

Journey to the Celestial City

A Study of Pilgrim's Progress



Christian looks for a way of escape outside the City of Destruction.

Why study it?

1. It is thoroughly Scriptural

“Why this man is a living Bible! Prick him anywhere; and you will find that his blood is Bibrine, the very essence of the Bible flows through him. He cannot speak without quoting a text, for his soul is full of the Word of God” (Spurgeon)

2. It is profoundly practical

It sets forth practical Christianity, the experiential realities of the true Christian, like his call, his _____, his walk, the opposition he faces, and the spiritual graces from this world to that which is to come

Who wrote it?

- ❖ John Bunyan was born in 1628 to poor parents. He received very little formal schooling
- ❖ He was a rough and thoughtless sinner, giving to swearing, Sabbath breaking and many other sins.
- ❖ He began to serve in the army while only 17 years old.
- ❖ At 20, he married a young woman, Mary, poor like himself, but from a godly home.
- ❖ He began to experience conviction of sin, was helped by Pastor John Gifford, and eventually brought to peace through the blood of the cross.
- ❖ He became a preacher. However, the Act of Uniformity made it illegal to hold religious gatherings outside of the Church of England. He spent 12 years in prison.
- ❖ He died on August 31, 1688

How to Read it?

1. Prayerfully
2. Probingly
3. Parabolically

Text to Ponder: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Heb. 11:13

The dream introduced

- ❖ A wilderness world
- ❖ A dismal den
- ❖ A doctrinal dream



The distress of the pilgrim

- ❖ The man with a burden
 1. The clothing he is wearing: _____
 2. The direction he is facing: _____
 3. The book he is reading: _____
 4. The burden that he is bearing: _____
 5. The fear he has: _____
- ❖ The concern for his family: the impending judgment coming on their city
- ❖ Their opposition to him: They don't understand him, minimize his concern, mock and ignore him



The compassion of Evangelist

Evangelist comes to meet this man in his troubled condition. Bunyan has an earnest and faithful minister of the gospel and pastor of souls in mind. He is a serious man, and gives a solemn word: "Flee the wrath to come!" Christian is pointed to the narrow gate, but Christian does not see it. Instead he tells him to keep his eye on "shining light." By this he means _____ . Then we see Christian beginning to run.



Pursued by Obstinate and Pliable

Christian has given up the world, but the world has not given up Christian. Two eager citizens of the city of destruction set out intending to bring Christian back, by force is necessary. "Together with Christian they constitute the representatives of most of the hearers of the gospel, and of the manner in which they receive it; they are either hardened against it (Obstinate), or are somewhat softened and disposed to set out (Pliable), or they become real Christians."

The Slough of Despond

The Slough of Despond is that place set before the narrow gate where pilgrims are assaulted by their own internal corruption and pollution. The dirt and scum that has attached itself to our hearts and minds is agitated by a guilty conscience and the enemy of our souls. The purpose of this swamp is to discourage the pilgrim from going forward... by reminding him that he is so vile, and trying to persuade him that it is too humiliating and futile to go on. It is meant to cause despair and shake our hope that something good awaits him.

- ❖ Pliable is offended
- ❖ Christian struggles on
- ❖ Help reaches out his hand.



Discussion

1. Which passages might Christian have been reading that gave him a sense of sin? William Mason wrote: "No soul was ever in earnest for salvation, till there was a cry in his heart to be saved from damnation." Do you agree? Must this be experienced to the same degree as Christian?
2. In what ways did Christian's family treat him? Why did they treat him this way? How are we to treat those who mistreat us? Can you think of Scripture texts that help us here?
3. What seems to be Evangelist's main desire when speaking to Christian?
4. What does the wicket or narrow gate represent? Read Matthew 7:13-14
5. When Christian was fleeing from the city of destruction, why was he running and why did he put his fingers in his ears? Who in the Old Testament fled from a city that was about to be destroyed (Gen. 19)? What are the differences?
6. Read Luke 14:25-33. How does Christian illustrate the teaching of this text?
7. Who meets Christian at the Slough of Despond? Who does he represent?