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**PARTNERS**

**IN A**

**NEW CREATION**

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**Roderick D. Belin**  
*President/Publisher*

**Garland F. Pierce**  
*Executive Director, Department of Christian Education*

**Andre' Wright**  
*Chief of Operations*

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**INTERMEDIATE SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY — USPS 266 - 360**

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# 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

## EDITORIAL STAFF

- **Rev. Dr. Roderick Belin**, Publisher
- **Rev. Dr. Garland F. Pierce**, Editor
- **Faith M. Waters**, Lessons
- **A.L. Stanfield**, Copy Editor
- **O. Dotson**, Graphic Designer

## 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 A.M.E. 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.

## GOD FORETELLS DESTRUCTION

LESSON SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 47

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 47:10-15

Key Verse: *You felt secure in your wickedness; you said, "No one sees me." Isaiah 47:10a*

### Isaiah 47:10-15 (NRSV)

10 You felt secure in your wickedness; you said, "No one sees me." Your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, and you said in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me."

11 But evil shall come upon you, which you cannot charm away; disaster shall fall upon you, which you will not be able to ward off; and ruin shall come on you suddenly, of which you know nothing.

12 Stand fast in your enchantments and your many sorceries, with which you have labored from your youth; perhaps you may be able to succeed, perhaps you may inspire terror.

13 You are wearied with your many consultations; let those who study the heavens stand up and save you, those who gaze at the stars, and at each new moon predict what shall befall you.

14 See, they are like stubble, the fire consumes them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame. No coal for warming oneself is this, no fire to sit before!

15 Such to you are those with whom you have labored, who have trafficked with you from your youth; they all wander about in their own paths; there is no one to save you.

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## VOCABULARY

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- **Wickedness** – The quality of being evil or morally wrong.
- **Astray** – To move away from the correct path or direction.
- **Charm** – To use magic power to change a situation.
- **Enchantments** – The state of being under a spell.
- **Sorceries** – The art, practice, spells of a person who is supposed to exercise supernatural powers through the aid of evil spirits.
- **Stubble** – The short, stiff stalks of grain or hay remaining on a field after the harvest.

### INTRODUCTION

**D**errick and his friend Tim decided to read their horoscopes online. “Wow! Derrick, my horoscope for a Gemini says, ‘You will have an unexpected inheritance coming to you this week. Use the money to buy what you desire.’”

“Tim, do you believe that stuff?”

“Well, my great grandpop is 95! He could die any day now. I believe I will get some of his money and be able to buy whatever I want.”

“Give me my phone,” Derrick grabbed the phone out of Tim’s hand.

“My horoscope for a Taurus says, ‘You will finally find the perfect match this week. Within the next two years, you will get married.’” Derrick laughed so hard tears ran down his face.

*Do you believe that astrologists (horoscopes), palm readers, or fortune-tellers can predict your future? Why? Why not?*

### BIBLE STORY

**G**od is omniscient and omnipotent. This means God is all-knowing and all-powerful. God sees and knows everything. We cannot hide from God. Isaiah prophesied doom for Babylon 150 years before it happened. God loves creation but hates all evil. The Babylonians were evil people who practiced idolatry and were excessively cruel to God's people.

Babylon became the most powerful nation in the world. They believed in their greatness and claimed to be the *only* power on earth. Babylon's king, Nebuchadnezzar, called himself "god." The people were caught up in pleasure, power, and idolatry. They destroyed both Judah and Jerusalem. But the Babylonians who captured God's people would become captives themselves in 539 B.C. God used the Persian king, Cyrus, to execute judgment on Babylon (45:1, 13).

Sin separates us from God. He already knows what we have done. Yet, God still loves us. God desires for us to acknowledge our sins, repent, and faithfully worship him alone. We must decide whether we will continue to seek pleasure and power or take the opportunity God offers to change. The decision is ours, but there are consequences for our actions either way.

