

ANNUAL

*Judah,
From Isaiah
to Exile*

THE SILENT MOMENT

The Silent Moment topics are based on the Home Daily Bible Readings, International Sunday School Lessons. Copyright © 2025 by the Committee on the Uniform Series. Printed in the U.S.A. Scripture taken from the King James version unless otherwise identified.

FALL QUARTER 2025

Vol. 42

SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER

No. 4

Roderick D. Belin
President/Publisher

Tiffany Gregory
Chief of Operations

O. Dotson
Cover design

THE SILENT MOMENT—USPS 737-070

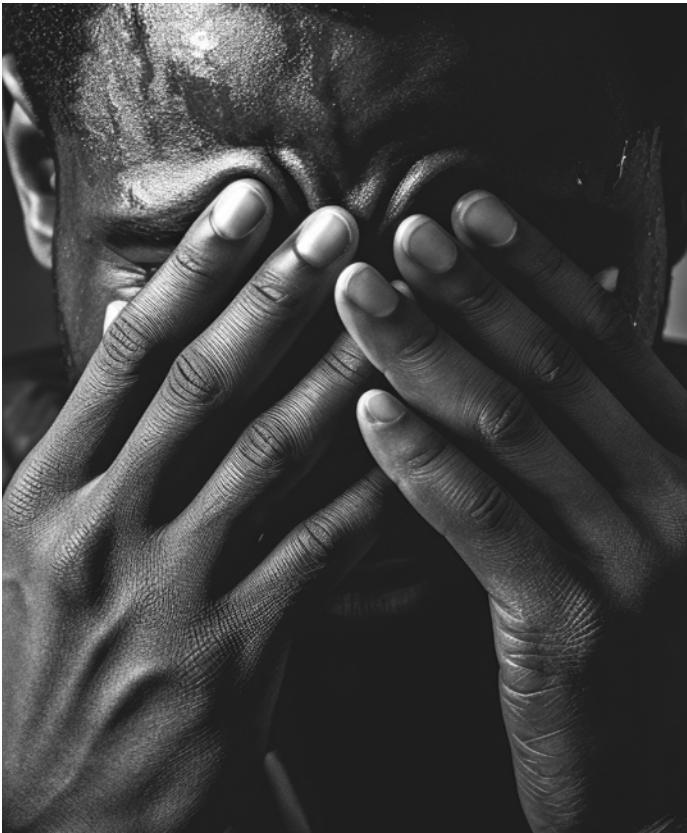
The Silent Moment (USPS 737-070) is published quarterly for \$16.00 / year by AMEC Sunday School Union, 900 13th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee 37212. Periodicals postage paid at Nashville, TN. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Silent Moment*, 900 13th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee 37212.

Lessons and/or readings are based on the Uniform Series International Sunday School Lessons, International Bible Lessons for Christian Teaching. Copyright © 2025, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The Silent Moment

“In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment,
but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,”
says the Lord your Redeemer.

—— Isaiah 54:8



September-November 2025

Photo © Digital Stock

Judah, From Isaiah to the Exile

The world these days feels like a rollercoaster, and that feeling is magnified whenever I look at the news. I can't turn on a screen, pick up a paper, or scroll through a feed without seeing political turmoil, economic unrest, human suffering, violence, and more. The world is a mess for sure—but that's nothing new. Since the garden, the world has been full of bad news.

But along with the bad news, there is good. There is beauty and healing, birth and rebirth. There is forgiveness, reunion, and love. And this has also been so since the beginning.

This unit of lessons find us in a period of time much like today—with its ups, downs, and in-betweens. And then, as now, God had a message for His people. It was a message of righteous anger and disappointment, a message of warning to be delivered through God's prophets. Because the people of Judah had willfully and repeatedly chosen the culture around them over their covenant with God, they would be disciplined, exiled from the land where they and their ancestors had dwelt in the shadow of God's wings. This consequence was a direct result of their own ungodliness and collective sin. It was heavy and unpopular news—but there it was, direct from the lips of a holy, almighty God.

Yet along with this heavy blow came the hope of a promise. A promise of redemption. A promise of rescue. A promise of restoration. A promise that God had not in fact deserted His people nor turned His back on them for good. A promise that all would be well in the end. And this news also came directly from the lips of a holy, almighty God—the Redeemer, whose kindness is everlasting and whose mercies are new every morning.

