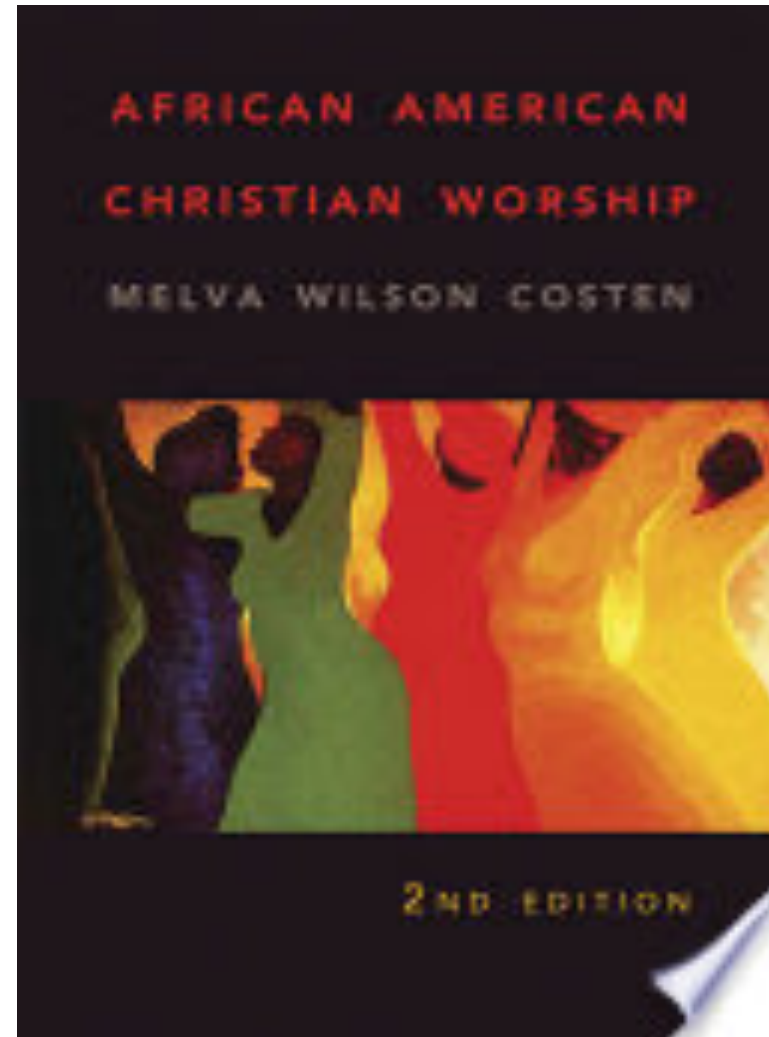
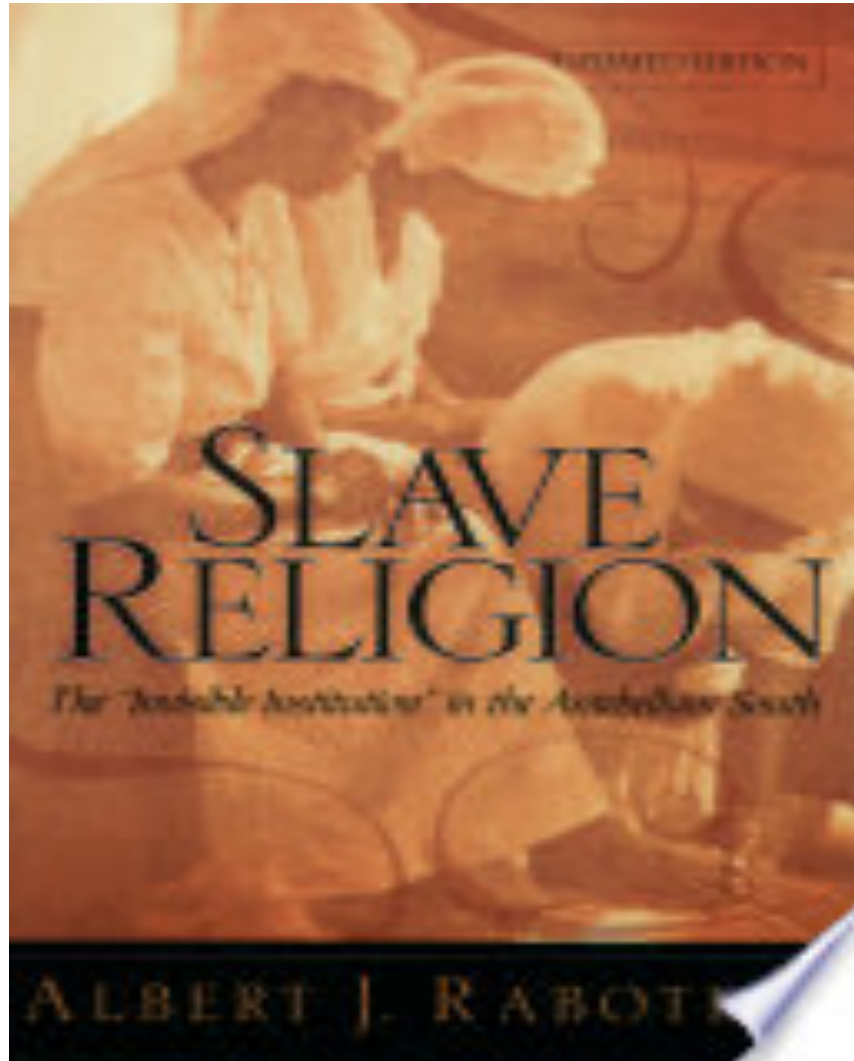


