

## **Lesson Sixteen**

### **THE INTERPRETER'S HOUSE #8 - The Man's Dream**

We are assembled again to continue our study of the Book *Pilgrim's Progress* which sets forth the way a person is saved. It also describes how a person becomes a Christian and how the Lord leads him from a state of bondage into the Celestial City which is heaven. The book was written by John Bunyan at a time when he was in prison for preaching the gospel. For the past 6 or 7 weeks we have been in the part of the book that deals with the Interpreter's House, which is the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit. There are several rooms in this house, and we have been going from room to room learning some Biblical lessons which will help a Christian as he continues day by day in sojourning here in this life until he arrives safely at home in the Celestial City which is heaven.

In the first room we entered into we found a picture on the wall of a man. This represented the character of a true minister of God, so that a new Christian could know who was a true minister by his very character and deeds.

In the second room we found a dusty parlor, and there we learned about the relationship between the law and the gospel. A Christian needs to know the difference between the law and the gospel and how each functions in our very salvation. We do not look to the law for salvation, but it is the law which brings us to an awareness in our conscience that we are lost and then we flee to the gospel.

In the third room we found two young children who were represented by the names Passion and Patience. They were representative of two types of people, one the man of this world who wanted everything now, and then the other one, the man of the next world who is willing to wait for his eternal reward.

The next room that we went into we found a very unusual scene where there was a fire that was burning on a wall. There was a man in this room that was pouring water upon the fire, but the fire was growing hotter and hotter. This was a great mystery until we went on the other side of the wall where we found an individual pouring oil at the base of the wall. This represented the sustaining work of the Holy Spirit. The devil would try to put out our faith, but as the Holy Spirit ministers on our behalf, we are enabled to look more and more unto the Lord.

In the next room there was a viranda where we could look out to see a very stately palace and a valiant man who was determined he was going to enter that palace. This palace represented heaven. We found out there were some obstacles. There were some guards and some difficulties in the way, but the man was determined that he would have heaven and Christ, and he set himself to achieve that particular task. This represented the cost of a godly life. Here we learned that it costs something to be a Christian.

Then in the last setting, we studied about a very depressing and sobering scene in the next room, and that was the Man in the Iron Cage. We found that this represented the misery of apostasy. This man was a person who had once professed faith in Christ and then had gone back against that profession. We carefully emphasized last week, that this was a man who had "professed" faith, not one who had actually "possessed" Christ. This was one who had once professed faith in Christ and then gone back and denied the blood of Christ, and the misery that came from that experience.

Now tonight we will go into the last room in the Interpreter's house. If you have your book, follow along with me and go to that particular section that we will read to you. We now begin with this particular statement.

***So he took Christian by the hand again, and led him into a chamber, where there was one rising out of bed; and as he put on his raiment, he shook and trembled.***

***Then said Christian, Why doth this man thus tremble?***

***The Interpreter then bid him tell to Christian the reason of his so doing.***

***So he began, and said, This night, as I was in my sleep, I dreamed, and behold the heavens grew exceeding black: also it thundered and lightened in most fearful wise, that it put me into an agony. So I looked up in my dream, and saw the clouds rack at an unusual rate; upon which I heard a great sound of a trumpet, and saw also a man sitting upon a cloud, attended with the thousands of heaven: they were all in flaming fire, also the heavens were on a burning flame. I heard then a voice saying, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment;" and with that the rocks rent, the graves opened, and the dead that were therein came forth. Some of them were exceeding glad, and looked upward; and some sought to hide themselves under the***

**mountains: then I saw the man that sat upon the cloud open the book, and bid the world draw near. Yet there was, by reason of a fierce flame that issued out and came from before him, a convenient distance betwixt him and them, as betwixt the judge and the prisoners at the bar. I heard it also proclaimed to them that attended on the man that sat on the cloud, "Gather together the tares, the chaff, and stubble, and cast them into the burning lake;" and with that the bottomless pit opened, just whereabout I stood, out of the mouth of which there came, in an abundant manner, smoke and coals of fire, with hideous noises. It was also said to the same persons, "Gather my wheat into the garner. And with that I saw many caught up and carried away into the clouds, but I was left behind. I also sought to hide myself, but I could not, for the Man that sat upon the cloud still kept his eye upon me: my sins also came into my mind, and my conscience did accuse me on every side. Upon this I awoke from my sleep.**