Much like God's people of old, we too are surrounded by a culture of idols, of selfishness, and of sin. Our choices have consequences, and God's warning still holds true. We must constantly decide where our loyalties lie, where our eyes are fixed, where our hearts call home. May we resolve to honor our covenant with the Father, shining His light into the darkness of the world around us while being careful not to succumb to it. Now more than ever, the world needs the hope to which we hold.

Gratefully yours and His,
Karen

Approach Each Day With a Heavenly Perspective

Using these devotions, you'll read the recommended text of the Bible, consider how its message applies to your life, then use the brief prayer to begin a conversation with God.

If you follow the ISSL Series, you'll likely notice that these devotions align with the ISSL Home Daily Bible Readings. Every day you pick up this devotional, countless people around the world are reading and studying the same verses as you. Opening the Bible each day invites us to a deeper fellowship with Christ as we apply God's Word to our lives.

Living Humbly

And this was [John's] message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie." (Mark 1:7)

Scripture: Mark 1:1–8

Song: "Be Thou My Vision"

John Ryland (1753–1825) published his first book at age 12, along with numerous essays and poems as a teenager. He was on his way to joining theologians like John Wesley as a household name. Not surprisingly, his pride grew along with his fame. Then a letter from John Newton, author of "Amazing Grace," changed his perspective—and his life. The letter said: "I hope you are less and less in your own eyes and that your heart is more and more impressed with a sense of the glory and grace of our Lord." Ryland determined to change. From then on, he was best known for his humility, integrity, and love for family.

John the Baptist is the greatest of anyone born of women, according to Jesus. Yet his life's message was: "After me comes the one more powerful than I." John knew the importance of becoming lesser so that the One who came after him would shine out clearly.

In this world of pursuing platforms and power, it's easy to make our lives all about us. Instead, let's seek to glorify Jesus first and foremost.

Father, forgive me for letting pride rule me. Help me to honor You with my life. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Putting Fears in Perspective

“Be careful, keep calm and don’t be afraid. Do not lose heart.” (Isaiah 7:4)

Scripture: Isaiah 7:1–7

Song: “Eye of the Storm”

I was an intern at a local publishing house when a wildfire struck Colorado Springs. I remember watching from a conference room as the fire leapt down the mountain toward town. That night, I lay in bed wondering whether I would be evacuated and how long it would take to pack my belongings. I didn’t even live in the area, so the risk I faced was quite low compared to residents who faced potential loss of their homes, but the fear I felt was still real and visceral.

As Ahaz and the people of Judah faced attack from two powerful enemies, their hearts were shaken. Yet through Isaiah the Lord declared that their fears were unnecessary. The destruction they dreaded would not take place. The Word of the Lord put their fears into perspective, and the truth of God’s power shone through.

Messages of fear are prominent in our society. Whether our fears are cultivated by a marketing firm to sell a product or driven by threats of war, illness, or natural disaster, it’s easy to let them shake us. But God’s Word puts these fears into perspective. The powers of this world will not have the ultimate victory, so we can set our hearts at rest in His presence.

Father, thank You for putting my fears into perspective. Help me trust Your care for me. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

When God's Commands Don't Make Sense

“Take off the sackcloth from your body and the sandals from your feet.” And he did so, going around stripped and barefoot. (Isaiah 20:2b)

Scripture: Isaiah 20:1–6

Song: “Have Thine Own Way, Lord”

In 1876, Mary Slessor set off as a 28-year-old missionary from Scotland to Nigeria. She was a single woman with minimal training, and many people must have questioned her decision. Her dedication resulted in her turning down a marriage proposal and suffering through many bouts of illness. But her certainty in what God had called her to do allowed her to spend almost 40 years serving the Nigerian people, becoming the vice consul of the region for the British and eventually adopting nine children.

Today's passage in Isaiah is tough to understand. Why would God ask Isaiah to go stripped and barefoot for three years—something that was certainly just as humiliating (if not more so) for a Jewish man as for anyone in our culture today? Yet Isaiah did it. Scripture doesn't record even a single protest. Isaiah was obedient, even when it meant his own embarrassment and, quite likely, rejection by his people.

God's commands may not make sense to us. They may leave us feeling confused, stripped bare, vulnerable. Yet ultimately, His Word promises that His commands are for our good and the good of those around us. We can trust Him to lead us in the way we should go.