*Reread Isaiah 47:10-13 and identify the sins of Babylon. How is today's society addicted to pleasure and power? How can you use your life for God's honor rather than your pleasure?*

**LIFE APPLICATION**

**W**e need one person to volunteer to read Isaiah 47:10-15 slowly. Every time the word *you* or *your* is heard as they read, quickly stand up and sit down. Or, if the class is on Zoom, let the class raise their hands instead. Count the number of times you stand up or raise your hand. Has anyone ever accused you of believing that everything was about you? What was happening to Babylon was because they believed everything was about them. How does God respond to those who are arrogant and prideful? What qualities does a humble person exhibit?



Let's view the demolition of a house on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/le3smffEm1g>.

The average time it takes to build a house is six to twelve months. The house in the video was demolished very quickly after being damaged by a hurricane. The owners wanted to build a new house. The house is symbolic of someone who lives their whole life separated from God because of sin. Sin damages our relationship with God. God loves us but hates sin. God will destroy those who refuse to repent and turn to him. If you have committed sins, just pray and ask God to forgive you. And with God's help, make every effort to refrain from committing the same sins again. For those who repent, God forgives and offers a fresh start.



## SUMMARY

**G**od sees and hears everything. We cannot hide from God. No matter what we say, God does not go easy on those who sin. It is better to confess and seek forgiveness. Confession and repentance are an ongoing and necessary part of our relationship with God. Only those who are humble and worship God alone can experience the mercy of God. What choice are you going to make? Either you will be a humble worshipper of God or an arrogant, prideful rebel. But always remember God's ways are best.

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

**Prayer:** God, we are thankful for your power and love. We ask you to forgive us for all the times we were rebellious. Teach and guide us in your holy ways. Amen.

**Hymn:** "O Thou, in Whose Presence" (*AMEC Hymnal* #83)



## GOD FORETELLS OF REDEMPTION

LESSON SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 49:1-17

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 49:1-13

Key Verse: *I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.* Isaiah 49:6c

### Isaiah 49:1-13 (NRSV)

1 Listen to me, O coastlands, pay attention, you peoples from far away! The Lord called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb he named me.

2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away.

3 And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

4 But I said, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my cause is with the Lord, and my reward with my God."

5 And now the Lord says, who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him, for I am honored in the sight of the Lord, and my God has become my strength—

6 he says, "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

7 Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations, the slave of rulers, "Kings shall see and stand up, princes, and they shall prostrate themselves, because of the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

8 Thus says the Lord: In a time of favor I have answered you, on a day of salvation I have helped you; I have kept you and given you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages;

9 saying to the prisoners, "Come out," to those who are in

darkness, “Show yourselves.” They shall feed along the ways, on all the bare heights shall be their pasture;

10 they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them down, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them.

11 And I will turn all my mountains into a road, and my

highways shall be raised up.

12 Lo, these shall come from far away, and lo, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Syene.

13 Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the Lord has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his suffering ones.

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## VOCABULARY

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- **Vanity** – Emptiness, falseness.
- **Salvation** – Deliverance from sin through the sacrifice and suffering of the Messiah.
- **Abhorred** – To regard with disgust and hatred.
- **Prostrate** – To lay stretched out on the ground with one’s face downward.
- **Covenant** – A contract or agreement between two parties.
- **Compassion** – A feeling of pity or sorrow for another’s suffering. It is one of God’s characteristics, as well as a characteristic of Christians.
- **Syene** – Pronounced: si-e’-ni.

## INTRODUCTION

The Walley family gathered in their dining room for Sunday dinner. Sunday was the only day of the week when they all had nothing on their schedules. This afforded them a chance to come together, talk, share a meal, and have family activities. Lisa and her brother, Derrick, appreciated it when they had family time.

The doorbell rang, so Lisa went into the living room and peered out the window. She noticed it was her friend Joyce, so Lisa opened the door. Joyce's face was wet with tears, her eyes were red, and her clothes were disheveled.

"Joyce, come on in." Lisa motioned for her to sit on the sofa. "What's going on?"

"I don't know how to tell you this, Lisa," Joyce twisted the end of her shirt, and her lip quivered, "but Marvin was shot and killed last night." Tears fell from her red, swollen eyes as she stared at Lisa. Marvin and Lisa had been best friends since they were six years old.

"NOOOOOO! NOOOOOO! NOOOOOO!" Lisa collapsed on the floor and wailed. Her parents and brother ran into the living room when they heard Lisa screaming. Lisa was inconsolable.

