

“WHO IS THIS” OBEDIENT KING: A STUDY ON ZECHARIAH 9:9-10 ROYAL
MESSIANIC FIGURE USED IN MATTHEW 21:5

กษัตริย์ที่มีใจถ่อมเชื่อฟังผู้นี้คือ “ใครหนอ” : การศึกษาเรื่องความเป็นกษัตริย์
ของพระเมสสิยาห์ในพระธรรมเศคาริยาห์ซึ่งได้รับการอ้างถึงในกิตติคุณมัทธิว

Itthaphon Duangnapha¹

อิทธิพล ดวงนภา

Abstract

Although most Christians are familiar with Matt 21:1-11, a narrative of Jesus’s victorious entrance into Jerusalem, few have given careful consideration to its use of Zech 9:9 in Matt 21:5, a reference of the royal figure who is riding on a donkey. The fact that Matthew explicitly refers to the text of Zech 9:9 invites the reader to examine the relationship between the two texts and a careful study on the context of Zech 9 would certainly help us to understand more about this royal figure whom the gospel writer identified with Jesus. A study also reveals other possible literary and thematic connections, including the humble character of the royal figure, the unique feature of the donkey used in the narrative, the motifs of Yahweh as divine warrior. These connections show that the gospel writer develops a depiction of Jesus as a royal figure, an important character among other Messianic identities. Finally, the prophetic royal messianic figure used by gospel writer shows a close relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament and the significance in the knowledge of the former in order to have a comprehensive interpretation of the latter.

Keywords: Zechariah, Matthew, Messiah, Jesus Christ, King, Donkey, Divine Warrior

¹ อาจารย์ประจำวิชาพันธสัญญาเดิม วิทยาลัยพระคริสต์ธรรมแมคกิลวารี มหาวิทยาลัยพายัพ

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บทคัดย่อ

แม้ว่าเรื่องราวการเสด็จเข้าสู่กรุงเยรูซาเล็มอย่างผู้พิชิตของพระเยซูคริสต์จะเป็นที่คุ้นเคยกันดีสำหรับคริสตชน อย่างไรก็ตามมีผู้อ่านไม่มากนักที่ได้กลับไปศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการอ้างถึงพระธรรมเศคาริยาห์ 9:9 ในมัทธิว 21:5 โดยมีมัทธิวได้อ้างถึงกษัตริย์ผู้ทรงลา ซึ่งการที่มัทธิวได้อ้างไว้อย่างชัดเจนและเจาะจงนี้เป็นการแสดงให้เห็นถึงการเชิญชวนให้ผู้อ่านได้ย้อนไปอ่านและศึกษาเพื่อหาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างพระคัมภีร์ทั้งสองตอนนี้ การศึกษาถึงบริบทของพระธรรมเศคาริยาห์ 9 ยังช่วยให้ผู้อ่านเห็นความสำคัญของลักษณะกษัตริย์ซึ่งผู้เขียนพระกิตติคุณมัทธิวอ้างถึงว่าเป็นอัตลักษณ์หนึ่งของพระเยซู ได้ชัดเจนมากยิ่งขึ้น นอกจากนั้นแล้วบทความนี้ยังศึกษาถึงตัวเชื่อมทางด้านภาษาและหัวข้อสำคัญต่าง ๆ ได้แก่ คุณลักษณะเรื่องความถ่อมของกษัตริย์องค์นี้ ลักษณะเด่นทางภาษาของการใช้คำว่า “ลา” ในพระธรรมตอนนี้ และเรื่องพระยาห์เวห์ทรงเป็นจอมทัพแห่งสวรรค์ (Divine Warrior) โดยตัวเชื่อมเหล่านี้ทำให้เห็นว่าผู้เขียนกิตติคุณมัทธิวต้องการแสดงถึงอัตลักษณ์ความเป็นกษัตริย์ขององค์พระเยซูคริสต์ซึ่งถือเป็นคุณลักษณะหนึ่งของพระเมสสิยาห์ นอกจากนั้นความเข้าใจเรื่องนี่ยังทำให้เราได้ตระหนักถึงความสัมพันธ์และความสำคัญของพระคัมภีร์ภาคพันธสัญญาเดิมต่อความเข้าใจพระคัมภีร์ภาคพันธสัญญาใหม่เพิ่มมากขึ้นอีกด้วย

คำสำคัญ : เศคาริยาห์ มัทธิว พระเมสสิยาห์ พระเยซูคริสต์ กษัตริย์ ลา Divine Warrior