**Chr. But what was it that made you so afraid of this sight?**

**Man: Why, I thought that the day of judgment was come, and that I was not ready for it: but this frightened me most, that the angels gathered up several, and left me behind; also the pit of hell opened her mouth just where I stood: my conscience too afflicted me; and as I thought, the Judge had always his eye upon me, showing indignation in his countenance.**

**Then said the Interpreter to Christian, Hast thou considered all these things?**

**Chr. Yes, and they put me in hope and fear.**

**Inter. Well, keep all things so in thy mind, that they may be as a goad in thy sides, to prick thee forward in the way thou must go. Then Christian began to gird up his loins, and to address himself to his journey. Then said the Interpreter, The Comforter be always with thee, good Christian, to guide thee in the way that leads to the city.**

**So Christian went on his way, saying,  
"Here I have seen things rare and profitable,  
Things pleasant, dreadful, things to make me stable  
In what I have begun to take in hand;  
Then let me think on them, and understand  
Wherefore they showed me were, and let me be  
Thankful, O good Interpreter, to thee."**

Now here we have the final scene which is portrayed by a man who had a dream, and he

dreams about judgment. Also, it is a man who is not prepared for judgment and has no assurance of his salvation. He is greatly frightful of the final judgment because in his dream he saw some that were departing into the final judgment of fire, and some that were entering the Celestial City. He also saw that before this was taking place, some were caught up to be with the Lord in the air, and he was left behind. This caused a great fear in his heart. Here is a man who was afraid to appear before the final judgment because he did not feel that he was prepared to stand before God. That is what the final scene brings before the Christian, the sobering scene of the final judgment.

I want to read to you several verses of Scripture that Bunyan uses in describing this scene of the final judgment. There are seven lessons that are learned here in this Interpreter's House which stands for the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the life of a Christian.

I want us to open your Bibles and let's look at several verses dealing with the theme of the final day of judgment when every person must give an account of himself before God. As we did in our last setting, we will not take a great deal of time in trying to expound these Scriptures, but will use them as a basis for Bunyan's description of the judgment scene. Turn to Acts 17:30-31 where the Apostle Paul declares these words in his sermon on Mars Hill: ***"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead."*** So according to the Apostle Paul, there will be a day of judgment. The Judge will be Jesus Christ, and the basis of His judgment will be righteousness, and the world will be assured that there is going to be a judgment because Christ has risen from the dead.

Now look in John chapter 5:25-29: Jesus said, "***Verily, verily,*** (which means truly, truly), ***I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man."*** These verses 25 through 27 have reference to the spiritual resurrection of an individual's soul in the new birth. But now on the basis of this, in verses 28 and 29, the Apostle John says, "***Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear***

***his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*** Here again is another basis for the belief that with the resurrection there is going to come judgment.

***"It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment."***

So the resurrection leads to judgment.

Now go to I Corinthians 15:51-53 - ***"Behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment of the twinkling of an eye at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality."*** That is, when the trump of God sounds, those who have died in Christ shall be raised and be given an incorruptible body. Those who are alive in Christ shall have their bodies changed and put on with immortality. That is, they shall never die. So here is another reference to the resurrection, the trump of God shall sound, the dead shall be raised and brought before God in judgment.

