

Jesus and His Teachings

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Subject Area: World History

Time Required: 1 class session

General Topics: Origins of Christianity in the Roman world, ancient Judaism, important individuals in Classical Mediterranean societies, religious views in Classical Mediterranean societies

Average Grade Level from Readable.io: 10.3

SUMMARY

This lesson on Jesus and his teachings focuses on two biblical texts, the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew and the Sermon on the Plain in the Gospel of Luke. It asks students to consider the historical context of the two sermons, the influence of Hellenistic Judaism on the authors of the two Gospels, and the challenges of using such literature to reconstruct history. To get the students started engaging with the texts, the lesson asks students to compare two artistic depictions of the sermons. It then moves to a close reading of both sermons using a guided reading graphic organizer and a resource developed by Advanced Placement called a SOAPStone graphic organizer. Using these tools to engage with the sermons will sharpen students' critical reading skills as well as give them methods they can use when they read other demanding texts. Coming from two of the earliest accounts of Jesus' teachings, these passages stem from a time when Hellenistic Judaism and nascent Christianity were both shaping portrayals of Jesus. Hence, the lesson includes resources to help students analyze how each sermon reflects its ancient cultural context and to consider the larger question of how scholars arrive at interpretive and historical conclusions when they have limited sources from which to draw.

ALIGNMENT WITH GEORGIA STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

World History:

SSWH3: Examine the political, philosophical and cultural interaction of Classical Mediterranean societies from 700 B.C.E./B.C. to C.E./A.D. 400.

SSWH3b: Identify the ideas and impact of important individuals, include: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar. [Though not specified in this standard, Jesus clearly falls under its purview as an important individual of the time period.]

SSWH3e: Explain the origins and diffusion of Christianity in the Roman world.

Information Processing Skills:

1. Compare similarities and differences
5. Identify main idea, detail, sequence of events, and cause and effect in a social studies context
6. Identify and use primary and secondary sources
11. Draw conclusions and make generalizations

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies:

L11-12RHSS2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

L11-12RHSS6: Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning and evidence.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- identify key themes and central ideas associated with Jesus as presented in two influential passages from the Gospels;
- compare and contrast primary sources about Jesus;
- describe how these primary sources reflect the views and purposes of their authors and their intended audiences;
- recognize potential challenges for historical reconstruction posed by differences between sources; and
- discuss how these two passages' presentations of Jesus' teachings relate to religious and ethical views in the Jewish and Classical societies of his own day.
- identify how the text uses character portrayals and different types of material (a first-person diary and a third-person report) to express key themes.

PRIMARY SOURCES QUOTES

“When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.” (Matthew 5:1 *New Revised Standard Version*)

“He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon.” (Luke 6:17 *New Revised Standard Version*)

ARTWORK

[The Sermon on the Mount](#) - James Tissot
c. 1890 *gouache on paper*



[The Sermon on the Mount](#) - Károly Ferenczy
1896 *oil on canvas*



INTRODUCTION

Biblical scholars study biblical texts in their original historical settings and in the original languages. Whatever their private religious convictions may be, these scholars agree that Jesus of Nazareth was an historical figure who lived from approximately 4 B.C.E-29 C.E. However, they disagree regarding what he actually did and said. The reason for this lack of consensus stems from the evidence. We have no written compositions by Jesus himself. Few non-believers wrote anything about Jesus for decades or even centuries after he lived, and believers who did record the words and deeds of Jesus sometimes held very different interpretations or traditions. The problem is compounded since we lack any firsthand accounts from the disciples who traveled with the historical Jesus. The first few generations of Christians did not even have “the New Testament,” although individual churches (often called “**house churches**,” because they met in members’ homes) may have known certain works that came to be a part of it. The books of the New Testament were not assembled as a “**canon**” or authoritative body of **scripture** until the 4th c. C.E. The idea of a Christian “Bible” with an Old and New Testament is thus **anachronistic** for early Christianity. Instead, Jesus and his disciples would have been familiar with books known as “**The Law and the Prophets**” that already had the status of Jewish Scripture and today are included in the Jewish “Tanakh” and Christian “Old Testament.” Put another way, Jesus’ Bible was the Jewish Bible of his day, written in the Hebrew language (and in parts of the books of Daniel and Ezra, Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus). After Jesus’ death, some followers told their accounts of his life to others, who eventually wrote their narratives down.

