

CHRIST BIBLE CHURCH

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS
A Readable Modern-Day Version of John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress
John Bunyan
Revision by Alan Vermilye

CHRIST BIBLE CHURCH

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS
A Bible Study Based on John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress
STUDY GUIDE
Alan Vermilye

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

1

JOHN BUNYAN'S
THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

CHRIST BIBLE CHURCH

2

John Bunyan	English Monarchy	Major Events in England
1628 Bunyan born	James I (1603-1625)	1611 King James Bible completed
1644 Drafted into the Parliamentary army	Charles I (1625-1649)	1618-1648: Thirty Years War in Europe
1649 Marries his first wife, Mary	Civil War (1642-1646)	1620 Mayflower leaves Plymouth, England
1651 Bunyan comes under the ministry of John Clifford	Cromwell's Protectorate (1649-1659)	
1653 Bunyan baptized		
1656 First preaching in public		
1658 Publishes <i>Some Gospel Truths Opened</i>		
1658 First wife Mary dies; he is left with four children		
1659 Marries Elizabeth (17 years old)	Charles II (1660-1685)	
1660 Imprisoned until 1672 for unlicensed preaching		1662 Act of Uniformity
1666 Once absconding published		1664 Conventicle Act
1672 Called as pastor of Bedford church (Jan. 21)		1665 Fire-Mis Act 1665 Great plague devastates London 1666 Great London Fire
1672 Released from prison		
1672 Licensed as Congregational preacher (May 9)	James II (1685-1689)	
1675 Warrant issued for Bunyan's arrest	William & Mary (1689-1702)	
1677 Imprisoned for six months for not attending parish church		1689 Bill of Rights
1678 <i>Pilgrim's Progress</i> , Part 1, published		1689 Toleration Act
1682 <i>July War</i> published		
1684 <i>Pilgrim's Progress</i> , Part 2, published		
1688 Bunyan dies		
1692 Elizabeth Bunyan dies		






3

All The Places Christian Encounters in *The Pilgrim's Progress*

- **City of Destruction**, Christian's hometown, represents the whole world with its sins, corruptions, sorrows, and hopelessness.
- **Swamp of Despair (Slough of Despond)**, the first obstacle Christian faces on his way to the Wicket Gate.
- **Village of Morality**, managed by Mr. Legality and his sons.
- **Wicket Gate** is the only certified and legitimate entrance to the Way leading to the Celestial City.
- **House of the Interpreter**, a many-roomed house where Christian learns to understand allegories concerning his new faith.
- **The Cross** is located on high ground near the foot of a tomb. When Christian approaches the cross his burden falls from his back.
- **Hill of Difficulty** must be climbed before reaching the Palace Beautiful. It represents opposition, persecution, temptations, etc.
- **Palace Beautiful** is at the top of the Hill of Difficulty, the residence of four sisters who represent Christian graces.
- **Valley of Humiliation** is located at the base of the Hill of Difficulty. Christian encounters ferocious Apollyon here.
- **Valley of the Shadow of Death** is even more fearful than the Valley of Humiliation, haunted by demons, representing the tribulations Christians endure.
- **Vanity Fair** is a wicked town with a year-round carnival to tempt pilgrims to forsake their journeys to give themselves over to lust. Faithful's journey ends here, put to death for his faith.
- **River of God** is a peaceful place adorned with pleasant meadows, a fruitful place with leaves that prevent illnesses.
- **Doubting Castle** is located adjacent to the narrowway. Giant Despair catches Christian and Hopeful and throws them into his dungeon.
- **Delectable Mountains** are green with vegetation and water fountains where four shepherds give Christian and Hopeful a map of traps to avoid on the Way.
- **Enchanted Ground** is a place where ease tempts pilgrims to fall asleep to their own demise.
- **The Country of Beulah** is a safe territory that borders the Celestial City, where angels often walk, a land of abundance.
- **The River of Death** is deep and dangerous. Christian and Hopeful must cross the river to reach the gates of the Celestial City.
- **The Celestial City** is on Mount Zion. It is the final destination for Christian and Hopeful. When they are granted entrance, they are surrounded by an angelic choir with a trumpet fanfare and receive a joyous celebratory welcome.

