

Aim of lesson

For the young people to want the kingdom to come because of the blessings it will bring.

Bible background

Psalms 72; Ezekiel 47:8-12; Isaiah 35; Micah 4:1-2.

Preparation required

Familiarise yourself with the relevant passages so that you have clear in your mind the picture of the kingdom you expect the young people to discover and so that you can answer questions which might arise. You will need to decide how to deal with a large number of passages, and work out whether, and how, to share them among the young people.

Suggested outline of lesson

Ask the young people what they think will happen after Jesus has returned. Depending on the depth of knowledge their answers reveal you may decide how to approach the rest of the lesson.

Many details are not made clear in scripture, so it will be sensible not to get bogged down in trying to sort out details (precisely who is raised in the first and second resurrections, for instance), especially if the young people don't ask.

Who will be there?

James 2:5: Those who are poor in the eyes of the world, but rich in faith, will inherit the kingdom.

Matthew 25:31-40: Those whose faith has shown itself in care for other people, and hence for Christ.

Jews

Romans 11:25-27: The nation will repent and turn to God and find salvation.

Isaiah 60:9-12: The other nations will rebuild Jerusalem and will bring the remaining Jews back to their land.

Arabs

You may like to remind the young people of the time of Solomon, when the kings of all the neighbouring countries brought gifts, and in particular of the Queen of

Sheba. Most maps place Sheba (and Dedan, with which it is commonly associated) in Saudi Arabia.

Psalm 72:9-11, 15: The desert tribes will serve him; many lands (Sheba in particular) will bring gifts.

Isaiah 19:19-25: The Egyptians and Assyrians (modern Iraq) will worship together with Israel.

If you have time you may like to mention that Moslems, nominally at least, accept much of the Bible (the law and prophets, and the New Testament), though they believe that the Jews have corrupted the text and that therefore the Koran is the only real authority. Many Arab peoples are descended from (or related to) Abraham through Ishmael, Esau, Ammon and Moab. Ishmael was named by God ('God hears' - Genesis 16:11), and God made repeated promises regarding him. (Genesis 16:10,12; 17:20, 21:18).

What will the world be like?

The land of Israel

Amos 9:13-15: Crops will be so plentiful that there won't be time to harvest them all.

Ezekiel 47:8-12: Fresh water will flow from Jerusalem and will 'heal' the Dead Sea. Explain to the young people that the passage is talking about Jerusalem: it is not clear simply from these verses.

The rest of the world

Psalm 72:16: Crops will be plentiful, so there will be no more hunger and starvation.

Isaiah 11:6-9: Animals will no longer be dangerous.

Isaiah 35:1-2, 7: The desert will blossom. 'Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom'

Micah 4:3-5: There will be peace and security

People

Luke 20:35-36: The saints will be immortal; they will not marry, but will be like the angels.

Isaiah 35:5-6: There will be no more physical handicaps.

Zephaniah 3:9: If the AV translation is correct, all nations will speak one language.

Worship

Zechariah 8:20-22: People will want to learn from God and to worship him.

Micah 4:1-2: Jerusalem will be the centre of worship for the entire world.

Isaiah 11:9: Everyone will know about God and worship him.

Government

Who will be king?

Matthew 25:31: Jesus will be king

Isaiah 9:7: He will reign for ever

Anyone else?

Matthew 19:28: The apostles will judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

Daniel 7:27: The saints will assist in government over the rest of the world.

2 Timothy 2:11: Those who have endured will reign with him

How?

Psalms 72:2-4, 12-14: The world will be a fair place, and he will look after those who need help.

Isaiah 11:4: He will be just, and will punish the wicked.

And after the millennium?

1 Corinthians 15:24-28: Christ delivers the kingdom to his Father, so that God may be 'all in all'.

Revelation 21:4: There will be no more unhappiness or death.

Revelation 22:1-5: The work of salvation is complete, everything is refreshed and perfect. There is a slight difficulty regarding verse 2, in that it is hard to understand why anything will need to be healed, but this passage is generally understood to apply to the time after the millennium.

We cannot really imagine this time - we simply have to trust God that it will be wonderful.

Now the important bit

It is not enough for the young people to simply go through a list of passages and write a precis. They need to be brought to a picture of what the kingdom will really be like.

Get them to try to describe it, in their own words, now that they have seen what the scriptures have to say. You may like to ask them some questions like:

- If you were to take a photograph anywhere in the world, what would you see?
- If you were to walk down a street, what would you hear? Smell?

- How would it feel to be there?
- What would you notice was missing from this world?
- How would you feel about that?
- Does anything in life come close to what you have described?
- How much do you want to be there?

Relevance to our lives

Many of us, especially young people, find it difficult to want Jesus' return when this life seems to hold good things in store. By contrasting these passages with many of the terrible things that happen in the world at the moment we can see that things really will be better when Jesus returns.

Prayer

Ask the young people to write a prayer for Jesus' return or asking God to help them to really want things to be better and therefore to want his return.

Other suggestions for activities

1. It would be good if you could ask the young people to do something creative to try to describe what the kingdom will be like. Get them to describe the kingdom in terms which have a real impact - things like being able to go out without worrying that someone will break in and steal things; having no worries or fears; not falling out with friends; no bad news of wars or famines ...
2. They may like to look at the words of some appropriate hymns in the light of what they have just learnt and maybe choose one for the end of Sunday School. Appropriate ones might be:

288 Behold! The Mountain of the Lord in latter days shall rise

289 A rose shall bloom in the lonely place

42 (Praise the Lord) He shall reign over all the earth

71 (Sing to the Lord) Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning.