

## SENIOR SCHOLAR SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY

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

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### THE ORDER OF SERVICE

- 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



LESSON 1 SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

## Abram Builds an Altar at Mamre

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 12-13 Focus Scripture: Genesis 13:8-18

**KEY VERSE:** So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord. Genesis 13:18

#### WORDS TO KNOW

STRIFE - contention, quarreling

KINDRED – the family to which one belongs

BREADTH – the distance or measurement from side to side of something; width

ALTAR – the central place of worship, such as a table, stones, or a mount, on which a sacrifice was made to God

ZOAR - pronounced: ZO - er

SODOM - pronounced: SAH - duhm

GOMORRAH - pronounced: guh - MAWR - uh

MAMRE – pronounced: MAM - ree

#### FOCUS SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 13:8-18

- 8 Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me and between your herders and my herders, for we are kindred.
- **9** Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left."
- 10 Lot looked about him and saw that the plain of the Jordan was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar; this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 11 So Lot chose for himself all the plain of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward, and they separated from each other.
- **12** Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the plain and moved his tent as far as Sodom.
- 13 Now the people of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.
- 14 The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Raise your eyes now, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward,
- 15 for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.
- 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted.
- 17 Rise up, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you."
- 18 So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord.



#### INTRODUCTION

During this Fall quarter, we will focus on the title, *Worship in the Covenant Community*. The lessons of this quarter are a study of worship practices offered in gratitude to the covenant relationship God initiates, first with Abram, and later with the people of Israel. *Leaders Set Worship Example* begins in lesson 1 with the example of (Abram) Abraham, who built altars to mark those occasions on which God called him to greater faithfulness.

How do you celebrate important events in your life? What items do you have to remember those special occasions?

#### **BIBLE STORY**

God initially called Abram in Ur and renewed the call in Haran (Gen. 11:31). He confirmed it at Shechem (12:7), again at Bethel (13:14 – 17), and twice at Hebron (15:5 – 18; 17:1 – 8). This emphasizes how important God's call to Abram was. God's covenant with Abram is mentioned in chapter 12 verses 2 through 4. The covenant was confirmed in chapter 13 verses 14 through 17, as well as chapter 15 verses 1 through 7, and chapter 17 verses 1 through 8.

The Abrahamic covenant had seven parts: 1) Abraham would be a great nation; 2) Abraham would be personally blessed; 3) Abraham's name would become great; 4) Abraham would be a personal blessing; 5) Those who bless Abraham will be blessed; 6) Those who curse Abraham will be cursed; and 7) All earth's families to be blessed in Abraham through his posterity.

Abram, his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and the persons (servants) he acquired in Haran migrated to the land of Canaan with him. They made stops in the cities of Shechem, and Bethel, and then arrived in Canaan. But Abram and his family had to leave Canaan due to a famine in the land. They traveled to Egypt and stayed there until Pharaoh sent Abram away for deceiving him (12:17 – 20).

Abram was a wealthy man with large herds of livestock and an

abundance of silver and gold. His nephew Lot possessed flocks, herds, and tents. The land in Bethel could not sustain both, so they separated. Abram permitted Lot to choose the land he wanted first. Then Abram settled in the land of Canaan. God showed Abram the land (13:14 – 18; 12:7). This certifies that Abram has fulfilled God's command to go to the land that God "will show" him (12:1). In gratitude to God, Abram built an altar to the Lord to worship. The place was Mamre, an ancient sacred place near Hebron.

What impacted Lot's decision to choose the plain near Sodom? How was Abram's decision to settle in Canaan validated by God? What was Abram's response?

#### **SANKOFA**

Bridget "Biddy" Mason (1818-1891)



Bridget "Biddy" Mason, born a slave in Mississippi in 1818, achieved financial success that enabled her to support her extended family for generations even though she was illiterate. In a landmark case, she sued her master for freedom, saved her earnings, invested in real estate, and became a well-known philanthropist in Los Angeles,

California.

After spending five years enslaved in a "free" state, Bridget Mason challenged Robert Smith for her freedom. On January 19, 1856 she petitioned the court for freedom for herself and her extended family of 13 women and children. Los Angeles District Judge Benjamin Hayes took three days before handing down his ruling in favor of Mason and her extended family, citing California's 1850 constitution which prohibited slavery.