Father, thank You for passages like this one that challenge me toward deeper faith and obedience. Help me to trust You, even when I don't understand. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Remembering the Works of Jesus

Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.” (Matthew 11:4–5)

Scripture: Matthew 11:1–6

Song: “I Stand Amazed”

Michelangelo’s *David* is perhaps the most famous statue in the world. Before visiting Florence and seeing the statue in person, I had seen photos of it many times. But as I walked through the gallery toward the six-ton, 17-foot-tall masterpiece, it became obvious why people travel from around the globe to see it. From the veins in his hands and neck to the muscles in his arms and legs, every detail is precise and lifelike. It is clearly the work of a master artist.

Just as *David* confirmed Michelangelo’s identity as a master artist, Jesus’ miracles confirmed His identity as Messiah. But for John, alone and afraid in prison, Jesus’ works did even more than that—they provided a balm for John’s suffering soul. *Yes*, was Jesus’ gentle answer to John’s question about who He is. *See my works? I am the One who is to come.*

When we are suffering and wracked with doubts, remembering the works of Jesus can bring powerful comfort to our souls. Let’s recall what He has done for us and use these stories to encourage each other when times are hard.

Father, thank You for the comfort I can receive through the miracles of Jesus. Help me to remember how You have worked in my life in the past. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Defying Definition

“What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? . . . A man dressed in fine clothes? . . . A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.”
(Matthew 11:7b–9)

Scripture: Matthew 11:7–15

Song: “You Say”

The animal world is full of enigmas that almost defy definition. From the hoatzin, or “stinkbird,” nicknamed for the foul odor caused by food fermenting in its digestive system; to the hagfish, capable of secreting 400 times its volume in slime; to the pink fairy armadillo that looks like a cross between a fuzzy caterpillar and a lobster, unusual animals may provoke laughter, amazement, and confusion all at the same time.

John the Baptist was given many labels in his time. Some people thought he was crazy; some hated him; and some believed he was a prophet. But Jesus said John was more than a prophet—he was “the Elijah who was to come,” the one who proclaimed the arrival of God’s Messiah.

Following Jesus may mean we’re a mystery to those around us. The world may be confused about us, surprised by us, or angry at us, depending on the day or situation. But the words of the world matter far less than the words of Jesus. Our true worth and identity come from Him.

Father, help me to care first and foremost about what *You* say about me. Thank You that I can always find my true identity in You. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Celebrating the Goodness of God

I will meditate on your wonderful works. They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great deeds. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. (Psalm 145:5b–7)

Scripture: Psalm 145:1–12

Song: “Goodness of God”

A few years ago, I was in an emotional slump. All I could think about were things that were still missing from my life. But then one day, I read a book that prompted me to start recording the good things God was doing in my life. I challenged myself to think about how He was providing in ways I didn’t recognize. I started writing down one good thing He did every day, and within a few weeks, my attitude transformed. My situation hadn’t changed, but I could see His goodness in a hard season.

In Psalm 145, David praises God for His many great deeds and talks about the importance of each generation sharing God’s goodness with the next. In this way, the glory of God’s kingdom spreads throughout the earth from generation to generation.

How has God shown up in your life? Do others know about His goodness to you? Consider how to share His works with those around you, so that His glory and the good news of the gospel spread around the world and to future generations.

Father, thank You for all Your goodness to me. Please remind me of ways You have provided for me and help me to share Your goodness with others. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

A Life of Faithful Service

Then [Isaiah] 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)

Scripture: Isaiah 6:1–8; 38:1–5

Song: “My Life Is in Your Hands”

When my grandpa passed away, condolences flooded in to our family. One woman shared about how her son had asked her to name Christians who had been faithful to God throughout their lives. She said my grandpa had been a shining example of faith through his lifelong commitment to Christ.

Chapters 6 and 38 of Isaiah are like bookends to his prophetic ministry, which stretched through the reigns of four kings. King Uzziah was mostly faithful, until pride overtook him. King Jotham served God faithfully but didn’t stop the people’s corrupt practices. King Ahaz was incredibly evil, sacrificing his own children to foreign gods. King Hezekiah purified the temple and turned the people’s hearts back to God—but he too suffered the consequences of pride in his later life. Through it all, Isaiah was there, providing the same message: “This is what the Lord says.”

Sometimes I long to have a life of great impact like one of the kings of Judah. But the life of Isaiah and the story about my grandpa remind me that a life of faithful service to God is just as valuable—and perhaps even more difficult. Let’s let go of any desires for fame, fortune, or power and strive for simple obedience and faithfulness.

