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Biblical Characters, Events, Places and Images Remembered and Celebrated in Black Worship

The present title of this article is a restatement and reduction of the much larger topic, "African and Biblical Bases for Black Worship and the Ways in which Biblical Events, Characters, Places and Images Parallel and Interweave Black Experience, and are Remembered and Celebrated in Worship," an extended project upon which I am constantly at work. It is to be noted, here, that I shall deal in this paper only with *Biblical* (i.e., not with African) characters, events, places and images.

At the very beginning, I must say that what is here presented is to be viewed and evaluated as the first draft of a report of an investigation into the subject. The subject is so vast that several persons, working over an extended period of time, might give attention to it. Therefore, the best that I might hope for is that what is presented may serve as a suggestion for further research and writing.

Worship consists of several elements. This investigation was limited to songs, sermons and prayers. In the course of the investigation I perused five hundred fifty Spirituals, chiefly by title; two hundred fifty Gospel Songs which date mainly from the 1930's to the present; fifty "Tindley" and similar Black Gospel Hymns which date from 1885 to 1935; and three hundred sermons which date from 1800 to the present. Roughly twenty-five prayers, dating from 1785 to the present, were reviewed.

BIBLICAL CHARACTERS AND EVENTS

Biblical characters and events may best be dealt with together, inasmuch as they are intimately related.

My research disclosed that some authorities have already produced works on characters and events as they have to do with songs, especially the Spirituals.

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In his book, *Negro Folk Music, U.S.A.*, Harold Courlander notes that if Black religious songs are arranged in a somewhat chronological order they are equivalent to an oral version of the Bible. He proceeds to demonstrate by citing Spirituals that deal in historical succession (but not always in correct sequence) with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Noah and the flood, Moses, Joshua, David, Samson, Elijah, Job, Daniel, Judas, Jonah, Pilate's wife, John the Revelator, Gabriel, Judgment Day, the story of Jesus' birth and ministry, John the Baptist, and more.¹

Various writers call attention to the fact that in the Spirituals one may find characters and events from different periods in Biblical history mixed together. Moreover, in a single Spiritual one may find characters and events that span the whole course of Biblical history, from creation to the last judgment portrayed in the book of Revelation. Thus, Courlander gives special attention to a Spiritual usually known as "Job, Job" which alludes to significant scenes scattered throughout the Old and New Testaments, without any rigid sequence. He describes the version which he reproduces as follows:

In the version given here, the song begins with Job in the first section; goes on in the second to tell about Judas, Pilate, and Pilate's wife; moves back to Joshua and the stopping of the sun in the third; follows in the fourth with scenes from the Revelation of St. John; continues with references to Gabriel in the fifth section; and in the book of Daniel. The choruses between stanzas vary, no two being exactly alike. They deal with Mt. Zion, the Salvation train, Judgement Day, Elijah's chariot, and, finally, the resurrection. . . .²

With specific reference to Spirituals, John Lovell, Jr. comments: "It is highly significant that with all the Biblical characters, incidents, parables, sermons, and historical features to choose from, the slave, in thousands of songs, selected relatively a few and turned these to only a few ends."³ He follows up with a chart that presents what he calls "Use of Biblical Items in the Spiritual." In this chart he sets forth Biblical "people" and events in both Testaments. His list of characters for the Old Testament is as follows: Adam and Eve, Methusaleh, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Pharoah, Pharoah's daughter, Joshua, Gideon, Samson, Delilah, Samuel, David, Ezekiel, Daniel, the Hebrew Children (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Nebuchadnezzar, and Jonah).

For the New Testament he lists: Jesus, Mary the Mother of Christ,

¹ Harold Courlander, *Negro Folk Music, U.S.A.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. 36-43.

² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

³ John Lovell, Jr., *Black Song: The Forge and The Flame* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1972), p. 257.

John the Baptist, Apostle Peter, Apostle John, Apostle Thomas, Nicodemus, Mary and Martha, Lazarus, Dives, Pilate, Paul, and the Prodigal Son.

