

SAMPLE

JUDAH, FROM ISAIAH TO EXILE

SENIOR SCHOLAR SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY

Vol. 62

Fall Quarter 2025

SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER

No. 4

Price \$5.39

— — — — **Ages 15-18 (High School and Young Adult)** — — — —

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SENIOR SCHOLAR SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY — USPS 490 - 140

Volume 62, No. 4, September, October, November 2025. An official quarterly of the African Methodist Episcopal Church prepared by the AMEC Sunday School Union. Published quarterly by the AMEC Sunday School Union, 900 13th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37212. Periodicals postage paid at Nashville, Tennessee. Copyright © 2025 by AMEC Sunday School Union.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Senior Scholar Sunday School Quarterly, 900 13th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37212.

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**Entered as Periodicals Postage Paid Matter, March 20, 1942, at the
Post Office at Nashville, Tennessee, under the Act of March 3, 1879.**

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

- I. Bell tap or organ
voluntary as a signal
for silence
- II. Singing
- III. The Apostles' Creed
- IV. Prayer, closing with the
Lord's Prayer in concert
- V. Singing
- VI. Calling roll of officers and
teachers
- VII. Responsive reading of
the lesson text by school
- VIII. The Decalogue

THE LESSON

- I. Organ interlude while
the classes are being
arranged
- II. Class study of the lesson
- III. Warning bell — 5
minutes
- IV. Closing bell — silence

THE CLOSING

- I. Singing
- II. Review and application
of the lesson
- III. Secretary's report
- IV. The Church School
Creed
- V. Singing
- VI. Benediction

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THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

THE CHURCH SCHOOL CREED

I believe my AME Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus' name.

AME Discipline

The Ministry of Isaiah

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 6:1-13; 7:1-7; 20:1-6; 38:1-22

Focus Scripture: Isaiah 6:1-8; 38:1-5

KEY VERSE: I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!” Isaiah 6:8

WORDS TO KNOW

SERAPHS – angelic beings considered to belong to the highest order in Christian angelology. Seraphs are often associated with light, passion, and purity.

PIVOTS – the central point, pins, or shaft on which a mechanism turns or oscillates.

WOE – refers to great sorrow, distress, or misery. It can also describe things that cause such feelings, like troubles or hardships.

IMPLORE – to beg someone earnestly or desperately to do something. It is often used to convey a sense of urgency or deep emotion.

AMAZON – Pronounced: AY-moz

HEZEKIAH – Pronounced: hez-uh-KAI-uh

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 6:1-8; 38:1-5

- 1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty, and the hem of his robe filled the temple.
- 2 Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew.
- 3 And one called to another and said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."
- 4 The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke.
- 5 And I said, "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"
- 6 Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs.
- 7 The seraph touched my mouth with it and said, "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out."
- 8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

.....

- 1 In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came to him and said to him, "Thus says the Lord: Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover."
- 2 Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord:
- 3 "Remember now, O Lord, I implore you, how I have walked before you in faithfulness with a whole heart and have done what is good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.
- 4 Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah:
- 5 "Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus says the Lord, the God of your ancestor David: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life."

INTRODUCTION

The fall quarter invites us to discover and appreciate how God, through prophets and other leaders, helped and guided the people of Judah so that we may see God's hand in our lives and all human affairs. Unit one offers four lessons that recount the spiritual reasons for Israel's decline, seen mainly through the prophetic ministry of Isaiah and two faithful kings, Hezekiah and Josiah.

All of us have experienced anxiety and stress. It is how we handle them that matters. *What causes you to feel anxiety and stress? Who do you turn to in a time of crisis? How do you handle the impact of the unjust laws enacted by people in power?*

In today's lesson, we explore the role of a prophet in the Old Testament.

BIBLE STORY

Isaiah, son of Amoz, whose name means "The Lord saves," was a prophet of God. His ministry began in 740 B.C., when King Uzziah died (6:1). Isaiah was married and had two sons (7:3; 8:3). He spent most of his life in Jerusalem. Isaiah enjoyed his most significant influence under King Hezekiah. Isaiah warned the people of Judah that their sins would bring punishment from God. But God afterward would redeem them.

