



LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS for Holy Week 2025

See, I Am Doing a New Thing *The King with the Crown of Thorns*

1. Have you ever “sized up,” or pre-judged a person or a situation, only to discover that all of your confident preconceptions were totally wrong? Briefly share a time when you were convinced you knew exactly what was going to happen, but things turned out totally different from what you expected. What did you learn from this experience?
2. **Read John 12:12-18.** “*Hosanna*” is both an exclamation of praise and a plea for salvation. It means “Save now!” or “Please save us!” Why do you think the Jewish pilgrims who were in Jerusalem for Passover were so excited about Jesus’ arrival? What were they expecting from him? What did they want to be “saved” from?

The Jews were very familiar with such prophetic descriptions of their long-awaited Messiah as **Isaiah 9:1-7** and **Zechariah 9:9-10**. They were also aware of how their people waved palm branches back in 164 B.C. to celebrate the victory of Judas Maccabeus’ army over the Seleucid Empire, and the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem. Judas Maccabeus, who led the armed revolt against the pagan king, Antiochus Epiphanes, was known as “The Hammer.” Waving palms was like waving flags here in America. It was a symbol of national pride and victory. If you were a Jew living under Roman occupation at the time of Jesus’ triumphal entry, how do you think *you* would have responded? What do you think *you* would have expected from Jesus?

3. How did Jesus feel about being anointed the “king” of the Jews? (Cf. **John 6:14-15; John 18:33-37; Matt. 4:8-10**).

Why do you think he felt this way?

If this is where Jesus stood on the subject of politics, nationalism, and monarchy, why do you think so many Christians today continue to politicize their faith and engage in such extreme and hostile partisanship, many of them even advocating for a monarchy or theocracy to replace American democracy? How does this compare to the Kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed (cf. **John 13:1-17; Matt. 5:1-12; Mrk 10:42-45**)?

4. **Read John 12:19-33.** Why do you think the Pharisees reacted to Jesus and his triumphal entry the way they did (**see verse 19**)? How would you describe their preconceptions of Jesus?

Why do you think the Greeks reacted to Jesus the way they did (**verses 20-21**)? What do you think their preconceptions were?

5. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (**verse 23**)?

How does this differ from the typical way we think of being glorified? And why is this so important for us to understand both *then* and *now*?

6. What three things will the cross accomplish according to Jesus in **verses 31-32**?
- 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)

Can you describe what Jesus means by these three things in your own words?

7. Martin Luther King Jr once said: *“Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”* Would you agree or disagree with this? Why or why not?

We live in an age where many self-proclaiming Christians are talking about “retribution” against their political enemies and taking up arms against their fellow Americans. How does this quote relate to the lifestyles of the King with the crown of thorns and his disciples (**cf. Matt. 5:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:19-25**)?

Do you think it’s actually possible to live like this in such a hostile, reactionary world? If so, can you think of some practical examples of how we could go about doing this?

8. *Who is your King today?* How can we tell if we are truly following “the King with the crown of thorns,” or “the kings of this world”? Can you name at least four ways these two kings and their followers differ from one another?