



"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®.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST?**

Trump University is the defendant in a lawsuit being heard in federal court. The judge in the case is Gonzalo Curiel, an Indiana-born son of Mexican immigrants. Donald Trump recently charged Judge Curiel with an "absolute" conflict of interest. Mr. Trump argues that Curiel's ethnicity made it improper for him to hear the case, since Trump has vowed to build a wall between the U.S. and Mexico. The charge is serious because political corruption often accompanies conflict of interest. Trump's critics in both major parties are condemning his speech as offensive.

### **CONFLICT OF MORALS**

Jerusalem claimed to be the city of God, but suffered from its leaders' offensive immorality. Their service of selfish interests placed them in an absolute conflict of interest with their call to serve God and his people. Zephaniah says the rulers, prophets, and priests alike were immoral, unprincipled, and profane. He says God will send the nations to judge the immoral city.

1. Why do you think politics is such a messy business? Why do politicians seem to so often speak unwisely?
2. Is it possible for us to set aside our ethnicity, social class, or even our politics, and be objective in deciding the issues of our time? What factors hinder us from doing so?
3. What evidence do you see of religious and political leaders in our culture committing the same abuses of power as their counterparts in Zephaniah's time?
4. Do you think, as some do, that America is reaching the end of its era of being blessed by God? Why or why not? How can Christians bring about needed change?

—Charles R. Boatman

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