In chapter six, we see that Isaiah received a unique commission from God. The people had mocked the "Holy One of Israel" (5:19), so God commissioned Isaiah to call them to account. King Uzziah reigned from 792 to 740 B.C. and was a godly and powerful king, but he did have flaws. He burned incense in the temple, so God struck King Uzziah with leprosy until his death.

Isaiah had a vision in the temple. He perceived the Lord seated on the throne (6:1). The seraphs were angelic beings with six wings who could not gaze directly at God. They worshiped God because of God's holiness. The temple shook and became smoke-filled (6:4). Isaiah panicked because anyone who saw God

expected to die immediately. He acknowledged his sinfulness and that of all the people.

The act of the seraph touching Isaiah's lips with a live coal from the altar was to cleanse and atone for his sins. Isaiah was now prepared to be God's prophet. He heard the voice of God asking for those who would represent the triune God. Isaiah's response, "Here am I. Send me!"

As God's spokesperson, Isaiah was given messages from God to share. In the case of King Hezekiah's grave illness, God told Isaiah to inform him to prepare to die (38:1). But Hezekiah humbly approached God in prayer to spare his life. He had been a faithful, devoted servant of God. Hezekiah wept as he waited on God (38:2-3). Isaiah received a message from God for Hezekiah. God heard Hezekiah's prayer and tears. God promised him fifteen more years of life.

How is Isaiah's call and commissioning connected to Hezekiah's answered prayer? Why is it important to listen to and obey God?

SANKOFA

Freedom House Paramedics

Forty years ago, long before television ever dreamed of "Emergency," a quiet revolution began in Pittsburgh, PA. An audacious, improbable experiment was started. Over the ensuing years, it was to provide the national standards for pre-hospital emergency care. The experiment went by the name of "Freedom House Ambulance Service" and embodied the disparate dreams of several dozen people.

In 1967, Phillip Hallen advanced the idea of high-quality emergency medical service. Phillip was president of the Maurice Falk Medical Fund, a former ambulance driver, and the OEO Health Committee chairman. Morton Coleman, of Pitt's Graduate School of Social Work, suggested combining an ambulance service with a program to train unemployed and underemployed black men and women as medical technicians. Searching for

an owner/operator, Hallen approached the recently formed Freedom House Enterprises, Inc. (FHE). FHE was an outgrowth of the United Negro Protest Committee located at 2027 Centre Avenue. In an unprecedented partnership with Dr. Peter Safar, known as the *Father of CPR*, a world leader in resuscitation research, and other pioneers in emergency medicine, Freedom House Paramedics began. Starting from a base in Presbyterian and Mercy Hospitals in 1968, they became the first paramedics in the United States.

Please view this short YouTube video on the Freedom House Paramedics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvOHFMQRgAY>

How do you assume the formation of the Freedom House Paramedics changed medical treatment for the sick and personal lives of the paramedics? Does it reflect God's intervention in human lives to fill a need?

Why is it important to know our history and its effect on modern times?

Source: <https://freedomhousedoc.com/>

REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

Based on today's scripture and background text, identify the role of a prophet during Isaiah's time. Compare and contrast the role of a prophet today with that of Isaiah's time.

God desires for his people to be his voice in the world. How can youth become the voice of God? What issues are you passionate about? What changes do you desire in society? The people in charge who can enact change will listen when you speak with them or write a letter. It may be a way to bring their attention to

the issues. Change can start with you! What steps are you going to take to be God's voice?

SUMMARY

God's call to Isaiah involved a vision of the Lord, seraphs, smoke, an earthquake, and a hot coal. It was enough to make Isaiah think he was doomed. However, God had a plan to use Isaiah as a prophet. God asked who would go for them, and Isaiah responded that he would go. God used Isaiah in various ways, but always to get his message heard. For instance, Hezekiah had become ill and received a message from God through Isaiah that he needed to prepare to die. Hezekiah's response was to pray, cry out to God, and weep bitterly. God was merciful toward Hezekiah and told Isaiah to inform Hezekiah that his life would be extended by fifteen years.