Turn to II Thessalonians 1:7-11. ***"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power."***

Now go to the Book of Jude right before the Book of Revelation and look at verses 14 and 15. ***"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints."*** (Notice it doesn't say "ten thousand," but it is "ten thousands" which is a number that is frequently used in the Grecian language as a term that cannot be numbered.) ***"To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners***

***have spoken against him.***" Here we find another judgment scene.

Now turn to the Revelation 20:11-15. This is one of the most sobering accounts in the Bible with reference to judgment. ***"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."***

We have given you several verses of Scripture which set forth the final judgment. It is a sobering scene that should cause us to reflect seriously upon our relationship to our Lord Himself. That is to see that our only hope of standing before the all-searching eye of God is to stand there complete in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We dare not have any hope of standing before God in our own merits and righteousness other than what Jesus Christ has done on our behalf upon the cross of Calvary. The all-wise, all-seeing God shall see through that thin film of self-righteousness which we are so prone to put forth. There is a final day of judgment coming. Even though the Christian will not encounter the wrath of God in that judgment, it should have a sobering effect upon us, because of the very fact of our fear and reverence of a righteous and holy God. That is, just because we are given a hope in Jesus Christ, and we have an assurance in that hope, a peace and joy that comes from it, it should not cause us to become casual and lax in our relationship to the Lord. We not only need a prod of a hope, but we also need to be prodded with the fact that God is a consuming fire and these two things balance out our relationship so as to guide and direct us through this path of life. After Christian has viewed these two last very sobering scenes, The Holy Spirit poses a question to Christian. He asks Christian if he has understood all the things which he has been taught here in the House of the Interpreter. And Christian says, "Yes, I understand them."

I want you to note very carefully the purpose and the effect of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian. It should do two things for you. Number 1 - Christian says, "***They put me in hope and***

**If you will search some references in the Bible on the word "Hope" you will find it means a "sure fast assurance," it is just not a "hope so" thing.**

***fear.***" What you have learned through the ministry of the Holy Spirit should give you a sure fast hope of your acceptance with God. One of the works of the Holy Spirit is to reveal the work of Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners so that you can believe in the promise and power of God to perform that promise. These promises are set forth, like the "Oil" that was being poured on the fire. This shows how God begins a good work in the hearts of His people, and He continues that good work. It does not fall or falter, but God brings His people safely all the way through. There is assurance and hope in understanding this. When the Bible speaks of hope, it is not the way we use hope today. Somebody says, "Are you getting along alright?" We reply, "Well, I hope so." That implies that I just don't know whether I am or not. That is not the Biblical hope. If you will search some references in the Bible on the word "Hope" you will find it means a sure fast assurance, it is just not a "hope so" thing. So our salvation is not just "Well I hope I am going to heaven in the sense that I really don't know and really can't be sure about it, but I hope I am." We have promises that are given in God's Word, and as we lay hold on those promises like Abraham, there is an assurance given by the Holy Spirit to that individual.

That is one thing you ought to learn from the ministry of the Holy Spirit, but there is another emotion or reaction that should take place within us in what the Holy Spirit teaches us. And that is a reverent respect or fear of God. God is not Someone that we can just take or leave, and we do not just flip God with a thumb of the nose. God is a righteous and holy God, and we just don't treat Him however we think would be best and think we are going to get by with it. No, in the heart of a true Christian there should be a reverent fear and respect for God and His right to rule our lives. You see, when you have these two things, (1) a sure fast hope of acceptance with God, and (2) a reverent fear of God and who He is, this acts as a goad to keep you out of apostasy, backsliding, coldness and indifference. If you would examine your heart when you find yourself growing cold in the things of the Lord, you may find that it is because you have grown to not expect that God has the right to do as He pleases in your life. That is, you become indifferent about the things of God and say, "I

will run my life the way I want to." That reveals a lack of fear or respect of God. But when that respect of God comes and it is there, we will not look within ourselves as to what we can do, but it leads us to look to the promise of God's power to work in us a willingness to do His very will here on earth.

So there is a twofold ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation to what He would teach us. Again, it is a sure fast hope of your acceptance with God and a reverent fear which leads us to lay hold upon the promise which is before us. If I am out in the woods and there is a bear or lion that runs out of the bushes at me causing fear. I don't know about the rest of you, but if one of those things came out of the woods, I would run to the nearest place of safety. When we see that our God is a consuming fire and He has a right to demand out of us as He pleases in His will as revealed in the Bible, then that should give us a fear and respect for God, and cause us not to look within and try to perform our duty on our own, but to run to the promises which are in the gospel.