7

FIVE SCENES

City of Destruction	Leaving the City	Swamp of Despair	Looking for the Wicket Gate	Mount Sinai
Christian	Evangelist	Help	Worldly Wiseman	Evangelist
				

These illustrations are by Mike Wimmer in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. By C. J. Lovick.

8

WHY NOT READ THE ORIGINAL ENGLISH VERSION OF *THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*?

THE STORY BEGINS



THE CITY OF DESTRUCTION

As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place, where was a Den, and I laid me down in *that* place to sleep: And as I slept, I dreamed a Dream. *I dreamed, and behold I saw a Man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a Book in his hand, and a great Burden upon his back.* I looked, and saw him open the Book, and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, *What shall I do?*

In this plight therefore he went home, and refrained himself as long as he could, that his wife and children should not perceive his distress; but he could not be silent long, because that his trouble increased: Wherefore he began to talk to them; *O my dear Wife, said he, and you the Children of my bowels, I your dear friend am in myself undone, by reason of a Burden that lieth hard upon me: moreover I am for certain informed, that this our City will be burned with fire from Heaven; in which fearful overthrow, both myself, with thee my wife, and you my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruin, except (that which yet I see not) some Way of escape may be found, whereby we may be delivered.*

9

WHY NOT READ THE ORIGINAL ENGLISH VERSION OF *THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*?

THE STORY BEGINS




Illustration by a copy of a woodcut from the City of Destruction

As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I came to a place where there was a clearing, and I laid down in it to sleep.


While I slept, I dreamed about a man in ragged clothes who stood, with his face turned away from his own house and with a book in his hand, carrying a great burden on his back. I saw him read from the pages of the book, weeping and shaking in fear until eventually he cried out loudly, "What should I do?"

He anxiously returned home and tried to remain calm so that his wife and children would not become worried. But he became so distressed that he could no longer be silent and decided it was time to tell his family exactly what was on his mind.

"I love you all dearly," he said to his wife and children, "but I feel I must share with you this miserable and heavy burden that I've been carrying. You see, I've been reading this book and learned that our town will be destroyed—burned with fire from heaven—and unless we find some way to escape, all of us will die."

THE CITY OF DESTRUCTION

10



Fleeing The City of Destruction

11

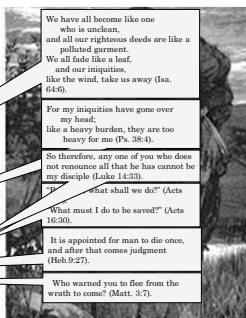
The Man in Ragged Clothing

Bunyan's allegory calls for correct interpretation.

In Chapter 2 we will encounter the Interpreter who will take Christian through seven rooms with various themes to instruct him how to interpret what he sees on his journey.

Here, Bunyan requires us to interpret what Christian is encountering. What do these represent? He provides Scripture passages to assist us.

- Pilgrim's ragged clothes.
- A heavy burden on Pilgrim's back.
- Pilgrim's urgent appeal to his family followed by great anguish.
- Evangelist speaks with Pilgrim.
- What is the book Christian is reading?



We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away (Isa. 64:6).

For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me (Ps. 38:4).

So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:33).


...what shall we do?" (Acts 16:30).

"What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30).

It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment (Heb. 9:27).


Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? (Matt. 3:7).

12




Leaving the City of Destruction

“Do you see that wicket gate?” Evangelist asked.
 “No, I do not.” replied the Pilgrim.
 “How about the light? Do you see the light?”
 “Yes, I think I do.”
 “Good! Keep that light in your eye, and go straight to it. When you arrive at the gate, knock, and you will be told what you are to do.”



Then Christian “set off running to the gate.”




“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few” (Matt. 7:13-14).

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Ps. 119:105).

And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts (2 Pet. 1:19).

13




In Pursuit of Christian

Now, Christian had not gone far from his own house when his wife and children came out running, pleading and begging him to come back home, but he put his hands to his ears and ran on, crying, “Life! Life! Eternal life!” He never looked behind but ran toward the middle of the field.