Two years later, Lisa devoted her time to establishing anti-violence networks in all schools and local communities.

*How do you feel when hearing about or witnessing evil powers at work? What impact does it have on your life, present and future?*

**BIBLE STORY**

**T**here are times in our lives when we set out to achieve goals and fulfill plans, but we encounter great opposition. Our plans are hindered by people who betray us and obstacles that seem hard to overcome. What can we do? God always has a plan. “All things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purposes” (Rom. 8:28, KJV)

In Isaiah 49, God offers comfort to Israel by promising a future redeemer. God’s servant calls out for the people to listen to him. Before the Messiah-Servant was born, God had chosen him for a special mission. His divine appointment from God made him qualified to minister to the world. The Messiah-Servant was equipped with a powerful message of salvation and divinely protected by God.

Israel was God’s chosen people, but they had failed to obey his commands. They had to endure the wrath of God for their actions. But God had a plan for redemption through the Messiah-Servant. The Messiah seemed to have failed to complete God’s mission because the people strongly opposed him. But God would get the glory from the Messiah’s rejection, suffering, and death. No matter how dreadful the outlook seems, God offers us hope when we place our full trust in him. The Messiah understood God would ensure his vindication and rewards.

This prophecy comforted Israel by promising their release from captivity in Babylon. Moreover, all people would experience release from the captivity of sin. God guided Israel and taught the people how to move forward no matter how rough the journey was. The Gentiles who had been excluded before would be included in God’s plan of salvation for all. Captives cannot free themselves, so God will send

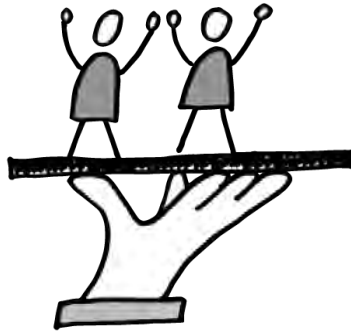
the Messiah to deal with evil and overcome it with good. The Messiah-Servant would be the light of the world. His redeemed people who act as lights to the world enjoy his full-scale blessings.

*How do you define 'servant'? Who can be identified as servants? Do you consider yourself a servant? Why or why not?*

**LIFE APPLICATION**

**T**hink about your life and what you could not live without. List the things you could not live without. Why can't you live without these things?

I CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT:

The servant is identified as the people of Israel (v. 3) and a few verses later as an individual restorer of Israel and savior of all human-kind (vs. 5-6). The book of Isaiah has four “servant songs” in which the servant is the Messiah. The class will divide up into four groups. Each group will read one “servant song” and identify the qualities of the servant contained in the scripture passage. If this class is on Zoom, open four Breakout rooms to separate classes. After the groups are finished reporting, compare and contrast the servant described with the typical servant in our society. The four “servant song” texts found in Isaiah are: 1) 42:1-4; 2) 49:1-6; 3) 50:4-9; and 4) 52:13–53:12.

### SUMMARY

**G**od, the creator, offers us deliverance and redemption through the Messiah-Servant. His characteristics, mission, and accomplishments prove that the Messiah is the only true God. Israel failed to be the light of the world as God’s chosen people. God demonstrated his love for them despite their disobedience by sending the Messiah to offer redemption from sin. The way was opened for all people to receive salvation through his rejection by the Jews, then suffering and dying. We all are included in God’s promises.

The Messiah desires for us to be lights for the world. Consider the

metaphor in verse 6: “I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” Think about how light dispels darkness as you hold a candle (battery operated) or flashlight from your phone. How can you be a light in the world for God? This week- every time you pray- turn on the candle or a flashlight and ask God to use you as a light to draw others to him. Witness for Christ as often as possible when opportunities are available.

### **CLOSING DEVOTIONS**

**Prayer:** God, we thank you for sending the Messiah to be the light of the world. Forgive us for hiding our light when we are around others. God, let your light shine brightly through me so the world can be draw to the Messiah and saved. Amen.