Father, help me to be faithfully obedient to You. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Open Your Palm Wide

You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. (Psalm 145:16)

Scripture: Psalm 145:13–21

Song: “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

When our oldest daughter was in college and one of her rare weekends at home was wrapping up, she circled her grandparents’ living room to give goodbye hugs to all. But when she got to her dad, something changed. After their hug, Elizabeth held out her right hand, rubbed her fingers together, and opened her palm wide to ask for cash. Everyone laughed, but the girl received what she knew her dad could give.

Psalm 145 paints a vivid picture of God’s posture toward us. He is not stingy or close-fisted. No! His ears are open to our cries (v. 19), and His hands are open wide, ready to satisfy our desires (v. 16). He is trustworthy and able to provide.

What are you asking God for today? Perhaps it’s resources, friendship, or future plans. Maybe you need healing for your mind, body, or broken heart. Whether your need is big or small, be bold and expectant. When you open your palm to Him, know His hand is already open to you. He is faithful in providing all you need.

Father, I look to You. Hear my cry as I open my hands to the One who alone can satisfy and fill me with all I need. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

The Key to a Changed Life

Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. (Matthew 3:8)

Scripture: Matthew 3:4–12

Song: “Change My Heart, O God”

Our youngest daughter, known for her quiet nature, jumped into her 18th year from an airplane. The 13,000-foot skydiving jump was a crazy distance to fall. But the greater leap for those who knew the birthday girl came from how starkly out of character this was for a self-proclaimed homebody.

The premise of today’s reading is one of radical change. John the Baptist preached a message of repentance. Some responded by confessing their sins and turning their lives over to God. But the Jewish religious leaders did not. They dug in the heels of their hearts, refusing to budge from their traditions or turn toward God. So John warned them to change their hearts and “produce fruit in keeping with repentance.”

Repentance is key to a changed life. When we repent by confessing our sins and turning toward God, He changes our hearts, which begins to change everything else. The fruit of repentance is new behaviors and character, proof of a changed heart and life. Using our words to lie, manipulate, or gossip becomes out of character. It’s out of character to be prideful, unforgiving, or selfish. But what if we still fail and fall, whether in an unintentional stumble or a 13,000-foot nose dive? In either case, His love invites us to return to Him. Jesus forgives us, picks us up, and helps us walk changed and in step with Him again.

Father, thank You for the forgiveness and new life found in Jesus. Change my heart so that my life produces fruit in keeping with repentance. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Truth for the Tired

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.” (Acts 3:19)

Scripture: Acts 3:12–20

Song: “Refresh Me”

As a teenage girl who slept in whenever possible, I never understood my father’s morning routine. As a dairy farmer, he could’ve slept until 5 a.m. before milking the cows, which was early enough! But he chose to get up at 4 a.m. to spend an uninterrupted hour in prayer and Bible study. That time was valuable to my dad because his refreshment came from being with God.

In Acts 3, Peter confronts the crowd with the truth that Jesus, whom they had disowned and handed over to be killed, is alive. They put to death the author of life, but God raised Him from the dead and now invites them (and us) into a new life. The Messiah has come, and He offers refreshment and forgiveness.

Teenage girls are tired, and they’re not the only ones. Exhaustion, burnout, and fatigue are the norm in today’s society. Yet no amount of sleep, vacation days, vitamins, or self-care can give energy to an exhausted soul. The truth for the spiritually tired is that real refreshment comes from a relationship with Jesus. When we repent and turn to God, Jesus wipes out sin, our biggest problem, and then He does what only He can do: He refreshes us from the inside out. In His presence there is hope, peace, shelter, and rest.

Father, I’m tired and weary. Nothing can satisfy but You. Refresh me in Your presence. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Always Time to Pray

Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. (James 5:13)

Scripture: James 5:12–18

Song: “Lord, I Need You”

In our small high school, we could rely on our music teacher, Mrs. B., like clockwork. Everyone knew that if you asked her to pray, she would. First, she’d pray with you on the spot. Then, with a simple but predictable gesture, she’d remove her wristwatch and put it back on with the face upside down as her intentional reminder to continue praying for you.

James concludes his letter by imploring the church to pray in faith. Our prayers are powerful and effective. James gives specific instructions. Are you in trouble? Pray. Are you happy? Sing songs of praise. Are you sick? Call the leaders and pray. His message is clear. We need God at all times and in all places. It is always time to pray.