As important New Testament events, Lovell lists only the Birth of Christ, the Crucifixion of Christ, and the Resurrection of Christ. Commenting upon the lists, which are based upon five hundred Spirituals from a total of more than six thousand, he says:

A close comparison with the real people and happenings of the Bible will reveal the slave poet's broad or delicate emphases and variations, his outright departures, and something very important, the Biblical items, events, and people he does not emphasize. Note, for example, that Paul's reputation rests on his ability to pray rather than on his great apostleship; Joseph's great rulership is ignored; and Ruth, Esther, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Amos do not appear in the current list (although it is hard to say flatly that they are never mentioned in the songs).⁴

Still other lists of characters by different scholars are given by Lovell, each scholar giving his particular choices. In the opinion of the present writer, the following characters and events, according to number, are the outstanding ones: Eschatological Events (at the end of time, Day of Judgment, etc.), 68; Jesus' Ministry, 45; Jesus' Passion (sufferings), 17; Jesus' Birth, 11; Jesus' Triumph at the end of time, 7; Jesus' Resurrection, 5; Moses and the Exodus Event, 5; The Jacob Story, 5; Mary and Martha, 5; Joshua and Jericho, 3; Peter on the Water, and Healing Beggar, 3; Nicodemus, 3; Daniel, 2; Lazarus, the Beggar, 2; Elijah and the Chariot, 2; Paul and Silas in Jail, 2; Jeremiah, 1.

Of special significance are the eschatological events. These are drawn from scenes of the Last Judgment and apocalyptic passages in the Gospels, New Testament epistles, such as I Thessalonians and I Peter, and especially from the book of Revelation. Hardly a scene in Revelation is omitted from the Spirituals viewed as a whole, and the singers participate in the scenes by way of anticipation. Scenes in Revelation include: The Giving of a New Name; The Four and Twenty Elders; The Sounding of the Trumpet; The Fall of Babylon; The Great Gittin' Up Morning; Jesus Riding as a Conquering Warrior; The Raining Down of Fire; The Marching In of the Saints; The Casting Down of Crowns before the Lamb; The Crowning of Christ as Lord of All; The Gathering of the Number that No Man Can Number; The Singing of the Song of Moses and The Lamb; and The Coming Down of the New Jerusalem from Heaven.

It should be noted that the number which indicates frequency of titles of the five hundred Spirituals indexed by Lovell may be misleading. The number 5 with Moses does not show that the one Spiritual, "Go Down Moses," is cited thirty times in Lovell's text, and is the most common of

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 258-262.

all the Spirituals. Again, the number 1 by Jeremiah refers to the Spiritual "Balm in Gilead" which appears eight times in the text.

In the "Tindley" and kindred Gospel Hymns, there are relatively few references to Biblical characters and events. What references that appear deal chiefly with Jesus: three instances of his teaching; two with his trial before Pilate; two with his death on the cross; and one each with his walking on water, his last supper, his prayer in Gethsemane, and his giving the Great Commission. Other characters, each of whom is referred to only once, are: Daniel and his deliverance; Elisha, and Namaan who bathed in the Jordan; Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet; Lazarus, who begged at Dives' table; the repentant thief on the cross; Pilate; and Paul and Silas in prison.

References to characters predominate over events in the Gospel Songs. As might be suspected, the characters correspond primarily with those in the Spirituals. However, importance ratings may be different; and additional characters and events may appear. The chief character is Jesus, with ninety-eight of the two hundred fifty songs dealing with him. God, the Father, ranks second, with twenty having Him as their subject. Among other favorite characters, Daniel appears at the top of the list. Proportionately, twice as many of the Gospel Songs, in comparison with the Spirituals, deal with the crucifixion and death, resurrection, and final triumph of Jesus. The second coming of Jesus is the concern of fourteen of the Gospel Songs.

Instances of the addition of new characters appear in the examples that follow. To be noted as additions are Rebecca, Isaiah, Solomon, Mark, Luke and Timothy. As raised in rank is Daniel; and Daniel, Paul and Silas appear frequently.

I thought when I entered that city,
 My loved ones knew me well,
 They showed me all thro' heaven,
 The scenes are too num'rous to tell.
 I saw Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
 Mark, Luke and Timothy;
 But I said, 'Let me bow down and worship
 The One who died for me.'⁵

He walked into the furnace door
 with Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego.
 He took the heat out of the flame
 I know today, I know today, He's jus' the same.

He was Daniel's stone arolling
 and Ezekiel's wheel aturning
 He was Moses' bush aburning,

⁵ *The New National Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1977).

