Triumphant King, Peaceful Savior, and World-Wide Ruler

*Three Scenes Which Clarify the Nature of Jesus’ Kingship (John 12:12-19)*

1. Jesus is welcomed as the promised Messiah (vv.12-13, 17-18)
   1. The crowd’s motivation for meeting Jesus (vv.12, 17-18)
      1. The first crowd testifies about His sign to those coming to the Feast .
      2. The second crowd responds to this report with an eager reception of Jesus.
   2. The crowd’s Messianic acclamation of Jesus (v.13)
      1. Their Messianic expectations were heightened by the timing at Passover (e.g, 6:14-15).
      2. Their Messianic accolades were symbolized in the palm branches (e.g., 1 Macc. 13:51; 2 Macc. 10:7; Rev. 7:9).
      3. Their Messianic desires were expressed through Psalm 118 (Ps. 18:26; John 1:49)
2. Jesus is presented as the Triumphant King (vv.14-16)

“*Doubtless many of them had felt for some time that Jesus’ teaching and miracles showed him to be the Messiah. But until now he would not make the claim. He would never set himself up as King. When on this occasion he did not reject their acclamation, their enthusiasm knew no bounds. He was now doing, they thought, what they had always wanted him to do.” (Leon Morris)*

* 1. Jesus accepts this identification as Messiah in a purposeful manner (vv.14-15; e.g., Zech. 9:9-10)
     1. The donkey signified honor and royalty (Zech. 9:9; Gen. 49:10-11)

*“The connection between the donkey/mule and leadership, especially royal leadership, suggests that riding on a donkey/mule is a traditional respectful symbol, much as the horse-drawn landau carriage functions today for the British royal family.” (Boda)*

* + 1. The donkey signified the peaceful rule of Messiah (Zech. 9:10; e.g., John 3:16-17; cf. Rev. 19:1ff)

*“Jesus’ choice of a donkey invokes prophetic imagery of a king coming in peace (Zech. 9:9-10), which contrasts sharply with notions of a political warrior messiah (e.g., 1 Kings 4:26; Isa. 31:1-3).” (Kostenberger)*

* 1. The disciples understand the significance of Jesus’ actions only after the cross and resurrection (v.16; e.g., 2:22)

*“What John appears to be saying is that the disciples did not understand the real significance of these events. They did not comprehend the nature of Jesus’ kingship (though they may well have thought of him as in some sense the messianic King). John is not affirming that the multitude correctly evaluated the Person of the Lord. They thought of him as King in a wrong sense. After the glorification the disciples thought of him as King in a right sense.” (Leon Morris)*

*“No one in Jerusalem but Jesus…understood that he entered Jerusalem, sitting on a donkey, to receive that kingship and, as the Son of man, to be lifted up on the cross. For that reason, the story of the entry, particularly in John’s presentation of it, is the story of Jesus’ hidden glory, the deep meaning of which only the progress of the events of salvation would disclose.” (Herman Ridderbos)*

* + 1. It was His glorification in the cross which established Him as the Zechariah 9:9 kind of King.
    2. It was His glorification in the cross which led to the fulfillment of the promises of Zechariah 9.
       1. Through the cross, Christ’s kingdom will be established in peace, not through warfare (Zech. 9:10).
       2. Through the cross, Christ’s rule will extend to the ends of the earth (Zech. 9:10; cf. Ps. 72:8; John 12:20).
       3. Through the cross, Christ’s blood would seal the salvation of God’s people (Zech. 9:11).
    3. It was His glorification in the cross which aligned Him to the other Messianic expectations of Zechariah (Zech. 9:9; 11:8, 12; 12:10; 13:7).

1. Jesus is identified in His relationship with the world (v.19)
   1. The world represents those who have failed to receive Christ rightly.

*“By the end of the chapter John will insist that the overwhelming reaction to Jesus was unbelief…so that here, as elsewhere…the Evangelist does not accord a very high place to the crowd’s positive response to Jesus.” (Carson)*

* 1. The world represents the universal scope of the conquering work of Christ’s cross.

*“The crowd that acclaims Jesus as the King of Israel anticipates the broader sweep of humanity that will enjoy Jesus’ saving reign. As the plots of the Pharisees and their colleagues were not proving very effective in reducing Jesus’ popularity, so the later attempts to stem the rising tide of Christianity proved exasperating.” (Carson)*