

John 12:12-16

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Date: 09 December 2012

Preacher: Gordon Frame

[0 : 00] Just a brief reading. The Lord Jesus has entered into Jerusalem for the last time. And we read John 12, verses 12 to 16.

The next day, the great crowd that had come for the feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, Hosanna!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the King of Israel. Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it.

As it is written, Do not be afraid, O daughter of Zion. See, your King is coming, seated on a donkey's coat. At first, his disciples did not understand all this.

Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.

[1 : 15] Well, I would imagine some of us have received our first Christmas cards of the year.

And if you're anything like us, your hearts sink a little bit. It's lovely that people remember you and the Christmas cards come through the door, but it reminds you that you haven't actually bought yours yet.

Never mind sent them. But as we get our Christmas cards, as we buy them, and I guess many of us, I mean, it's only those of us of a certain age who get them anymore. Our son says he's never sent one in his life and doesn't intend doing so.

But perhaps we look to get cards that have a Christian message on them. And amongst the things that will be said on some of the cards, it will talk about the kingship of Jesus.

Perhaps it will have verses like in Isaiah 9, speaking about Jesus, the one who will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom.

[2 : 22] And I just want us to think a little bit this evening about what it means for Jesus to be king. What that means, and we're going to look at one or two passages tonight to see that.

Of course, whenever we even use that term, Jesus Christ, when we use that phrase, we are pointing towards Jesus' kingship because the word Christ, as I'm sure you know, Christ or Messiah in the Hebrew, means the anointed one.

prophets and priests were anointed, but above all, it was the king who was anointed.

So even as we use the term Jesus Christ, we are inferring something of his kingship. And yet if we were to look at an outsider, was to look at the earthly life of Jesus, you wouldn't see many of the trappings of what we might think of with regard to a king.

His birth was a particularly lowly birth. There wasn't any great finery about it. There were no signs or placards outside a palace to announce the birth of a king.

[3 : 59] And his life, from society's point of view, was a fairly undistinguished life. He didn't leave his own native shores.

He didn't lead any armies. He didn't even write any books. There was nothing somebody from the outside would look at and say, there was somebody who was obviously a king.

And yet, even at the beginning and at the end of his life, he was recognized, at least by some, as being a king.

You remember the Magi, these wise men who came from the east and when they appeared before Herod, the question that they had was, where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?

Of course, not surprisingly, they headed towards Jerusalem, the capital, and they headed towards the royal palace to ask this sort of question.

[5 : 09] If the star hadn't led him, they wouldn't have expected to find him in Bethlehem. But that was their question. Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?

And of course, it was that question that led Herod to feel tremendously threatened. He was the only one, the only king, and he didn't want any rivals.

And that, of course, was what caused the horrendous butchery, the murder of the innocents. But again, we find the same at the end of his life.

When the Lord Jesus was crucified, Pilate put the placard above him which said, this is Jesus, the king of the Jews.

Of course, many of the Jewish people objected to that and asked Pilate to change it to, you know, this is the one who said he was king of the Jews. But Pilate at that point at least stood firm and said, what was written would remain.

[6 : 20] So as I say, even at the beginning and the end of his life, there is something of Jesus' kingship is shown. And Jesus himself, whilst denying worldly models of kingship, acknowledged that indeed he was a king.

When he was appearing before Pilate, Jesus said to Pilate, my kingdom is not of this world.

If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place. You are a king then, said Pilate.

Jesus answered, you are right in saying I am a king. So Jesus points out that his kingship and the way he would rule is totally different to the models around about them but nevertheless he acknowledges that he is a king.

Now it's evident, isn't it, as we look around the world today, use the term worldwide, if you look around Whitby today, if you look around your street today, you will see that Jesus is not universally recognized as king now.

[7 : 42] but the Bible tells us that a time will come when he will be, when everybody will have to have to acknowledge that he is the king.

In the last book of the Bible in the Revelation we're told that he will appear and on his robe and on his thigh he has this name written king of kings and lord of lords.

Paul, when he was writing to the church at Philippi, perhaps quoting from a hymn that was already in existence, said, at the name of Jesus every knee will bear and it will.

So in Jesus the Old Testament officers of prophet, priest and king all coalesce, he is the exalted king over all and to whom everyone will bear.