How has God revealed himself to you recently? Who do you turn to during a time of crisis or suffering? If you were to share your salvation story with others, how could it impact them?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Prayer: *God, we honor and worship you. I am available to be used. When you call my name, I will listen and obey. Amen.*

Hymn: "A Charge to Keep I Have"
(AMEC Hymnal #242)

Hezekiah Leads the People Back to God

Lesson Scripture: 2 Chronicles 30:1-27

Focus Scripture: 2 Chronicles 30:1-9, 26-27

KEY VERSE: There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon son of King David of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem. 2 Chronicles 30:26

WORDS TO KNOW

SANCTIFIED – to dedicate; make holy.

REMNANT – remaining portion.

DESOLATION – a waste.

EPHRAIM – Pronounced: EF-rim

MANASSEH – Pronounced: Muh-NASS-uh

HEZEKIAH – Pronounced: hez-uh-KAI-uh

ASSYRIA – Pronounced: Uh-SEER-ee-uh

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: 2 CHRONICLES 30:1-9, 26-27

- 1** Hezekiah sent word to all Israel and Judah and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the Lord the God of Israel.
- 2** For the king and his officials and all the assembly in Jerusalem had taken counsel to keep the Passover in the second month
- 3** (for they could not keep it at its proper time because the priests had not sanctified themselves in sufficient number, nor had the people assembled in Jerusalem).
- 4** The plan seemed right to the king and all the assembly.
- 5** So they decreed to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba to Dan, that the people should come and keep the Passover to the Lord the God of Israel, at Jerusalem, for they had not kept it in great numbers as prescribed.
- 6** So couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with letters from the king and his officials, as the king had commanded, saying, "O people of Israel, return to the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, so that he may turn again to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria.
- 7** Do not be like your ancestors and your kindred, who were faithless to the Lord God of their ancestors, so that he made them a desolation, as you see.
- 8** Do not now be stiff-necked as your ancestors were, but yield yourselves to the Lord and come to his sanctuary, which he has sanctified forever, and serve the Lord your God, so that his fierce anger may turn away from you.
- 9** For as you return to the Lord, your kindred and your children will find compassion with their captors and return to this land. For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him."
-
- 26** There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon son of King David of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem.
- 27** Then the priests and the Levites stood up and blessed the people, and their voice was heard; their prayer came to his holy dwelling in heaven.

INTRODUCTION

Five years ago, the world had a pandemic. COVID-19 started in one part of the world and spread quickly throughout every continent. No one was prepared for what was to come. From the youngest to the oldest, people began to get sick and go to hospitals. There was no cure, so millions of people died. The nations' leaders had to constantly give updates to keep the people as calm as possible. The cure rested in the hands of scientists who worked tirelessly to find out how to stop COVID-19 from spreading. After a lengthy period, a vaccination was created.

During crises, people want strong national leadership to help restore society. What types of leadership promote stability? In today's lesson, Hezekiah brought stability by guiding the nation back to the Lord through worship and by reinstating the Passover.

BIBLE STORY

Second Chronicles continues the history of First Chronicles. David's son, Solomon, was inaugurated as king. Solomon built the magnificent temple in Jerusalem. He enjoyed a peaceful and prosperous reign of 40 years that made him world famous. After he died, his son Rehoboam became king but was very immature. His immaturity caused the kingdom to be divided.

In Judah, there are a few good kings and many evil ones. Eventually, their idolatry led to God's punishment. The nation was conquered, and the people taken captive by the Babylonians. The temple was destroyed. When Hezekiah ascended to the throne, he immediately took action to restore the temple, eliminate all idolatry, and reinstitute worship of God.

Hezekiah desired to make a covenant with the Lord (29:10). First, the temple had to be cleansed of idols and sanctified. Then, Hezekiah approached God and offered sacrifices. Sacrifices were God's appointed way of approaching God and restoring a right relationship with him. Hezekiah's sin offering was given to ask for God's forgiveness for unintentional sins (29:21). Afterwards,

Hezekiah and everyone sang praises and worshiped God.

Hezekiah took the initiative to reinstate the Passover celebration (30:1). Although it was usually held the previous month, circumstances allowed it to be celebrated a month later (Num. 9:10-11; 30:2-3). Passover commemorates God sparing Israel's firstborn sons in Egypt, marked by the blood of a lamb over their doors (Exo. 12:23). All other firstborns were killed during this plague, after which Pharaoh freed the Israelites. This yearly celebration served as a reminder of God's redemption, and Hezekiah's efforts indicated a significant change of heart, as it had been over 200 years since such a celebration occurred in Jerusalem.

