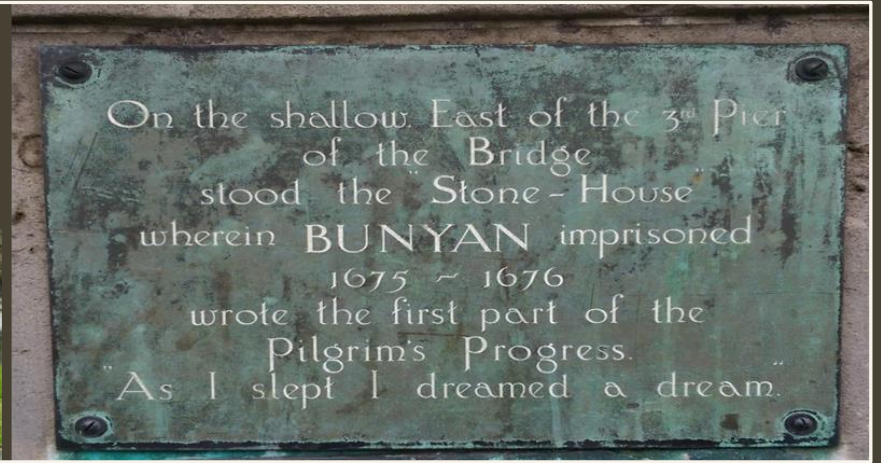
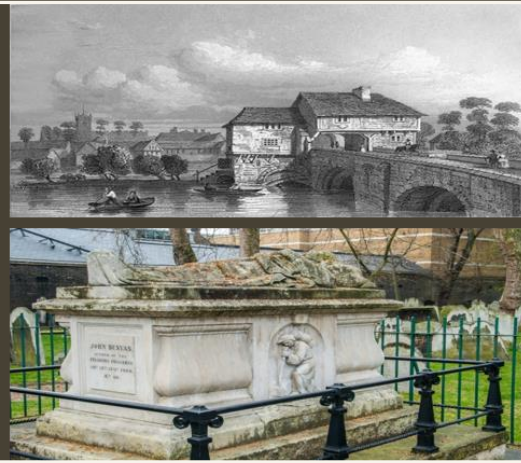
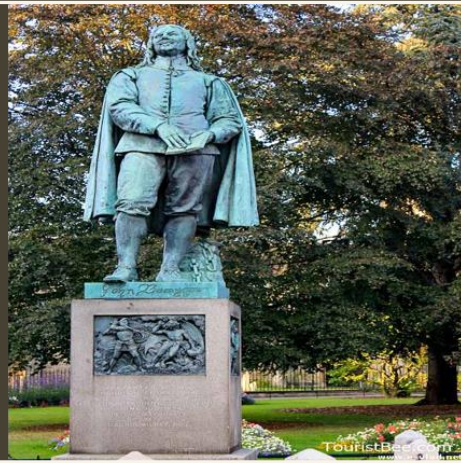


“WE MUST GO THROUGH MANY HARDSHIPS TO ENTER THE  
KINGDOM OF GOD.”  
ACTS 14:22



# JOHN BUNYAN'S *THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*

CHRIST BIBLE CHURCH



# *THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away, betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will increase, the love of many will grow cold. **But the one who endures to the end will be saved.**

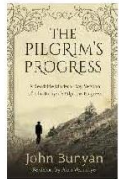
Matthew 24:9-13



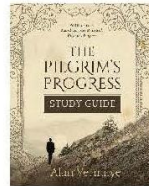


# CHRISTIAN & HOPEFUL ENCOUNTER THE SNARE OF THE FLATTERER, ATHEIST, & IGNORANCE, AGAIN

## Study of *The Pilgrim's Progress* Spring 2024



[The Pilgrim's Progress—A Readable Modern-Day Version of John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress — Revision by Alan Vermilye](#)  
[The Pilgrim's Progress — Study Guide](#)