Introduction

We are all familiar with the passages in Matt 21:1-11 regarding the “Triumphant entry into Jerusalem” of Jesus and his disciples, which is usually relived before our eyes during the Palm Sunday service every year. As vivid as it is written within the narrative, Matthew states his understanding of the event as **τοῦτο δὲ γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῆ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τοῦ προφήτου** “This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet” (21:4), a statement that he is consistently propounding throughout the book. Similar statements also found in Matt 1:22 “All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet” and in 26:56 “But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Therefore, it is obvious that the writer of the first gospel attempts to portray Jesus as the fulfillment of the hope that has been promised from Yahweh through the prophets—a king who is promised. According to Charlene McAfee Moss (2008), “the Matthean Jesus is portrayed as a royal figure. The image of Jesus as Davidic king, which first appeared in the Infancy Narrative, is suddenly reintroduced by means of the Zechariah fulfillment citation” (p. 62). Moreover, Mark Black (2008) concisely sums up the importance of Zechariah tradition used in the gospel:

The influence of Zech 9-14 on the gospel traditions is significant and focused... there are numerous echoes, allusions, and citations of portions of these chapters. It is in fact the cumulative evidence that is convincing... Additionally, the influence is concentrated in the final chapters of the gospels. Furthermore, these chapters are understood with reference to Jesus, particularly his rejection, suffering, death, resurrection, and future coming in judgment. Zechariah 9-14 was a text-plot read by early Christian in light of the experiences of the last days of Jesus. (p. 111)

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Accordingly, the main purpose of this paper is to examine the literary contexts of Zech 9:9, which is quoted in Matt 21:5 in order to have a fuller understanding of the presentation of Matthew’s royal messianic nature of Jesus. The study would be beneficial in several ways: it would present the nature of the royal figure in Zechariah’s texts and how it creates the expectation in the future; and in what way that this concept of royal figure can contribute to the understanding of messianic theme featured in the gospel of Matthew.

In order to accomplish these expectations, I will begin the study by figuring out the literary context of Zech 9 as a whole, with a special attention to verses 9-10, in which the royal messianic figure is presented. This will involve word studies of some key words, which described this messianic king as עֲנִי, who is riding on עֵיר, תְּמֹר, and אֶתוֹן. Also, I will do an observation on the Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern concept of divine warrior motif. Both of these investigations should help us to understand the nature of Zachariah’s messianic king figure, as we are moving forward into the gospel of Matthew, attempting to gain a better understanding of how Matthew uses this Zechariah tradition in his work, specifically in Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem narrative as a messianic king of the Davidic lineage, and how we should interpret this text. Generally, it is no surprise to notice that the representation of kingship of Jesus here is “so different from worldly models of authority... Jesus subverts the worldly understanding of kingship to suggest a reign of a different order,” (Keener, 1999, p. 489) but even more than this simple notion, I propose that in Zech 9 the prophet was presenting Yahweh as the universal King who reestablishes the order of the world, with his messianic earthly king as his representative—a royal obedient king-regent—who is, on his behalf, proclaiming righteousness and peace on the earth. Therefore, Matthew’s presentation of Jesus—a son of man—as messianic king is not only to present him as a humble king, but also, and even more importantly, as a subordinate obedient messianic king-regent, who would eventually proclaiming, through his suffering, God’s

righteousness and peace for humanity. Therefore, according to the citation of Zech 9:9, Matthew already knew “who is this” (v. 10) Jesus. He is not only a prophet as the Jerusalem crowds had answered in verse 11, but he is also a king. Matthew crafted such narrative only to present Jesus as the obedient messianic king—a fulfillment of prophets’ prophecy.

Literary Context of Zechariah 9

It is obvious that Matthew follows almost exactly, but not entirely, with that of Zech 9:9. The exception is the opening words **εἶπατε τῇ θυγατρὶ Σιών**, which he was probably taking from Isaiah 62:11 “Say to the daughter of Zion” (Beale & Carson, 2007). “Zion” is a common usage in the second part of Isaiah “to refer to the exilic community” (Boda, 2016, p. 192). According to Robert H. Gundry (1982), a variant use of “say to” (Isa 62:11) rather than “rejoice” (Zech 9:9) may have been because the Jerusalem crowds had no idea who he is and that his coming “is going to be upset rather than joyful” for them (p. 408). Nevertheless, the next clause **ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεὺς σου ἔρχεται σοι** “Behold your king is coming to you” is following exactly with the LXX and conform with the Hebrew MT texts. Matthew is probably deliberately excluding the next clause from Zech 9:9, which describes the kingly figure as “righteous and saved” to make it fit with his context. For Matthew, as already mentioned above, the city (Zion) was not supposed to rejoice with the coming of the Messiah because they would be the one who received judgment eventually (Matt 23:37-39) (Osborne, 2010). Nevertheless, another way to look at the omission is that the intention of Matthew here is to present Jesus as the “humble king” **βασιλεὺς πραύς**. Gerhard Barth opines on this matter:

Through this deletion **πραύς** stands in the middle point, dominating the quotation. The only possible point in the omission is the emphasizing of **πραύς**. By Matthew’s abbreviation of the account of the finding of the animal

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that is to be ridden (Mark 11.4f) the motive of the wonderful prediction of Jesus about the finding of the animal falls into the background. In this way the thought of the **βασιλεὺς πραύς** steps in a dominating way into the centre. It now shapes the whole account of the entry.... The decisive thing for Matthew in reproducing Zech 9.9 is that Jesus is **πραύς**, he is the **βασιλεὺς πραύς**. (Bornkamm, Barth, & Held, 1963, p. 130)

Krister Stendahl (1991) also has a similar comment that the omission gives precedence to the “poor and riding on an ass” (p. 118-19). The Greek **πραύς**² was used in the Septuagint for the Hebrew **יָנִי**, it occurs more than fifteen times in the Greek translation (Moss, 2008, p. 64). Another fulfillment citation of Zech 9:9 in Matt 21:5 is the mean of transportation into Jerusalem, a donkey, in which Matthew uses three words to describe it: **ὄνον**, **πῶλον**, and **υἷον ὑποζυγίου**, which also substitute for the three words for a donkey used in Hebrew text: **עִיר**, **רִמְלָה**, and **יָתוֹן**.³ The translation makes it quite obvious that Matthew knows Hebrew well and that he keeps his translation literally closer to the Hebrew text when compare to the Septuagint, which seems to interpret the donkey in Zechariah tradition as parallelism and have used only **ὑποζυγίου** and **πῶλον** for it. Craig S. Keener (1999) comments that in this context:

In view of Matthew’s knowledge of Hebrew elsewhere... it is quite unlikely that Matthew would be unfamiliar with Hebrew parallelism. Even here, where his point is closer to the Septuagint, he translates from the Hebrew more literally than the Septuagint does. By reading the text in the manner most useful for

² The word **πραύς** was already used previously in Matt 5:5; 11:29-30

³ There is an issue whether Matthew misinterprets Zachariah 9 or not, regarding the number of the donkey, in which I will not discuss in this article because most commentaries are already dealing with it. The problem probably comes from a literal reading of the Septuagint.

his purpose, Matthew was not offering an unusual hermeneutic; his contemporaries regularly read more into a text than it required where it suited their purposes to do so. (p. 491)

Therefore, by adopting Zech 9:9, Matthew is presenting Jesus as the messianic king who is humble and riding into the city upon “the son of the beast of burden,” which again pointing to both the messianic and the humbleness of Jesus. Follow the overview of Zachariah citation in Matthew 21:5, now we will turn to observe the texts in context of Zechariah 9:9, starting with the two sets of words which point to the messianic nature of this king.

יָנֹכַח in Zech 9:9

יָנֹכַח is an adjective form of the verb form **עָנָה**. It coexists with another adjective form **אָנָּה** which makes it difficult to precisely pin down their semantic distinction between the two terms (Botterweck, Ringgren, & Fabry, 1974, p. 242). The meanings of these adjectives are, for example, crouching, bowing, without property, poor, wretched, humble, suffered, misery, oppressed. Nevertheless, etymologically, the two terms are not fundamentally different (Köhler & Baumgartner, 1995, p. 855-56). The use in the Old Testament is generally applied to such people who is poor and under privilege. For example, in Lev 19:10 and 23:22 Yahweh commands that the Israelites must not completely harvest all of their crops but ought to leave some behind for the poor and the sojourner. They are the people who are dispossessed and have no property, therefore, in this case, Yahweh is their defender. The Old Testament often times specify these group of people as His people and have special relationship with Him, for example, in Exod 22:24 (Eng. 25) He calls the poor “my people” and the moneylender should not demand interests from them. As they are the responsibility of the community, the king also ought to maintain justice on them, for example, in Psalm 72:1-2 the king asked God to grant His justice to him so that he would be able to apply justice to the poor. In the context of Zech 9:9, the description of the messianic king fits well with this concept, he is firstly describe as “righteous” and “saved” the