Hezekiah was a king who dedicated himself to God and wanted to help his nation grow spiritually (30:6-9). He sent letters throughout Judah and Israel, asking everyone to turn back to God. He urged them not to be stubborn, but to surrender themselves to the Lord. We show our submission to God by obeying him and giving our bodies, minds, wills, and emotions to him. We need to be guided and renewed by the Holy Spirit. Only then can we deny our selfish desires.

Who did God choose to rebuild his relationship with the people? How did King Hezekiah improve their relationship with God? How can we restore our relationship with God after we have disobeyed? What spiritual practices can help show that we are genuinely trying to change?

SANKOFA

Lawrence Joel (February 22, 1928 – February 4, 1984) was a United States Army soldier who served in the Korean and Vietnam wars. While serving in South Vietnam as a medic with the rank of specialist five assigned to 1st Battalion of the 503d Infantry in the 173d Airborne Brigade, Joel received the Silver Star and the Medal of Honor for his heroism in a battle with the Viet Cong that occurred on November 8, 1965. He was the first medic to earn the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War and the first living black American to receive this medal since the

Spanish American War in 1898.

Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. SP6 Joel demonstrated indomitable courage, determination, and professional skill when a numerically superior and well-concealed Viet Cong element launched a vicious attack, which wounded or killed nearly every man in the lead squad of the company. After treating the men wounded by the initial burst of gunfire, he bravely moved forward to assist others who were wounded while proceeding to their objective. While moving from man to man, he was struck in the right leg by machine gun fire. Although painfully wounded, his desire to aid his fellow soldiers transcended all personal feelings. He bandaged his own wound and self-administered morphine to deaden the pain, enabling him to continue his dangerous undertaking.

Through this period of time, he constantly shouted words of encouragement to all around him. Then, completely ignoring the warnings of others and his pain, he continued his search for wounded, exposing himself to hostile fire; and, as bullets dug up the dirt around him, he held plasma bottles high while kneeling completely engrossed in his life-saving mission. Then, after being struck a second time and with a bullet lodged in his thigh, he dragged himself over the battlefield and succeeded in treating 13 more men before his medical supplies ran out. Displaying resourcefulness, he saved the life of one man by placing a plastic bag over a severe chest wound to congeal the blood. As 1 of the platoons pursued the Viet Cong, an insurgent force in concealed positions opened fire on the platoon and wounded many more soldiers. With a new stock of medical supplies, SP6 Joel again shouted words of encouragement as he crawled through an intense hail of gunfire to the wounded men. After the 24-hour battle subsided and the Viet Cong dead numbered 410, snipers continued to harass the company. Throughout the long battle, SP6 Joel never lost sight of his mission as a medical aidman and continued to comfort and treat the wounded until his own evacuation was ordered. His meticulous attention to duty saved many lives, and his unselfish, daring example under most adverse conditions inspired all. SP6 Joel's profound concern for his fellow soldiers, at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of

duty, is in the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflects great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country.

What crisis were the soldiers facing? How did Lawrence Joel's leadership and actions make a difference? What characteristics do leaders need to be effective?

Resources: <https://www.facebook.com/MofHRecipients>
<https://www.historynet.com/lawrence-joel-medic-vietnam/>

REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

Kings like Ahaz (Hezekiah's father) were considered idolatrous. They set aside the worship practices prescribed by God because they preferred to do what the nations around them were doing, which led to idolatry and other sins.

What happens in the surrounding culture that draws your interest or attention away from God and the church? What are the things in the world that you desire? To what extent do you set faith aside to pursue personal desires?

God loves us very much. God wants our full commitment. What decisions or changes must you make to be fully committed to God? Take some paper and write a prayer of commitment or rededication to God. Remember to include your life changes to demonstrate your commitment to God. Once finished, take a moment and thank God for his goodness.

SUMMARY

Some crises occur outside our control. When we face troubling times, our trust in God can sustain us. We can pray that those in authority do what is best for all. But no matter what they do, our God will sustain us and provide guidance. Our faith will increase because we know who is in control. These facts should propel us to worship God. There are many ways to worship God, so worship as God leads you.

