



“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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PLACING THE BLAME ON OTHERS

We keep being reminded of the pervasiveness of evil. On October 31, a terrorist who claimed inspiration from ISIS killed eight bicyclists in New York City by driving a truck down a cycle path. Then, last Sunday, a man who had recently sent threatening texts to his mother-in-law went into the church in Texas where she attends and killed 26 people. He is said to have had a history of violence, having been dishonorably discharged from the Air Force five years ago for assaulting his wife and child.

PLACING BLAME WHERE IT SHOULD BE

The social covenant on which our society relies is being torn to shreds. We have no idea when an aggrieved soul will (in Jeremiah’s words) “destroy and bring disaster.” With God’s permission, evil nations had overthrown Israel and Judah, but Jeremiah announced that God would henceforth be using his power to build and plant. Perhaps just as important at a personal level, no one could any longer blame external forces—whether ISIS or a mother-in-law, for example—for his sinfulness.

1. How can these violent events give us a “wake-up call,” an opportunity to consider the nature of evil and destructiveness of sin? Explain.
2. Explain the “teeth on edge” proverb of Jeremiah’s day. What are some similar ways we explain suffering without confessing our own guilt today?
3. Consider the terms of the Old Covenant. Where was the law written and whose responsibility was it to know and keep it?
4. How does having God’s law written in your heart affect the way you live as a follower of Jesus? Give specific examples.

—Charles R. Boatman

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