Solomon's Rose of Sharon,
He was Jeremiah's mighty battle ax.⁶

I'm gonna live on forever,
Yes, I'm gonna live on forever,
Yes, I'm gonna live up in glory after while.
I'm going out sightseeing in Beulah,
March all around God's altar,
Walk and never tire,
Fly, Lord, and never falter.
Move on up a little higher,
Meet old man Daniel.
Move on up a little higher,
Meet the Hebrew children.
Move on up a little higher,
Meet Paul and Silas.
Move on up a little higher,
Meet my friends and kindred.
Move on up a little higher,
Meet my loving mother.
Move on up a little higher,
Meet that Lily of the Valley,
Feast with the Rose of Sharon.⁷

Well Isaiah said he saw him
with his dyed garments on,
coming from the land of Bozrah,
treading the wine press alone.

Daniel said he saw him as a chief
cornerstone,
I'm gonna wait right here for my
Jesus till he comes.

Rebecca said she saw him while
kneeling down in prayer,
He came down through the elements
and his glory filled the air,
With a rainbow on his shoulder
and the government in his hand,
I'm gonna wait right here on my
Jesus till he comes.⁸

As James Weldon Johnson states in the preface to *God's Trombones*, first published in 1927, "there was a stereotyped sermon which had no definite subject, and which was quite generally preached; it began with

⁶ *Songs of Zion* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), Song #193.

⁷ Langston Hughes & Arna Bontemps, eds., *The Book of Negro Folklore* (New York: Mead & Company, Inc., 1983), p. 324.

⁸ Anthony Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound*, Updated and Revised (New York: Limelight Editions, 1985), p. 78.

the creation, went on to the fall of man, rambled through the trials and tribulations of the Hebrew children, came down to the redemption by Christ, and ended with the Judgment Day.”⁹

In similar fashion, some Black preachers today, no matter what their text or subject, may include in a single sermon references to nearly all the characters and events in the Bible—from Genesis through Revelation.

The chart which follows presents in chronological order the Old Testament characters dealt with in the sermons, the number of sermons upon them, and the events associated with them:

Adam and Eve	2	Their fall in the Garden
Job (as a patriarch)	2	His suffering and faith
Abraham	2	His exercise of faith, and near offering of Isaac
(Often used as example)		
Isaac	2	His cleaning of wells and near sacrifice
Jacob	3	Story of his flight from and return to Canaan
Rachel	1	Her death
Joseph	5	Whole story of, and his teaching on Providence
Moses	21	Whole story from call, through Exodus, and viewing of Promised Land
Pharaoh	2	His defeat at Red Sea
Joshua	2	God’s command for his to “go on,” and his order to go into the “wood country”
Caleb	1	His asking for a mountain
Deborah	2	Her being a mother in Israel
Gideon	1	His conquering with a small band
David & Goliath	2	David’s defeat of Goliath (but with twenty sermons based upon the book of <i>Psalms</i> , presumably as written by David)
Elijah	3	His victory on Mt. Carmel (often cited as example)
Elisha	2	His ministry with Namaan

⁹ James Weldon Johnson, *God’s Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons In Verse* (New York: The Viking Press, 1927), pp. 1-2.

Namaan	1	His bathing in Jordan River
Jonah	1	His having been given a "second chance"
Amos	1	As being a prophet
Isaiah	1	His call—but with ten sermons based upon Isaiah
Hezekiah	1	His prayer in distress
Jeremiah	3	Conversations with God (but with several references to "Balm in Gilead")
Habakkuk	1	His exercise of "Watchtower Faith"
Ezekiel	0	But with four sermons on "Dry Bones"
Daniel, (Nebuchadnezzar and Hebrew children)	3	Deliverance and Faithfulness
Malachi	1	His appeal to tithing
Haggai	1	His appeal to rebuild Temple
Nehemiah	1	His rebuilding of walls of Jerusalem
Esther	1	Her being God's Woman

With respect to the New Testament, seventy of the sermons, apart from those on the parables, deal with aspects of Jesus' life and ministry. The events and number of sermons are as follows: Birth, 6; Temptation, 5; In Synagogue at Nazareth, 3; Entry into Jerusalem, 3; Upper Room and Last Supper, 6; Trial, 1; Crucifixion, 2; Resurrection, 4; Giving of Great Commission, 3; Final Triumph, 13.

Fourteen of the sermons deal with parables told by Jesus, and his other teachings. Among the parables, often viewed as actual happenings, the number of sermons on each are: The Good Samaritan, 6; The Prodigal Son, 2; Dives and Lazarus, 2; The Unjust Steward, 1; The Friend Knocking at Midnight, 1; The Rich Fool, 1; The Lost Sheep, 1; and the Lost Coin, 1.