African Heritage Bible Study “The Invisible Institution”



The Source for Tonight's Lesson



Let's Begin with Defining Terms

- ▶ *Invisible*-unable to be seen; not visible to the eye
- ▶ *Institution*-organization founded for a religious, educational, social, or similar purpose.
- ▶ .



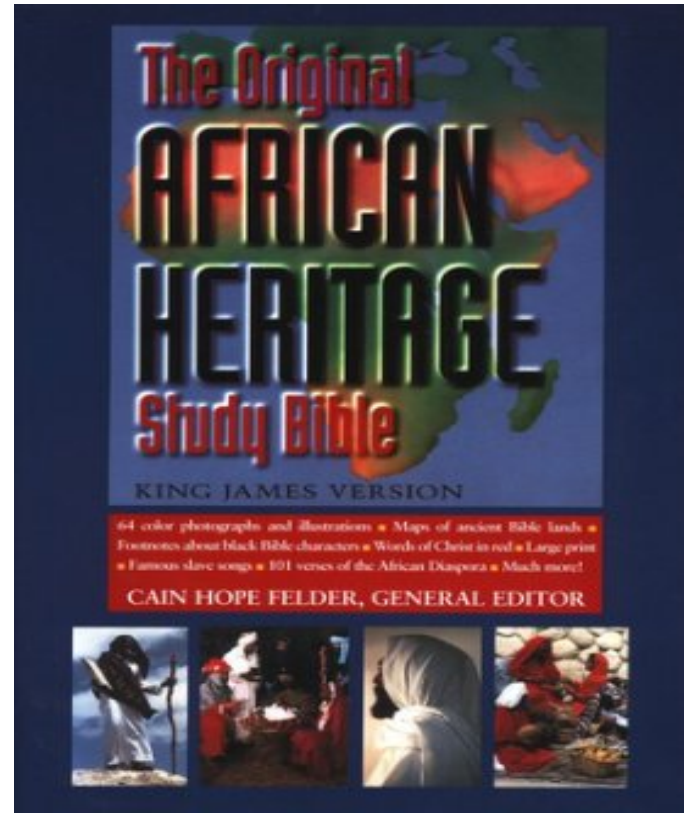
- ▶ Slaves developed a worship life of their own in secret places

Biblical Basis for Tonight's is Psalm 91:1-2

▶ Psalm 91:1-2 King James Version (KJV)

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.



The Elements of Worship in the “Invisible Institution”

- ▶ Call To Worship
- ▶ Praying (Prayer)
 - ▶ Singing
 - ▶ Preaching





Call To Worship Psalms 24:9 & 10

- ▶ Since worship was to take place in secrecy, worship was “Called” or announced long before the community assembled.
- ▶ The time and place was confirmed in song as the slaves went about their work.
- ▶ Slave songs (Spirituals) such as “Steal Away”, “Get You Ready There’s A Meeting Here Tonight” and “Over My Head” are some of the songs that served as a “Call To Worship”.