**Hymn:** “Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam” (*AMEC Hymnal* #556)



## GOD'S RESTORED PEOPLE SHALL PROSPER

LESSON SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 49:18-26

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 49:18-23

*Key Verse: Thus says the Lord God: I will soon lift up my hand to the nations, and raise my signal to the peoples; and they shall bring your sons in their bosom, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.  
Isaiah 49:22*

### Isaiah 49:18-23 (NRSV)

18 Lift up your eyes all around and see; they all gather, they come to you. As I live, says the Lord, you shall put all of them on like an ornament, and like a bride you shall bind them on.

19 Surely your waste and your desolate places and your devastated land—surely now you will be too crowded for your inhabitants, and those who swallowed you up will be far away.

20 The children born in the time of your bereavement will yet say in your hearing: “The place is too crowded for me; make room for me to settle.”

21 Then you will say in your heart, “Who has borne me these?

I was bereaved and barren, exiled and put away—so who has reared these? I was left all alone—where then have these come from?”

22 Thus says the Lord God: I will soon lift up my hand to the nations, and raise my signal to the peoples; and they shall bring your sons in their bosom, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.

23 Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you, and lick the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the Lord; those who wait for me shall not be put to shame.

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## VOCABULARY

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- **Desolate** – A place that is deserted and has no people or animals.
- **Inhabitant** – A person or animal that lives in or occupies a place.
- **Bereavement** – The period of grief and mourning after a death or other loss.
- **Barren** – The inability to produce offspring.
- **Exiled** – A person or group that has been expelled and barred from one’s native country for punitive or political reasons.
- **Shame** – A painful emotion caused by the consciousness of guilt.

### INTRODUCTION

**M**r. Walley had personally struggled to understand why Ken, a 16-year-old teenager, killed his daughter’s best friend. And most shockingly, Ken is the nephew of the Walley’s pastor. Marvin’s life was cut short at the age of 14. Marvin’s family wants justice for their son. Lisa was experiencing depression and spent most of her day in her bedroom. The entire community felt the impact of this traumatic event.

After praying and discussing the situation with his wife, Mr. Walley decided to form a community group to be an intermediary and provide conflict resolutions for those who need it. Moreover, he desired to focus on helping youth learn de-escalating techniques to avoid violence. He understood that those with the expertise to help him were

already active in the community. Mr. Walley reached out to some of them. Everyone he spoke to agreed to work with him and provide additional resources. Mr. Walley's doctor volunteered to send mental health counselors to assist in the work.

*How do you think Mr. Walley's actions will impact the community? When community outreach centers are available for the youth, does it help?*

### BIBLE STORY

The Israelites were taken captive by the Babylonians because they disobeyed God. While they were away from their homeland, the lands remained untouched and barren. The Israelites felt God had deserted them in Babylon, but God could never abandon his own. Just like a mother would not leave her little child (49:14-15), God loves us. God may punish us for our sins, but he is still present and watching over us as a good parent does. Our names are inscribed on the palms of God's hands (49:16).

God had not forgotten about Israel. God assures the people he would restore and bless them in their land. Israel is personified as a bride, and God is the bridegroom (Rev. 19:6-8). The command to Israel to adorn themselves with ornaments means God has taken the unfaithful people back as a bride (49:18). If we repent and turn back to God, he will forgive and restore us when we sin.

The restoration of the "desolate places" points to the future return from Babylonian exile. God promised to make Israel prosper again and make her children return from all the nations where they had been scattered; in time, there would scarcely be enough room for all of them (49:19-23). This also may be referring to spiritual offspring

among both Jews and Gentiles. God would protect the people, and their enemies would be punished and made to serve them. The restoration of God’s people comes through the power of God. We have to continue to trust in God’s promises no matter our current circumstances. God has a glorious future planned for each of us.