So you see these two are in harmony – an indwelling hope which we have and also a reverent fear. You say, "Pastor, is this Scriptural? Is it proper to have a hope and a fear simultaneously, how can you do that?" Alright, lets look in I Peter 1:13-17, and see an example of how a Christian can have an assurance and hope, and at the same time have a reverent respect or fear of God which helps to prevent him from a cold backslidden condition. Starting with verse 13 - ***"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ,"*** The revelation of Christ in this text refers to His second coming, and grace shall be given us to be taken into our state of glory or heaven. Notice, we are to gird up our loins until that time comes, and we are to have a hope in the grace which has not only been given us, is being given us, and shall be given us when the Lord returns. Now in the meantime, ***"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:"*** That is back when you were in a state of darkness and bondage, not living as you did then, ***"But as He who has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."***



Lets look at that text. Back up in verse 13 Peter says because of the hope we have in the gospel, gird up the loins of our minds, gird them up, strengthen them, and put your hope in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Until the Lord returns to take us home, we are to live here passing the time of our sojourning with that hope. That is, we are pilgrims here on this earth, in fear, or in respect of God. So here is a hope and a fear at the same time within the Christian's bosom.

Look over in I Peter chapter 3 and verse 15 - ***"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."*** Do you see that? If someone comes to you today and says, "What right do you have to believe that God will allow you to enter into His heaven? What basis do you have in believing that God has saved you and that you can go to heaven?" Now Peter says to be ready to give a reason for that hope you have in you, but do it with a humble attitude of meekness and fear. So there is a reverent respect for God, and thereby when we give a reason for the hope that we have in Jesus Christ, it is not a proud boasting in self and in our abilities to perform all the duties that God has given us, but in meekness, in humility and a reverent respect for the power of God we share as to why we have a hope to be received by God.

Now go to II Corinthians 5:8- - If anybody had a reason to have assurance that he was a Christian, it would be the Apostle Paul. Yet, let us see how he conducted himself in the light of his hope until the time that he was taken to heaven. Here is his confidence and hope - ***"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."*** There was Paul's hope. He says, I am confident of this. ***"Wherefore we labour,"*** see, he is not just sitting down in a chair saying there is nothing more for me to do, but he says, on the basis of my hope, I labor here in my sojourning; ***"that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."*** Paul had a confidence that he was going to be accepted before the judgment seat of Christ, and yet he said "I labor in my sojourning here." Why does he do this? Because of his

knowledge of the "terror" of the Lord. God is a consuming fire and Paul doesn't take that lightly, so on the basis of the character of God, he says, "we persuade men." That is, we endeavor to persuade others to come with us on this journey so that when we stand before God, we may as a good servant give an account of our actions, and that we may be rewarded accordingly with reward or with loss. So that there is within the bosoms of true Christians who have experienced a ministering work of the Holy Spirit enlightening them in the things of God, a sure fast hope and a reverent fear. I hope that is within your bosom. I hope that you have an assurance that you have been made acceptable before God, and I hope also at the same time that God has implanted in your heart with that assurance a reverent respect for the things of God so as both of these dual goads serve to prick your conscience on to a laboring for Him while we sojourn here in this life.

Christian then leaves the House of the Interpreter setting forth what he has learned. I want to read it to you again. The Christian then goes on his way now leaving the House of the Interpreter. The Comforter is to go with the Christian to guide him in the way that leads to the City, as Jesus said, **"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.**" (John 14:16) So here is what the Christian says,

***"Here I have seen things rare and profitable."***

Have you ever entered into someone's presence and just set there and bathe in what you were gleaned from their conversation, or have you ever gone to an art gallery if you appreciate art, and just soak in all of the paintings? That is what this man feels like here. He said, **"I have seen things rare and profitable."** In other words, he is saying, "I didn't learn these in the world or from the philosophies of men, but I highly value what the Holy Spirit has taught me here in the House of the Interpreter." Now, why does he say this? Because he has a long road to travel yet, and the things he has learned are going to be invaluable in his Christian experience. **"Here I have seen things rare and profitable, things pleasant, dreadful,"** -- I have seen some pleasant things in the Holy Spirit's ministry to me, and I have seen some dreadful things. He is describing both a hope and fear which is counter balanced, and which keeps a person in the hope of salvation and a fear of God acting as goads to keep him on the strait and narrow path. Do you see the balance

