



"And now I am no more in the world,
but these are in the world..." (John 17:11).

Use this recent news story to help your students see the relevance
of this week's lesson from the Standard Lesson Commentary®
or Standard Lesson Quarterly®.

THE FOUNDERING OF HOPE

The Obama administration is cautiously considering its next move regarding the most recent stalled attempt to broker an Israeli-Palestinian peace. But this is nothing new. Each U.S. presidential administration of the past quarter century has experienced similar frustration in attempting to create a just peace in the region. Hopes for success are constantly dashed by the realities of sinful pride and power in the region. Sadly, there seems to be much unholiness in "the Holy Land."

THE REALIZATION OF HOPE

The Old Testament prophets predicted the coming of the Messiah, the one who would establish his just and righteous rule. When Jesus appeared on the scene, many in his day hoped that he would be the one to expel the Romans from the land. Their hopes were not fulfilled. However, the peace that Jesus did establish—peace between God and people—was realized in the hearts of all who accepted him as Messiah. It still is. It is a better kind of hope that anyone expected. It is the best kind of peace to hope for.

1. Should Christians view attempts to achieve peace between Israelis and Palestinians as more important than attempts to achieve peace between other people-groups? Why, or why not?
2. What role can and should Christians have in peacemaking?
3. At what point, if any, do a Christian's efforts on working to achieve world peace distract from helping people find eternal peace with God through Christ?
4. How would you respond to the claim that religion has been responsible for most of the hatred, wars, and deaths of innocent people throughout history?
5. What is your answer to the charge that Christianity is an agent of intolerance and discord in society rather than peace?

—Charles R. Boatman

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