



"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®.

### **AN UNEXPECTED MIRACLE?**

Last week, Iranian authorities released four American prisoners as part of an exchange for seven Iranians held in the US. One of the Americans released was Saeed Abedini, a Christian pastor who had been arrested in 2012 for founding churches in Iran. The current administration labeled the release as a victory for diplomacy. Opposition voices rejoiced at the release of Abedini and the three others but labeled the deal that brought them home as the lopsided result of negotiating with terrorists. Others note that an estimated 90 other Christians remain imprisoned in Iran for nothing more than sharing their faith. Abedini's wife credited prayers of Christians worldwide for her husband's release. "We look forward to Saeed's return and want to thank the millions of people who have stood with us in prayer during this most difficult time," she said.

### **AN UNEXPECTED MIRACLE!**

There was no doubt that an unexpected event at a wedding long ago in Cana was a miracle. Jesus turned water into wine, an act that surprised the guests and that caused his disciples to put their faith in him. No human effort could have accomplished that feat. The miracle in Cana was a sign of divine power at work in Jesus.

1. Do you believe that diplomatic maneuvering or prayer was more effective in gaining the release of the prisoners? Do you consider this event to be miraculous? Why or why not?
2. Consider each of the following: desired results coming after faithful believers pray, God's bringing good results from the actions of evil people, an event that seems to have no natural or scientific explanation. Compare and contrast each of these to Jesus' miracle at the wedding in Cana.
3. How might the release of Abedini and what happens in his life in years to come bring glory to God and cause others to put their faith in Jesus?

—Charles R. Boatman

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