

Sunday School Lesson

By Bessie Wilbon

INTRODUCTION

The book of Job recounts the suffering patriarch's day in court. He heard, rather impatiently, while his three friends presented their explanation of his grief; and he answered, more lengthily, to them and to God. The friends' presentations occupy a total of nine chapters in the book; Job's complaints and replies occupy 20 chapters. Yet this was not enough for Job. He desired, even demanded, a hearing with the Almighty Himself, (Job 23:3-7). Job was heard in Heaven, and he did hear at last from God, with results that were not at all what he had expected.

A complaint of wasting time came from the late speaker in the discussion between Job and his friends. This was a young person and gave this as his reason for remaining quiet so long. His name was Elihu. He rebuked Job for his presumptuousness in finding fault with God's justice; he also rebuked the three friends for condemning Job on the assumption of his guilt for some hidden wrong. He pleaded for patience in waiting for the final verdict from an all-wise, all-benevolent God. His summary arguments occupy six chapters, Job 32-37.

Then God spoke to Job, "Out of the whirlwind," to say that the problem of Job's suffering was by no means the only thing Job could not understand. What about the world and its creation? The stars and the nearer heavens of rain and wind? What about the seas? Darkness and light? The animals and their various ways of life and living: Read Job 38 and 39.

Why, we wonder, did not God speak to Job earlier and save all the waste of time spent in fruitless discussion?

The time was not wasted. Until the disputants had "spoken their piece" - until they had spread out their arguments and had been heard - they were not ready to accept the conclusions. They must talk themselves empty before the Lord could touch that emptiness with His revelation.

THE LESSON

"I spoke foolishly, Lord. What can I answer? I will not try to say anything else. I have already said more than I should." Then out of the storm the Lord spoke to Job once again.

The Lord: Stand up now like a man, and answer my questions. Are you trying to prove that I am unjust - to put me in the wrong and yourself in the right? Are you as strong as I am? Can your voice thunder as loud as mine? (Job 40:1-9).

Most important to Job was that the Almighty had given attention to his plea and had responded. Now he knew God cared. God's answer at this point was directed to Job's generally implied and sometimes stated criticism that "God hath delivered one to the ungodly and turned me over into the hands of the wicked..."

If one is to find fault with the way God runs things, let him show a better way. If we trust and obey God only insofar as we understand and approve His doings, we are not trusting God at all, but are trusting our own reason. This is the kind of faith that is fostered by a very popular form of humanism in our culture. It becomes like the runaway child, very sure he can get along quite well on his own resources.

"Let him who accuses God answer him!" It is easy for a rebel to ask difficult questions of one in charge; it is quite another to answer those same questions himself; and even harder to answer the questions that the one in charge may ask him.

"I know, Lord, that you are all powerful; that you can do everything you want. You ask how I dare question your wisdom when I am so very ignorant. I talked about things I didn't understand, about marvels too great for me to know. You told me to listen while you spoke and to try to answer your questions. Then I knew only what others had told me, but now I have seen you with my own eyes. So I am ashamed of all I have said and repent in dust and ashes," (Job 42:1-6).

Job's answer applied to the whole range of God's presentation found in Job 38-41, both before and after the confession Job had made already. Job was ready to trust God without explanations. In the face of his helplessness he recognized God's limitless power. The Creator's accomplishments could not be ignored.

Job recognized God's perfect understanding. Probably God's declarations had responded to some things Job had thought but had not said.

It is one thing to accept facts concerning God without test or opposition, as Job probably had done for most of his life. It is another to affirm them with the kind of conviction that Job now possessed.

Job's fault was that of almost anyone who has achieved some expertise in one area and then moves to another. Such a person assumes that the skills he applied in the old area will work just as well in the new, and so he proceeds to offer advice to the natives. More often than not, he will discover that the new field possesses characteristics he knew nothing about and he has spoken before he learned. Job's friends did this in advising him. Job did it in discussing God's administration; preachers sometimes do this when they act hastily to change policies, and aggressive new members sometimes do it in churches.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath," (James 1:19). Human pride must always wilt in the divine presence.

With self-centered pride removed the believer is ready for the kind of restoration that came to Job, who was justified before his friends and was given a new life in family and wealth.

One great value to the study of Job is its practical reminder that zeal, sincerity and good intentions do not themselves qualify one to manage his own affairs or to judge the performance of another. It was this discovery that resolved the conflict of Job.

"Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord," (1 Cor. 15:58).



Rev. Aaron Johnson
.....Changed parties

According To Rev. Johnson Republican Party Offers Economic Development

By Teresa Simmons
Managing Editor

We've always been taught that strength is in unity. Perhaps this is one reason why the majority of blacks swing toward the Democratic ticket during elections. But the strength hasn't been clicking, and for the Rev. Aaron J. Johnson, now secretary of the North Carolina Department of Correction, it became one of the reasons to change parties in mid-stream.

What does Johnson's Republican Party membership have to do with his present position? A lot. It's one of the reasons he is the highest ranking black in the N.C. political area today. Serving as chairman of the bi-partisan committee to elect Jim Martin didn't hurt his chances either.

His reasons for getting more blacks involved in the Republican Party have been multifold.

"The Republican Party has more to offer blacks from a substance standpoint," Johnson stated in a recent Post interview. "The Democrats emphasize social programs. The difference is that the Republican Party offers economic development." Aaron stressed that he is not toally against human service programs, but they should be only for emergencies and used as survival programs. "These programs should simply be a start. The Republican Party has long lasting solutions - start ups for business and economic developments, for example."

Johnson went on to cite the opportunity for ownership of homes, businesses and the philosophy of self help.

