords with the gospel, to affirm a person's citizenship in the kingdom through the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to exclude false professors who remain in unrepentant sin from the membership of the church, thus disavowing their citizenship in God's kingdom.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Elliott E. Johnson, "Hermeneutical Principles and the Interpretation of Psalm 110," *BSac* 149, no. 596 (October 1, 1992): 437.

<sup>6</sup>For an excellent discussion of how the church wields the authority of God's kingdom on earth, see Jonathan Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Church Membership and Discipline* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 169–228.

1 Peter 2:9 indicates that the purpose of the church's royal priestly identity is to "proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light." Every time the gospel is preached, the church summons unbelievers to repent with the royal authority of king Jesus. By spreading the gospel message, the church extends the borders of sacred space every time an unbeliever repents of sin, believes in Christ, and receives the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Through the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the church publicly affirms an individual's kingdom citizenship. The church is authorized, on the basis of its royal priestly charter, to administer baptism as the "initiating oath-sign of the new covenant."<sup>7</sup> The royal priestly authority exercised by the church through baptism also becomes the means by which the baptized individual is absorbed into that same authority. In other words, the baptized individual is initiated into the membership and authority of the collective royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:9).<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the church is authorized to administer the ordinance of the Lord's Supper as the "renewing oath-sign of the new covenant."<sup>9</sup> The children of Abraham (members of the new covenant) receive the blessing of communing with Christ through the Holy Spirit by partaking of the bread and wine, which are distributed under the authority of the corporate royal priesthood (the church).

Finally, the church, as a royal priesthood, wields the keys of the kingdom through the practice of church discipline. By excommunicating someone in unrepentant

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<sup>7</sup>This language of "initiating oath-sign of the new covenant" is borrowed from Bobby Jamieson in his excellent chapter on the relationship between baptism and the new covenant. Bobby Jamieson, *Going Public: Why Baptism Is Required for Church Membership* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015), 53–80.

<sup>8</sup>Leeman writes, "Through baptism people are formally reinstated to Adam's original political office and the body politic of Jesus' church." Jonathan Leeman, *Political Church: The Local Assembly as Embassy of Christ's Rule*, Studies in Christian Doctrine and Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016), 361. This quote is cited in Jamieson, *Going Public*, 93.

<sup>9</sup>Again, this language is taken from Jamieson, *Going Public*, 113–17.

sin, the church declares that individual a kingdom imposter. By authoritatively distinguishing the insiders from the outsiders, the church exercises its royal priestly authority by protecting the boundaries of God's kingdom on earth.

In all of these ways, the church embodies what it means to mediate God's blessing on earth. Reflecting on Psalm 110, Routledge applies the priestly component of blessing to the church's relationship to the world. He writes,

More particularly, in the light of the discussion of what it means to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek, we recognize that a key part of our calling (and in 1 Pet. 2:9 we are also described as priests) is to be a channel of God's blessing to the people of God (and to the world). Read in this way, the psalm not only blesses *us*, it also challenges us to live up to our calling to be a means by which the blessing of God flows to others.<sup>10</sup>

### **Apologetics**

As I pastor in Utah, I am surrounded by people who claim to hold the office of the Melchizedekian priesthood. Mormonism teaches that the offices of the Aaronic and Melchizedekian priesthoods are still in effect and held by leading members of the Mormon Church.<sup>11</sup> This dissertation has proved that such teachings cannot be sustained from the metanarrative of Scripture. Christ has rendered the Aaronic priesthood obsolete, and the resurrected Christ alone qualifies for the office of the Melchizedekian priesthood. Christ alone is able to mediate the blessings of the new covenant by virtue of his perfect obedience, sacrificial death, resurrection, and ascension into the heavenly Zion. No other human being has accomplished what Christ achieved, and therefore, no other human being may claim the right to Melchizedek's priesthood. While it is true that the Bible teaches that all believers in the new covenant era occupy the functional role of royal

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<sup>10</sup>Robin L. Routledge, "Psalm 110, Melchizedek and David: Blessing (The Descendants Of Abraham)," *Baptistic Theologies* 1, no. 2 (September 1, 2009): 16.

