



"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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RESTORED TO JERUSALEM?

On May 14, the U.S. government officially opened its embassy in Jerusalem. The move angered many Palestinians and their allies, who believe that Jerusalem should be the capital city of a future Palestinian state. On the other hand, many believe opening the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem simply accepts reality. Jerusalem has been recognized as Israel's capital for 3,000 years, and Israel has long maintained its main government offices there. In 1995, the U. S. Congress passed the Jerusalem Embassy Act, which required that the U.S. embassy be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Presidents of both parties have pledged to do so, but it has not happened until now. Some (but far from all) evangelical and fundamentalist Christians believe that restoration of Israel's capital to its biblical location has end times significance.

RESTORED TO JERUSALEM!

We've lived with occasionally misguided end time prophecies for thousands of years. So the theological implications of our government's action are open to interpretation. What we do know, from today's text and others, is that God is Lord over history and will protect and provide for his people even in times of great distress. The actions of governments may help or hinder Christians, but we look forward to the New Jerusalem God has promised where his order will be restored forever.

1. Do you think the new American embassy in Jerusalem has prophetic significance? What is the scriptural basis for your opinion? Is Christian activism in Israeli politics good or bad? Why?
2. How does hope for living in the New Jerusalem strengthen you?
3. What practical advice can you offer about "taking refuge" in God in times of distress? How has God brought restoration to you personally, either physically or spiritually?

—Charles R. Boatman

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