



"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®.

### **CHANGING ONE'S MIND**

Political leaders change positions on issues when current events overtake their carefully calculated intentions. We saw an example last week in President Obama's statement that, contrary to his earlier promises, American troops will continue to be in Afghanistan after he leaves office. On the other side of the world, Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel has long condemned Palestinian violence and said that any Israeli response is defensive and justifiable. However, this week he had to condemn Israeli vigilantes who beat and shot an Eritrean man whom they mistook for a Palestinian.

### **EXPLAINING THE CHANGE**

In response to a vision from God, Peter brought the gospel to Cornelius and his household. Visiting a commander of an army occupying his nation would certainly not have been a popular political position. But it was also a controversial religious act, Accepting non-Jews as equals in Christ was diametrically opposed to Peter's previously held convictions as well as the convictions of all those who steadfastly observed the law of Moses.

When Peter got back to Jerusalem, he had to face angry traditionalists and explain why he had changed his theology and associated with Gentiles, leading them to Christ.

1. When leaders change a position on issues, how might they alienate some who were once their allies? What risks are inherent in doing so?
2. The Holy Spirit directed Peter's dramatic change of heart. Can you think of a time when the Holy Spirit directed you through prayer and Bible study to rethink a long-held notion? Tell what happened.
3. On what issues are Christians being challenged to reconsider their positions today? How do we determine whether the Spirit of God or the spirit of our times is directing us to change?

—Charles R. Boatman

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