

Sunday School Lesson



INTRODUCTION

When John the Baptist, in prison, sent word to Jesus, asking, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3), he was voicing the hope of the Jewish people for the Deliverer whom God had promised to send to them. The common title by which this anticipated one was known was the Messiah, the one anointed of God for the task of deliverance.

The term Messiah, referring to the special agent of the Lord, appears in only one passage of the Old Testament, Daniel 9:25, 26. Nevertheless, there are so many prophecies related to this person - so many and so specific, in fact that a dominant tenet of the Jewish faith was that the Messiah would come. There are two other aspects regarding the Messiah that are presented in the Old Testament. One of these is that He would be God's spokesman. God said to Moses, "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren: like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." (Deut. 18:18). The New Testament clearly indicates that this prediction was fulfilled (see Acts 3:30-22).

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have indicated that the prophecy, relative to the servant, found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. However, the expression "servant of the Lord" was more extensive in its meaning until it came specifically to indicate the Messiah.

In Isaiah 4:1-8, 9, we read, "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant: I have chosen thee and not cast thee away." The language is clear. Israel was God's chosen servant; however, the reference is to Israel as a unity, not as an aggregate of persons. In similar fashion we can say today that the church is the servant of the Lord. This is not to say that every person making up the church is faithfully seeking to do God's work. It does mean that the church bears a special relationship to God, will continue to do so as His servant and will realize His promise that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18).

Isaiah 42:1-4) The Lord says, "Here is my servant whom I strengthen - the one I have chosen, with whom I am pleased. I have filled him with my spirit and he will bring justice to every nation. He will not shout or raise his voice or make loud speeches in the streets. He will not break off a bent reed nor put out a flickering lamp. He will bring lasting justice to all. He will not lose hope or courage; he will establish justice on the earth. Distant lands eagerly wait for his teaching." In the eyes of the world the position of a servant is one of humility. Yet even among the proud it is considered a signal honor to be the servant of a king, and certainly it is an honor to be called the Servant of the Lord. Our first Scripture introduces the Servant as one specifically chosen and loved by the Lord.

Israel had been chosen by the Lord and endowed to become a light to the nations, the servant of the Lord for a special task. But as a nation, she failed her responsibility. The Messiah would not fail in His mission. He would be God's Servant to bring blessing to all families of the earth.

The theme of a world mission for Israel is prominent in the Old Testament, although the nation was slow in accepting the responsibility. It would remain for the Messiah to implement this mission of taking the judgment of God to all nations. The Servant would bring forth for all nations that which is right, the truth, the true form of judgment (God-given) - the basis upon which meaningful human relationships may be realized.

Verse 4 intimates that the Servant would have to undergo hardship and suffering in His mission. Yet, he would not flinch from the task. He shall not fall. He will not grow weak; He will not be "dimmed." Nor would He be discouraged. However rugged the way, He would persevere.

Upon the completion of the Servant's mission, the supreme good would be seen to be fellowship with God through Jesus Christ whom He sent, and with others as brothers and sisters, involve happiness but not that which is focused upon sensual pleasure. This would be a true happiness of the spirit in tune with God. Perfectionism would also be a factor but not that of the self-made man. This kind would be the result of forgiveness and cleansing by the Lord. And self-realization would be the joyous outcome for those who would give heed to the Servant's message.



Tony Brown, host and executive producer of "Tony Brown's Journal," will be the guest speaker at a United Negro College Fund fundraiser sponsored by Johnson C. Smith University. The fundraiser will be held February 13 at McDonald's Cafeteria, 7 p.m. The \$15 tickets to the wine sip and dinner can be purchased at the Office of Development, Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, N.C. 28216.

During Black History Month JCSU Special Calendar Of Events

Sunday, February 12 through Friday, February 24 - The Charlotte Black Artists' Exhibition, the fifth annual event sponsored by the JCSU Art Department, will be held in the campus library. A public reception for the artists will kick off the two week exhibition from 3-5:30 p.m., Sunday, February 12. For more information, call Charles Rogers at 378-1000, ext. 2005. Library hours are 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Thursday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday; noon to 4 p.m., Saturday and 2-10 p.m., Sunday.

Monday, February 13 - A special convocation featuring nationally syndicated television journalist Tony Brown as guest speaker, will be held at 3:30 p.m. at the University Church on campus. Pepsi-Cola of Charlotte is sponsoring Mr. Brown's visit as part of the Black History Month, open to the public free. For information, call Dr. Gloria Duval at 378-1024.

Monday, February 13 - Johnson C. Smith University-United Negro College Fund fundraising wine sip and dinner featuring journalist Tony Brown as guest speaker. Come and meet Tony Brown at the wine sip from 7-8 p.m. at McDonald's Cafeteria on Beatties Ford Road and I-85. Dinner and speech will begin at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15 which includes all food and beverages. All proceeds will benefit JCSU's UNCF campaign. For information, call Dr. Gloria Duval at 378-1024 or Margaret Braun at Pepsi-Cola at 523-6761.

Thursday, February 16 - Workshop III of the Urban Studies' Black History Month series: "City Growth and the Black Community." Stanley Watkins of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission will discuss the Charlotte growth plan and how it will affect the black communities: McCrorey Hall, Rm. 208, from 7-10 p.m. For information, call Hattie Leeper at 378-1097.

Sunday, February 19 - "Hats: A Tribute to Harriet Tubman." Atlanta actress Sandra Dunson Franks will present a one-woman show in the tribute to Harriet Tubman, one of black history's greatest conductors on the underground railroad. Harriet personally led over 300 slaves to freedom using a series of safe houses on 19 trips through the South despite a paralyzing illness and a \$40,000 reward for her capture, dead or alive. Tubman served in the Union Army as a soldier, nurse, spy, scout and cook as well as taking on active leadership roles in the AME Zion Church. The show is open to the public free of charge and will be held at 8:15 p.m. in the University Church on campus.

"Black Heritage Week" Planned

The Central Piedmont Community College Student Association invites the public to its concluding performance of Black Heritage Week, which began February 6.

Friday, February 10, at 8 p.m. in Taylor Hall, Room 100, the CPCC Dance Group, gospel musician John Key, and the Awareness Arts Ensemble will perform for Afro-American Night. Reggae and gospel music will be featured. For more information, contact Ross Surplis at 373-6584.

A&T Alumni

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Charlotte chapter of A&T State University alumni will meet Friday, February 17, at 7 p.m. at Holiday Inn, Sugar Creek Rd.

The guest speaker will be Sampson Buie, Jr., Director of Alumni Affairs at A&T.

All alumni are encouraged to attend.

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