



Be ready

Aim of lesson

To discover the work of the Lord Jesus now and in the future.

Bible background

Ephesians 1:16-23

Preparation required

Familiarise yourself with the passages in the students notes and decide what you expect the students to say they mean.

Outline of lesson

As the students are likely not to have thought much about these topics before, start by asking them how much they know. You can do this by using a big sheet of paper on which you or the students could scribble e.g. 'Jesus is in heaven' or 'He is with God'. They could also write down questions e.g. 'What will happen when Jesus comes back?' You could prompt with a few questions of your own, like 'What do you think Jesus' form is now?' For instance, after his resurrection he was able to 'appear', and yet could still eat fish on the beach. Either jot down what they think the answer is or write it as another question.

Before you open the student's books ask them to think whether they know any passages that would help them find out some answers. For instance they might remember Acts 1:11 or think that the Mount Olivet prophecy would help. They might also half remember a verse but not know where it is from. This could be added to the sheet.

At the end of the lesson, you can refer back to this sheet and see how much has been learnt and how many questions have been answered.

Now get the students to find out some answers. They could use a concordance to find half-remembered verses and then use the references in the students' books.

Talk about what each verse means, what do we know and what do we still not know. As you look at each verse, the students could jot down briefly in their books what they have learnt or correct, tick or answer points on the brainstorming sheet. You should be able to amass the following facts.

Jesus now

- He is with believers now (Matthew 18:20).
- He is Lord of all things for the sake of his church (Ephesians 1:16-23)
- He will always be with us if we want him to be (Matthew 28:20).
- He is a mediator (1 Timothy 2:5).
- we can approach God with confidence because Jesus knows how we feel (Hebrews 4:14-16).
- He is a priest who can save us completely (Hebrews 7:23-25).
- He is watching over his churches (Revelation 1:12-20, 2:1).

In the future

- Jesus will come back in the same way he went (Acts 1:9-11).
- He will repay everyone according to what he has done (Matthew 16:27).
- It will be obvious to everyone. There will be a lot of trouble. There will be signs and Jesus will gather to him all those who have served him (Matthew 24:27-31).
- Jesus will come with the angels and will sit on his glorious throne (Matthew 25:31).
- The dead will be raised when Jesus comes back (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).
- Jesus will judge the living and the dead (2 Timothy 4:1).
- We don't know exactly when he will come (2 Peter 3:10).
- Everyone will see him (Revelation 1:7).

While you talk about Jesus' return emphasize that we do not know when he will come or exactly what it will be like or the order of events. The reason for this is that God probably doesn't think we need to know. He certainly wants us to be ready at anytime. You could discuss recent 'signs' from the news (natural disasters, conflicts, events in the Middle East etc), pointing out that we can be sure God is working out his plan.

It was always God's plan

If the class want to think about the timeline in relation to this lesson, it is obvious that all the references are taken from the New Testament. This isn't surprising as the message wouldn't be irrelevant until people knew of Jesus personally. However we can see from Zechariah 14:4 and also Nebuchadnezzar's dream of an image, show us that that God knew he would send Jesus a second time.

Relevance to our lives

We can be in no doubt from the many references in the Bible that Jesus will return. We may not know the detail and we may be worried about it. But the other thing we can be sure of is the fact that Jesus watches over our lives now and understands our needs through his own experiences. The knowledge that Jesus will return, and soon, should affect our lives but it shouldn't worry us.

Extension activities

- You could remind the class what they talked about in lesson 6. Jesus had several roles when he came the first time and the class will have talked about him being our king, in a way now but fully when he returns. He will also be a judge when he returns. How does he fulfil any other roles?
- The students could look at some of the types of the Lord Jesus who had a role as a mediator between God and man, for example, Moses, or at the role of the high priest under the law. It should be emphasized, though, that Jesus death (when the veil was rent from top to bottom) opened the way to God so that we can approach with confidence and not need a go between.
- You could look in more detail at the events preceding the second coming in the Olivet prophecy and look at recent newspapers to look at current events in that light.
- Look at some of the parables about the second coming, considering their relevance for us.