Session	Date	Pages		Chapter
		Pilgrim's Progress	Study Guide	
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2	February 11	34-55	32-45	2
3	February 18	56-68	46-54	3
4	February 25	69-83	55-63	4
5	March 3	84-97	64-70	5
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7	March 17	125-136	81-85	7
8	March 24	137-152	86-93	8
	March 31	<b>No Class—Easter Sunday</b>		
9	April 7	153-163	94-99	9
10	April 14	164-181	100-108	10
11	April 21	182-214	109-122	11
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Download [Pilgrim's Progress Scripture Reference Guide](#)  
Download [The Pilgrim's Progress Study Guide Answer-Guide](#)



# FOUR SCENES

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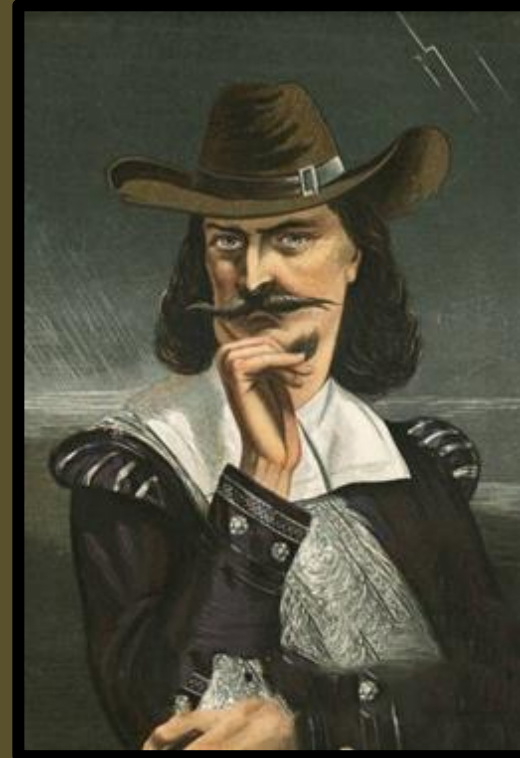
Fork in the  
Path



Caught in  
Flatterer's Net



Atheist



Ignorance





From the top of the hill called Clear the shepherds gave Christian and Hopeful a glimpse of the Celestial City through their telescope.


Knowledge gave them a map.

Experience warned against Flatterer.

Watchful warned against sleeping on the Enchanted Ground.

Sincere blessed them for their journey.



A photograph of a dirt path winding through a forest during autumn. The trees are covered in vibrant yellow and orange leaves, with some green still visible. The path leads into the distance, flanked by tall, thin tree trunks. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

**AGAIN, CHRISTIAN AND HOPEFUL  
NEED TO DECIDE WHICH OF TWO  
PATHS THEY SHOULD TAKE.**



## THE FLATTERER

The Flatterer is disguised both in attire and speech. He presents himself as a fine-spoken man, but he exploits words to corrupt and to destroy (e.g., Dan. 11:32; Prov. 26:28; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 11:13-15).

Flattery is deceit, insincerity, darkness masquerading as light, a lie parading about as truth.

Whether flattery comes from others or our own thinking, it assures us that our sins are not as bad as they truly are. It convinces us that our efforts are more noble than they really are.

Unresisted flattery always leads astray.

The two pilgrims follow the Flatterer leading them incrementally in the opposite direction toward Destruction rather than the Celestial City. The directional change was incremental.

This is a real danger, especially for seasoned pilgrims who have attained a measure of spiritual maturity. This is not rushing ahead with Vain-Confidence. This is being charmed with flattering thoughts concerning conquests over past temptations and sins. Instead of praising God, it is reflecting fondly on one's progress with self-congratulations, "See how far I've come!"

Too frequently, sins of the past are sins that ensnare us again despite sound teaching and firm warning. Christian discovered this concerning his continuing battle with spiritual pride.

- We saw this first when he was descending into the Valley of Humiliation, where Apollyon accused him of pride.
- Again, pride preceded his stumble and fall when he overtook Faithful. He needed assistance to stand again.
- Once more, pride prompted Christian to step over the stile into By-Path Meadow and to beckon Hopeful to follow.
- He was led astray by Vain-Confidence and captured by Giant Despair who imprisoned the pilgrims in Doubting Castle.

