

Use “The Scene” to introduce “No Idols,” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for June 14, 2015. The lesson is found on page 11 of *Young Teen Teacher* by Standard Publishing.

# the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

It hadn't happened for 37 years. Many people had begun to believe it was an impossible feat. Yet despite the slim chances, every year horse owners, trainers, and jockeys ready 3-year-old thoroughbreds to race in the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness Stakes, and the Belmont Stakes to attempt the three-win sweep known as the Triple Crown. On Saturday, June 6, American Pharoah defied the odds and ended the drought, becoming only the 12th ever horse to be a Triple Crown victor.

Why is the Triple Crown so difficult to achieve? “To win the Triple Crown, a colt or filly must prevail over three different race tracks in three different states at three different distances—all within a five-week span. Each of the three races demands a different kind of ability,” explained *Star-Ledger* columnist emeritus Jerry Izenberg. He said the challenge of the Derby is the crowded track with so many horses in the race; the challenge of the Preakness is its short distance requiring speed; and the challenge of the Belmont is its far distance most horses have never run before.

American Pharoah's trainer, Bob Baffert, described how astonishing a horse has to be to win the Triple Crown: “You just have to wait for one of these superhorses to come around. They don't come around often. And then they have to be tough.” And Baffert has known how tough. He was close but lost three other chances at having prior horses win the Triple Crown, but each were defeated in the final race. So to find American Pharoah even amazed Baffert. “He moves like no other horse I've ever had. . . . He just moves over the top of the ground. He's quick, he's fast, and he doesn't use a lot of energy. So that's why he dominates. . . . I was in a little bit of awe.”

Until last week and American Pharoah's crowning achievement, the horse racing industry had begun to wonder if the format or schedule of these famous races should be changed in some way. Because it had been decades since a horse had won all three races, some began to doubt if it was possible to do anymore. “I don't know, maybe we need to re-order the races and adjust the distances,” horse trainer Wayne Lukas had said. But likely this 2015 triumph for American Pharoah will bring new energy and new belief.

*As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:*

**If something hadn't happened in 37 years, would you doubt that it was possible to achieve that goal? Why or why not? When you hear about something huge that happened, do you just listen to the information or do you prefer to see a video of it? Explain.**

**Why do you think people doubted that a horse could win the Triple Crown anymore until they saw it happen? Does the description of what is required for each race sound impossible to you?**

**Did you watch any of the Triple Crown horse races this year? If so, you have witnessed history! What is it about humans that impresses us to see with our own eyes super things—super feats of strength, super athletes, super brilliant minds, or super animals?**

**Some people may have been skeptical about what was possible for these horses until they saw American Pharoah win with their own eyes. Sometimes it's easier to believe in something when we can see it. But God asks us to believe in Him without seeing Him. When we try to create an image to represent God, we can run into trouble. The Bible warns us of the consequences of making God into an image that He's not, and He calls it idolatry.**



MEETING GOD FACE-TO-FACE

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