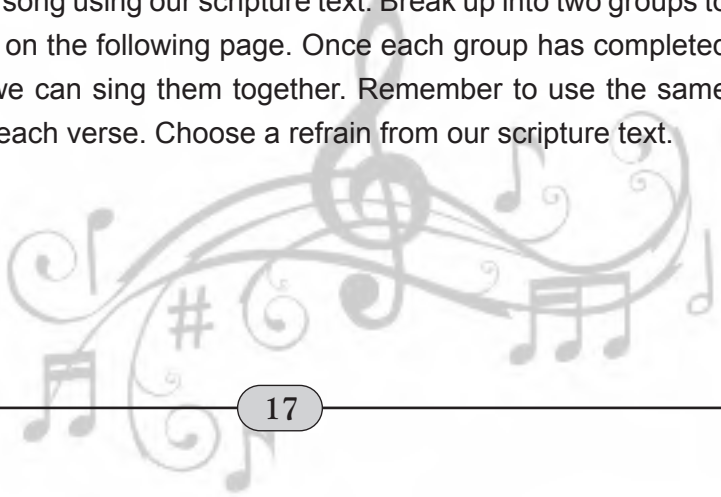
*How does God enact justice for his chosen people? What can we do to promote love, mercy, and justice? Compare and contrast restored Israel with our current world.*

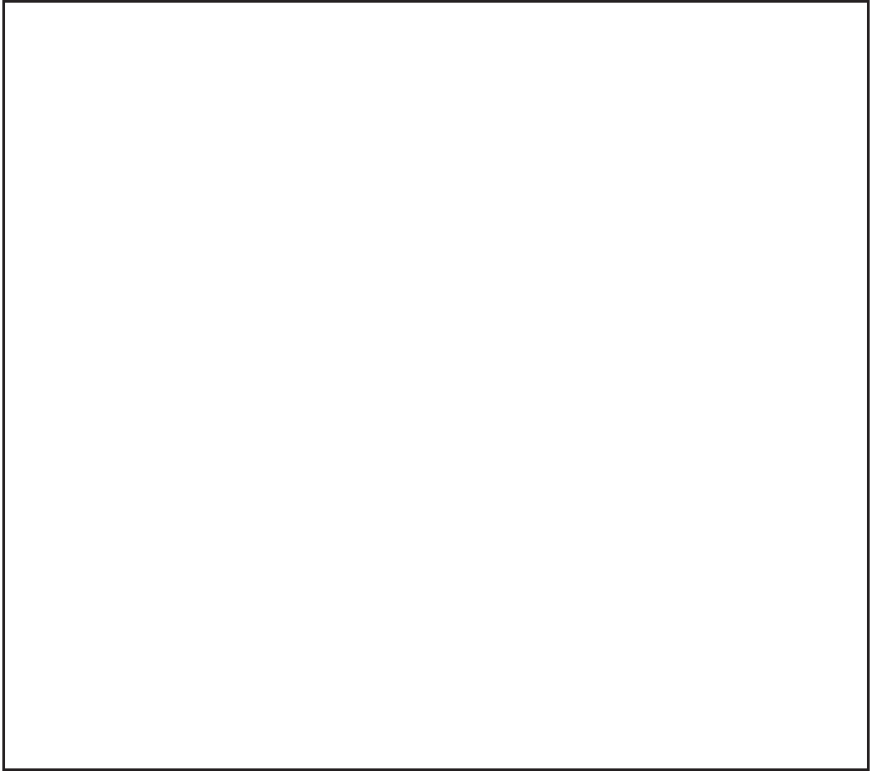
### LIFE APPLICATION

**M**ost fairytales end with the quote, “And they lived happily ever after.” They are called fairytales because they are not real (facts) but fantasies. Think about the fairytales you read or viewed on television. What was your favorite? Why? When have you ever seen the fairytale be replicated in real life?



Create a song using our scripture text. Break up into two groups to write a song on the following page. Once each group has completed their song, we can sing them together. Remember to use the same refrain after each verse. Choose a refrain from our scripture text.





### SUMMARY

**T**he Lord encouraged disheartened Israel. God promised to release the Israelites from captivity and bless them. They would be prosperous and have many offspring. God would punish those who oppressed them. The Israelites would once again live in their homeland and experience peace, mercy, and justice from God. This is after they had restored their relationship with God. Sin separates us from God, but grace restores us.

*Where do freedom and blessings come from? What did God promise Israel? How has God restored personal relationships for you?*

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

**Prayer:** God, our redeemer, we praise and thank you for fulfilling your promises. We trust that you can restore our relationships. Also, let your mercy and justice reign in every life situation we endure. Amen.

**Hymn:** "Standing on the Promises" (*AMEC Hymnal #424*)

Or

Sing the songs created by the class.