Once again, the two travelers face the dilemma of two paths. Which direction should they go? A finely dressed man in a white robe tells them he is traveling to the Celestial City and beckons them to follow him.

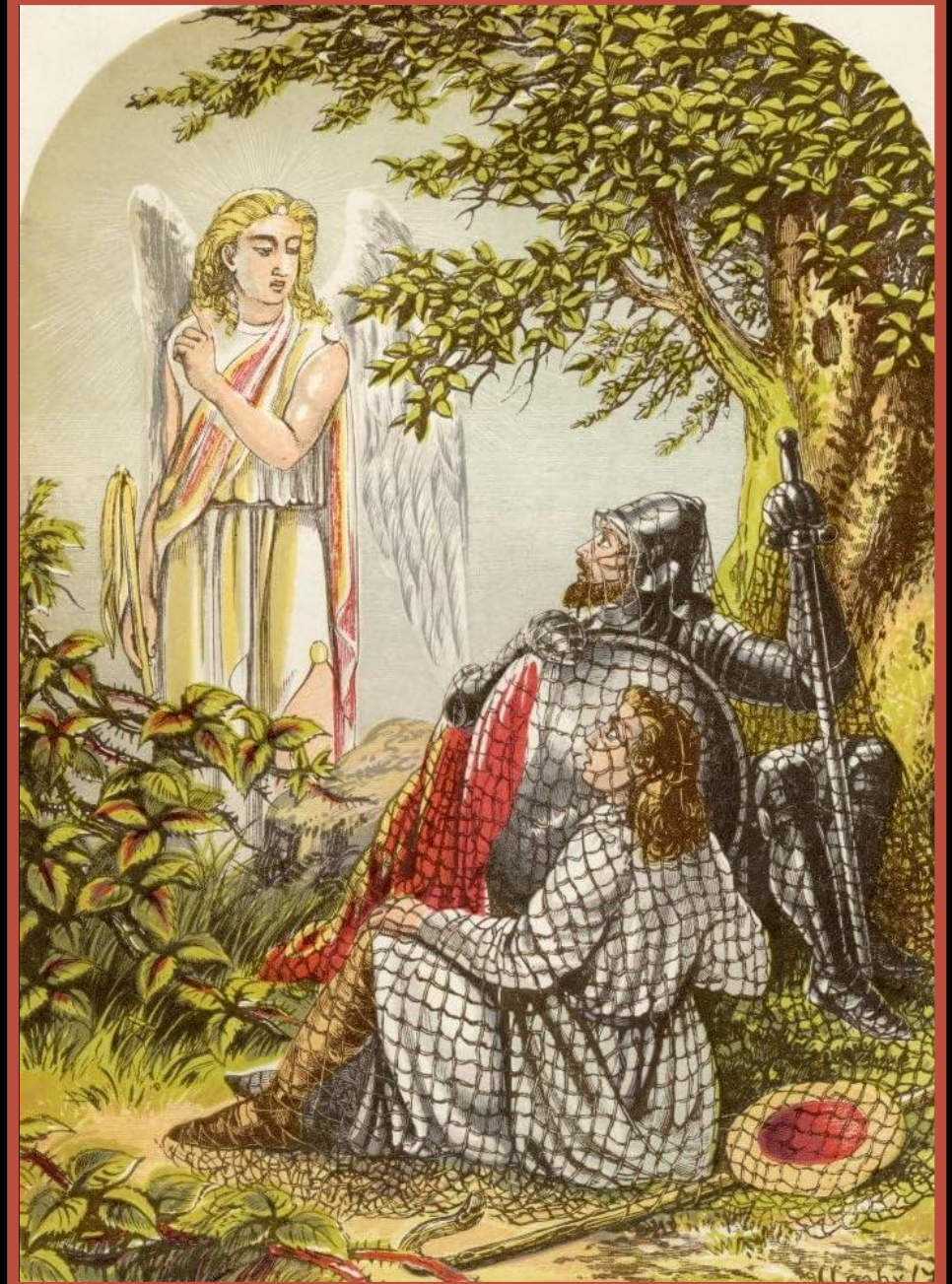
Christian and Hopeful should have known better by now. They should have learned from Experience who warned them. Enticement leads them astray again, this time facing more subtle danger.