that Bunyan always has in his writings and in his possession at all times? **"Things to make me stable."** Oh, how we need stable Christians today! How we need Christians who will walk the way with patience. When I was in high school, I ran the mile and the one-half mile in track. I remember one of the first lessons I learned when I went out for track. The coaches didn't tell you anything when you went out to train, and I didn't know how long a mile was. I was running against some juniors and seniors that year, and when the gun went off, I took off and made it around the first quarter of a mile. When I looked back at all the other runners, I said, "look at all of these fellows who have been running for two or three years, and I am almost a full quarter of a mile ahead, and they are just trotting back there." I thought this was sure easy, but it didn't take me but about another lap to find out the others had more sense than I did. They were patient. They knew they had to pace themselves, and they didn't come out of the starting gate like a horse coming out of the gate in his race. No, they came out and ran with patience the race that was set before them. (See Hebrews 12:1). I would far rather see a new convert to Christ plot along day in and day out in the things of the Lord, exhibiting the true character of a Christian, instead of being like so many today who start out like a ball of fire, and end up like a block of ice six months later. We need stable Christians day in and day out, so that when we meet them we know they can be depended upon. We know they have failures and shortcomings, but they are going forward, stumbling, falling, making mistakes, and committing acts of sin and disobedience, but yet they are getting up and going on, not like those to whom the Apostle Paul asked, **"You did run well, what did hinder you."** (See Galatians 5:7). He is asking, "you started off well, but now you are not even interested in the things of the Lord, what happened to you?" May God enable us to say like the Christian would say, "I have learned **things to make me stable.**" A stable Christian **"in what I have begun to take in hand, Then let me think on them, and understand."** He didn't understand it all to perfection, and neither do you. What you learn in the Bible and what you learn tonight, ask God to seal these things to your heart and mind, and help you to further understand them. We never perfectly grasp the whole truth of God. We are always learning, so he would say to the Interpreter, "What I have learned then you help me to understand them more fully." **"Wherefore they showed me were, and let me be thankful, O good Interpreter, to thee."** All that I have learned here, I owe it all to the Holy Spirit in revealing the truth of God to me."

I hope that as we close our study in the Interpreter's House, we also will leave the building this evening with a hope in the gospel, and yet a reverent fear of God that drives us to embrace the promises in the gospel. When those two are working hand in hand, there we have a harmony, there we have coordination and a coming together that will keep us on the path and keep us off the false ways. When we have a balanced ministry of the Holy Spirit goading us on to the things that lie ahead of us, it will keep us from turning and going back into the world.

May we look to Him in prayer this evening.

Father, I do pray that this time we have spent here in the Interpreter's House may be profitable. Now Father, we have spent seven to eight weeks, almost two months of our lives studying just this portion of this book. Father, I recognize that many would be desirous of going faster, speeding on through the book, and seeing what lies ahead of the many exciting adventures, but Father, we also recognize that there are pitfalls in this life, and until we are prepared for the battle, we will not stand in the battle. So I would pray that we as Christians here tonight that in our activities and service of the Lord we might not neglect the ministry of the Holy Spirit in imparting knowledge through the teaching of the Word of God. And that we might be instructed in the things of God. We would pray for those young Christians who have perhaps neglected the study of the Bible and as a result have fallen into sin, have fallen into the ditch, the clutches of Satan and are now experiencing heartache and agony because they thought they could run the race without You, and yet they overlooked the power of their adversary. So we pray that this might enable us to **"put on the whole armor of God, and to run with patience the race that is set before us."** (Ephesians 6:11). Encourage and strengthen those who are weak in faith. Give them a greater vision of the promises that are in the gospel. Those that are growing lax in the faith and are becoming indifferent toward the things of the Bible, may You place in them a renewed fear of Thee, and a respect for Thee that they might keep to the strait and narrow path which is faith and obedience in the gospel. Bless these requests tonight, seal them to our hearts, for we ask them in the name of Jesus, Amen.