

The Sunday School Lesson

By Bessie Wilbon

INTRODUCTION

Our lessons for October form a group that deals with "Interpreting a Nation's Suffering."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Generally speaking, Uzziah and Jotham were good kings. They strengthened their country greatly. In their concern with foreign relations, however, it seems that they failed to stop the corruption of religion and morals in their own land.

Ahaz was a bad king. He actively promoted false worship and evil living in Judah. Everything he did "transgressed sore against the Lord."

Hezekiah was a good king. He did his best to restore both morality and true worship. God therefore defended Judah against the Assyrians, who destroyed north Israel. Evil was firmly entrenched, however, and was very hard to eradicate.

The book of Isaiah collects many prophecies along with some historical data. Some of the prophecies are not dated, nor are all of them arranged in chronological order. However, Isaiah's song shows that it came at a time when the people of Judah were very far from being what they ought to have been as God's people."

THE LESSON

The Song of the Vineyard "Listen while I sing you this song, as song of my friend and his vineyard: My friend had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug the soil and cleared it of stones; he planted the finest vines. He built a tower to guard them, dug a pit for treading the grapes. He waited for the grapes to ripen, but every grape was sour. So now my friend says, 'You people who live in Jerusalem and Judah judge between my vineyard and me. Is there anything I failed to do for it? Then why did it produce sour grapes and not the good grapes I expected?' Here is what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge around it, break down the wall that protects it and let wild animals eat it and trample it down. I will let it be overgrown with weeds. I will not trim the vines or hoe the ground; instead, I will let briars and thorns cover it. I will even forbid the clouds to let rain fall on it." Israel is the vineyard of the Lord Almighty; the people of Judah are the vines he planted. He expected them to do what is good, but instead they committed murder. He expected them to do what is right, but their victims cried out for justice. "You are doomed! Heroes of the wine battle! Brave and fearless when it comes to mixing drinks. But for just a bribe you let guilty men go free, and you keep the innocent from getting justice." (Isaiah 5:1-7, 22, 23)

A love song and a vineyard song! How well it was designed to catch the ears of revelers at a vintage festival! The hearers did not know it yet but Isaiah's well-beloved was the Lord. To them Isaiah would sing. The song was not Isaiah's own. It was the Lord's own song, for he gave it to Isaiah by inspiration. It was a song about the vineyard belonging to the beloved.

With the best of soil, the best vines, and the best of care, what could a vineyard do but produce the best of grapes? But it brought forth wild grapes. What a let down! Anyone who has sampled wild grapes can feel it. They are tiny, full of seeds, and incredibly sour!

There was nothing lacking in the owner's care for his vineyard. The vineyard had every possible advantage, every reason to bear the best fruit. Why didn't the vineyard do what it ought to do, what it could have done? That was not so easy to answer, but it was plain that the fault was in the vineyard itself. The owner was blameless.

After reading v.7, it becomes plain that the whole vineyard song is a parable. The Lord of hosts is the owner; Israel and Judah are the vineyard. From Egypt the Lord brought choice vines, the descendants of His friend Abraham, a man famous for his faith and obedience. God planted those people in the land of promise, which was a rich and fruitful land. He gave them cities that were already built by the people who had lived there before, vines and fruit trees already mature and bearing fruit. He gave them fertile soil for their grain fields and pastures of green grass for their sheep and cattle. He protected them from heathen tribes as a wall and hedge protect a vineyard. He gave them His laws to guide them in dealing with one another and with Him. What was lacking in His care? Nothing! God's provision for them was complete.

What was wrong with the people of Israel and Judah? They ignored the first and great commandment that God gave them. Isaiah's beloved was not their beloved. They loved themselves, and with the self-love went all the horrible sins that Paul ascribed to lovers of self in the latter days: "Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." (2 Timothy 3:2-4) We live in the latter days. Looking at the world around us, we can see every item of that ugly list.

King James said that kings sit on God's throne in the earth and must answer to Him for their administration. At the same time, some members of Parliament held that the voice of the people is as the voice of God. But king and Parliament agreed that God is supreme.

There is trouble ahead for any nation that loses its consciousness of God, the owner, the supreme ruler. Romans 1:28-32 gives a horrid picture of the state of people who "did not like to retain God in their knowledge." Second Timothy 3:1-8 gives a similar picture of those who are lovers of self and money and pleasure rather than lovers of God. When a nation fits such a picture it can expect God will take away the fence and let that nation be devoured and trampled.

Lord, help us to do Your will and produce the fruit for which You created us. Amen.

S. C.'s First Black United Methodist Bishop

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) --- The first black United Methodist bishop in South Carolina says his installation confirms that blacks are part of the church.