What does "worship" mean to you? How can you demonstrate your feelings about God?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Prayer: *God, forgive us for worshiping idols. We are committed to obeying and worshiping you alone, Amen.*

Hymn: "What a Wonderful Change in My Life"
(AMEC Hymnal #403)

SAMPLE

What Hilkiah Found in the Temple

Lesson Scripture: 2 Chronicles 34:1-33

Focus Scripture: 2 Chronicles 34:15-22, 26-27

KEY VERSE: Hilkiah said to the secretary Shaphan, “I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord,” and Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. 2 Chronicles 34:15

WORDS TO KNOW

PENITENT – feeling or showing sorrow and regret for having done wrong; repentant.

HUMBLED – to be meek, not proud.

AHIKAM – Pronounced: uh-HAI-kam

HILKIAH – Pronounced: hihl-KAI-uh

SHAPHAN – Pronounced: SHAY-fuhn

HULDAH – Pronounced: HUL-duh

TOKHATH – Pronounced: To-kah'-ath

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: 2 CHRONICLES 34:15-22, 26-27

- 15** Hilkiah said to the secretary Shaphan, “I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord,” and Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan.
- 16** Shaphan brought the book to the king and further reported to the king, “All that was committed to your servants they are doing.
- 17** They have emptied out the silver that was found in the house of the Lord and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers and the workers.”
- 18** The secretary Shaphan informed the king, “The priest Hilkiah has given me a book.” Shaphan then read it aloud to the king.
- 19** When the king heard the words of the law, he tore his clothes.
- 20** Then the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, the secretary Shaphan, and the king’s servant Asaiah,
- 21** “Go, inquire of the Lord for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that has been found, for the wrath of the Lord that is poured out on us is great, because our ancestors did not keep the word of the Lord, to act in accordance with all that is written in this book.”
- 22** So Hilkiah and those whom the king had sent went to the prophet Huldah, the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe (who lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter) and spoke to her to that effect.
-
- 26** “But as to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall you say to him: Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: ‘Regarding the words that you have heard,
- 27** because your heart was penitent and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants, and you have humbled yourself before me and have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the Lord.’”

INTRODUCTION

Ezra wrote Second Chronicles to bring the nation back to God by reminding them of their past. Only by following God will they prosper. Judah had suffered because of its idolatry. There had been a history of corrupt and idolatrous kings. But there were a few good kings, and for a time, there was revival. It did not last because the people returned to their idolatry, which led to chaos, destruction, and captivity.

Ezra wrote this book in 430 B.C., recording events from Solomon's reign (970 B.C.) to the beginning of the Babylonian captivity (586 B.C.). The most quoted verse from this book is 2 Chronicles 7:14. In today's lesson, we will explore the impact of Hilkiah's discovery of the Book of the Law.

Remembering practices and traditions that help establish our identity as a person, family, race, or culture is vital. What practices and traditions do you and your family celebrate? Based on our practices and traditions, how can others know we are Christians and belong to the AME Church?

BIBLE STORY

When he became king, Josiah was eight years old. He reigned from 640 to 609 B.C. as one of Judah's best kings. Josiah sought the Lord. He obeyed God and purged Judah and Jerusalem of idols. Josiah ordered Shaphan and Joah to repair the temple. While removing money to restore the temple, the priest Hilkiah found the Book of the Law. The Mosaic law was lost during Manasseh's reign of terror (2 Kgs. 22:1–23:30). Hilkiah gave the Book of the Law to Shaphan, the king's secretary. Shaphan immediately reported the discovery to Josiah and read it aloud.

The laws of God that Hilkiah found were probably in the book of Deuteronomy, which most likely had been lost during the reign of the evil kings. Josiah tearing his clothes represented his grief over the people's neglect of God's laws. Now that it had been found, Josiah realized that drastic changes had to be made to

bring the nation back in line with God's commands. He desired to be obedient to God, so he asked the priest to seek what God desired for him to do (34:19-20). They went to the prophetess Huldah (34:22).

God declared that a disaster would come because the people had forsaken him and offered to other gods (34:25). Once he heard the Word of God, Josiah responded with repentance and humility, promising to follow God's commands so his life would be spared (34:27-28). God is merciful and kind. Josiah proclaimed a celebration of the Passover as a reminder of God's deliverance of Israel out of Egypt.