One economic development tool is giving companies tax breaks to establish within low business risk neighborhoods and communities, but only on the grounds that the business hire employees from the community.

Strengthening the many bonds of the community are Johnson's objectives in terms of reducing crime in North Carolina. That's part of his job in managing the Department of Correction which includes the Department of Prisons and adult probation and parole.

Poverty, lack of education, unemployment, racism, and injustice are just a few reasons Johnson feels people end up incarcerated. The astonishing fact is that 63 percent of the men imprisoned are black. With the population being comprised nationally of only 12 percent black, one wonders what is going on and what will Johnson do not only against this mass misrepresentation, but also in the overcrowded situations of the state's jails.

"We don't know the full answer," Johnson stated about the reason why more blacks are imprisoned than whites. It could be any or all of the reasons mentioned in the above paragraph. And he admitted that the problems of overcrowding is too complex to solve with short term

Students Honored

Sonja Ganti, Carol Graham, Carl McManaus and Kenneth Smith were recognized for outstanding academic achievement at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Students honored had at least a 3.0 grade point average or must have served as academic counselor with at least a 2.5 average. Special awards were given for the highest academic average in each undergraduate class and to students maintaining a 3.0 throughout their collegiate career.

Fraternity Meetings

Beta Nu Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity meets the second Monday of each month at 8 p.m. in the Excelsior Club, 921 Beatties Ford Rd., Charlotte.

The next meeting of the fraternity will be held Monday, May 13.

solutions.

"I've looked at it in a long term perspective. It involves going back into the community, working with community groups, schools, churches, and social programs and striving to prevent crimes, to improve the value system, giving guidance on the dangers of drugs, for instance." Johnson will speak to specific groups and volunteer groups will work with community-based correction programs and with the family to reduce the crime rate.

"There are so many men in prison," Johnson stated, "that the entire social structure has been disturbed. It concerns me that young men are pulled out of the community and put in prisons because of crimes. They are the potential husbands and fathers."

"My encouragement goes out to the community groups to work with the family, to strengthen the family structure, to concentrate on traditional values: spiritual, family, education, and economic. These efforts will keep men out of prisons."

As secretary of the N.C. Department of Correction, Johnson is set on declining prison enrollment; as a Republican, he is shooting for a different type of unity for the black race. "If the unity in the Democratic Party is not producing anything then that unity is useless. We see ourselves in a trend, voting blindly and powerless. We need to get involved in both parties and become involved in the decision making process and shape our own destiny."

FOR THE RECORD

Rev. Aaron J. Johnson was born March 6, 1933 and has been a minister for 32 years. He now pastors Mt. Sinai Baptist Church in Cumberland County.

His education involves Shaw University, B.A., social studies, 1957; School of Religion, Shaw University, 1960. He is married to Mattie Johnson, a public school teacher and has a daughter, Dezette, and a son, Jamale.

Churchworker Of The Year

Continued From Page 1A
increase from previous years.

Although this is the goal of the contest, Ms. Johnson stated that her personal goal is "to be available to the churches and the contestants, to offer more support to them and to keep them from feeling far removed from the "Churchworker of the Year" contest."

Working diligently to iron out all aspects of the contest, Ms. Johnson also stated that WPEG, the contest's other co-sponsor, will have a more active role. "They will be pushing

the contest more on the air during the gospel program on Sundays and they will be more visible at workshops throughout the contest. Presently, WPEG is working along with me to find a guest speaker for the banquet.

"Being a church-oriented paper," Ms. Johnson added, "we feel that this contest is the best way that we can think of to help the church. The funds that they receive from each subscription sold will help in financing various projects of the church."

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By the way...

By Joe Black

No doubt many of you have heard the Staple Singers and Diana Ross suggest through song that we can help to make the world a better place by reaching out and taking the hand of a fellow human being. And through the years, Blacks who were on an upward and onward career path have been admonished to reach back and help someone else up the ladder of success. But I wonder how many of us understand this challenge of reaching back. Does it mean being charitable with your money? Yes, sometimes we must be willing to share our money with those who are still struggling to rid themselves of a depressed lifestyle. On occasions, it will require nothing more than some of your time for listening and/or making suggestions as to how he or she can overcome. And at times, we may "reach out" in a positive way by "opening the door of opportunity" for someone else. Please bear with me as I give an example of opening doors.

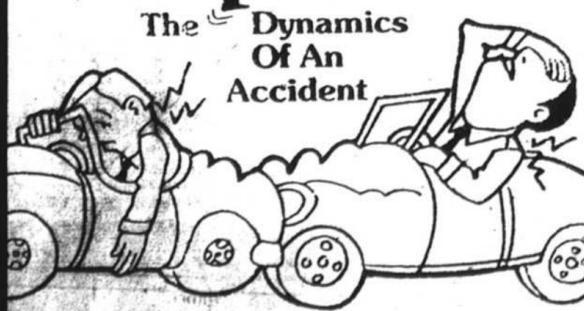
The Georgetown University Basketball Team has been a dominant force in collegiate basketball for the past several years. Their successes have given Coach John Thompson favorable identification as a leader who molds winners in athletic ability and character. His team has won national championships, and he has been honored as Coach of the Year. But John Thompson was not content to rest on his laurels. He has used his fame and prestige as a "tool" to help a needy, but worthy Black institution - our colleges and universities. Coach Thompson included a Black college on the Georgetown basketball schedule. This act generates two positive results: (1) it identifies the existence of Black schools and (2) the TV exposure adds to the revenues of the Black schools. I salute Coach John Thompson for demonstrating that you can enjoy the success of a king and still be able to walk with the "common" man.

Joe Black

Vice President
The Greyhound Corporation

Whiplash

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