But what sort of king is he? What I want us to do this evening to begin with and for the bulk of our meeting I want to go back to that passage in Deuteronomy chapter 17 and show how the Lord Jesus perfectly fulfills that definition if you like of what a good king should be like.

[9 : 19] We know that after this eventually the nation of Israel both the northern and the southern kingdom had their kings and some were better than others it seemed to be almost cyclical didn't it?

There would be a good king who would rule for a while and would lead the people back towards God and then often followed by a bad king who would turn the people away from God and so it went on and on.

So there were bad kings there were better kings but not one of them would fit this pattern absolutely perfectly until the Lord Jesus Christ came along.

Two or three years ago Martin Johnson was sacked from his role as coach of the England Rugby Union team and I remember Jeremy Guscott being interviewed once about whether he felt it was fair or unfair that he had been sacked and Jeremy Guscott said well let's be honest in the end he came up short.

I must admit I guess Jeremy Guscott immediately went off Martin Johnson's Christmas card list at that point but that was his conclusion in the end he came up short and we can look at the kings of the Old Testament and some were an awful lot better than others but in the end if you actually compare them to this template every one of them to some extent came up short but the Lord Jesus doesn't adore.

[11 : 04] So let me just point out five things that are pointed out in this passage in Deuteronomy 17 about what the sort of person that the Israelites were to look for for their king and to show how Jesus fulfills this absolutely perfectly.

First thing is that the writer there says that they must appoint a king of God's choosing.

See there in verse 15 be sure to appoint over you the king the Lord your God chooses. Don't just look for who you think would do the job well.

Look for the person that God would choose. And of course there is a glorious example of that isn't there when Samuel goes to the house of Jesse to seek to find a king to replace Saul who has begun sadly to turn his back on God.

And when Samuel turns up to the house of Jesse the first person he sees is the eldest son and he's a strapping young man and he looks every inch a king if you can have that.

[12 : 31] And Samuel thinks surely this is the person whom God has brought me to this household for. But God says to him no he is not the one I have chosen.

And he points out that men tend to look on the outer things but God looks at the heart. and you remember that Samuel goes through all of these sons of Jesse until finally there is just the one left who Jesse doesn't even think of bringing before him the one who is out on the hills with the sheep and it's the youngest son David.

But he is the one of God's choosing. But when we look to the life of the Lord Jesus when we see him come upon earth every so often God the Father makes clear to the people that here is the one who is very very special.

The one whom God the Father has chosen to do his work. When the Lord Jesus is baptized a voice is heard from heaven.

saying this is my son whom I love with him I am well pleased. Jesus is the one chosen of God.

[14 : 01] And then a little later when he begins his earthly ministry he turns up at the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth and the scriptures are given to him and he unrolls it and he finds the place there in Isaiah and he reads the words out the spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor he has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind to release the oppressed to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour then he rolled up the scroll we're told gave it back to the attendant and sat down and the people are waiting for him to teach this is what would normally happen the scriptures would be read and he would teach the eyes of everyone in the synagogue are fastened on him and he began by saying to them today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing

I am the one about whom Isaiah was speaking or God was speaking through Isaiah I am the one who has the spirit of the Lord upon me who has been anointed to preach the good news so yes David was chosen by God but more especially was the Lord Jesus the chosen one secondly they are told that they must be sure that their king is somebody who belongs to God's family he says he must be from among your own brothers do not place a foreigner over you one who is not a brother Israelite he says you know it's not like the England football team you can't get a coach from a foreign country he says your king has to be a fellow Israelite and the

Bible is very very clear at drawing out the Lord Jesus family line how does the whole of the New Testament begin it begins in Matthew with the genealogy of the Lord Jesus pointing out yes of course he is an Israelite but even more than that he fulfills all of the predictions of the one the Messiah who was to come he is not only an Israelite but he is born of the land of Judah he is of the tribe of David and of course finally he was born in Bethlehem this isn't just padding when the Bible puts that genealogy in it it's important for us to see where the Lord Jesus Christ came from physically in his physical descent

