



"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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THE BEGINNING . . .

This week we saw one of the repeating idiosyncrasies of the American political system. Throughout the political primaries, presidential candidates in both major parties pointed out all the flaws (both real and imagined) of their party's fellow contenders. We were told why the other candidates were unsuited for office. For example, Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders recited a litany of reasons that purportedly disqualified the other, and Donald Trump and many of his rivals traded stinging barbs.

. . . AND THE END

In the days since winning the election, Donald Trump has begun forming his cabinet. Surprisingly to most observers, he met with former Republican nominee Mitt Romney—a longtime Trump critic—regarding a potential role as Secretary of State. President-Elect Trump and President Obama have even had a civil conversation. When Jesus, the Beginning and the End, returns, things will be different. The righteous and the unrighteous will go their separate ways in the life to come. There will be no more opportunity to "make up."

1. Is it hypocritical for politicians to condemn each other strongly in the primaries and then join together to work at governing? Why or why not?
2. Do we sometimes see similar behavior in our private lives . . . or even in the church?
3. Scripture is clear about separate destinies for the saved and the lost in eternity. Does this raise questions about how we should treat "bad people" in the here-and-now? Explain.
4. How does Jesus' teaching on forgiveness (e.g., Matthew 18:21-22) fit into this picture?
5. Does your life now (the beginning) reflect what your desired end will be? Explain.

—Charles R. Boatman

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