Other sermons, having to do with Jesus' miracles, are based upon: Feeding of Multitude, 3; Healing the Man at the Pool, 2; Healing of Boy with Demon, 2; Healing of "Legion," 3; Giving Sight to Bartimaeus, 1; Healing of Woman with Issue of Blood, 1; and the Raising of Lazarus, 1.

In addition to Jesus, New Testament characters treated are: John the Baptist, preaching and baptizing in the wilderness, 2; Peter, and incidents related to him as a disciple, 5; Peter and John healing the beggar, 2; the three Marys at the tomb, 3; Martha, and her conversation with Jesus about Lazarus, 1; Paul, 1, but with fifty of the sermons based upon

his epistles; and John the Revelator, 6.

Harold A. Carter, in his book, *The Prayer Tradition of Black People*, quotes a statement of John Lovell, Jr. to the effect that prayer is another literary form in which the Spiritual specializes, citing several.¹⁰ The same comment may be made about the "Tindley" songs and the Gospel Songs, numerous examples of which could be given. And although Carter gives what he regards as a prayer that is typical in style and content, that prayer refers to no Biblical character or event. Of the fifteen prayers and excerpts from prayers presented in Carter's book, only four do contain references. The first of these refers to Elijah praying at a mountain, apparently Sinai; the second, to Daniel in the lion's den and the Hebrew children in the furnace; the third, to Job; and the fourth to Jesus' statement to Peter about the church and the gates of hell, and to Samson's setting the Philistine wheat fields afire.¹¹

Four other prayers, dating from 1785 to the present, contain references, but two of these are reconstructed by the Black writers James Baldwin¹² and Richard Wright. Two of the four prayers refer to Daniel and the Hebrew children only. Richard Wright's prayer contains references to Israel's Exodus out of Egypt, Dry Bones, the Hebrew children, the sun's standing still at Gibeon, the fall of the walls of Jericho, Jonah and the whale, Jesus' walking on water, Jesus' being raised from the dead, Jacob, and Saul—all with God's having done something. The fourth prayer, prayed by an old lady shortly after the Civil War, refers to Daniel and the Hebrew children, to "sinking" Peter, and to "weeping" Mary.¹³

Interestingly, the Angel Gabriel, so popular in Black culture, does not appear in relation to events with which he is associated!

BIBLICAL PLACES

Despite the fact that much should be said introductorily about Biblical places, I proceed directly to deal with them by way of tabulation.

In two hundred seventeen of the Spirituals eight places stand out. The names and number of references to them, in descending order, are: New Jerusalem, 68; Places in Jesus' ministry, 48; Heaven, 46; Jordan River, 24; Egypt, 19 directly, but numerous times indirectly; the seven churches to which John wrote, 8; Promised Land, 4; Patmos, 1.

¹⁰ Harold A. Carter, *The Prayer Tradition of Black People* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1976), p. 95.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-91.

¹² James Baldwin, *Go Tell It On The Mountain* (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., A Signet Book, 1954), p. 59.

¹³ Ellen Wright and Michel Fabre, eds., *Richard Wright Reader* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), pp. 297-298.

Although ninety percent of the "Tindley" and similar songs are oriented toward heaven, seven of them refer to an equal number of places, according to number, as follows: Heaven, 6; Jordan River, 2; Calvary, 2; Red Sea, Wilderness, Sea of Galilee, New Jerusalem, once each.

Eleven places, apart from the list in the song which follows, appear as the choices in the Gospel Songs. Names with number of references are: Heaven, 25, one tenth of all; Calvary, 8; Jordan River, 4; Beulah Land, 4; Zion, 3; Canaanland and New Jerusalem, 2 each; Bethany, Galilee, Promised Land, and Bethlehem, 1 each.

Winning the prize for the largest number of places in a single song is "City Called Jerusalem" which contains the following stanza:

There are many important cities
 where the great Apostles went,
 Rome, Athens, Thessalonica, Antioch and Corinth.
 The John in Revelation when called to come
 up higher,
 Wrote to Ephesus and Smyrna, Pergamos
 and Thyatira;
 Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea—a letter
 around,
 But none was like the city John saw
 coming down.¹⁴