The Rev. Joseph Bethea, who was superintendent of the Raleigh, N.C., district before his election, was installed Sunday during a packed worship service in Columbia. He preached about "The Church We Want to Be," using 1 Corinthians 12 as the basis for his text.

Since Sept. 1, Bethea has led the state's 244,000 United Methodists in 1,080 churches. Many of the hundreds who came to his installation belong to black congregations.

During a news conference, Bethea said his new position "speaks a very relevant and needed word to the black members, the black United Methodists in South Carolina. It says to that constituency that they

are part of the church; they have ownership of the church."

He added, "I would hope all United Methodists in South Carolina will have a new sense of healing and wholeness as a result of my assignment as episcopal leader I hope I have some skills and graces that can serve all the people."

Bethea recalled a sermon he preached years ago at a white church in the Rockingham, N.C., district. Afterward, an elderly parishioner came up to him and said, "Thank God for sending you our way. It makes us whole. It makes us one," Bethea said.

Bethea, 56, said the direction of the South Carolina Annual Conference will be determined by its Council on Ministries, a program agency led by the Rev. James Gadsden.

Actively Waiting For Jesus Christ To Return

By J. M. Little

"And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." (1 Thess. 1:10). Every born-again believer is waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ to come from the third Heaven and take them home with Him. I'm waiting for Him. Are you?

It is not a passive waiting, but an active waiting. That is, I anxiously look and long for His return.

This message grew out of a statement a young woman made to me as I was preparing to leave Norfolk where I had been stationed for four months. I told her that it may be the last time she would ever see me since I was leaving. She replied, "We may never meet here again, but we'll meet in Heaven." Yes, to all of you who know Christ, I'll meet you in Heaven when Christ comes. If you know Christ you'll be taken when He comes. Do you know Him? If you do then you, too, are waiting for Him, longing for Him, and you know that any moment the Lord could come.

Yes, He is near, even at the doors, (Matt. 24). I also went by Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church and told the folks there; "This may be the last time you'll see my face on this earth, you may never see me again until that time in the Word of God where a thousand years is one day, and a day is a thousand years, the time of the GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT." I warned them closely; if you don't come to know Christ, I'll have to witness against you that day.

At that great and final judgment of Rev. 20:11-12 every human being born on the face of

the earth will be there, both the elect and fallen. Every lost person will be there to be judged. Most of you think "witnessing" as going out and telling others about Christ. That is good and right. But the word "witness" is a legal term, a court term, meaning that someone is going to be tried. At the GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT every lost person will be brought forth and tried for all his sins while on this earth. You didn't know that, did you? Like it or not, you are going to this judgment.

Every saint will be there to help judge the lost by witnessing against those who would not come to Christ. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2). This is what the beloved Apostle Paul was talking about. How will you fare at the final judgment? I praise the Lord that one day He opened my heart and revealed my lost condition to me and then revealed Christ to me.

I'll be present at this judgment to witness against all those who fought the Gospel that I knew and all those who fought me.

Just as certain as God is on His Throne Christ is coming back for His own. And if you know Him as your Lord and your Saviour you'll be taken when He comes and I'll meet you in Heaven with our Lord. You may tell me that you will be there. But I'll be there, too.

Salvation in Christ is so personal until I feel as though I am the only one saved. I cannot live in your light. I can only live in the light the Lord has given me. As I told the folks there at Mt.

Pilgrim; "The greatest thing in all this life, in all this world, in all this universe, is just to know Christ as your Lord and your Saviour. I, also, told the folks that over at Olive Grove Baptist Church there near Lake Gaston on the Virginia border one Sunday. They had never heard that before.

My friends, if you ever come to know Christ as your Lord and your Saviour, you, too, will know that great truth. Salvation's a Person, Christ Himself, a living reality to my heart.

Is He a living reality to your heart? If He is then you and I will meet in Heaven. Do you know Christ? Think on your ways, where are you going?

What if you died in your present state? I would hate to go out into eternity on the mud flat our church members live on and stake the destiny of their souls. Do you know Christ? It is my prayer that you will turn to Him, who alone can be your salvation. I leave this simple message with you.

The greatest thing in all this universe is just to know Christ as your Lord and your Saviour.

Listen to our last pastor, L.R. Shelton, with THE VOICE OF TRUTH BROADCAST each Sunday morning at 7:30 over WAGL-FM and at 8:00 over WAGL-AM.

The Prophet's Column is a paid advertisement.

