



"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®.

### **EPIDEMIC**

The Ebola epidemic has been spreading across Africa for weeks. Dr. Tom Frieden, Director of the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, says the situation is "spiraling out of control." There are over 3,000 suspected and confirmed cases, with more than 1,500 victims now having died from the disease. At this point, the primary hope for stemming the spread of the disease is several vaccines that are still in their experimental stages of development. For the time being, however, more misery and death are expected.

### **HOPE**

The Babylonian exile would result in an epidemic of hopelessness for the Judeans (see Psalm 137). The people had broken God's covenant time and again, and they were to suffer from God's punishment for their sin. But Jeremiah, prophesying before the exile of 586 BC began, foretold of God's promise of a new covenant. The new covenant would "vaccinate" people by putting God's law in their hearts. The result would be new spiritual life.

1. In what ways, if any, is the Ebola epidemic similar to Judah's Babylonian captivity in calling attention to the human condition of sin? Explain.
2. Why do some people still cling to the old covenant when the new covenant is so much better?
3. In what ways do Christians cling to the old covenant without realizing it?
4. In what ways might we look at the new covenant as being "a vaccine of hope"?
5. What blessings have you experienced from God's new covenant? Be specific.

—Charles R. Boatman

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