



“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®.

### **SADNESS . . .**

Even though this is “the season of joy,” the world relentlessly provides us with reasons for not being joyful. For example, Al Qaeda and its various offshoots continue to murder innocent people. Last week, two victims included an American and a South African held captive in Yemen. Al Qaeda had threatened to kill the American unless certain demands were met. A U.S. rescue effort failed and both hostages were killed.

### **. . . IN A SEASON OF JOY**

Despite the many reasons for sadness in the world, the psalmist of this week’s lesson urges us to worship God with joy-filled hearts. Events may make this difficult at times, but looking at life from a longer-term perspective reminds us that we live in God’s good creation. God cares for all that he has made—especially us! God rules over all and his will shall eventually be accomplished. Let us live in joy-filled hope!

1. What is a Christian response to Al Qaeda’s brutality?
2. How would you comfort the families of loved ones who have died (from any cause) in what is (or should be) this season of joy?
3. In what ways do you experience the joy of God’s care and protection now?
4. What was the most joyous Christmas season you ever experienced? Why?
5. What was the least joyous Christmas season you ever experienced? Why?
6. What will you do this week to “make a joyful noise” in praise of God as a public witness?

—Charles R. Boatman

<http://www.standardlesson.com/downloads>

Copyright © 2014 by Standard Publishing, Cincinnati, OH. All rights reserved.  
Each download is for the use of one church only.