



"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 PASSIONATE DEBATE

Conservative justice Antonin Scalia's death last year left the US Supreme Court divided 4-4 on many issues. This week, the Senate passionately debated the nomination of Neil Gorsuch to the court. Many see the Senate hearings as a battle for the spirit of the nation. The dream of conservatives is that a court with the 49-year-old Justice Gorsuch on it would bring more traditional rulings for decades to come. Liberals have visions of a court more attuned to what they might call the spirit of our times.

A PROPHETIC CALL

The prophet Joel lived in and prophesied to the nation of Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel, during a time when the country was devastated by a locust plague. He viewed Judah as a nation whose supreme judge was God and whose national spirit was formed and guided by the Spirit of God. The Lord promised to restore Judah to a place of honor among the nations and to make Jerusalem a place of deliverance and salvation.

1. Why do both sides of the Senate view the stakes of the Gorsuch nomination to be so high?
2. Is it better for the Supreme Court to "tilt" to the left or the right? On what issues and why?
3. Regardless of which direction the court moves, do you see a need for America's spirit to be restored to what it was in a previous era? Explain.
4. Does Joel's call to return to the Lord (Joel 2:13) speak to us today? If not, why not? If so, how?
5. Does Joel's promise that Judah would not be an object of scorn (Joel 2:19) offer you hope for the Christian faith to be more highly regarded in our nation? Why or why not?

—Charles R. Boatman

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