



“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®.

EXILES RETURN HOME AMIDST VIOLENCE

In recent years, war in the African nation of Mali has displaced over 140,000 of its citizens. These refugees have fled to neighboring countries, with nearly 25,000 crossing into Burkina Faso. However, this year, violence against refugees in Burkina Faso has caused many Malian refugees to make the hard decision to return to their home country. But continued unrest there prevents them from returning, leaving them displaced, vulnerable to attack and oppression from all sides. Only peace in the land will allow the Malian refugees to return home.

EXILES RETURN HOME BY GOD’S HAND

The northern kingdom of Israel had fallen to the Assyrians a hundred years before Zephaniah prophesied to the nation of Judah. Ten tribes of Israel had been dispersed from their homeland—and the worst was yet to come. Jerusalem would be destroyed and the people of Judah exiled. But the prophet foretold that God’s punishment would not last forever. One day, the Lord would gather the exiles, lead them home, and restore their fortunes.

1. What experience, if any, do you have with refugees?
2. What’s the most painful or risky decision you’ve ever had to make?
3. How have you been (or how would you like to be) delivered by God and allowed to return to a place or relationship you abandoned?

Additional Resources

These videos and materials are for your personal use. If you show videos in class, be sure to have the necessary rights to do so.

Music Video, Traditional: [“Onward, Christian Soldiers”](#)

Music Video, Multicultural: [“Worthy One” by Nashville Life Music](#)

Music Video, Contemporary: [“He Will Rejoice Over You” by The ZOE Group](#)

[Coffman’s Commentary on Zephaniah 3](#)

[Working Preacher’s Commentary on Zephaniah 3:14–20](#)

[Guzik’s Commentary on Zephaniah 3](#)

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