Mason and her family moved to Los Angeles where her daughter married the son of Robert and Minnie Owens. Mason worked as a midwife and nurse, saved her money, and purchased land in the heart of what is now downtown Los Angeles. Mason also organized First AME Church, the oldest African American church in the city. She educated her children and with her wealth became a philanthropist to the entire Los Angeles community.

FAME Church, Los Angeles is the oldest church founded by African Americans in the *City of Angels*. In 1872, Ms. Biddy Mason received the vision from God to establish a church that would minister to the mind, body, and soul of all who would join that small band of believers. That vision and small band of believers has grown to what is now a congregation of more than 19,000 members and several dozen ministries within 13 corporations that bless and reach tens of thousands of seekers in greater metropolitan Los Angeles.

Built on the foundation laid by Bishop Richard Allen who in the city of Philadelphia in 1787 started the movement that later became the African Methodist Episcopal Church, FAME Church finds joy in being the "First to Serve." Its founder, Bridget "Biddy" Mason, died in Los Angeles in 1891.

How did Bridget Mason use her wealth for the glory of God? What does the First AME Church of Los Angeles symbolize today?

Sources: Martineau Wagner, T. (2007, July 12). Bridget "Biddy" Mason (1818-1891). BlackPast.org. https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/mason-bridget-biddy-1818-1891/https://www.famechurchla.org/ministries/about-fame-church/

#### REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

God keeps his promises. The Abrahamic covenant was fulfilled. God has fulfilled promises made to us as well. Think about those fulfilled promises and create a poem about God's faithfulness.

Write the poem on a sheet of paper or your phone. If you use your phone, share the poems with others by posting them on your social media platforms.

We need to set reminders of personal God moments. We can create a bookmark; and collages; take pictures to make a scrapbook; write in personal journals; etc. Think about how you can create reminders and write down your plan. When you return home, you can start implementing your plan.

#### SUMMARY

Abram regularly built altars to God for prayer and worship and as reminders of God's promise to bless him. It helped Abram remember that God was at the center of his life. Regular worship helps us remember what God desires and motivates us to obey God.

Abram had to settle the conflict between his herders and Lot's herders. He did not desire to live in conflict with his nephew. Moreover, Abram even humbly let Lot choose the land he wanted first.

What family conflict are you dealing with? How can we seek peace and reconciliation with others so God's plans can be fulfilled?

God implores us to demonstrate our faith by worshipping him with gratitude in our hearts. Set a space aside in your home to create a place for worshipping God, praying, and studying the Word. It does not need to be a big area. It can be in a closet, backyard, corner of a room, etc. Make sure it is a space where you will not be disturbed. Set aside time each day to go to your sacred space.

Why is it important to remember what God has done in our lives? How can our witness impact the next generation?

#### **CLOSING DEVOTIONS**

Prayer: God, I trust you. I will worship you with gratitude in my heart. Amen.

Hymn: "Bless the Lord, O My Soul" (AMEC Hymnal #595)

LESSON 2

SEPTEMBER 8, 2024

# Solomon Dedicates the Temple

Lesson Scripture: 1 Kings 8:22-53

Focus Scripture: 1 Kings 8:22-24, 37-39, 46, 48-50a (end

with "committed against you")

**KEY VERSES:** "Whatever prayer, whatever plea there is from any individual or from all your people Israel, all knowing the suffering of their own hearts so that they stretch out their hands toward this house; then hear in heaven your dwelling place." 1 Kings 8:38-39a

#### WORDS TO KNOW

COVENANT – an agreement between two parties, such as God and Abram

STEADFAST - dutifully firm and unwavering

BESIEGE – to surround with armed forces to compel surrender

ALTAR – the central place of worship, such as a table, stones, or a mount, on which a sacrifice was made to God

RENDER - to give, impart, restore

REPENT – feel sorry for the sins you have committed and regret doing them

TRANSGRESSIONS - sins

#### FOCUS SCRIPTURE: 1 KINGS 8:22-24, 37-39, 46, 48-50A (END WITH "COMMITTED AGAINST YOU")

- **22** Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly of Israel and spread out his hands to heaven.
- 23 He said, "O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and steadfast love with your servants who walk before you with all their heart,
- 24 the covenant that you kept for your servant my father David as you declared to him; you promised with your mouth and have this day fulfilled with your hand."

- **37** "If there is famine in the land, if there is plague, blight, mildew, locust, or caterpillar; if their enemy besieges them in any of their cities; whatever suffering, whatever sickness there is;
- 38 whatever prayer, whatever plea there is from any individual or from all your people Israel, all knowing the suffering of their own hearts so that they stretch out their hands toward this house;
- 39 then hear in heaven your dwelling place, forgive, act, and render to all whose hearts you know according to all their ways, for only you know the human heart –..."