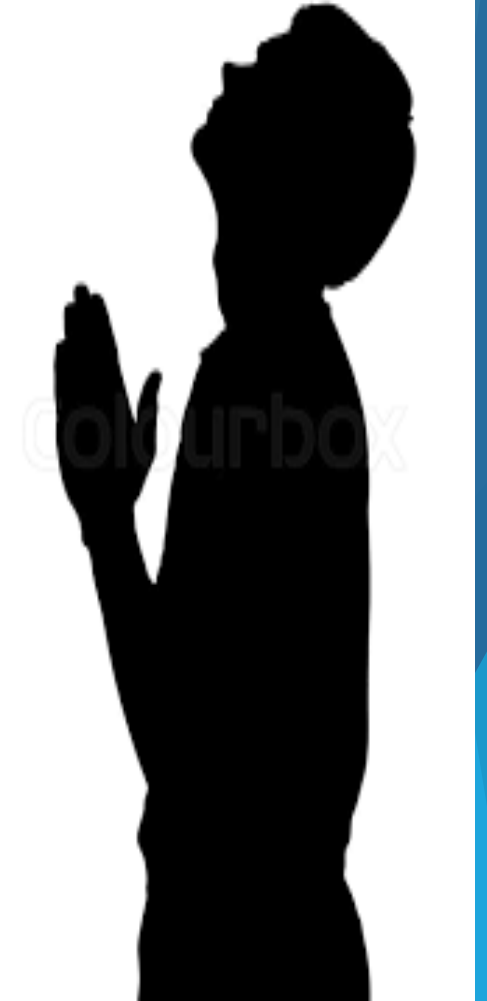


Praying (Prayer) Matthew 21:13

Is the most important way to remain in communication with the Almighty God.

Exhausted from their daily labor, worshiper in the secret environment of the invisible institution often found physical and mental relief in prayer.

Rather than passively listen, they prayed with the prayer leader using responses such as “Amen”, “Thank you Jesus”, or “Yes Lord”.





Singing Psalm 98:1

Singing provides a divine channel through which God speaks and believers respond.

Singing has a mysterious power that frees the human spirit so that the Spirit of God can penetrate and in the words of James Cone, it also intensify the power of the Holy Spirit 's presence with the people.

Singing provided another way to fully engage their total being in worship.





Preaching Acts 9:20

- ▶ The Word of God heard and experienced in a free worshiping environment was the foundation for the secret meeting of the Invisible Institution.
- ▶ The preacher, divinely inspired, called by God, and affirmed by the community, to stand in the divine place (improvised pulpit) and deliver the Word.
- ▶ A prophetic voice could be heard each time a slave preacher would assert that “God tol me” that freedom was right down the road;we’s got to be patient.
- ▶ The prophetic voice was calling the community to keep the faith, they encouraged believers to look with faith to deliverance from their bondage.



Psalm 91

He that dwelleth in the *secret place* of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

- ▶ Most High-is “El Elyon” meaning the possessor of all the earth.
- ▶ Almighty-is “El Shaddia” means all powerful.
- ▶ Lord-is “Adonai” derived from “Jehovah meaning promise.
- ▶ God-which is Elohim meaning the plural, the full Godhead.

If you put it all together our ancestors were worshiping God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, demonstrating they knew who really possess and control everything and it was not the their masters or oppressor; they know about the true power of the Almighty through the transcendent of God during their worship in the Invisible Institution

Howard Thurman's Greatest Legacy



- ▶ The Inclusive Community confirms Thurman understood God's will for human relationships.
- ▶ As it has been said: Sunday morning is the most segregate hour in American life.
- ▶ Thurman's model removed all barriers thus resulting in inclusive community

Thurman's Greatest Legacy



- ▶ **The Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples is an interfaith, interracial, intercultural community of seekers dedicated to personal empowerment and social transformation through an ever deepening relationship with the Spirit of God in All Life.**