Dick Gregory's SLIM SAFE BAHAMIAN DIET

A NAME YOU CAN TRUST

Correction Connection is proud to bring you the first safe, natural, nutritional way to reduce weight: Dick Gregory's Slim-Safe Bahamian Diet.

To learn about the complete program, contact your local distributor:

Local Distributor
Mrs. Onetta Boyton-392-1849

Distributed by:

CCI
CORRECTION CONNECTION

Goodies ICE CREAM PARLOR

Lunch Special \$1.99
2 Hot Dogs, Chips and 12oz. Coke

8 GREAT FLAVORS
Open: Tue-Thur.
11:30AM-8PM
Fri & Sat. 11:30AM-9PM
1501-A W. Blvd.
Leola Plaza

REGISTER
To Win A 35mm Camera
Drawing to be held Oct. 15, 1988
372-3462

Post Obituaries

BEASLEY FUNERAL HOME
Mrs. Minnie Barbara Foust, 87, of 4820-C Daybreak Dr. died Sept. 19, 1988, at Charlotte Memorial Hospital. Funeral was Sunday, Sept. 25 at Union Missionary Baptist Church. Burial was in Beasley Memorial Gardens.

Survivors are her daughters, Mrs. Louella Thompson, Mrs. Patricia Crawford, Mrs. Kathleen Truesdale; 15 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren; 10 great-great-grandchildren.

Mr. Willie James Owens, 70, of 2976 Shady Ln. died Sept. 19, 1988, at Charlotte Memorial Hospital. Funeral was Sunday, Sept. 25 at Union Baptist Church, Enoree, SC. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Survivors are his wife, Elizabeth of Brooklyn, NY; sons, James Owens, Alton Owens, John Owens, all of Brooklyn; daughter, Mrs. Brenda Martin; brothers, Garfield Owens, Claude Owens, both of Fountain; sisters, Mrs. Lydia Sullivan, Mrs. Allean Sullivan, both of Simpsonville, SC; 14 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren.

Mr. Cursoe Higgins, 78, of 1024 Everette Pl. died Sept. 19, 1988, at Charlotte Memorial Hospital. Funeral was at Beaverton Baptist Church, Enoree, SC. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Survivors are his son, Thomas Sanders of West Germany; daughter, Ms. Stephania Higgins; sisters, Mrs. Ruth Thompson of Philadelphia, Mrs. Carrie Snead of Washington, Mrs. Bernice Goode of Charleston, Mrs. Deborah Williams of Woodruff, Mrs. Geneva Glenn; one grandson.

LONG & SON MORTUARY SERVICE

Ms. Alice Matha Stewart, of 5015 Farm Pond Lane formerly of Washington, DC died Sept. 19, 1988, at Presbyterian Hospital. Funeral service was held September 22, at Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church. Burial was in Rutherford Memorial Park Concord, NC. Memorials can be made to Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church.

Survivors are her sister, Ms. Jane Reid of Charlotte, NC.

Shontelle "Sharee" Moore, of 936 Windover Dr. died Saturday, Sept. 24, 1988. Funeral service will be 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 1 at Greater Bethel A.M.E. Church.

Survivors are father, Jeffery Cathey; mother, Mrs. Charlene D. Smith stepfather, Robert D. Smith; stepbrother, Darryl Donnta Westmoreland, maternal grandparents, Arthur J. Moore, III; Mr. Leon Caldwell; Mrs. Andea Wiley; paternal grandparents, William & Thelma

Cathey; great grandparents, Mrs. Willie Mae Boyd, Mrs. Thelma Wallace, Mrs. Geneva Cleveland; great grandfather, Alfred Boyd.

The family will be at the home of Mrs. Willie Mae Boyd, 317 Walnut St., Charlotte, NC

MET SOMEONE NEW?



Meeting someone new can be exciting, as long as it is not the result of an automobile accident. The "Whiplash" injury takes only a split second to occur, in that moment, the injury may cause problems such as Headaches, Stiffness and Difficulty in movement of the neck, as well as pain and numbness in the arms and hands.

Left untreated, the result can be disastrous. If you have "Whiplash" call now to make an appointment with one of our premier Neck and Back Specialists.

KEITH CLINIC OF CHIROPRACTIC, P.A.

WEST	SOUTH	EAST
Freedom Mall	Carmel Commons Shopping Center	Eastland Mall
392-1338	541-7111	568-4195

4016 Triangle Ave.	7523 Little Ave.	5344 Central Ave.
--------------------	------------------	-------------------

We Have 3 Locations To Serve You. Stop By And See Us Today For Your Neck and Back problems.

For All You've Ever Wanted In BLACK NEWS "The Charlotte Post" Is For YOU!