Paul writing to the church at Rome says who as to his human nature was a descendant of David there's a game I remember our children had when they were young and I'm trying to remember the name that some of you may remember where you get a board and there's about 24 different people there what is it guess who that's right and the children have to work out who the one is the card that they've got by asking questions like do they have a hat is it a man or a woman and so forth but eventually there is only one person who exactly fits the description and it is Jesus who fits the description so he is chosen by God he belongs to God's people thirdly the king according to Deuteronomy 17 had to be somebody who was a model of trust in and loyalty to God that's this business of horses and wives did it strike you as a bit strange that that he wasn't somebody he wasn't to acquire a great number of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them I wonder if that struck you as a bit of an odd instruction when you were choosing a king but as I mentioned actually this morning you know horses were the sort of great technology of the day for warfare the nations who had horses and who had chariots tended to be much more successful than those who were without and Israel often fell into the tendency of not relying on

[19 : 23] God you know sometimes they would defeat their enemies with far smaller armies through the power of God but they never seemed to learn from that time and time again they were

faced by opposition and they were saying oh to beat the opposition we must get more horses or we must make alliances with foreign countries and whenever they did that they were defeated that was the point of not going for horses and not going back to Egypt that was disloyalty and it was failing to trust God and before we knock them too much can't we be just like that in various circumstances in our life we find that God and he alone has helped us through things and yet when the next problem comes along instead of going to him first we try all the broken systems first and only go to him as a last resort and then when we find

God's aid and help we say to ourselves I must remember that in the future and how easy it is to forget again but the Lord Jesus in his earthly life trusted entirely in his father and in the spirit you remember when he was arrested in Gethsemane one of his disciples you know slices off the ear of one of the people who come to arrest him and they try by physical force to prevent his arrest and Jesus said look I could call down legions of angels but this isn't the way I entrust my life completely into the father and of course if the Lord Jesus had resisted his arrest and resisted being crucified there wouldn't be one of us who would be here tonight and there wouldn't be one of us with the hope of heaven and the king was also to be loyal and loyal to

God and this again is the point of the warning not to choose somebody who would take many wives and by that be led astray the classic example of that is king Solomon he was a man who started his reign very very well but he went his own way he ignored the wisdom of God that he had asked for and we find that eventually he took a huge number of wives of royal birth and we told in 1 Kings 11 and his wives led him astray in what way as Solomon grew old his wives turned his heart after other gods and his heart was not fully devoted to the

Lord his God as the heart of David his father had been but the Lord Jesus unlike Solomon was entirely loyal to his father when he was tempted in the wilderness you remember that the devil offered him huge riches and power over the earth if he would bow down and worship him but the Lord responded from the scriptures and pointed out that all men's loyalty is due to God and God alone so the king was to be a model of trust in and loyalty to God and he was also to be a model of selflessness not only must he not take many horses and many wives but we're told again in verse 17 he must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold of course it would be very easy for a king in those days to use that position to multiply wealth to himself he had all the power in the world and we sometimes see despots today doing just that

I think it's right to feel righteous indignation when we see poverty stricken countries where the ordinary people are desperate and their leaders living in obscene opulence do not your king is not to accumulate large amounts of silver and gold and what happens when the king of kings and the lord of lords comes to earth where one person says i'll follow you wherever you will go Jesus says the son of man has nowhere to lay his head he says i don't even have a home that i own at the time he was on his itinerant ministry he would just stay at friends houses you could say he was sofa surfing the lord Jesus had nowhere to lay his head and again we're told later he came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many not accumulating silver and gold but a selfless life i was given a tract last week when i was in leeds and i should have gone back to the person who gave me it as i looked at i read it it came from a purportedly christian group advertising their meetings and on the back of it it had testimonies when i read the testimonies there was nothing of Jesus there there was nothing of people repenting from their sin but they were just testimonies of people who had been healed or people who had been in debt and by following God now had masses of money i just found it so sad that this was a supposed testimony follow Jesus you'll have health and wealth the Lord Jesus was a model of selflessness and fifthly and finally the king should be a model of love for and obedience to the law of God you see the first thing that a king had to do when he became king or he should do was to write out for himself on a scroll the law of God that must have taken a while and then to read it all the days of his life and to love it because some of the kings took that seriously some of them like Hezekiah you know rejoiced when he found God's law and wanted to reform the country according to the law but even he had his weaknesses but the Lord Jesus in his earthly life you cannot but be taken by his love for God's word when he was age 12 you remember he got left behind in Jerusalem by his parents and when they realised he was missing they went back to Jerusalem and what do they find him doing they find him in the temple there discussing God's word with the scribes we've already mentioned the way in which he was tempted to divert from the path that he had been set on when he was in the wilderness with the