Four of the authors whose accounts did make it into the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, are the best historical witnesses to the life and teachings of Jesus that we have. Little is known about who these authors really were, although later Christian tradition pairs them with disciples and other early followers of Jesus with the same names. It is possible that the author or collection of authors we call “Matthew” was indeed the disciple Matthew, and that the author we call “Luke” is the same Luke who followed Paul, a later missionary of Christianity, but we do not know for certain. At any rate, the versions that we have of their stories are composed in the Greek language, although in a few places they present Jesus as speaking in Aramaic. There were also many other Gospels and writings that were sacred to many early Christians that did not gain widespread enough authority to be included in the New Testament; for various reasons, they cannot be relied upon as historical evidence of Jesus’ life. The portrayals of Jesus in the four Gospels of the New Testament vary in their levels of agreement and disagreement. Scholarly circles and different groups within Christianity disagree about the extent to which they preserve traditions that go back to eyewitnesses of Jesus’ life.

Passages from the Gospels known as The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and The Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49) were chosen for this lesson as they are fundamental New Testament texts that will assist students in understanding the basic tenets of early Christianity. Early Christianity, as expressed in the books of Luke and Matthew, two of the earliest accounts of the teachings of Jesus Christ, was not monolithic. Differences in region, time period, leadership and the ethnic background of congregants often made a difference in the writings. Some writings, like those of Luke, emphasize

Greco-Roman elements, while others, like Matthew, display more Jewish concerns. However, even Judaism of the first century C.E. was “Hellenistic Judaism,” since **Hellenism** had influenced all the cultures that it had touched since Alexander the Great (d. 323 B.C.E.) had united territory from Macedonia (north of Greece) all the way to India under a fusion of Greek and indigenous cultures. Jewish society in the area known today as Israel/ Palestine was thus a Hellenistic Jewish culture under Roman rule. If one could walk the streets of Jerusalem in 30 C.E., one could well encounter Jews and non-Jews, Roman officials, and peoples from Persia, the Italian peninsula, Greece, Asia Minor, and Africa, all of whom were citizens of the vast Roman Empire. Jesus lived and moved in this complex intercultural world.

In this lesson, students will read Matthew 5:1-26, 43-48 and Luke 6:17-38, then employ a set of guided reading notes to process the material for discussion. After that, they will use a graphic organizer based on AP World History's [SOAPStone Document Analysis](#) to use academic tools for historical analysis. Then, students will study a T-chart outlining the differences between Hellenistic Judaism and non-Jewish Hellenistic Religions. Using the information from the two sermons, their SOAPStone analysis, and the T-chart, students will interpret the primary source material and draw conclusions regarding the differences and similarities in the two sermons, pointing to the respective cultures of the authors of the two sermons. This will illustrate the difficulties in conducting historical research from limited literary sources.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What does each text reveal about its author’s purpose and concerns?
- What are the basic historical contexts of these two sermons?
- Keeping in mind the background of Hellenistic Judaism, how does each sermon reflect its culture?
- What are the challenges arising from using literary evidence to reconstruct history?

BACKGROUND

Due to the different emphases of the Gospels, biblical scholars who study the historical Jesus — what Jesus did, said and believed — differ on many important details of how they would reconstruct this figure. Some scholars maintain that Jesus preached about **eschatology**, or beliefs about the coming end of the world and the installation of the Kingdom of God. Others think Jesus' followers added these end times beliefs, while he himself stressed the revelation of knowledge about a spiritual home in the heavens.

Readers of the New Testament account for these differences in various ways. Some maintain that Jesus gave two sermons, close but not identical, to two different audiences on different occasions. Other readers assume, as do most biblical scholars, that any access to the original words of Jesus came through one or more writers or those who edited his words — whom we will call “Matthew” and “Luke” for convenience. Understandably, the authors colored Jesus' message as they themselves could understand it. Just as Jesus had addressed particular audiences when he taught, these authors wrote for particular audiences.