Earlier, Christian and Hopeful became imprisoned in Doubting Castle, the creation of their own minds.

Now, Christian and Hopeful are caught in the Flatterer's Net, another fabrication of their own failings.

**The Shining One released them from the snare, brought them back to the Way, and rebuked and chastened them for failing to follow the directions the Shepherds had given them. He sent them on their way, reminding them to heed all the other directions the Shepherds had given them.**



# ATHEIST



A man coming from the direction of the Celestial City met Christian and Hopeful.

He asked, “Where are you going?”

“To Mount Zion,” Christian responds.

Atheist laughed uncontrollably at Christian and Hopeful for enduring their demanding journey and then mocked, “There is no such place as the Celestial City in all this world.”

The two responded, “But there is in the world to come.”

To this, Atheist replied, “When I was at home in my home country, I heard about the Celestial City and set out to find it for myself. I have spent twenty years seeking that city, but I’m no closer to finding it than the day I began looking.”

Christian asked Hopeful, “Do you think this man speaks the truth?”

Hopeful warned, “He is one of the Flatterers. Take heed! Didn’t we see the Celestial Gates from the Delectable Mountains? Aren’t we required to walk by faith? Shouldn’t you be admonishing me? Why am I warning you?”

Christian replied, “I did not pose the question because I doubt, but to test you, to oblige you to express your faith plainly.”

During the long journey across the Enchanted Ground, Christian and Hopeful engage in extended conversations to avoid falling asleep. The first conversation features Hopeful recounting for Christian his testimony of coming to faith in Christ. For the second conversation, Bunyan brings Ignorance back into the story. He has two purposes in these extended conversations:

1. To draw out some **important doctrines regarding the salvation of sinners**
2. To more clearly highlight the **differences between true faith and false faith**

Bunyan knows that his readers will identify with various characters and places throughout the story. He especially wants to help us see, for our salvation, the difference between a true believer (Hopeful) and a false believer (Ignorance). The contrast between the two is especially evident in where they place their confidence. Hopeful believes the gospel. He places his hope and trust in Christ alone. Ignorance is willfully ignorant of the gospel. He follows his heart, believing what his heart convinces him is true.

When Christian and Hopeful last saw Ignorance, he had taken offense at their counsel, rejected their company, and continued the journey on his own. Though Ignorance is walking along the Way, presuming to be headed to the Celestial City, he approaches the journey casually.

Hopeful spies Ignorance behind them, loitering and dallying. But Christian and Hopeful are willing to wait for him, desiring the opportunity to speak with him again.



IGNORANCE



## IGNORANCE

Christian begins by asking Ignorance about his standing before God. Earlier, Hopeful affirmed that only Christ alone can save. Only the soul anchored in God's promises has hope of salvation. But Ignorance has moored his soul to wishful thinking. He hopes all is well. He rests his hope on his own "good motions" that come to his mind to comfort him along the way.

*Good motions* are those thoughts, feelings, and deeds that appear to be morally upright, spiritually uplifting, and truly beneficial to the soul. Ignorance has determined that if he can maintain a positive outlook and a preponderance of good things in his life, he will be welcomed at the end of his journey into the gates of the Celestial City. These good motions include (1) thinking about God and heaven, (2) desiring God and heaven, and (3) trusting his heart that he is living a good life. So long as these motions are active in his life, all must be well with his soul, he reasons.

However, Christian shows from Scripture that these "good motions" are insufficient to validate saving faith.

Ignorance thinks about God and heaven, but even the demons believe and tremble.



## IGNORANCE

You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! (James 2:19)

He desires God and heaven, but desiring alone attains nothing.

The soul of a lazy man desires and has nothing;

But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.

(Proverbs 13:4)

He trusts his heart's affirmations that his life is good, but "the heart is deceitful above all things."

The heart is deceitful above all things,

And desperately wicked;

Who can know it?

I, the Lord, search the heart,

I test the mind,

Even to give every man according to his ways,

According to the fruit of his doings.