[28 : 16] devil and how did he rebuff the devil time and time again he just referred him back to the scriptures this is what the word says and he quotes from deuteronomy and if you of course if you look at his teaching the lord jesus time and time again refers back to the old testament scriptures there's one point where his disciples were particularly thick just like we are very often they're short of food people around about them are short of food as well and they say we'll go and get some and jesus says to them you know i've got food here that you don't know anything of and they presume he means he's got his packed lunch with them you know that he's got physical food there but jesus says no my food is to do the will of him who sent me he says that's my food that's my nourishment that's what keeps me going my food is to do the will of him who sent me i wonder if we can say that so the lord jesus fully meets this template of what a king was meant to be like most of the time his kingship remained veiled during his earthly life because he knew as soon as it was made evident his enemies would seek to bring him down and the time had not yet come but eventually that kingship would be unveiled and that's why i read that little passage in john chapter 12 it's found in the other gospel accounts as well where the lord jesus enters into jerusalem just a few days before he he will die and the lord jesus prepares his entrance intimately the other the synoptic gospel writers tell us all about how he arranged this entry into jerusalem how he sent his disciples before him how he organized that he would get a colt and he would ride into jerusalem on that colt or on that donkey and that was very very deliberate why because it was fulfilling the prophecy of of zechariah zechariah who centuries before would say see your king is coming seated on a donkey's coat so when jesus organized that he was announcing he was saying here is the fulfillment of zechariah's prophecy i am coming into jerusalem just as he said i am coming as your king and that crowd it's so sad isn't it that perhaps many of that crowd would later be the ones who would shout crucify him and yet the crowds at the time they put their palm branches before him they they lauded him with praise from psalms that were recognized as being messianic psalms blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord blessed is the king of israel and jesus doesn't turn around and stop them he accepts their praise he accepts their adulation and when people tried to stop them and said to jesus don't you hear what they're saying stop them saying such things about you and jesus said even if i were to stop them the very stones would cry out for once because the time now had come he allowed his kingship to be seen absolutely clearly so what is our response what does that mean to us if we are christians here tonight surely realising again realising afresh that jesus is indeed king is a source of hope and confidence for us sometimes it seems to us doesn't that everything is against us and the cause of christ in the western world we see so much apathy and indifference though i would say in recent years that apathy and indifference is beginning to turn more into actually more open hostility not necessarily physical hostility but hostility against us in terms of what we can say and what we can stand for in this country but of course in other countries that hostility is much more physical we have brothers and sisters in prison i know earlier this year many of us were praying for pastor nader khani in iran who was eventually released though it's very possible he may be arrested again and others who we don't know about we don't know their names are arrested or killed and it can sometimes seem to us that you know everything is against the cause of christ we need to remember jesus is king our god does reign and it is a certain thing that he will bring this present age to an end and he will bring in the new heavens and earth in which we will see everything subject to him but as well as being a source of encouragement in that way it's a challenge

I think to our lives we live in a world that is increasingly wary of authority and in which people want to be masters of their own fate and we can become infected by this as well can we happily sing that philip doddridge hymn which says my gracious god my gracious lord i own thy right to every service i can pay you know lord jesus i recognize that you have a right to every service i can pay you have the rights over my time my service my attitudes my money and strange enough of course the more we accept that the happier we are and the freer we are because he is a good king and it's a great thing to be his willing subjects but if there are any of you here this evening who are not yet christians do remember what we said earlier from that passage in philippians that we're reminded that a day will come when every knee will bow there will be those who have bowed their knees willingly to the lord jesus but if we continue to refuse him we still will have to bow before him but then it will be a recognizing him of being kin but gaining none of the blessings of being his willing subjects we need to bow our hearts and knees now in the day of grace john piper draws out that comparison between

Jesus coming in on a donkey into Jerusalem and that picture that is given of Jesus that awesome picture of him in revelation riding his great war horse and he says this at the minute he still rides a donkey and not yet a white war horse he is ready to save all who receive him as savior and treasure and king come to him know him receive him live your life in allegiance to him well may God help us all this Christmas time to know Jesus amen now to the King eternal immortal invisible the only God be honor and glory forever and ever amen to
Isaiah a i tonight are on oh the replied your money■■■■ also the end google variability air his and the things i i say