

# FOLLOW ME

*The Gospel of Matthew*

## WEEK 5 - THE KING OF THE JEWS OVERVIEW

For the four weeks leading up to Easter, rather than exploring just an individual passage in Matthew, we are going to follow four threads which each give the story of Jesus' crucifixion much deeper meaning. First, we will explore the thread of **Jesus' kingship**, especially as it **contrasts with the power and rule of Rome**. From Jesus' **triumphal entry** into Jerusalem to his **trial before the Roman governor** Pilate, to the **mocking of the Roman soldiers** and the sign they make to humiliate him ("King of the Jews"), we see Jesus as a rival ruler and threat to Roman power. It is all the more startling, then, when at his death the Roman soldiers at the crucifixion name him the "son of God" (one of Caesar Augustus' titles)! By following this thread, we are invited to consider the rule and reign of a new kind of king, and recognize that although **it was meant to humiliate**, the cross has become the holiest of thrones for our king.

*The Roman officer and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, "This man truly was the Son of God!"*

**Matthew 27:54**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear "King of the Jews"?
2. Read [Jeremiah 52:10-11](#). If this is what happened to the last king of Israel, what do you think life was like for Israelites while they waited for hundreds of years for the Messiah?
3. Why is Jesus' triumphal entry significant? (see [Zechariah 9:9](#) and [Matthew 21:8-11](#).)
4. Describe how each of the following verses in Matthew illustrates part of the "Kingdom Manifesto" of Jesus Christ.
  - a. [Matthew 5:5, 10](#) - Jesus' kingdom operates by an entirely different set of rules.
  - b. [Matthew 19:30](#) and [23:11-12](#) - Jesus redefines the concept of greatness.
  - c. [Matthew 5:39](#), [5:44](#), [26:52](#) - Jesus rejects the violence of empire.
  - d. [Matthew 20:25-28](#) - Jesus upends the default settings of humanity in our lust for power.
5. Why does the way that Jesus was anointed matter? (read [Matthew 26:6-7 NRSV](#))
6. Explain what Barry meant when he said, "The cross wasn't Jesus' defeat. It was his enthronement." (see [Matthew 27:37](#) and [27:54](#).)
7. Why did Jesus - the rightful king of Israel - have to die?