



“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®.

MISPLACED BLAME

Last week, California Chrome had a chance to become horse racing’s first Triple Crown winner since 1978. But after winning this year’s Kentucky Derby and the Preakness, the horse finished tied for fourth in the Belmont Stakes, a foot having suffered a gash coming out of the starting gate. One of Chrome’s owners intemperately blamed the loss on the rules governing the race at Belmont, unaware that his horse’s injury contributed to his failure to win. He later apologized for his outburst.

BLAME RIGHTLY PLACED

There was no moral element in California Chrome’s failure to win—no bribing of jockeys, no doping of horses, etc. On the other hand, ancient Israel suffered self-inflicted moral failures repeatedly, failures that defiled the nation spiritually. Israel’s situation was the result of its own deliberate choices, and God caused the nation to suffer the consequences of its sin. Israel could not blame its fortunes on anyone or anything except its own failures.

1. How do we keep from making hasty judgments that we will come to regret?
2. To what extent is a lack of moral purity to blame for our country’s failures in various areas? Why?
3. How should Christians respond to the charge of being intolerant when we point out impurity in society at large?
4. Under what circumstances, if any, can we say that various misfortunes today are the result of God’s judgment as they were in Haggai’s time? Why?
5. What examples can you offer of a moral cause and effect at work?

—Charles R. Boatman

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