46 "If they sin against you – for there is no one who does not sin – and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near,..."

- 48 "...if they repent with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive and pray to you toward their land that you gave to their ancestors, the city that you have chosen, and the house that I have built for your name,
- 49 then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea, maintain their cause,
- **50** and forgive your people who have sinned against you and all their transgressions that they have committed against you,..."

#### INTRODUCTION

Gardeners often wait until the Fall season to plant flower bulbs for the Spring, Come Spring, the flowers bloom and bring great joy as people see the beautiful colors and smell the wonderful scents. And the bees enjoy being able to lay on the petals and gather pollen to spread around. Life can offer opportunities that impact our future so we must take advantage of them. Our future is determined by what we do today.

In today's lesson, Solomon prayed for the people who tended to sin, hoping for God's forgiveness when they repent and compassion from their captors. His prayer was composed as worship to God who allowed him to build and dedicate the temple.

How do you benefit from the sacrifice and labor of others? What can you do to express gratitude for the blessings you have received from others?

#### **BIBLE STORY**

Solomon, David's son, was the king of Israel. God allowed Solomon to build the temple. Solomon gathered all the people to dedicate it. The Ark of the Covenant was transferred from the tent sanctuary into the inner sanctuary of the temple (Google "Ark of the Covenant"). The ark only contained the tablets of stone that Moses had placed in it (Deut. 10:1-5). In Chapter 8 verses 14 through 66, Solomon pronounces three prayers.

The first prayer, in front of the assembly, reinforces God's promise to David of an eternal dynasty and highlights that Solomon is David's legitimate successor and proper temple builder (2 Sam. 7). In the second prayer, in front of the altar, Solomon spreads out his hands toward heaven (8:22). His posture is to demonstrate reverence and worship of God. Solomon reasserts seven times that the Lord does not dwell in the temple but in heaven. The temple is the place to worship God and pray.

Solomon also mentions seven different occasions when prayer is needed: 1) Sin of an individual (vs. 31 - 32); 2) Defeat in battle (vs. 33 - 34); 3) drought (vs. 35 - 36); 4) Famine and plagues (vs. 37 - 40); 5) A foreigner who comes to pray (vs. 41 - 43); 6) War (vs. 44 - 45); and 7) Sin of the people and deportation (vs. 46 - 51). Solomon pleads with God to forgive their sins in the future when they repent. Prayer is initially located in the temple, then it is in the direction of the sanctuary. And finally, the praying individuals are in another country and pray toward the city and the temple. This occurs after the Babylonian exile.

The last prayer, spoken in front of the assembly of people, reasserts that the Lord has fulfilled all his promises (vs. 54 - 61; Joshua 21:43 - 45). It urges us to respond to God's faithfulness by observing God's commandments.

Why do you suppose Solomon mentioned all the occasions when people needed to pray to God? Do you turn to God for help in good and bad times? Why? Why not?

#### **SANKOFA**



Rev. Dr. King Solomon Dupont was pastor of Fountain Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in the 1950s when the Tallahassee Bus Boycott took place (simultaneous with the Montgomery Bus Boycott). As vice president of the Tallahassee Inter-City Council, Rev. Dupont's role in operating the alternative transportation system (cars to carry women

and men to work) made it possible for protest participants to survive. He persevered despite putting his life and that of his wife and children at risk because of the threats from angry white citizens coupled with police refusal to protect him from gunshots and cross-burnings. He was the first black person to run for public office in Tallahassee since Reconstruction. Dupont lost his 1957 bid for a seat on the Tallahassee City Commission, but he paved the way for more than two dozen blacks who have been elected to office in Tallahassee and Leon County.

His wife, Eleanor Jiles, was threatened with the loss of her job as a schoolteacher but continued to support her husband's stand for justice. Dupont's credit was ruined and someone subscribed to a communist newsletter in his name, giving newspapers "fodder" to say the movement was inspired by communists.

Rev. Dupont's youngest child, Jacquelyn L. Dupont, was one of three black freshmen students who joined the lone black student, Maxwell Courtney (admitted in 1962), in de-segregating Florida State University in 1963. She has gone on to carry out the Dupont legacy with many other firsts including serving as the first African American female non-elected official on the LA County Metropolitan Transit Agency Board which oversees a \$5.075 billion budget.