(Jeremiah 17:9–10)

He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife,

But he who trusts in the Lord will be prospered.

He who trusts in his own heart is a fool,

But whoever walks wisely will be delivered.

(Proverbs 28:25–26)

After leaving Ignorance to himself for a second time, Christian and Hopeful conversed about a man named Temporary, a man who once accompanied Hopeful. Hopeful identifies four causes for sudden departure from professing Christian faith.

1. Awakened consciences but no repentance, no change of mind. When guilt's power of guilt diminishes, what prompted the guilt fades away. As their sense of hell and fear of damnation cools, their desire for salvation also cools. When guilt and fear are gone, they return to their course again.
2. Another reason is that slavish fears of fellow men master them. They want to please others. So, that terror diminishes when hardships and troubles come. They suddenly return to their old ways.
3. The public shame that attaches to following Christ Jesus also strikes at pride. Embarrassed, they look on Christian faith as contemptible, returning again to their former course.
4. The guilt and terror that come to mind as they ponder their condition grieves them. It does not draw them to Christ for deliverance but instead shuns the thoughts of guilt and terror. So, when once they are rid of their awakenings about the terrors and wrath of God, they harden their hearts gladly and choose such ways as will harden them more and more.

Christian said, "You summed it up well. Common to all who apostatize is the truth that they all never change their desires or minds. They never truly repent. Like criminals who stand before a judge, they tremble, but not because of remorse for their crimes, which they would commit again if they were free. Rather they quiver with terror as they contemplate imprisonment."



TEMPORARY



## TEMPORARY

Hopeful asks Christian to speak of how people come to apostatize. He explains,

1. Apostasy begins by avoiding thoughts of God and his Word.
2. It continues by neglecting prayer and the reading of the Scriptures.
3. Neglecting these soon affects public associations, avoiding the presence of vibrant Christians.
4. Avoiding encounters with maturing Christians chills public duties, especially church attendance, worship, hearing the Word preached, congregational singing, and public prayers. Soon, church attendance is no more.
5. Excusing one's lack of attending church follows. The imperfections of others are the chief excuse for absence from church.
6. Loss of church fellowship is filled with ungodly associations. People who are not concerned about sin are more accepting of people the way they are.
7. Complacency and comfortableness with sin settle in. Apostates fear what fellow humans think of them, but they have no fear of the Lord. They can maintain a high reputation by keeping their sins private or secret.
8. Sin that takes root in the darkness does not remain hidden. The fleeting pleasure of secret sin craves more. Private sinning becomes public sinning.
9. Unrestrained sin calcifies the heart and deceives the mind. Apostates often end up worse than before they professed faith in Christ. They find it impossible to repent after they have deliberately abandoned the only Way to life and peace with God. The currents of the broad way sweep them swiftly toward eternal perdition. They show who they really are. They are the only ones truly deceived.

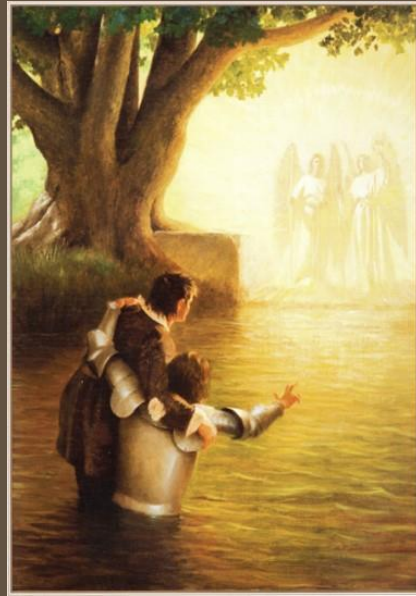
AN INDISPENSABLE,  
VITAL MEANS OF  
GOD'S GRACE. . . .

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-25







NEXT WEEK  
CHRISTIAN &  
HOPEFUL VIEW THE  
CELESTIAL CITY FROM  
BEULAH, CROSS THE  
RIVER OF DEATH,  
IGNORANCE IS  
TRANSPORTED TO  
HELL



CHRIST BIBLE CHURCH

