

7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

Lesson Plan: Jesus' Teaching on His Return

Learning Goals: Students will evaluate what Jesus taught about his own return and seek to differentiate that from "popular" idea surrounding the End Times.

Question: If you knew that Jesus would return 24 hours from now, what would you do? (or alternative game)

Prayer

Discuss Question on Board

Activity: "Whack-a-foot"

Item needed: A rolled-up newspaper

Have the group sit in a circle with their feet toward the middle of the circle (students may need to stand depending on what they wearing). Pick someone to be "IT." The teacher will call out a name. The person who is "IT" must try to whack that person in the foot with a rolled-up newspaper before that person can say his/her name and the name of someone else in the circle. The person who is "IT" must try to whack the new person mentioned until he can get someone before another name is called.

Follow Up Questions:

- How did it feel when your name was called? Were you surprised, nervous, afraid?
- What did you do to get ready for your name being called?
- Whose name did you have prepared to say?
- When have you felt totally unprepared for something big that happened?

Read Matthew 24:1-51; 25:31-46

Jesus and the Temple

- Jesus pronounces judgment and destruction on the temple.
- *Connected to yesterday's lesson* (Jesus turning over the tables of the moneychangers)

"Signs" (Labor Pains of the Kingdom)

- False Messiahs (not people claiming to be Jesus returned, but claiming to be the military leader that everyone was looking for)
 - see also 1 John 4:1-6
 - connection to "antichrist" - anything that is against Jesus (not necessarily THE Antichrist)
- Wars and rumors of war
 - Matthew suggests that the end will be a time of upheaval before the return of Christ
- Earthquakes, famine, and natural disasters
- Persecution of believers from governments and even family members
- The Gospel Message of the Kingdom will be preached to all nations

The “**Abomination of Desolation**”

- Maybe some connection to Antiochus Epiphanies slaughtering the hog on the altar to desecrate it in 167 BCE
- When you see it, leave everything behind, take nothing, and go (similar to the disciples when Jesus calls them to follow him)

Jesus’ **Return** (“**Second Coming**” - **Parousia**)

- When Jesus returns, there will be no doubt (he will not come in secret) - it will be unmistakably public
- Not announced by this-worldly signs, but cosmic signs (sun and moon darkened, stars falling, etc.)
- There will be no warning - the event itself will be the sign.
- This is the king returning to bring the kingdom in its fullness. This is the goal of the kingdom.

When Will This Take Place?

- No one knows the day or the hour (vs. 36)
- Connection to the story of Noah (Gen. 6-10)

What Is Matthew’s Point? (So What?)

- Be ready always!
- Do not be indifferent!
- Live every single day with abandon and full devotion to God (love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength)

The Final Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46)

- Seems to suggest that God will judge based on how well we brought the kingdom on earth as it is in heaven (how well we lived out our faith):
 - feeding the hungry
 - giving water to the thirsty
 - clothing the naked
 - housing the homeless
 - comforting the sick
 - visiting the prisoner
 - welcoming the stranger

Additional Questions:

- Rapture: there are hints, but there is nothing that explicitly expounds a rapture theology

Lesson Summary/Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Abomination of Desolation
- Antichrist
- Second Coming
- What are the “signs” Matthew mentions connected to Jesus’ return?
- What is Matthew’s main point in his description of Jesus’ Second Coming?