Places referred to in or related to the sermons, many on the basis of Paul's letters, number forty-nine. According to name and number of references they are: Jerusalem, 28; Palestine, 12; Rome, 9; Babylon, in the Old Testament where it is an actual city, and in Revelation where it is a symbol of Rome, 8; Galatia, on basis of Paul's letter, 7; Galilee, 6; Jordan River, 6; Jericho, 5; Egypt, 5; Philippi, on basis of Paul's letter, 4; Wilderness near Jordan River, 3; Sinai Wilderness, 3; Bethlehem, New Jerusalem, Red Sea, Nazareth, Calvary, Ephesus (Paul's letter), and Patmos, 3 each; Sea of Galilee, Gadara, whole World, Ethiopia, Mt. Moriah, Heaven, and Gethsemane, 2 each; and once each for Bethany, Bethel, Beulah Land, Canaan, Colossae, Damascus, Dead Sea, Ebenezer, Golgotha, Israel, Jabbok, Macedonia, Mar's Hill, Mediterranean Sea, Mt. Ararat, Mt. Carmel, Mt. Sinai, Mount of Temptation, Ninevah, Persia, Samaria, Spain, and Syria.

Only four places are named in the prayers: an unspecified mountain, obviously Sinai; the jail in which Paul and Silas were placed; the fiery furnace, and Calvary.

In the lists of places remembered and celebrated in songs, sermons, and prayers, some ten places stand out prominently. It should be noted, however, that Biblical places play a very important part otherwise in

¹⁴ Anthony Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound*, p. 102.

Black worship: in the naming of churches, names range from Antioch to Zion, and are of places located primarily in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece.

Frequently actual places are allegorized or spiritualized as in the instances of Canaan, Promised Land, Egypt, Wilderness, and Jordan River. Some places may be symbolic or figurative locations, such as New Jerusalem, Beulah Land and even Heaven.

By way of contrast, it is interesting to note that Black Americans did not give to towns and settlements which they populated and governed Biblical names as white Americans so often did. Of some sixty-seven such towns and settlements, according to records in 1937-38, only three bore such names: Nicodemus, Illinois; Mt. Carmel, Mississippi; and Mizpah, New Jersey.¹⁵

Using Baltimore, Maryland, as an example, Olin P. Moyd notes that twice as many Black Baptist churches take their names from Biblical mountains as from Biblical saints. He attributes theological significance to the use of mountains for names, and cites Mount Sinai, Mount Carmel, Mount of Olives, and Mount Zion as representative.¹⁶

BIBLICAL IMAGES

By its very nature as an Oriental book, and as a book that treats of spiritual matters, the Bible is filled with images, symbols and figures of speech. God, being Spirit, can only be spoken of in figurative language. So it is also with respect to other entities in relation to God. The people Israel and the Church, the New Israel, are spoken of as sheep, sons or children of God, wife, and bride to name a few metaphors. Moreover, some entities such as death and heaven are treated symbolically. Still again, as noted under the discussion of *places*, some actual places such as Egypt, Canaan, Wilderness, Promised Land, and Jordan River are allegorized or spiritualized in worship.

In this paper the treatment of images is limited basically to *metaphors* that are applied to God and to Jesus Christ. The ones presented appear chiefly in poetic sections of the Old Testament, especially in psalms both in and outside the book of *Psalms*, and in the poetic sections of the prophetic books, plus others that appear in the New Testament with reference to Jesus Christ.

A catalog of some images of God in the Old Testament includes the following: Alpha and Omega, Ancient of Days, Creator, Cup, Deliverer,

¹⁵ Merl R. Eppse, *The Negro, Too, in American History* (Nashville: National Publication Company, 1943), pp. 540-541.

¹⁶ Olin P. Moyd, *Redemption in Black Theology* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1979), p. 194.

Dwelling Place, Father, Fire (consuming), Fortress, Help, Helper, Helper of the Fatherless, Holy One, Holy One of Israel, Husband, Judge, Keeper, King, King of Glory, Light, Lord of Hosts, Most High, Most High God, Portion (chosen), Rearguard, Redeemer, Refuge, Refuge In Day of Trouble, Rock, Rock of Refuge, Rock of Salvation, Salvation, Shade, Shade on Right Hand, Shepherd, Shield, Stay, Strength, Stronghold, Stronghold for the Oppressed, Sun, Tower (strong), and Up-holder of My Life.

Images of Jesus in the New Testament include those in the Messianic passages in the Old Testament which appear especially in the book of Isaiah, such as: Immanuel, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, and the Servant. To himself Jesus applied the figures of Bread, Door, Light, Resurrection, Life, Shepherd, Vine, Way, Truth.