There are some things most biblical scholars do agree on, such as that Jesus was known as a Jewish teacher and healer in the region that today is Israel and Palestine around the Sea of Galilee. He spoke Aramaic (closely related to Hebrew) and lived in small Jewish towns that were nevertheless near larger Hellenized urban centers, where Greco-Roman religions flourished. Also, many who study Jesus as a historical figure agree that the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 and the similar, but not identical, Sermon on the Plain in Luke 6:20-49 contain teachings that originated with the historical Jesus but note that the writers of the Gospels shaped their presentations of that material. However, while Jesus may have been the source for most of the content, the writers of the gospels were not first-hand witnesses to the sermons, in many scholars' view. The Gospels' accounts, emphases and even audiences differ. Jumping from these written accounts to the history of the life of Jesus poses challenges for historians.

PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

To begin the lesson, teachers can use the two paintings, “Sermon on the Mount” by James Tissot and “Sermon on the Mount” by Károly Ferenczy to illustrate the point that two different sources may present significantly different views of an event. Begin by showing the two pictures, side by side, and asking students to note similarities and differences.

Teachers should have the students read selections from the two sermons, Luke 6:17-38 and Matthew 5:1-26 and 43-48. The two **Guided Reading handouts** will assist in ensuring students have a basic knowledge of the content of the two sermons. Teachers can have students read these documents independently or as a class, depending upon the independent reading ability of the class.

Once students have read the two primary source documents and demonstrated sufficient understanding of them, the teacher will break the students into pairs or trios to complete a **SOAPStone graphic organizer**. The teacher should circulate to assist students as they grapple with the documents. If the students are using the SOAPStone format for the first time, the teacher may want to analyze one sermon using the SOAPStone graphic organizer as a class, and then have students do the second sermon in pairs/trios.

After that, the teacher should guide the class in discussion, encouraging students to use a different colored writing instrument to add notes to their SOAPStone worksheet. Teachers wishing to take the worksheet for a grade may wish to make note of the additions students make to their worksheets, as the idea is to have a richer understanding of the primary document(s) after doing a SOAPStone analysis.

Following the SOAPStone analysis, the teacher should guide the students through the **T-chart which compares Hellenistic Judaism with non-Jewish Hellenistic Religions**. Both standard and advanced T-charts are provided.

Finally, the class will complete a **Comparison T-chart** comparing the two sources and ask them to draw conclusions about early Christianity, using evidence from either/both piece(s) to support those conclusions. This could be done individually, in pairs/trios, or as a whole class activity with a whiteboard or poster/newsprint.

RESOURCES

- Guided reading graphic organizer
- SOAPStone graphic organizer
- Comparative T-chart analysis of Hellenistic Judaism and Non-Jewish Hellenistic Religions (teacher resource; provided to students as handout or lecture)
- Comparative T-chart analysis of the Matthean and Lukan passages (teacher and student resource, in standard and advanced formats)
- Rubric for Reflective Writing
- Micah readings handout

LESSON ACTIVITIES

- Guided reading
 - Teachers who have a class with students reading below grade level should read the two sermons aloud with their classes, using the guided reading graphic organizers to prompt class discussion of the sermons, but focusing on one sermon at a time. It could be helpful to use the “think aloud” modeling with students. “So what sort of people does Jesus say will be ‘blessed’? In the first ten lines of Matthew, Jesus identifies several types of people.” List those on the board, then prompt students to look at the list to identify connections between and amongst types.
 - Teachers who have classes reading on level or above could assign the guided reading as homework so the students can come to class with something to say (or questions) about the two sermons.
 - Student and teacher versions are provided.
- SOAPStone analysis
 - The SOAPStone analysis is designed to prompt students to think like an historian about the two sermons. Depending on class skill levels, teachers could have students do this activity as individuals, in pairs/trios, or as a whole class using a template on a screen/board to fill in as the class determines responses to the prompting questions.
 - There is no suggested response key provided for this activity, as answers can (and should) vary.
- Discussion of Hellenism based on T-chart (provided in teacher resources in both standard and advanced formats)
 - This T-chart provides the major differences between Hellenistic Judaism and non-Jewish Hellenistic Religions. It is fundamental to the comparative T-chart discussion guide, which gives the students a powerful tool to use as they consider the similarities and differences between the account in Luke, aimed at a non-Jewish or “Greek” Christian audience, and the more Jewish account in Matthew.
- Comparison chart based discussion
 - The comparative T-chart, which has students look at the sermons from the basis of scholarly questions, could again be done as individuals, in pairs/trios, or as a whole class. The T-chart connects the background/introductory material with the sermons, so it might be helpful for students who need the assist to have a printed copy of the background/introductory for reference, if they are not particularly good note-takers. Teachers may also want to have bullet points from the background/introductory on the board or on butcher paper posters in the room. Students absolutely need a copy of the Hellenism T-chart (standard or advanced).
 - Standard and advanced versions of this chart are provided, so teachers can select the most appropriate tool for their students.
- Reflection writing options, with prompts for standard or advanced students. The suggested rubric for the reflection writing is in the appendix.

