



"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®.

### **50 YEARS**

For the last fifty years, America's biggest one-day spectacle has been Super Bowl Sunday. Traditional Christianity may be in decline, but NFL football has been called "America's new religion." Sports writers speak in terms that are reminiscent of spiritual themes: sacrifice, toil, glory, and victory. In this new religion, Super Bowl Sunday is the holiest day of the year—drawing many viewers who are only nominally football fans. The day has its rituals, such as the release of anticipated commercials and halftime shows. Gathering together and feasting is also a part of the day. It's an expensive religion: the faithful gave an average "offering" of \$4,800 each for last-minute tickets available on ticket resale sites!

### **50 DAYS**

Passover celebrated the beginning of the Jewish nation, as God prepared to lead Israel out of Egypt. Fifty days later, this new nation was commanded to celebrate the Festival of Weeks, also known as Pentecost. Although not specifically designated as such in Scripture, today the Jewish people recognize this festival as coinciding with giving of the law of Moses on Sinai. Christians recognize that Jesus was crucified on Passover, and the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost.

1. Is professional football (or sports in general) America's new religion? Why do some draw that analogy? What other American events seem to evoke an almost religious fervor?
2. While the church in America celebrates Easter, many churches do not pay much attention to Pentecost. Why do you think that is? What do you think should be done to recognize that day?

—Charles R. Boatman

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