This Gadsden County, Florida native paved the way for hundreds of blacks to serve in public office and inspired others to carry the legacy of his beloved African Methodist Episcopal Church to new heights.

How did Rev. Dupont's faith sustain him through the good and bad times? What impact did he have on future generations?

Source: https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/2014/11/02/dupont-tallahassees-first-black-candidate/18397479/

#### **REAL TALK, FAITH WALK**

Solomon was the wisest man to have ever lived. God gave him the wisdom needed to lead the nation of Israel and build the temple. Search on your phone for "Solomon's Temple." Look at the composition and dedication to details. Solomon built it according to God's instructions.

There are many ways we can grow spiritually. I urge you to seek God daily. One way to grow is to pray regularly. Prayer is how we commune with God. Pray not only for yourself but for others as well. You can do a prayer walk alone or with others. Make sure you

walk in a safe area. (Search online for "prayer walks" to get more info.) (Go to: www.persecution.com for ideas on who you can pray for in other parts of the world suffering on behalf of Christ.)

#### **SUMMARY**

Solomon understood the power of prayer and the importance of repenting of our sins. God is compassionate and merciful. We must seek God. There is no guarantee God will respond to our pleas for help and deliverance, but we must keep the faith. God is with us. Pray continually and watch God do the miraculous. Raise your hands and worship the Lord during the good and bad life situations.

How does worshipping the Lord impact our lives? What steps can you take to grow spiritually, besides praying?

#### CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Prayer: God, hear my prayers and respond in accordance with your will. Amen.

Hymn: "I Love the Lord; He Heard My Cries" (AMEC Hymnal #313)

(For a few minutes while singing the hymn, raise your hands in the air and worship God.)



SEPTEMBER 15, 2024

LESSON 3

## Hezekiah's Prayer

Lesson Scripture: 2 Kings 19:1-34

Focus Scripture: 2 Kings 19:14-20, 29-31

**KEY VERSE:** So now, O Lord our God, save us, I pray you, from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone. 2 Kings 19:19

#### WORDS TO KNOW

ENTHRONED – to install a monarch on a throne during a ceremony to mark the beginning of their rule

CHERUBIM – flying creatures which seem to have been used as guards in the Old Testament

REMNANT – those left in Judah who will participate in the future unfolding of God's redemptive program

HEZEKIAH - pronounced: heh - zeh - KAI - uh

SENNACHERIB - pronounced: se - NAK - er - ihb

ASSYRIA - pronounced: a - SIHR - ee - uh

AMOZ - pronounced: AY - muhz

#### FOCUS SCRIPTURE: 2 KINGS 19:14-20, 29-31

- 14 Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; then Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord.
- 15 And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said, "O Lord the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, you are God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth.
- 16 Incline your ear, O Lord, and hear; open your eyes, O Lord, and see; hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God.
- 17 Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands
- 18 and have hurled their gods into the fire, though they were no gods but the work of human hands wood and stone and so they were destroyed.
- 19 So now, O Lord our God, save us, I pray you, from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone."
- 20 Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I have heard your prayer to me about King Sennacherib of Assyria."
- 29 "And this shall be the sign for you: This year you shall eat what grows of itself and in the second year what springs from that; then in the third year sow, reap, plant vineyards, and eat their fruit.
- **30** The surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward,
- 31 for from Jerusalem a remnant shall go out and from Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this."

#### INTRODUCTION

Young people have a lot of stressful situations to deal with. Stress can affect your physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Other people may not understand what is going on with you, so they criticize everything you do. Then, if you react in a certain way, it makes you look bad. What can you do when you feel overwhelmed and hopeless?

In today's lesson, we examine King Hezekiah's response to a hopeless situation. Hezekiah prayed and realized what was most important: "The Lord alone is God."

How do you feel when you are stressed? What techniques do you use to de-stress?

#### **BIBLE STORY**

The arrogant conqueror Sennacherib in 701 B.C. sent his Assyrian commander-in-chief from Lachish (the Judean fortress commanding the road to Egypt) to demand the unconditional surrender of Judah. The commander met with Hezekiah's delegation, and in its presence taunted Judah for trust in Egypt and Hezekiah's God (ch. 18). He continued his blasphemous taunts before all the people of Jerusalem.