How did Josiah prove his love and obedience to God? What significant celebration did Josiah reinstitute? Why? How can our connection to past events bring unity?

SANKOFA

Labor Day in the U.S. has its roots in the late 19th century when labor activists pushed for a holiday to recognize workers' contributions to the country's prosperity. The first Labor Day celebration, organized by the Central Labor Union, took place on September 5, 1882, in New York City.

The holiday's origins are debated—some credit Peter J. McGuire, a co-founder of the American Federation of Labor. In contrast, others believe Matthew Maguire, a machinist and labor leader, proposed the idea. By 1894, President Grover Cleveland signed a law making the first Monday in September a national holiday. It remains a day to honor workers and their achievements, often marked by parades, barbecues, and the unofficial end of summer.

Source: www.britannica.com

Why is Labor Day celebrated? How does the holiday connect us to the past? What event do you celebrate that enables you to remember and appreciate the past events in your life?

REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

In the Bible, the Love Feast, or Agape Feast, is a tradition where early Christians gathered to share communal meals, emphasizing love, fellowship, and unity. Paul's letters and Jude's warnings highlight these gatherings' spiritual importance and the need to protect their sanctity.

Rooted in Jesus' teachings, Love Feasts were more than meals; they symbolized equality and mutual care, breaking down social barriers. These gatherings underscored a commitment to serve one another, reflecting Christ's love.

Jude 1:12, Acts 2:46, and 1 Corinthians 11:20-22 reference the communal meals and gatherings where Christians celebrated their unity in Christ, often linked with the practice of the Lord's Supper. The Love Feast was connected to or followed by the Eucharist in some early Christian gatherings, though the two became distinct over time.

Sharing a meal reflected the love of Christ, reminding participants to love and serve one another, as Jesus did with his disciples. The Love Feast was a central part of the Christian community's spiritual life during the first few centuries of the Church. The Love Feast is primarily about communal fellowship. At the same time, the Eucharist (or Communion) remembers explicitly the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Some denominations, such as the Moravian Church and Methodist traditions, continue the practice of the Love Feast in various forms of worship and community meals.

Source: www.biblepure.com

Is the Love Feast still celebrated as a part of your church's traditions? If so, compare the original tradition with the current tradition. How do you encounter God during the Love Feast? Why is it important to love God and our neighbor? For more information, ask your pastor to discuss the history of the Love Feast.

Worship is a vital part of our praise of God. Worship can take on many forms. How do you personally like to worship God? What types of worship are included in your church's services? In what way would you like to change the worship services to meet the needs of others? Speak with the pastor about your suggestions and the idea of creating a special worship space for diverse expressions of worship.

SUMMARY

When we continually disobey God, we can expect punishment. The prior kings, Manasseh and his son Amon, did what was evil in God's sight. If people neglect practices or traditions that have helped establish their identity, they lose a sense of meaning and purpose. When Hilkiah found the Book of the Law, it opened the path to restoring Israel's worshipful practices. The celebration of the Passover was a new beginning for all.

How can we incorporate diverse spiritual practices in our daily lives in worship of God? What spiritual practices do you already use? How open are you to trying other spiritual practices?

