



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

DECEMBER 19 2020

the servant hero

Scripture Story: Isaiah 53; 61; Zechariah 7; 8.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings*, chapter 59.

Key Text: Isaiah 53:3.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The prophecies of Isaiah and Zechariah look beyond Israel's present troubles—oppression by foreign nations, exile in Babylon, the attempt to rebuild the homeland after exile. They look forward to a time of peace and prosperity in which all nations look to Israel as a source of truth and enlightenment. At the center of these prophecies is the figure of the Lord's Servant as described in Isaiah 53 and other passages. The Servant is not the conquering Messiah who will defeat Israel's enemies in battle, but the humble Leader who suffers on behalf of others.

When Jesus came, He was not the kind of Messiah Israel was hoping for. Their hope was for deliverance from their immediate problem—political oppression. Jesus came to be a different kind of Leader. His type of leadership was foretold in the prophecies of the suffering Servant, and His kingdom was to be the peaceful kingdom prophesied by Isaiah and Zechariah—not just the kingdom of Israel, but a kingdom for those of all nations who worship the God of compassion and peace.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Recognize the portrayal of Jesus in the Old Testament prophecies. (*Know*)
- Desire to follow Jesus as a leader rather than the world's idea of a hero. (*Feel*)
- Choose to follow Jesus' example of loving service to others. (*Respond*)

III. EXPLORE

The Son, Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs, no. 4: "God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. . . . He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things." (Isaiah 53:4-6; Daniel 9:25-27; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; 10:30; 14:1-3, 9, 13; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:17-19; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-19; Hebrews 2:9-18; 8:1, 2.)

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

On a whiteboard or chalkboard, draw a Venn diagram. Brainstorm with the students a list of qualities that are desirable in heroes. List their comments in the Venn diagram in the following way:

On the left side of the first circle, list attributes of people whom the world esteems as heroes but that

are not found in people who reflect Christ's character. In the right hand side of the second circle, list qualities that Jesus and godly people throughout history had in common but that do not correspond to the world's idea of fame and popularity usually associated with heroes in secular society. In the section created by the intersection of the two circles of the Venn diagram, list qualities that all heroes have in common.

After this exercise, engage students in a discussion and highlight the importance of making wise choices that God would approve when selecting role models, knowing that people whom we admire eventually influence who we become. Human heroes, no matter how great they might be in some ways, all possess character flaws and weaknesses. But if Jesus becomes our hero, the more we think of Him and admire the beauty of His character, the more we will become like Him: 2 Corinthians 3:18; Hebrews 12:1, 2.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Heroes often come from humble or ordinary backgrounds. Jesus came from a simple peasant family and grew up to use His divine powers to help and heal people. One important distinction exists between Jesus and all other great heroes. They triumph through strength—using force to destroy their enemies. Only Jesus triumphed through self-sacrificing love, knowing that by suffering and dying for the sins of the world He could save the human race from the penalty of sin, that is, from eternal death.

“Love for sinners led Christ to pay the price of redemption. No one else could ransom men and women from the power of the enemy. His life bore no taint of self-assertion. The world honors position, wealth, and talent, but the Son of God would present none of these. The Messiah was not to use any of the means that people employ to win allegiance. The Bible foretold his renunciation of self:

‘He shall not cry out, nor raise His voice,
Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.
A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench’ (Isaiah 42:2, 3, NKJV)” (*Royalty and Ruin*, p. 244).

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

The prophets gave the people of Israel hope throughout hard times. But people focused on the message they wanted to hear—that someday their nation would be great again, that foreign oppressors would be overthrown. They overlooked some of the shadows in the picture of the future that the prophets painted—a picture of a Messiah who would conquer through suffering, who would redeem others by dying for them. When Jesus came, they didn't see in Him the Messiah they were expecting. Sometimes our own expectations of how we would like God to work blind us to what God is actually doing in our lives.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

Direct students' attention to the activity in Sunday's lesson. Divide the class into groups of three or four and have them write a description of the mission of the Messiah based on the Bible passages in the lesson. Encourage group members to suggest other Bible passages—particularly from the Gospels—that could be used to add to the description of the Messiah. Then give each group poster board and art supplies and ask them to describe and illustrate the role and mission of Messiah, using several Bible texts drawn from the lesson and from other parts of the Bible.