Though timely, we don’t need a wristwatch to be prompted to pray. Praise opportunities abound—a new day, a new job, or a phone call from an old friend. Prayer prompts for those in trouble are everywhere! An argument, an ambulance siren, or an anxious teen’s outbursts are all prayer alerts. We need God. It’s time to pray. And while we may say it’s always time to pray, the evidence of what we really believe about prayer is seen in how much time we spend in doing so.

Father, I need You. Thank You for the open invitation to pray anytime, anywhere, about anything. Hear my prayers and move for Your glory, I ask. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Only Jesus

“The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.”
(Exodus 12:13)

Scripture: Exodus 12:3–14

Song: “Not What My Hands Have Done”

The first time I started reading through the Bible, I was eight years old. I began in Genesis but abruptly stopped in Leviticus. There’s some strange stuff in Leviticus, especially when you’re eight. But the even bigger problem was that I got the Bible flip-flopped. Rather than looking for God’s message through *Jesus*, I made it a book about me. How am *I* supposed to live? What am *I* supposed to do?

The Egyptians had enslaved the Israelite community for 400 years. There was nothing God’s people could do to save themselves. They needed a Rescuer. In Exodus 12, God does just that through the Passover. When God saw the lamb’s blood on their houses, He passed over them. He saved their lives and secured their freedom.

The Hebrews couldn’t have known that Passover pointed forward to Jesus, the Lamb of God (John 1:29). Jesus shed His blood for the sins of all people. He died to secure our freedom from death, and He rose so we could live. The storyline of Scripture is Jesus, only Jesus and always Jesus. It’s not about what we must do, but what Jesus did for us. Then, knowing God’s story, we can live a good story—a story that points people to Him.

Father, thank You for forgiveness, freedom, and life in Jesus. Thank You for all He has done for me. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Worship That Counts

“There, in the presence of the LORD your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the LORD your God has blessed you.” (Deuteronomy 12:7)

Scripture: Deuteronomy 12:5–12

Song: “House of the Lord”

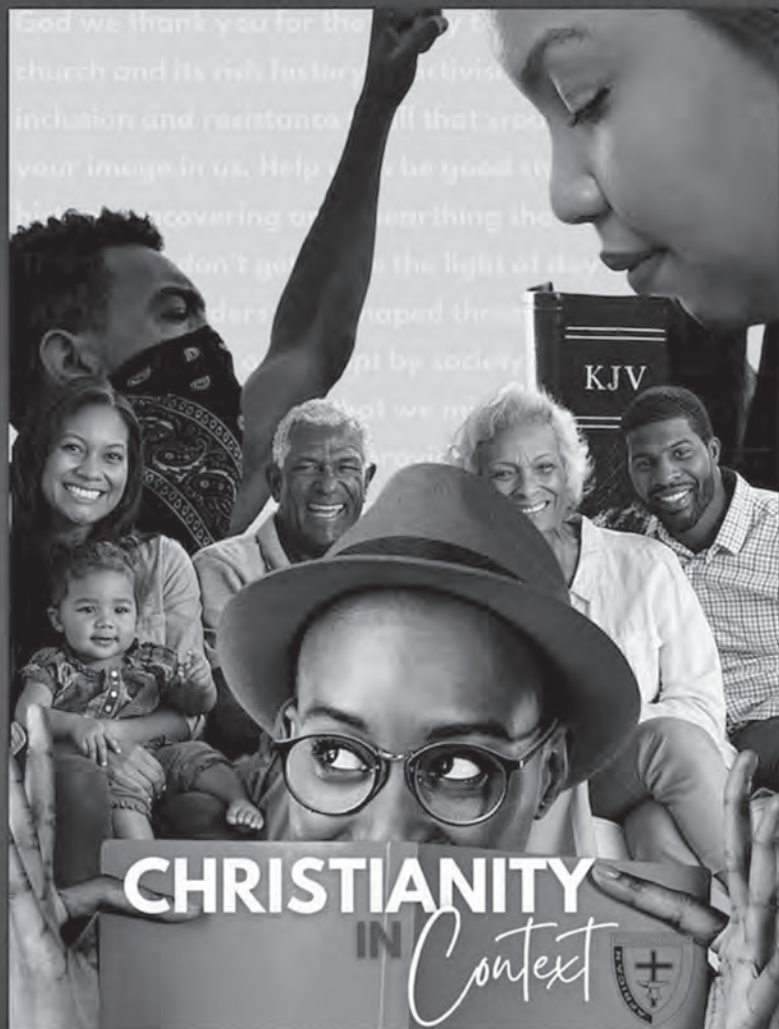
There were 26 students in my sixth-grade class. I remember because there was a head count every time we got on and off the school bus for a field trip. Each of us mattered, and we belonged together. No one would be left behind.

