

## 7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

### Lesson Plan: Jesus' Resurrection

**Learning Goals:** Students should be able to cite the basic features of Jesus' resurrection. They should also be able to critique common objections to the resurrection and relate evidence that supports the historical resurrection.

**Question:** Why does Jesus' Resurrection matter?

Prayer

Discuss Question on Board

### Read Luke 24; Matthew 28:1-15

#### Resurrection

- First Day of the Week (Sunday) - inclusive counting
- Women were the first ones to the tomb
  - Mary Magdalene and Mary (Matthew)
  - Mary, Mary, and Salome (Mark)
  - Mary, Joanna, and "other women" (Luke)
- Messengers (Angel(s)/Men) were present
  - Men (Mark/Luke) or Angels (Matthew/John)
  - One (Luke and John) or Two (Matthew/Mark)
- Their response - fear, bowing down to the ground
- Jesus himself appears to Mary and the women (according to Matthew and Mark); after greeting them, he tells them not to be afraid. (If I saw a dead person come back to life, I think I would probably have been a little freaked out about it.)
- They take the message back to the apostles, but they think it sounds like an "idle tale"
- Peter takes off running to the tomb and finds it empty

#### The "Cover Up" (Read Matthew 28:11-15)

- The Jewish leaders try to cover up the resurrection by fabricating a different story of what happened to Jesus' body.
- They paid the guards to say that they had fallen asleep and the disciples came and stole the body in the middle of the night.
- Since the penalty for falling asleep on duty could be execution, the religious leaders agree to cover for the guards with the governor.
- Matthew says that this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

#### Some possible objection to the resurrection (non-supernatural explanations):

- Women went to the wrong tomb
- Joseph of Arimathea took the body
- Jesus never died on the cross - he merely "swooned"
- The disciples stole the body
- Body decomposed in a gaseous vapor in 36 hours
- Religious leaders stole body to prevent it from being made a shrine
- Appearances of Jesus were just "visions"

**Evidence supporting the historicity of the empty tomb:**

- Multiple attestations of the empty tomb (all 4 gospels)
  - The proclamation of Jesus' resurrection assumes the empty tomb (early preaching)
  - Women were the first witnesses (counter-productive element because women were not reliable witnesses)
  - The fact of the empty tomb was acknowledged by the Jews (never disputed in their polemics with Christians)
  - The empty tomb was a well-known tomb
  - Sunday worship is due to the discovery of the empty tomb on the first day of the week.
  - The earliest church tradition of the resurrection centers on the empty tomb (1 Cor. 15:3-8)
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**Lesson Summary/Review:**

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

- Who was present at the Resurrection?
- Why would the Jewish leaders want to cover up the Resurrection?
- Why would that be unlikely?