<sup>11</sup>Joseph Smith, *The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints: Containing Revelations Given to Joseph Smith, the Prophet, with Some Additions by His Successors in the Presidency of the Church* (Salt Lake City, UT: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1952), 107:1, 6.



priests (cf. 1 Pet 2:9), no Christian, nor anyone else, can claim the office of the Melchizedekian priesthood. To do so is to blaspheme the singularity and sufficiency of Christ's redemptive work.

### **Closing Comments**

Psalm 110 is one of the most well known passages of Scripture. By no means has this dissertation settled all the exegetical, theological, and hermeneutical issues associated with this particular psalm—nor was that my goal. This project honed in on one of this psalm's most difficult problems, namely, how to make sense out of the union of kingship and priesthood in a way that assumes the integrity of Scripture and its authors. My assumption heading into this research was that the inner-biblical logic of David's royal priestly Melchizedekian messianism (Ps 110) was part of a much bigger biblical-theological picture than the Melchizedek episode of Genesis 14:17–24 alone. I believe this dissertation has substantiated that assumption by connecting Psalm 110 to the Bible's unfolding story of God's kingdom purpose in creation and redemption.

I pray that the research presented here might stimulate the hearts of all who read it to have greater trust in the integrity of the Bible and a deeper sense of wonder at God's glorious plan of salvation for his royal priestly image bearers. Jesus Christ is our great high priest and eternal king to whom all glory is due. Until we reign with him as a kingdom and priests to our God (Rev 5:10), may this project be used to equip and strengthen his church. *Soli Deo Gloria.*

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## ABSTRACT

### THE ROYAL PRIEST: PSALM 110 IN BIBLICAL- THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Matthew Habib Emadi, Ph.D.  
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Chair: Dr. James M. Hamilton, Jr.

This dissertation develops the biblical-theological rationale for the union of kingship and priesthood in Psalm 110 in the context of the entire canon. The thesis of this project is that a canonical reading of David's depiction of the eschatological Melchizedekian priest-king develops God's creational purpose for humanity to establish God's kingdom (king) by mediating God's covenantal blessings from his temple sanctuary (priest), and simultaneously advances God's redemption project by depicting the order of royal priesthood that would bring the promises of the Abrahamic covenant to fruition.

Chapter 1 introduces the thesis and methodological issues pertaining to this study, and surveys the research in the modern period in order to identify how scholars have handled the union of kingship and priesthood in a single figure in Psalm 110.

Chapter 2 examines the concept of royal priesthood in the Torah. This examination demonstrates that Adam is the Bible's royal priestly prototype and that his royal priesthood is recapitulated in important covenantal figures—Noah, Abraham, Melchizedek, Israel, and Aaron. Melchizedek, in particular, is a priest-king uniquely associated with Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant.

Chapter 3 situates Psalm 110 in its Old Testament context and hones in on the

patterns of David's own life experiences—revealed in 1–2 Samuel—and the content of the Davidic covenant in order to show how David would have arrived at the conclusion that the messiah was to be a royal priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Chapter 4 briefly investigates the intertestamental literature in order to show how the union of priesthood and kingship in Psalm 110 influenced the messianic expectations of the authors of the *Testament of Levi*, *1 Enoch*, *2 Enoch*, and *11QMelchizedek*.

Chapter 5 focuses on how the New Testament develops the union of priesthood and kingship in the person and work of Jesus Christ on the basis of Psalm 110. The Gospel of Mark and the epistle to the Hebrews pick up the royal priestly logic of Psalm 110 in their respective Christological arguments.

Chapter 6 is the conclusion. It summarizes the arguments of the previous chapters and proposes some theological implications from this study.

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