Moses was getting the Israelites ready for life in the promised land. In Deuteronomy 12, he describes the system of sacrificial worship for the people of God. God would guide them to the place of worship and specify what they should bring. They were to come with their best offerings, all their people, and hearts full of praise. As a community, they were to worship with joy and gratitude. They were to thank God for who He is and all He provides.

God still invites us to worship in community, not out of ritual but to rejoice in our salvation in Jesus Christ. We don't gather to count heads but to count His blessings. His people belong together. But are people in our faith communities being left behind? Are we missing the joy of worshipping God together? Gathering with God's people matters. It draws us closer to God and one another. Who can you invite to Bible study or church today?

Father, I worship You and thank You for Your blessings. Teach me to prioritize worshipping with Your people. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

**INTRODUCING!!!
A MULTIMEDIA
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CURRICULUM!**



— Christianity in Context —

Created to introduce you to theological ideas, or ideas about God,
developed by theologians over the course of Christian history.

Join us at

www.iamame.org/christianityincontext/

We would be thrilled to have you with us!

THE DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH NOW AVAILABLE!

***ORDER YOUR
COPY TODAY!***

\$36.00 plus S/H.

Order must be pre-paid.

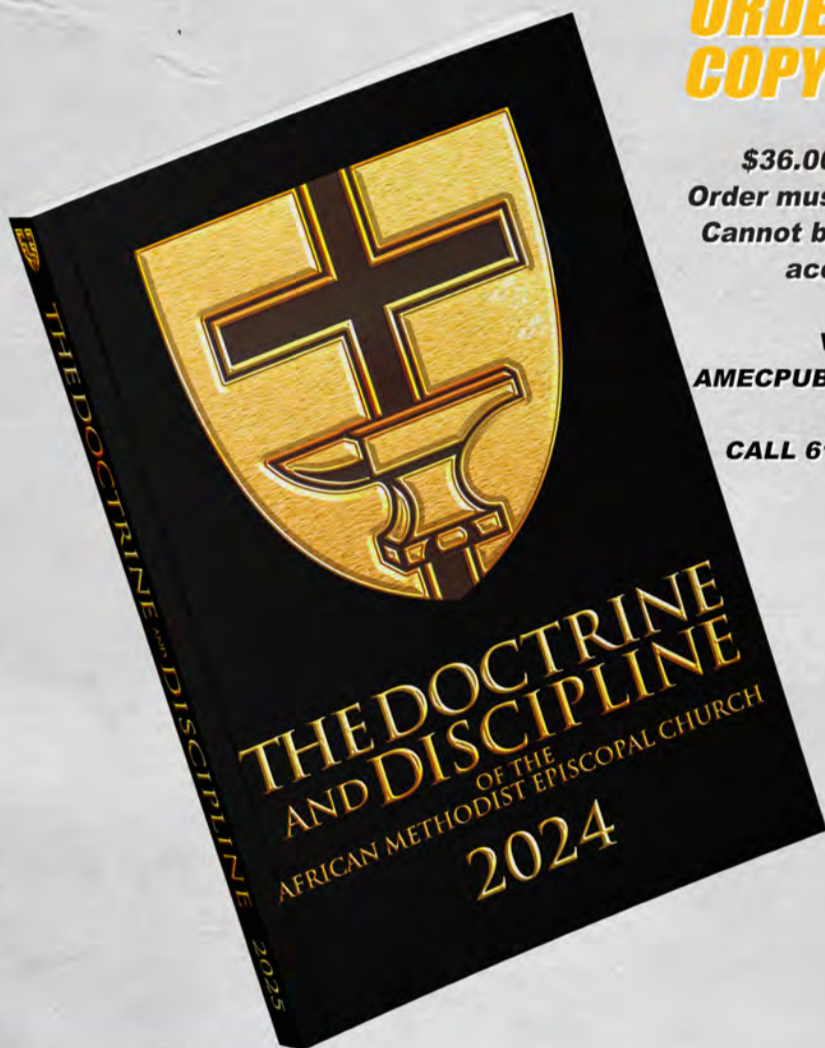
**Cannot be invoiced to
accounts.**

VISIT

AMECPUBLISHING.COM

OR

CALL 615.256.5882



**Equip yourself. Strengthen your church.
Deepen your understanding.**