After the posters have been done and shared with the whole group, ask: What kind of Messiah were the people of Israel looking for? What kind of Messiah did God send them? Was Jesus what they really needed? Why did most people not recognize Him as the true Messiah?

What kind of Savior, God, or hero are people looking for today? Does Jesus fit the expectations of the people? How can we help people be more aware of their need for Jesus and how He fulfills their needs?



Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

“The prophecies concerning the Savior led the Hebrews to live in a state of constant expectancy. Many believed and ‘confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth’ (Hebrews 11:13, NKJV). The promises repeated through patriarchs and prophets had kept alive the hope of His appearing. God had not at first revealed the exact time of the first advent; and even when the prophecy of Daniel made this known, not everyone interpreted the message correctly. Century after century passed. Finally there were no more prophets. . . . But heaven’s council had determined the hour for the coming of Christ. ‘When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman’ (Galatians 4:4, 5, NKJV). . . .

“When the Savior finally appeared ‘in the likeness of men’ (Philippians 2:7, NKJV), Satan could only bruise His heel, while by every act of suffering Christ was bruising the head of His adversary. The anguish that sin has brought was poured into the heart of the Sinless One. Yet Christ was breaking the slavery that had held humanity. Every pang of anguish, every insult, was working out the deliverance of the race.

“If Satan could have gotten Christ to stain His perfect purity by one act or even one thought, the prince of darkness would have triumphed and gained the whole human family. But while Satan could distress, he could not contaminate. He could cause agony, but not

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

Using “Pop-Culture” References in Teaching

This week’s lesson asks students to reflect on the idea of Jesus as a leader, or hero.

- Be sure to point out differences between the values of our culture and the values of the Bible. While similarities can be useful, we should be aware of the differences, too. For example, superheroes triumph through strength and the use of force, while Jesus triumphed through self-sacrifice.

RABBI 101

defilement. He made the life of Christ one long scene of conflict and trial, yet with every attack he was losing his hold on humanity. . . .

“Through death Jesus destroyed ‘him who had the power of death, that is, the devil’ (Hebrews 2:14, NKJV). This act made the plan of salvation secure forever. In death, in rising again, Jesus opened the gates of the grave for all His followers. Our Redeemer has opened the way so that the most sinful, the most needy, the most oppressed and despised, may find access to the Father” (*Royalty and Ruin*, p. 246). Could it be that having both the Old and New Testaments to learn from, we still don’t fully appreciate Jesus’ ministry of peace, humility, and servanthood? We should turn to the Bible to deepen our understanding

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Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

• Key Text

Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.

• Flashlight

Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book *Prophets and Kings*. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from *Out of the Story*.

• Punch Lines

Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.

• Further Insight

Ask them how the quotes in Further Insight convey the point of the story in this lesson.

of Jesus' ministry and be willing to follow Him on the narrow way of self-sacrifice and total surrender that He might fulfill His purpose in our lives..

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Say: This week's and last week's lessons have talked about how the promises of Jesus' coming brought hope to God's people in dark times, and how those same promises can bring hope for us today.

Hand out a 3" x 5" index card to each student. Write on a chalkboard or whiteboard at the front of the room:

"Jesus gives me hope because . . ."

Ask each person to fill out the card with their own reasons why Jesus provides them with hope. Next

have them turn to their partners and share the hope Jesus offers them.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

God promised His people a Deliverer who would bring them out of darkness and into light. That promised Deliverer was Jesus. He was a humble servant who met suffering people where they were, helped them, and shared in their suffering. In the end, He shared the worst of all human experiences—a painful death He didn't deserve.

Jesus triumphed through suffering. He was great because He was humble. He led by being a servant. He promises hope to all of us in our darkest times, but He also calls us to serve others and to suffer just as He did. It's a big promise, and a big challenge. Let's pray we're all ready to be led by Jesus.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Prophets and Kings (or Royalty and Ruin)*,* chapter 59.

*A special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings* has been created by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.