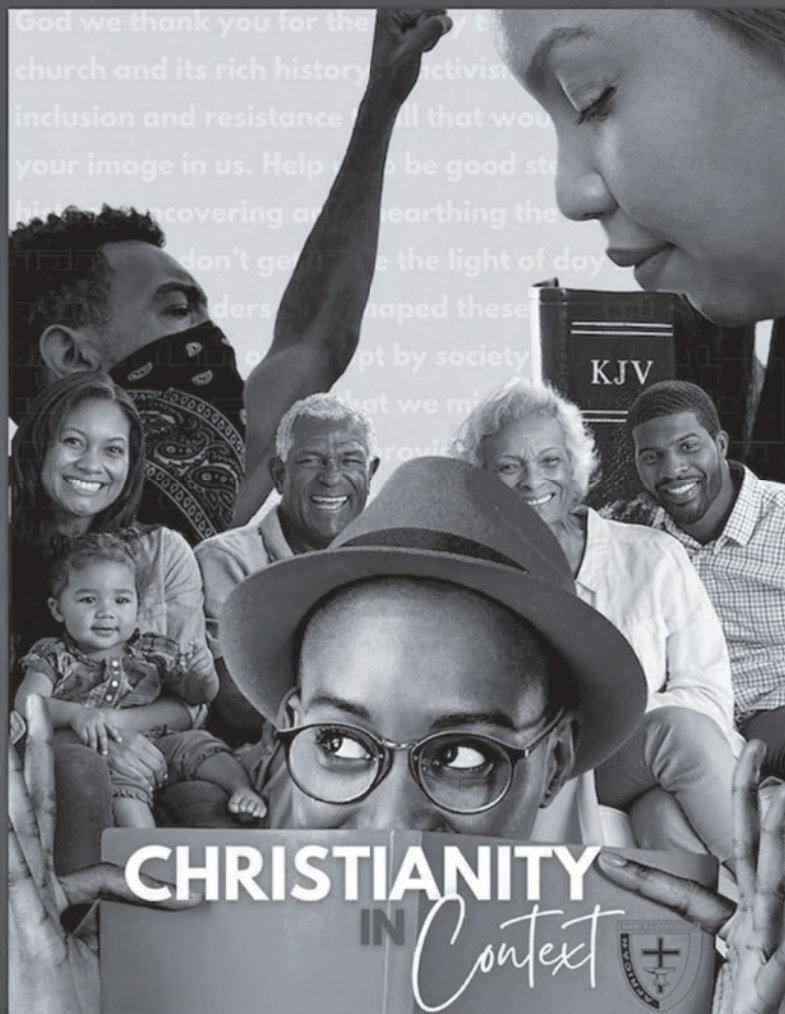
CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Prayer: *God, forgive us for turning away from your Word. We are fully committed to obeying your commands and worshiping with our whole hearts. Amen.*

Hymn: "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"
(AMEC Hymnal #75)

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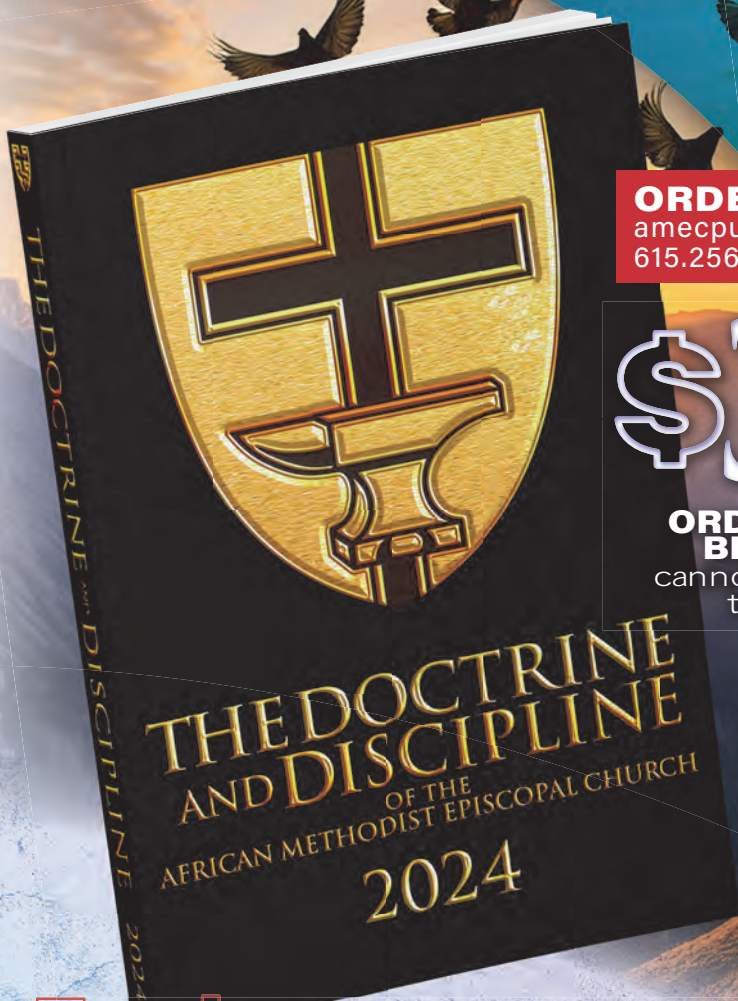
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