



"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®  
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### **A MODERN CLASH OF RELIGIOUS VALUES**

ISIS militants recently beheaded Japanese journalist Kenji Goto. American news media made little reference to the fact that Goto was a Christian (only 1 percent of Japanese are). Japan has been officially pacifist since World War II, but Prime Minister Shinzo Abe vowed that his nation could not allow atrocities against Japanese citizens. He proclaimed that Japan would avenge the deaths of Goto and another hostage recently killed by ISIS militants. No mention was made of atrocities (including beheadings) committed against prisoners of war by the forces of Imperial Japan during World War II.

### **AN ANCIENT CLASH OF RELIGIOUS VALUES**

Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan addressed Jewish bias against Samaritans, a bias that was religious in nature. Luke 9:54 records the premeditation of an act of savagery against Samaritans, an act that Jesus forbade. Samaritans were shunned, if not outright despised (John 4:9; 8:48). The feeling was mutual (Luke 9:52, 53). Antagonism that has religious differences as a basis are certainly nothing new!

1. How do we weigh the imperative to love neighbors against needs for self-defense in the face of violent enemies such as ISIS?
2. Should Christians respond differently to atrocities than governments do? If not, why not? If so, how?
3. In what situations do Christians sometimes "go to the other side of the road" to avoid being a neighbor to someone who needs help? How do we resist doing so?
4. Since just about everyone these days seems to have a cell phone to use in calling for aid, under what circumstances, if any, does that affect our obligation to stop and offer help? Explain.
5. What was a circumstance in which you overcame your reluctance be a "neighbor" to someone you disliked? How did things turn out?

—Charles R. Boatman

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