ASSESSMENT (TEACHERS MAY USE ANY OR ALL OF THESE ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADES)

- SOAPStone sheet
- Guided reading notes
- Comparative T-chart of sermons
- Reflection Writing Prompts (rubric provided in Appendix):
 - **Standard:** After reading and discussing Matthew 5:1-26, 43-48 and Luke 6:17-38, construct an argument using at least two direct quotations from each source in which you analyze how the different emphases in the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain demonstrate the effect the differing cultural orientations of the gospels' audiences (i.e., Jewish or non-Jewish) have on their presentations of early Christian teachings.
 - **Advanced:** Given that sermons may be directed at either a group of believers to reinforce their connection to a religion or to a group of non-believers in an attempt to convert them to a religion, construct an argument using at least two direct quotations from each source in which you assert each writer's purpose for the Sermon on the Mount or the Sermon on the Plain.

EXTENDING THE LESSON

Hellenistic Judaism transformed early Israelite religion in many ways, expanding it with more developed beliefs about angels, the afterlife, and heaven and hell as places of reward and punishment. However, Hellenistic Judaism and Israelite religion shared many of the same ethics regarding social justice, the responsibility of Jews to observe the commandments, and the role of Jerusalem in the "days to come" or "day of the Lord." With this in mind, read selections from Micah 3:5, 4:1-4, 6:8 (provided in the appendix), prophetic oracles written by an Israelite prophet who lived ca. eighth century B.C.E. Then, make a T-chart that compares the Beatitudes with the passages from Micah. Save room at the bottom for a paragraph analyzing the similarities and differences.

Appendix (handouts and resources)

SOAPSTone WORKSHEET

Name(s): _____

S	What is the subject of the piece? Identify the general topic, idea or thesis.	
O	What is the occasion? In what time, place and setting does it occur? What appears to have prompted the speaker to create the piece?	
A	Who is the audience? Why would the speaker want to address that audience?	
P	What is the purpose? Based on your reading of the source, what does the speaker want to accomplish?	
S	Who is the speaker? What do we know about this historic person? How might that affect the content of this text?	
Tone	What is the tone of the piece? Look carefully at word choice in the text to help you draw your conclusion(s).	

Teacher's Guided Reading Notes for Luke 6

Characterize the kinds of people Jesus says will be "blessed."	The "blessed" will be the poor, hungry, those who weep, hated, excluded, reviled and defamed. These are all indicators of people who are suffering and impoverished.
Characterize the kinds of people Jesus says will experience "woe."	The rich, the full, the laughing, and those of whom others speak well will experience "woe." These are all indicators of people who are affluent and wealthy.
In vv. 27-31, Jesus specifies things his listeners should do. What are these things? How challenging are they? Why?	Jesus specifies loving your enemies, doing good to those who hate you, blessing those who curse you, praying for those who abuse you, turning the other cheek, giving your shirt to the one who take your coat, giving to everyone who begs from you, and not asking go taken goods to be returned. Answers will vary in terms of the challenging nature of these actions and the reasons why they are challenging.
In vv. 32-36, Jesus provides a rationale for doing what he laid out in vv. 27-31. What is this rationale?	Jesus' rationale is that it means little to do the easy things, such as doing good to those who do you good. The reward is being "children of the Most High" and behaving as "your Father."