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qualities that is needed for an ideal king to maintain justice for the people, especially the poor and afflicted ones (cf. Psalm 72). However, the difficulty arises when the term עֲנִי itself is being applied to this messianic king. On this issue Boda (2016) argues that when focus on the interpretation of עֲנִי as “humble” and “humility” it can be applied to people as a general inner quality. Accordingly, “humility is a key quality for one able to fulfill this role of submission to and reliance upon Yahweh as the high king” (p. 567). Therefore, the focus here is on the humbleness of the king, a king-regent, who submits himself to Yahweh, in contrast to other rulers who might not care for the people, this king-regent, out of humbleness to his divine King, ensures that there will be justice for his people. Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers (1993) recognize that:

pious and humble to their god, upon whom they depended for victory in battle. This king’s ability to ascend the throne and claim dominion over his (and other) people is the direct result of his having been “saved” by Yahweh, and so he must surely act humble and subservient to God. (p. 128)

In conclusion, the term עֲנִי, which has been used in Zech 9:9, though strangely applied to the king, portrays the royal messianic figure as a humble subordinate king before the divine king—Yahweh his God.

חֲמֹר, עֵיר, and אֲתוֹן in Zech 9:9

These three terms are used to designate domestic donkey and it is very interesting that all of these are clustering within this messianic passage. Throughout the Old Testament, the most frequently used of these lexemes is חֲמֹר, which is used 96 times, followed by אֲתוֹן 34 times and then עֵיר 8 times. Another term used in the Old Testament for a mule is פָּרֶדֶד (male) and פָּרֶדֶה (female) together appeared 17 times. And the terms for non-domestic, wild donkey, פָּרָא and עֲרוֹד are used 10 times and 1 time respectively.⁴ Accordingly, חֲמֹר seems to be a general use for donkey in the Old Testament, however, Kenneth C. Way (2010), in his article regarding the

⁴ OakTree Software, Inc. Accordance 11.2.4: Bible Software. 2016.

overlapping used of these terms in Zech 9:9, has argued that “the rendering of עֵיִר as ‘colt’ (or foal) is incorrect and that the term has nothing to do with the youngness of the animal,” moreover, the emphasis of the term בֶּן-אַתְנֹת is rather “defines the animal as the ‘offspring’ of a female donkey” and therefore, “the string of donkey terms in Zech 9:9 moves from the general to the specific—the second and third terms each adds new information to the preceding term” (p. 106). That is, הַמֹּר is a term for donkey in general and can be either male or female. For example, Gen 32:6 (5) tells us that Jacob has הַמֹּר, which later on in Gen 32:16 (15) being identified as אֶתֹן and עֵיִר given to his brother. On the other hand, אֶתֹן is always referring to a female donkey, which according to Way’s observation, is being used in many contexts in the Hebrew Scripture: as indicator for wealth, as booty and tribute, as transportation, as beast of burden, and as a royal transportation. Finally, the term עֵיִר is only used with a male animal, which can be both male donkey and mule, but can be either young or old, therefore in this context of Zech 9:9 the noun בֶּן is used in the phrase בֶּן-אַתְנֹת to specifically identify that this animal is young and it is a donkey, not a mule. Therefore, Way (2010) concludes against a popular translation of Zech 9:9 that the “Zion’s king is riding on a donkey (הַמֹּר), but not just any donkey. He is riding on a jackass (עֵיִר), but not just any jackass. He is riding on a purebred (בֶּן-אַתְנֹת) jackass” (p. 114). The distinctiveness of this “purebred” donkey gives more vibrant to the royal king regent, who will come to restore a covenant, justice, and peace with the people of God—the poor and the afflicted ones. According to Way (2011) the donkey was part of the life of nomadic people. It serves in all aspect of life, from religious ceremony, to transportation, to agricultural works. Therefore, it’s “establishing the symbiotic partnership between humans and donkeys. This relationship may have been a significant impetus for the unique status of the donkey in the biblical world” (p. 203).

