



*Studies in Peace and Scripture:
Institute of Mennonite Studies*

THE VEHEMENT JESUS

Grappling with Troubling Gospel Texts

DAVID J. NEVILLE

The Vehement Jesus composes a fresh examination and interpretation of several perplexing passages in the Gospels that, at face value, challenge the conviction that the mission and message of Jesus were peaceful. Using narrative analysis and various forms of intratextual critique in the service of a hermeneutic of *shalom*, the author makes the case that Gospel portrayals of the vehement Jesus are compatible with, perhaps even indispensable to, the composite canonical portrait of Jesus as the Messiah of Peace. As a result, this exploration in New Testament theology and ethics makes an invaluable contribution to the crucial conversation about the role of Jesus' life and teaching in Christian reflection on the morality of violence today.

"This engaging work of patient and passionate scholarship is theologically productive. Neville is well-informed, fair-minded, meticulous, creative, and—above all—honest."

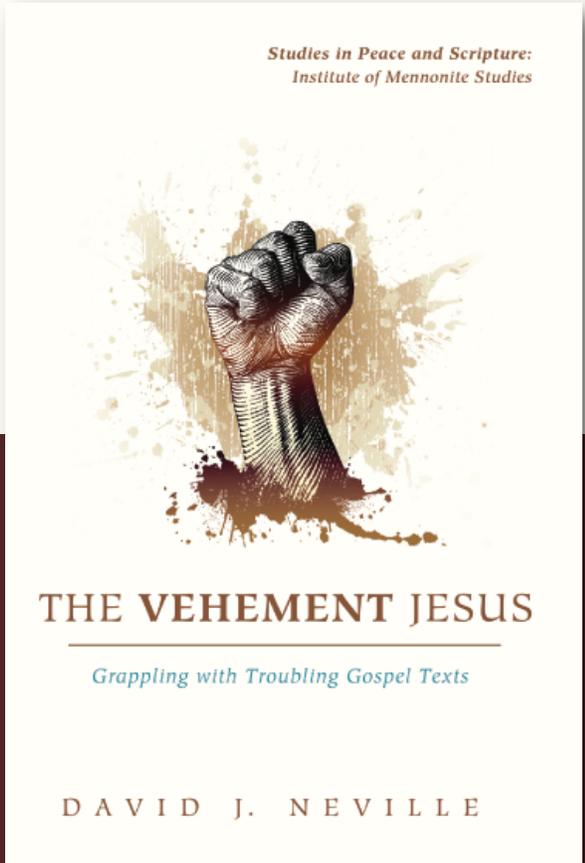
—DALE C. ALLISON, JR., Princeton Theological Seminary

"Do the Gospels present Jesus as committed to the practice of non-violence? Tackling a set of especially challenging texts in the Gospels and vigorously engaging the counter-arguments of other scholars, David Neville makes a convincing case for a vehement, yet non-violent Jesus. This is an important book on a topic of biblical interpretation and ethics that has urgent relevance for our time."

—JOHN T. CARROLL, Union Presbyterian Seminary

"Every chapter of *The Vehement Jesus* contains a biblical bomb ready to explode. David Neville is not in the business of defusing and disposal; he opens the passages carefully and shows us what makes them tick. His exegesis is precise, contextually sensitive, self-critical, and conversant with a range of opinion both contemporary and ancient. His conclusions are judicious and never predetermined. The author deserves our thanks for a tractable treatise on intractable texts."

—C. CLIFTON BLACK, Princeton Theological Seminary



"Neville's close, contextual readings of Gospel texts that seemingly implicate Jesus in violence (by teaching or action) could be a model for biblical scholars who want to face difficulties in the Bible head-on while respecting the normative, canonical thrust of Scripture (an ethical variant of the rule of faith). Without harmonizing variant traditions or reducing them to their supposedly 'historical' kernel, Neville proposes responsible readings of problematic texts in a manner that will be helpful to the church negotiating a violent world. Parenthetically, his treatment of the cursing of the fig tree is worth the price of the book."

—J. RICHARD MIDDLETON, Roberts Wesleyan College

David J. Neville is associate professor of theology and lecturer in New Testament studies at St Mark's National Theological Centre, the Canberra campus of Charles Sturt University's School of Theology. He is the author of two books on the synoptic problem and, most recently, *A Peaceable Hope: Contesting Violent Eschatology in New Testament Narratives* (2013).

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