Student Guided Reading Notes for Luke 6

Name: _____

Characterize the kinds of people Jesus says will be "blessed."	
Characterize the kinds of people Jesus says will experience "woe."	
In vv. 27-31, Jesus specifies things his listeners should do. What are these things? How challenging are they? Why?	
In vv. 32-36, Jesus provides a rationale for doing what he laid out in vv. 27-31. What is this rationale?	
Jesus claims in Luke that the best victory over enemies is not defeating them, but loving them. What does he mean by this and why would it fit in with the purpose of his sermon?	

Teacher Guided Reading Notes for Matthew 5

Name: _____

Characterize the kinds of people Jesus says will be "blessed."	Jesus says the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake will be "blessed." These are people who are obeying the commandments of Torah, doing (in his view) what they are supposed to do, and are blessed by God for their spiritual character.
What does it mean to be "the salt of the earth"?	This phrase refers to people who are worthy and of high value due to their moral integrity. Extending the metaphor, salt is common in coastal areas and easily separated from seawater. As those living in hot areas knew, eating salt is essential to survival, thus the disciples are essential to the survival of the world. It is somewhat unclear what the phrase "if salt has lost its saltiness" means, except that some water (such as the Dead Sea) was more salty than fresher water.
The city "built on a hill" refers to Jerusalem. What does this imply about the importance of Jerusalem? Where have you heard this phrase used before?	A city built on a hill will be the center of attention, as everyone can see it. This implies Jerusalem has a role to play as a model for the rest of the world (see Isaiah 2:2-4, Micah 4:1-2). If you've taken American History or Literature, you've probably read John Winthrop's sermon claiming the Massachusetts Bay Colony was "a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us," because the colonists cast America as the New Israel.
Jesus commands his followers to "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." What do you think he means by "good works"?	"Good works" refers to active doing, not just believing. That is, Jesus directed his followers to do good things as prescribed in the Torah, thus demonstrating their obedience to it.
When Jesus says, "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven," what is he saying about observance of the commandments in the Torah?	This phrase reinforces the importance of following the commands of the Torah and underscores the need to be scrupulously observant and obedient. Earlier when Jesus says that not an "iota" or "dot" nor a "stroke" or a "hook" of a letter of the law will pass away until the end times, this refers to common markings on Hebrew letters, the language in which the Torah was written. Additional information on Pharisees is available at Bible Odyssey .

Student Guided Reading Notes for Matthew 5

Name: _____

Characterize the kinds of people Jesus says will be "blessed."	
What does it mean to be "the salt of the earth"?	
The city "built on a hill" refers to Jerusalem. What does this imply about the importance of Jerusalem? Where have you heard this phrase used before?	
Jesus commands his followers "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." What do you think he means by "good works"?	
When Jesus says, "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven," what is he saying about observance of the commandments in the Torah?	