Structure of Zech 9

From literary point of view Zech 9:1-17 can be structurally divided into three sections, following three markers presented within the text: first, the **o** (*s^eūmā*), a closed or minor Hebrew paragraph marker at the end of 9:8; then, secondly, the use of the imperative גִּילִי “rejoice” as the opening word in 9:9; and thirdly, the use of the expression גַּם-אַתָּה “Also you” with the adverb גַּם indicates the focus or attention given

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to the noun that follows it, in this case “you.” The general use of this adverb is to modify the word or clause that follows and associates it to the preceding one (Arnold & Choi, 2003, pp. 132–133). Therefore, “you” here “shifts back [from the royal figure] to Jerusalem, declaring that there are benefits for her” (Boda, 2016, p. 575). Nevertheless, there is still a sense of connection throughout the entire unit, by having Yahweh as glue between the three sections. He is the one who speaks; He is continually speaking in the first person from verses 6-8, onto verse 9-10 and also in verses 11-13. And He is referred to in the third person form in verses 1-5 and 14-17. Therefore, though the unit can be divided into three sections, we could possibly say that it is still a coherent unit.

Another way to look at Zech 9 structurally is through its theme. In general, according to Petterson (2009), there is a theme of “restoration” embedded within these three sections: the restoration of the land (verses 1-8); the restoration of the king (verses 9-10); and the restoration of the people (verses 11-17) (p. 130). He is basically arguing that the cities that are mentioned in verses 1-7 may not be the references to a threatening “contemporary historical event” at the time of the prophecy, as some scholars do think they are, however, “they have been listed because they were the traditional enemies of Israel and because their geography was significant in circumscribing the ideal land of Israel” (Petterson, 2009, p. 131). Also the details of Yahweh’s speech “I will encamp at my house” (verse 8) and a reference of “all the tribes of Israel” (verse 1) reminded us to the time of the united kingdom, the time of David and Solomon, and “therefore that Yahweh is coming to re-establish the kingdom promised to David” (p. 135). Moreover, Douglas R. Jones (1962) suggests that it is out of place to make referent of “sling stones” in verse 15 as it is “archaistic” and so “These were the weapons of David against the Philistines, not the modern, devilish, destructive weapons of the fifth century B.C.!” (p. 249). Therefore, what we have here is another indication of the flashback to the time of David.

Furthermore, the king who is mentioned in verse 9 has been specifically designated to be the king of Jerusalem. The second feminine singular suffix ךַ attached to the term מְלִיכָה is pointing “your king” to be the king of Jerusalem and Zion mentioned at the beginning of the verse, both as a daughter. If the first person pronoun

in the later part of verse 8 “for now I see with my own eyes” refer to the prophet himself, then there might be an issue of who is actually the king in verses 9-10, since Yahweh can definitely take up the role of the king. However, when consider the facts that, firstly, this king will be “riding on a donkey” it is more obvious to identify this royal figure with the Davidic king. Secondly, the terms describe this king are **קִיָּצְ** “righteous,” **נִשְׁבַּע** (Niphal participle)⁵ “saved,” and **עָנִי** “humble” would fit more if the king is a humanly king and not Yahweh. Of course, Yahweh often referred to as the righteous and just, however, when consider together with being saved and humble, which suited more with a humanly king.

Finally, with the shifting of the oracle from the king in verses 9-10 back to “the people” of Zion and Jerusalem in verses 11-17 by the use of **אֲנִי-דָגַלְתִּי** marker (see discussion above), here Yahweh will set the prisoners free (verse 11); they will be restored doubly (verse 12); they are reminded or restored of their strength as Yahweh’s bow, arrow, and sword (verse 13); the relationship between Yahweh and the people is restored as He takes up the role of the protector of the flock of His people once again (verse 16). Therefore, these pointers give us the picture that the people of Zion and Jerusalem is restored back with Yahweh, as He is now fighting for them, restored back their lands, and will rule over them through His righteous regent king.

Divine Warrior Hymn Motif

Paul D. Hanson (1973) approaches the structure of Zech 9 in a different perspective as he classifies the texts as hymn with a ritual pattern of a mythic chaos and having Yahweh as a divine warrior. Therefore, he sees the whole Zech 9 text as one unit based on the idea of a Divine Warrior Hymn.

The depiction of Yahweh as a Divine Warrior can be seen throughout the Hebrew Scripture, the most well known one is the “Song of the Sea” a song of Moses in Exod 15:3 describing specifically that **יְהוָה אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה** “The Lord is a man of war” and like most of the other motifs within the Old Testament, its ideology can be traced

⁵ Scholars translate this Niphal participle variously, most as passive “saved” as we use it here, while some translate it as “victorious” considering the close relationship between Yahweh and the king, so the victory of Yahweh is also a victory of the king. Some take it as a reflexive and therefore translate it as “having salvation.”