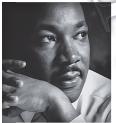
Hezekiah tore his clothes and put on sackcloth before he laid the matter before the Lord in the temple and then sent a delegation to the prophet Isaiah for counsel and prayer (19:1 – 7). The message he received from the prophet was the first word of assurance about God's deliverance. Meanwhile, the commander returned to find Sennacherib besieging Libnah (another fortified city of Judah north of Lachish). Hearing that Prince Tirhakah (Taharka in the Egyptian king lists, who later became the third king in Egyptian Dynasty XXV) was preparing to attack, Sennacherib dispatched another intimidating threat to Hezekiah (vs. 8 – 13).

Hezekiah took the letter and laid it before the Lord in the temple and prayed for deliverance from the enemies of the Lord. The Lord granted a second assurance through the prophet Isaiah, which was not solicited by the king, that God heard his prayer (vs. 14 – 20). In verses 29 through 31, the Lord described the sign Hezekiah will observe as evidence God overthrew Sennacherib. The God-defying monarch would be crushed.

What caused Hezekiah to feel hopeless? How did God respond to Hezekiah's intercessory and worshipful prayers? What does Hezekiah's reaction to the hopeless situation teach us?

#### **SANKOFA**

Listen to the narrated prayer of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:



Prayers for Spiritual Guidance · Prayers of MLK; https://youtu.be/l\_zacFL6cGA?si=nsc-yJPKM9H8fBeu

What concerns are mentioned in his prayer? Can you relate to Rev. Dr. King's prayer requests? What does it demonstrate about Rev. Dr. King Jr.?

#### **REAL TALK, FAITH WALK**

Read chapter 19 verse 16. Using a pen or pencil, identify the senses mentioned in verse 16. Why do you believe Hezekiah included this in his prayer?

Write down positive ways to cope with stress and hopelessness (for example, prayer).

#### **SUMMARY**

Hezekiah was facing a serious challenge. How could he stop Sennacherib's threats to besiege Jerusalem? Hezekiah felt powerless but still trusted God to deliver them. God is trustworthy.

When we face overwhelming problems, we can pray for God to help us. Our God hears, sees, and always listens. He will respond! Just trust God's timing, plans, and purposes for your life. Hezekiah did and God delivered them from their enemies.

Many nations and people feared the king of Assyria. Discuss the king's remarks about destroying other gods. What is the difference between these gods and the God of Judah?

Meditate on and memorize chapter 19 verse 15. What does it mean to you? Every morning recite this scripture. Note how it impacts your attitude and emotions throughout the day.

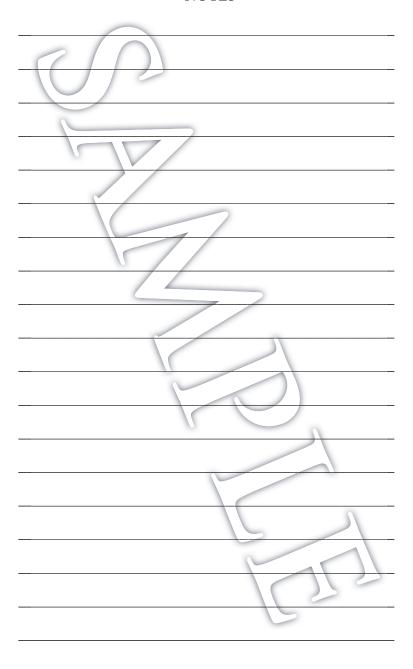
Lean on trustworthy people for support and prayer. Who are those people in your life? Call, text, or email them. Moreover, if possible, visit them.

#### **CLOSING DEVOTIONS**

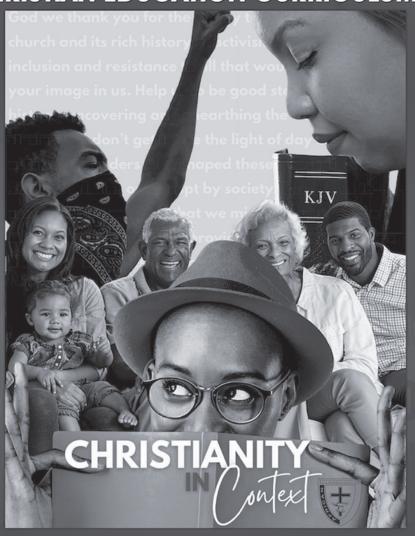
Prayer: God, I trust you. Please deliver me from all my troubles. You are the only person who can help me. Amen.

Hymn: "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior" (AMEC Hymnal #272)

#### **NOTES**



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