Teacher Comparison T-chart with Suggested Responses

Matthew 5:1-26, 43-47	Luke 6:17-38
Who is the audience in the account in Matthew? Why are they listening to Jesus? The disciples and apparently not “the crowds” (5:1). The disciples so far seem to include Peter and Andrew, James and John (4:18-22). They are Jews living in the region of Galilee who are presumably listening to him because they have pledged to follow his ministry closely. Many Jews had a Hebrew name and a Greek nickname; Peter was originally Shimon. Note that in v. 47 Matthew contrasts Jesus’ hearers with “the Gentiles” or non-Jews.	Who is the audience in the account in Luke? Why are they listening to Jesus? Jesus has come down from a mountain and is speaking to his chosen twelve disciples or “apostles” — a Greek word for “those who are sent.” He is also speaking to “a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem and the coast of Tyre and Sidon” (6:17). These are presumably Jews (and possibly a few coastal peoples who were not Jews) who are there to listen and to be healed of their diseases, which were believed to be caused by demon possession (6:18).
According to the notes in this lesson, what is the religious makeup of the original audience of the whole Gospel According to Matthew? Students should be able to deduce from the notes that this gospel seems to address a Jewish audience of Christians.	According to the notes in this lesson, what is the religious makeup of the original audience of the whole Gospel According to Luke? Students should be able to deduce from the notes that this gospel seems to address a non-Jewish, “Gentile” or “Greek” audience of Christians.
Where is Jesus during this sermon? Up on a mountain with his four disciples, to get away from the crowds (5:1).	Where is Jesus during this sermon? He has come down from a mountain to a flat, level plain (6:17).
What is Jesus’ opinion of how and to what extent his followers should keep the commandments in the Torah? They are to keep and do all of it. Every “dot” or “iota” and every “stroke” or “hook” on every letter of the Law (Torah) is valid until the end of days (5:18). Jesus seems to argue that all of the commandments in the Torah should be observed (v. 19). Even worse than those who break the commandments are those who teach others that is okay to do this (5:19).	What is Jesus’ opinion of how and to what extent his followers should keep the commandments in the Torah? Observing the whole Torah appears to be a non-issue in Luke. However, many of the commandments that Jesus gives — to love, to be merciful and forgiving — also appear in the Law and the Prophets, e.g.,: “What does the Lord require of you to do, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8).
What will the “Kingdom of God/Heaven” be like, and who is included? A place of comfort, mercy and closeness to God where the righteous dwell. It appears to	What will the “Kingdom of God/Heaven” be like, and who is included? A place where those who are poor, hungry and sad in society now will be rewarded and

take place on Earth (5:4) as well as Heaven (5:11). It includes: the poor in spirit, meek, those who hunger and thirst <i>for righteousness</i>, the merciful, those who are pure in heart, and the peacemakers (5:3-10). Note the difference from the literal <i>poor</i> and <i>hungry</i> in Luke.	satiated. Society is upended and norms are reversed.
What are the major divisions in society that Jesus envisions? Matthew's Jesus divides society according to Jewish notions of spirituality and legal standing according to observance of the Torah's commandments: righteous vs. unrighteous, uplifted vs. dispirited.	What are the major divisions in society that Jesus envisions? Luke's Jesus divides society as Hellenistic moral philosophy tended to divide it, into rich vs. poor. Those who had wealth were viewed as less morally upstanding and less spiritual than the poor, who were praised. Concern for the poor is also a strong emphasis in the Hebrew Prophets and Torah. Jesus contrasts his followers with "sinners," who presumably are those who do not care for the poor (6:33).
What does Jesus want his followers to do most of all, according to this sermon? What is "good"? Matthew speaks of "good works" (5:16), which seems to include leading a righteous life according to the Law and the Prophets, keeping all of the commandments, and being perfect like God.	What does Jesus want his followers to do most of all, according to this sermon? What is "good"? The message seems to be to avoid wealth and a successful worldly reputation (see the "woes" in 6:24-26). Also, they are not to judge, but rather to love and "do good." This includes not resisting violence against oneself, lending money without interest or personal monetary gain, and showing mercy and forgiveness (6:27-38).
Is the Jerusalem Temple or its service mentioned? Yes, see 5:23, where Jesus presumes his followers will be offering sacrifices and libations at the Temple. Like earlier prophets (e.g., Isaiah 1:11-18, 1 Samuel 15:22) Jesus believes the ritual is empty without the proper state of heart and work to create social harmony and justice.	Is the Jerusalem Temple or its service mentioned? Not here. In the passage previous to the sermon, Jesus does reference a passage from the Jewish Bible in which David enters the Temple and eats the Bread of the Presence, but Jesus is mentioning this to show his view on how it is acceptable to <i>break</i> the laws concerning Temple observance (6:1-4).

Student Worksheet Comparison Responses

Name: _____

Matthew 5:1-26, 43-47	Luke 6:17-38
Who is the audience in the account in Matthew? Why are they listening to Jesus?	Who is the audience in the account in Luke? Why are they listening to Jesus?
According to the notes in this lesson, what is the makeup of the original audience of the whole Gospel According to Matthew?	According to the notes in this lesson, what is the makeup of the original audience of the whole Gospel According to Luke?
Where is Jesus during this sermon?	Where is Jesus during this sermon?
What is Jesus' opinion of how and to what extent his followers should keep the commandments in the Torah?	What is Jesus' opinion of how and to what extent his followers should keep the commandments in the Torah?
What will the "Kingdom of God/Heaven" be like, and who is included?	What will the "Kingdom of God/Heaven" be like, and who is included?
What are the major divisions in society that Jesus envisions?	What are the major divisions in society that Jesus envisions?
What does Jesus want his followers to do most of all, according to this sermon? What is "good"?	What does Jesus want his followers to do most of all, according to this sermon? What is "good"?
Is the Temple or its service mentioned?	Is the Temple or its service mentioned?