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back or parallel with that of their Ancient Near Eastern neighbors. The discoveries at Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit) shed light on our understanding of the concept of the Biblical Divine Warrior. The Baal cycle, “a mythic literature common to the Canaanites and to those who shared their culture in the Middle and Late Bronze Age” (Cross, 1997, p. 113). The following is a synopsis of one of the series of mythic adventurous stories of Baal:

When first the content of this complex of myths becomes clear, we find a conflict developing between Prince Sea and mighty Baal-Haddu. The scene portrays Yamm, Sea, sending his divine pair of messengers to the assembly of the gods held at the tabernacle of El located at the source of the double-deep, at the cosmic mountain, that is, at the gates to heaven and the entry into the abyss. Prince Yamm, alias Judge River, demands that Baal be given over to him as a captive and that his Yamm's lordship be acknowledged. The council is cowed, and despite Baal's rebuke, El, patriarch of the gods, replies to the terrible ambassadors of Yamm: Baal is thy slave, O Sea, Baal is thy slave forever, The son of Dagan thy prisoner. Baal in this decree of the assembly comes under the sway of Prince Sea. After a break in the text we hear Kôtar, craftsman of the gods, predicting a victory of Baal over his captors... Kôtar fashioned two clubs for Baal and gave them magical names.... With clubs, Baal overcomes Yamm... the next major episode is the assembly of the gods at which it is decreed by El, father of the gods, that a temple be built for Baal, king of the gods. The craftsman Kôtar constructs a palace.... The completion of the palace on Mt. Sapon is the occasion then of a great feast of the gods, celebrating Baal's installation and inaugurating the temple cult... (Cross, 1997, pp. 113–118)

Therefore, Baal in this mythic story was presented as divine warrior over gods and mythic beast. This divine warrior and battle motif is significantly parallel to that of the Old Testament. For example, by observing Psalm 24:7-10 (also Exod 15 and some other passages of Isaiah), Cross (1997) once again summarizes:

Such an interpretation assumes a Canaanite myth-and-ritual pattern standing behind the Israelite rite reflected in the psalm. Psalm 24:7-10 can be fitted into the Canaanite pattern, provided we assume that it was modified somewhat in the Israelite context.... Returning to Psalm 24, we find the Divine Warrior recognized as the “glorious king”; and the procession of the Warrior-King into his temple may be said to reenact the founding of the Temple (at the fall New Year) and the choice of Zion as the shrine of the Ark. (p. 93-97)

Patrick D. Miller (1973) recognizes that this Divine Warrior motif is present in Zech 14:

The passage re-echoes the language and themes of the ancient holy wars... and is, in fact, a kind of recapitulation of the pattern we discerned in several pieces of the early Israelite poetry, modified by other themes and influences coming out of the royal theology and eschatology: Yahweh go forth (v.3) to fight against the enemies of Israel and returns victorious with his hosts (v.5). The result is Yahweh’s kingship over all the earth (v.9), Israel’s salvation and secure dwelling (vv.5 and 11), Yahweh’s established sanctuary (the elevation of Jerusalem, v.10). Finally, all the nations, not just Israel, shall go up to the sanctuary to worship Yahweh the king. (p. 140-41)

Though Miller does not mention Zech 9 in his study, however, I would argue that as Zech 9-14 is being categorized as a one coherent unit as Deutero-Zechariah, Zech 9 is certainly contain a divine warrior theme. This is clearly seen through the themes present within Zech 9: battle and warfare, Yahweh as the Divine Warrior, the reference of the Temple [my house], the procession of the coming king, the victory and the feast, and the reference to the Day of the Lord [on that day].

According to Hanson (1975), based on this Divine Warrior motif, the unit of Zech 9 can be divided into eight parts: conflict–victory (1-7); temple secured (8); victory shout and procession (9); manifestation of Yahweh's universal reign (10); salvation:

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captives released (11-13); theophany of Divine Warrior (14); sacrifice and banquet (15); and fertility of restored order (16-17) (p. 315-16).

In conclusion, Zech 9:1-17 present Yahweh as a Warrior defeats His enemies and then guarding and securing His House, the Temple, and finally establishes His Kingdom. Regards the king who is coming in verses 9-10, according to Hanson’s assessment (1973): “without any sense of contradiction the divine king and his anointed ruler are together celebrated, a fluidity running throughout the royal psalms of the Old Testament” (p. 51) and in verse 10 “the newly established shalom is secured by destruction of the implements of war. In verses 11-13, the theme of restoration (cf. Isaiah 61:1-3) emerges, as “the captives are summoned to their stronghold, Zion,... the house secured and protected by Yahweh” (Hanson, 1975, p. 321). The description of the king as **קִדְּוֶה** “righteous” is clearly connect to the Davidic kingship, and “The Divine Warrior motif is used to express the promise of salvation to the nation as a whole” (Hanson, 1975, p. 324).