In the Gospels, Epistles and Revelation images applied to Jesus by the first Christians include the following: Adam, Amen, Anointed, Cornerstone, Firstborn of the Dead, Guardian, Head, Image, King, King of Jews, King of Kings, Lamb, Lamb of God, Paschal Lamb, Lamp, Leader, Lily of the Valley, Lion of Tribe of Judah, Lord, Lord of Lords, Master, Name, Passover, Physician, Pioneer and Perfecter, Priest, Rabbi, Righteousness, Rock, Root of David, Rose of Sharon, Ruler of the Kings of Earth, Savior, Shepherd, Son of God, Son of Man, Son of David, Star, Stone, Sun, Water, Wisdom, Witness, and Word.

"God," in the Spirituals indexed by Lovell, appears as subject twenty times. The pronoun "He" is used four times. God is addressed as "Lord" eight times, and He is called a Man of War once. "Jesus" as subject is used thirty-two times; and he is referred to otherwise in the following terms: Lord, 62 times; King, 9; Lamb, 4; Savior, 3; "He," 3; Door, 2; Prince of Peace, 2; Rock, 2; Vine, Man of Calvary, Bread, once each.

In the "Tindley" and kindred Gospel Hymns, God is addressed as Father, and God most High, and is referred to as the Rock of Ages. Jesus is addressed as King seven times, as Savior seven times, and is called Lamb, Lily of the Valley, Son of God, Truth Divine, and Word of Life once each.

Most of the images in the Gospel Songs are applied to Jesus. God is addressed simply as God or Father, and is referred to under several images in a single song, such as in the instance that follows:

He's worthy! God's worthy! Almighty Creator!
Alpha, Omega, Beginning and the End!
Holy, holy Lord God Almighty
Which was and is and is to come.

Blessing and glory, wisdom and power,
God of my Rock, In Him will I trust!
My Strong Tower and my Refuge

Savior, Deliverer and soon-coming King.¹⁷

God is, further, called Rock, Sword, and Shield.

In a sampling of the Gospel Songs favorite images for Jesus are: Bread of Heaven; Cornerstone; Fortress; King; King of Kings Lamb; Lily of the Valley; Lion of Judah; Lord of All; Master; Rock of Ages; Solid Rock; Rose of Sharon; Savior; Shepherd; Shield; Son of God; Bright Morning Star; Sword; Way; Wonderful.

Biblical images that refer to Jesus in the sermons, thirty-five plus those in *Isaiah*, chapter 9, are, in alphabetical order: All sufficient One; Alpha and Omega; Author and Perfecter; The Christ; King; Heavenly King; King of Kings; King of Zion; Lamb; Light; Lily of the Valley; Lion of Judah; Logos; Lord; Lord Jesus; Lord of Life; Lord of Lords; Passover; Priest; Prince of Peace; Redeemer; Resurrection and Life; Rock in a Weary Land; Rose of Sharon; Savior; Shelter in a Time of Storm; Shepherd; Son of God; Star; Stay; Suffering Servant; Vine; Word; and Wonderful.

Especially in the Gospel Songs and sermons, images based upon modern religious experiences are employed to augment those found in the Bible. Indicative of some used in a sermon are Bread in a Starving Land, Water in Dry Places, Integrative Personality, Cosmic Mind, Unique Idea, and Liberator—for Jesus; and for God: All-Powerful and Knowing, Merciful, Patient Ultimate Reality; Ground of Being; All-Sufficient One; Enabler; Provider, Sustainer; and Righteous-Victorious One.¹⁸

Images in the prayers consist of Rock in a Weary Land, Shelter in a Storm, Holy Father, Father Almighty, Lamp, and Light, for God. For Jesus they are King, Master, Lamb, and Redeemer.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this paper it was stated that the subject is so vast that several persons, working over an extended period of time, might give attention to it. Such an assertion receives support in noting that only five hundred fifty Spirituals of a total of more than six thousand that are extant were dealt with, and that chiefly by title. Further, and still with reference only to songs, standard hymns such as those by Watts and the Wesleys, tabernacle and revival hymns, etc., were not considered; yet these abound with references to Biblical characters, events, places and images. Further still, there remain to be investigated those elements of worship additional to songs, sermons and prayers such as testimonies, Scripture readings, responsive readings, calls to worship, and so on.

Indeed, "the fields are ripe unto harvest," and the prospects are abundant.

¹⁷ *New Inspirational Soul* (Newbury Park, Ca.: Lexicon Music, Inc., 1984), p. 3.

¹⁸ Joseph A. Johnson, Jr., *The Soul of the Black Preacher* (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1971), pp. 164-165.