Reflection Writing Prompt Rubric (May be used with either prompt)

Descriptor	2	3	4
Reflective essay has strong focus; deep response to prompt	Surface reading — predictable and rather shallow OR loses focus on prompt	Shows some moments of deep thought; maintains focus on prompt	Shows significant and consistent deep thought; maintains focus on prompt
Reflective essay contains appropriate (two each) text references either footnoted or in-text cited, <u>No citations means 0 points for this item</u>	Contains at least one citation for each text OR significant errors in citation OR citations that are not on point	Contains two citations for each text which are mostly on point OR minor errors in citation	Contains two or more perfect and on-point citations
Essay draws defensible conclusions	Conclusions are not logically drawn from provided evidence	Conclusions are logically drawn from evidence, but not particularly insightful or thought provoking	Conclusions are logically drawn from evidence and demonstrate insight or provoke thought.
Conventions (grammar etc.), writings that are so poorly produced they are unreadable earn a 0 for this item	Interferes with reading	No impact on reading	Excellent, enhances reading

Suggested Grading Scale: Average 2-2.5 D; 2.6-3.0 C; 3.1-3.5 B; 3.6 and higher A

T Chart: Hellenistic Judaism

vs.

Hellenistic Religions (non-Jewish)

Monotheism — Jews believed in one God	Polytheism — Believed in many gods
In the first century C.E., most Jews agreed that the Torah and a collection of books known as the Prophets were scripture.	No one official collection of scriptures existed; some branches had their own writings.
Central worship site is the Jerusalem Temple, where priests sacrifice animals. People also gathered in synagogues to listen to the Torah be read, to pray and to sing songs.	Depending on which god was worshipped, there were thousands of temples. There was no equivalent to the synagogue.
The people tried to follow all of the commandments in the “Torah” or “Law” (later traditionally numbered at 613), including avoiding worship of any other gods, rest on the Sabbath day, and eating ritually pure food (Kosher). These sacred laws superseded civic laws, and sometimes contradicted them.	The civic laws were also sacred laws, since sacrifices were made to the Roman Emperor and his “genius” (a daimon who guided him), as well as to the respective gods/goddesses of the city and Roman Empire.
Greek was widespread in the eastern Roman Empire and Latin was widespread in the West. Local languages were also used. Jews, especially in the Near East, often used Aramaic, and some knew Hebrew.	Greek was widespread in the eastern Roman Empire and Latin was widespread in the West. Local languages were also used.
Hellenistic Jews developed a variety of afterlife beliefs, and some may have believed there was no afterlife. Some believed the soul turned into an angel or a star, some believed the body was resurrected along with the soul, and some developed ideas about what the final resting place of bliss was like for the person.	Held a variety of afterlife beliefs, but mostly thought of the soul as separate from the body and as something that could live on after death. Some believed in a special place of afterlife bliss, some believed that the soul was transformed into a star, and some believed there was no afterlife.
Believed in a final collective salvation of all the righteous in “The World to Come,” “Kingdom of God,” etc. Well-developed eschatology .	Little in the way of endtime beliefs. “Salvation” is individual.