Matthew’s Christology: Jesus as The **πραύς King**

There are some other places in the Gospel of Matthew in which the author has focused on the quality of humbleness (Matt 5:5 and 11:29), together with the portrayal of Jesus as the humble king in Matt 21, these might implied that the idea of Jesus as being **πραύς** has always been in the author’s mind: in Matt 5:5, the author recorded the teaching of Jesus that the **πραεῖς** (meek) will be blessed as they “shall inherit the earth” and in Matt 11:29, as Jesus is **πραύς**, he promises that whoever comes to him he will give them rest. Nevertheless, both of these texts do not have Zech 9:9 as their direct source. Obviously the biblical source for Matt 5:5 is Psalm 37:11 “But the meek shall inherit the land” the Greek term here renders the plural form of **ἰσχυ** which according to Nolland (2005) “the common quality is, rather, the state of powerlessness: inability to forward one’s own cause; and in every case God either is, does, will, may be expected to, or should come to the rescue” (p. 201). However, he is also admitting that “possibly the very choice of **πραεῖς** is intended to inject a sense of humility before God” (p. 201, footnote 42) in which I think is relevant with my point in this study that the humbleness or meekness in context is the obedience to God, resulting from humility. In the case of Matt 11:29, Dale Allison (1988) claims that Matt 11:25-30

is parallel with Exod 33:12-14 and therefore the texts as a whole “was composed with Exod 33:12-14 in view... an awareness of Exod 33:12-14 seems very probably to have influenced the composition of Matt 11:25-30” (p. 481). Jesus’ meekness in Matt 11:29 is referring back to the meekness of Moses in Num 12:3 “Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth,” therefore, “when Jesus speaks of being meek, he is claiming for himself one of the outstanding qualities of Moses” (Allison, 1988, p. 483). However, this does not seem to fit with the context as the **πραύς** here is being used with Jesus and that he is the **πραύς** king in Matt 21:5. It is also interesting that the two terms **πραύς** and **ταπεινός** occur together in Zeph 13:12, considering that the texts of Zeph 13:14 and Zech 9:9 are very similar to each other, we might assume here that Matthew was somehow trying to combine between Isa 62:11, Zeph 13:12, and Zech 9:9, and used on Matt 21:5. Nevertheless, what matter here is that Matthew seems to emphasize on **πραύς** in his Christology. If Jesus is humble/meek (Matt 11:29) then it is fitting that he shall inherit the earth (Matt 5:5), considering also that in Matt 11:27 “All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” Therefore, when we bring Zech 9:9 into this context, the messianic king-regent in Zech 9:9 is identified as being **πραύς** then one may assume that Jesus is this messianic **πραύς** king who inherited the earth from the Father, the Creator. In sum, I am assuming here that Zech 9:9 has an important part in the shaping of Matthew’s Christology: Jesus is the **πραύς** Messiah, who has authority over all things, given by the Father, just as Yahweh, the Divine Warrior King given authority to His royal messianic **πραύς** king-regent in Zech 9:9.

Moreover, the humbleness of this messianic king-regent in Zech 9:9 is being portrayed in the obedience unto death of Jesus in the Passion narrative: the king-regent in Zech 9:11 is described to set free the prisoners through “the blood of covenant” which is directly connect with Matt 26:28 where Jesus announces that “This is my blood of the covenant poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins”; and Jesus anticipate his own death by citing Zech 13:7 in Matt 26:31 that God will “strike

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the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.”⁶ Matthew uses Zech 13:7 to affirm the skandalon the “fall away” of the disciples at the time of the arrest of Jesus. Douglas J. Moo (1983) regards Zech 13:7 as messianic and the figure in the text is “Messianic, or at least as an individual close to God and in His favor” (p. 186), he is “some sort of status as God’s vice regent” (Nolland, 2005, p. 1090). Jesus, though knows of all these predictions about himself, chose not to turn away from it. The humility of the Messiah, before God the Father, was resulting in his obedience, even unto death.

