



the **SCENE**

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

Nearly 11,000 crocodiles are starving to death on a Honduras farm after the bank accounts of the wealthy owners have been frozen. The Rosenthal family, a powerful clan in Honduras, is being investigated for their alleged involvement in laundering money and drug trafficking. The US-imposed asset freeze means that American businesses are prohibited from doing business with the family and any of its companies—which include banks, media, real estate, tourism, livestock, and agriculture. The crocodile farm (named Cocodrilos Continental) exports the animals’ meat and skin to the United States, while also “preserving the species,” according to its website. The Rosenthal family spends roughly \$1 million per year on the farm to pay its employees and feed the animals. But with the bank accounts being frozen, that money is off-limits. “The crocodiles . . . are dying of hunger, and we are too because we haven’t been paid the last two weeks,” said one worker.

According to employees at Cocodrilos Continental, thousands of American crocodiles are spread out over the farm, living in 135 pools of water hidden in tall grasses and weeds. Sixty or so newborn crocodiles are included in that number, as are around 70 sick animals. But the on-site animal clinic that cares for the animals has been shut down. Seven lions are also being kept in cages with no food. “Forty animals already died. They were taken away in boxes by trucks to be buried,” said a farm employee.

Pablo Dubon, an official at the Forest Conservation Institute in Honduras, says they are working on an emergency plan to care for the animals until other arrangements can be made. One suggestion was to have employees work for food until the legal matters with the Rosenthals were settled. A week ago, Dubon’s team delivered 3,000 pounds of chicken meat to the farm. But workers refused to feed the animals unless they were paid \$340 each—their usual wage for a month.

In contrast, the Rosenthals are one of Honduras’ wealthiest families, thought to be untouchable until now. Jamie Rosenthal (the 79-year-old leader of the family) was once vice president of the country. His son Yani Rosenthal was a government minister from 2006 to 2009. But those days appear to be over. Meanwhile their farm employees are becoming more and more desperate as they wait for this drama to unfold. Some are looking for jobs elsewhere. But if they left, they say, people living nearby would break into the farm and steal the crocodiles to eat.

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:

Who is to blame for this situation?

Who do you think is responsible for taking care of the animals and workers on the farm? Why?

What is the biggest responsibility you’ve ever been given? How did you handle it?

The way that we handle our responsibilities tells a lot about us. And the bigger the responsibility, the bigger the pressure that goes along with it. But there is no greater responsibility than responding to the call of God. Today we’ll see how God used Paul and how God can prepare us to be ready for His service.