T Chart (Advanced): Hellenistic Judaism

vs. Hellenistic Religions (non-Jewish)

Monotheism — Jews believed in one God	Polytheism — Believed in many gods
Jews placed tremendous value on their Scripture, the Torah (Law) and the Prophets, plus other writings, depending on the Jewish group.	No one official collection of scriptures existed; some branches had their own writings. Homer's <i>Odyssey</i> and <i>Iliad</i> had scriptural status for some, along with many other writings.
Until 70 C.E., the Jerusalem Temple was considered to be the main place of connection to God in heaven through the sacrificial rituals conducted by male priests. In 70 C.E. this Temple was destroyed by the Romans, never to be rebuilt even until today. People also gathered in synagogues to listen to the Torah be read, to pray, and to sing songs.	Depending on which god was worshipped, there were thousands of temples and other sacred sites at which people could worship and at which priests sacrificed animals. Priests and priestesses both officiated, depending on the denomination of Greco-Roman religion in question. There was no equivalent to the synagogue.
Hellenistic Jews believed in angels, good and bad, and in spirits that lived between the sphere of the moon and the Earth, on the Earth, or under the Earth; some could enter you and make you sick.	Greco-Roman peoples believed in “daimons” that lived between the sphere of the moon and the Earth, on the Earth, or under the Earth. These were good and bad entities, some of which could make you sick.
The people tried to follow all of the commandments in the “Torah” or “Law” (later traditionally numbered at 613), including avoiding worship of any other gods, rest on the Sabbath day, and eating ritually pure food (Kosher). These sacred laws superseded civic laws, and sometimes contradicted them. Jews and Romans clashed repeatedly, culminating in the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. in the First Jewish War and the banning of Jews from Jerusalem in the Second Jewish War ca. 130 C.E.	The civic laws were also sacred laws, since sacrifices were made to the Roman Emperor and his “genius” (a daimon who guided him), as well as to the respective gods/goddesses of the city and Roman Empire.
Jews could be Roman citizens, but the Jewish people were a legal grouping called an “ethnos” or ethnic group, which included intermarried people from other cultures and converts. Their legal standing was complex, living under both Jewish and Roman law. Ideally, all pledged to obey the one Jewish God and live under sacred Jewish laws; as Jews, they were exempt from sacrificing to the city and imperial gods. Most women worked in the private, home sphere, while public life and worship in the Temple was mostly the domain of men. Jesus’ ministry apparently included women.	Hellenistic peoples who were not Jewish were comprised of multiple ethnicities — including Persians, Romans, Greeks from Asia Minor, Greeks from the Greek Mainland, and Romans from North Africa. While it was a male dominated society, some Roman women achieved public prominence and success.

Greek was widespread in the eastern Roman Empire and Latin was widespread in the West. Local languages were also used. Jews, especially in the Near East, often used Aramaic, and some knew Hebrew.	Greek was widespread in the eastern Roman Empire and Latin was widespread in the West. Local languages were also used.
Hellenistic Jews developed a variety of afterlife beliefs, and some may have believed there was no afterlife. Some believed the soul turned into an angel or a star, some believed the body was resurrected along with the soul, and some developed ideas about what the final resting place of bliss was like for the person.	Non-Jews of the Greco-Roman period held variety of afterlife beliefs, but mostly thought of the soul as something separate from the body and as something that could live on after death without the need for a resurrected body. Some believed in a special place of afterlife bliss, some believed that the soul was transformed into a star, and some thought death was the end. Some believed that philosophy, along with honoring the city and imperial gods through sacrifices, was the path to this spiritual perfection. Others belonged to small religious associations focused on worshipping a particular god or goddess.
Although beliefs were not standardized, most Hellenistic Jews also believed in a final collective salvation of all the righteous in “The World to Come,” “Kingdom of God,” etc. Oftentimes, this is portrayed as being in an earthly paradise, or heaven and earth become conflated. There is a well-developed eschatology, or theories of the endtime salvation of the righteous and dramatic transformation to history, but these vary greatly from text to text.	There was little in Greco-Roman religion in the way of collective eschatology. Where the idea of “salvation” of the soul appears, it is individual.

Micah Readings

From the NRSV version of Micah 3:5, 4:1-4, 6:8:

Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets
who lead my people astray,
who cry 'Peace'
when they have something to eat,
but declare war against those
who put nothing into their mouths [against those who have nothing to eat].

...

In days to come
the mountain of the Lord's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised up above the hills.
Peoples shall stream to it,
and many nations shall come and say:
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob [the Jerusalem Temple];
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.'
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between many peoples,
and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away;
they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
and their spears into pruning-hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more;
but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees,
and no one shall make them afraid;
for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

...

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?