Conclusion: The Obedient King of Zech 9 in Matthew 21:5

In his article, Leroy A. Huizenga (2009) sees a typology between Jesus and Isaac within the gospel of Matthew, as Jesus being the new Isaac. He opines that

Indeed, the Matthean Jesus and Isaac of ancient Jewish tradition resemble each other to a remarkable degree: both are promised children conceived under extraordinary circumstances, beloved sons who, for redemptive purposes, willingly face their sacrifices at the season of Passover in obedience to their respective fathers. Thus, when rightly read as a narrative with attention to its first-century C.E. cultural location, the Gospel of Matthew presents a significant Isaac typology. (p. 508)

Though Isaac typology in Jesus is not our concern in this study, nevertheless, the theme of the obedient Son, who would be crucified, is implicitly presented within the gospel (cf. chapter 20:17-19). It is also somewhat interesting that the word for obedient ὑπακούω “to obey,” occurs only one time, in the gospel of Matthew, in which the writer happens to put it under the situation of Matt 8:23-27; Jesus rebukes and calms the storm. It could not help, for the picture of Yahweh as a Divine Warrior comes to mind. Obviously, according to Osborne (2010) “there are OT parallels for God’s controlling the dark powers of chaos behind the waters.... It is best to say there

⁶ Though in Zech 13:7 the verb עִירָא “awake” is a feminine imperative, but Yahweh is clearly the subject.

may be an echo of cosmic conflict here, but the main thrust is Jesus' power over nature. Jesus was the agent of creation behind this world... and so controls the forces of nature" (p. 314). Furthermore, there are some thematic parallels and similarities between the narratives of Matt 8:23-27 and Matt 21:1-11. First, both narratives present Jesus as the Lord over all creations. He calms the raging sea in Matt 8:27 and in Matt 21:3 he tells his disciple to simply answer anyone who may have anything to say about the need of donkeys that "the Lord needs them," which some commentators suggest that this gives emphasis on Jesus' authority (Nolland, 2005, p. 834), "thus Matthew focuses attention on the following reference to Jesus' lordship" (Gundry, 1982, p. 407). Secondly, both narratives put an amazement about Jesus into the crowd or the people who are not so familiar with Jesus. In Matt 8:27 notice of **ἄνθρωποι** "the people" in contrast to **μαθηταί** "the disciples" could be significant, as the one who is questioning about Jesus here is the people, "which is not found in Mark or Luke, is best explained as designed to introduce here people other than the disciples to voice the coming question.... The language of question is designed to give strong guidance to the reader as to what might be the appropriate answer" (Nolland, 2005, p. 372). Therefore, also in Matt 21:10 the crowds of Jerusalem, who were not familiar with Jesus, asked, "Who is this?" Should it be right to say that Matthew has designed the question for an appropriate answer? Jesus, particularly in this context, is not only a prophet, but a king, and he is not just a generally typical king known in the ancient world, but a humble and obedient king-regent. Just as it is signified through riding on **פָּרָס טָהוֹר** a purebred donkey and not just a **חמור** in general. According to Zech 9, Yahweh presents Himself as a Divine Warrior King, bringing the victory and restoration to His people: He restores His people with the land, the king, and the covenant. In the context of Matt 21:1-11, we recognize Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as a triumphant one, and contradicted with the idea of the humble king. Now, through the lens of Zech 9, we can have a clearer picture that Jesus is rather humble in obedience to his Father. As discuss above the term **עֲבֹד** describes the royal king in Zech 9:9 as a humble king, the one who humble to Yahweh, the true King, in whom his salvation was provided to him as the king-regent who is being saved by his God. Therefore, in the context of Matt 21 the Father is the one who pronounce the victory and restoration to His people. Jesus here then takes

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up the role of the king-regent presented in Zech 9:9. According to Brandon Crowe (2013), the Gospel of Matthew portrays Jesus as the consummate fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. He is “the τέλος [the ultimate aim] of Israel, leads the nation toward and fulfills the prophetic hopes. This explains the prominence of Jesus’ obedience in Matthew, particularly as illustrated by the fulfillment formulae: Jesus is the true, obedient Israel who fulfills Scripture and reverses past failures” (p. 123-24).

Therefore, through the context and interpretation of Zech 9, he is truly the humble and obedient king-regent of the Father, the triumphant King, who exhibits this fulfillment of restoration from what was already spoken by the prophet Zechariah. This obedient king-regent, Jesus, enters Jerusalem, riding on a donkey, even though he knows that his death is awaiting and it will be violent one. Yet he still chooses to do it out of obedience to his Father and care for his flocks. Indeed, the knowledge on Zechariah 9, a **πραύς** king-regent, helps reveal on this aspect of Matthew’s Christology.

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