His neighbors also came out to see him run. As he ran, some mocked, others threatened, and some cried after him to return. Two of the neighbors, Obstinate and Pliable, set off to bring him back, by force if necessary. By this time, Christian was a good distance ahead of them, but they were determined to catch him and eventually did.

How should we understand this within the allegory?



“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:26)


Pliable & Obstinate Appeal to Christian



For I have many who calling “Terror is on every side,” “Thou shalt not let us distress him,” say all my close friends, switching for my fall. “Perhaps he will be deceived, then we can overcome him and take our revenge on him.” (Job 20:10)

14

A Conversation with Pliable



“We look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen” (2 Cor. 4:18).

“An inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:4).

“But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one.” (Heb. 11:16).

“No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

- What’s in a name?
 - Obstinate?
 - Pliable?
 - Christian?
- Why does Obstinate depart?
- Why is there no burden on Pliable’s back?
- What is Pliable’s interest?

“What are you looking for?” Obstinate asked. “What is so valuable that you would turn your back on all the world to find it?”

Pilgrim is first called “Christian”

15

Battling the Swamp of Despair

- Lost in conversation, they find themselves in lost in the Swamp.
- Pliable lives up to his name.
- Pliable exits the swamp more easily than Christian. Why?
- Help finds Christian.

“The swamp cannot be fixed since . . . all sorts of scum and filth associated with the conviction of sin drain into it. Therefore, it’s called the Swamp of Despair.”

“Is this the happiness that you’ve been telling me about all this time? If this is what happens at the beginning of our journey, I cannot imagine what we can expect to find at the end.”
“I’m going home. You can travel alone.”

“And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away” (Mark 4:16-17).

I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure (Psalm 40:1-2).

16

Advice from Worldly Wiseman

- Mr. Worldly Wiseman resides in Carnal Policy, near City of Destruction.
- Christian, heading for the Wicket Gate where he expects to be relieved of his burden, is detained and redirected.
- Worldly Wiseman derides Evangelist—“a terrible guide The most dangerous advice.”
- “How did you get your burden?”
- “Go to the Village of Morality.”
- “Look for Legality or his son, Civility.”
- Christian wanders away from the Narrow Way leading to the Wicket Gate, which represents Christ Jesus.

Legality & Civility Represent Fixation on the Law as an End in Itself

“From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.” (1 Cor. 7:29-31).

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col. 2:8).

17

- Evangelist approaches Christian.
- “Aren’t you Christian, the man whom I found crying outside the City of Destruction?” “You must completely hate three aspects of his advice.

1. “Did I not point you to the Way that leads to the Wicket Gate, to Christ Jesus?”
2. “You have rejected God’s counsel by turning from the Cross to go a different direction from the way of peace, even to the point of eternally losing your life.”
3. “You must hate his directing you to the law; only the gospel speaks consolation and the forgiveness of sins.”

“On the morning of the third day, there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. . . . Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.” (Ex. 19:16, 18).

“Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, ‘I tremble with fear.’” (Heb. 12:21).

“My righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him” (Heb. 10:38).

“See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven” (Heb. 12:25).

I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.
“Do not disbelieve, but believe!” (John 20:27).

18


EVANGELIST INSTRUCTS CHRISTIAN	
1 John 4:3,5	"This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. . . . They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them." "It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ."
Luke 11:24	"Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able."
Matt. 7:13-14	"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."
Hebrew 11:25-26	"Choose rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. Consider the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of the world. Look to the reward."
Mark 8:38 John 12:25 Matt. 10:38-39	"For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." "Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." "And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

19



**'Run, John, run, the law commands,
But gives me neither feet nor hands.
Far better news the gospel brings:
It bids us fly and gives us wings.'**

This saying, though often attributed to Bunyan, is likely not from him, but it captures well Evangelist's message to Christian.

John Bunyan



20

	<p>NEXT WEEK</p> <p>CHRISTIAN ARRIVES AT THE WICKET GATE</p> 
---	--

21
