

A man with reddish-brown hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and a black vest, sits on a large, textured rock. He has his hands clasped in front of him and is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a dense forest of green trees, slightly out of focus. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

Pilgrim's Progress

Part One - Christian

The Pilgrims Progress

Part 1 – Christian

John Bunyan

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The Departure

Christian sat beneath a tree, holding a book in his hand and carrying a huge heavy burden on his back. It seemed that the more he read from his book, the larger the burden grew. As he read, he would occasionally look up, sigh, and stare off into the distance for a while before once again turning back to his book to resume his reading. Now, as he looked down at the open book resting in his hand, a troubled expression etched its way onto his face, and as he read, he began to cry. He then looked up into the sky and cried out, "What should I do?"

Eventually, Christian went home, but he was still in deep distress. He eventually tried to explain his troubles to his family. He said, "My dear wife and children, I am very troubled because of this weight on my back. And more than this, I have read in this book that our city is soon going to be destroyed by fire, and we will all die in the fire unless we can find some way to escape."

Hearing his words, the family was shocked. They were not shocked because they believed his words were true, but because they were afraid that he was losing his mind. So his wife told him, "Why don't you go get some sleep. Maybe you will feel better in the morning." Taking her advice, Christian went to the room and finally fell asleep, but upon waking, he was no better than before.

Instead, he was worse. The things that he read about in the book continued to plague him, but when he tried to warn the other people in his town about the coming destruction, he was continually mocked and ridiculed, so he found a quiet place to read and pray, trying to figure out how to escape the impending danger.

One day, as he was outside reading his book, Christian cried out into the air, "How can I be saved?" He then looked to his right and to his left, as if he was going to run somewhere, but he didn't know where to go. As he stood there, a man named Evangelist confronted him and asked, "What is the matter?"

Christian held up the book in his hand and replied, "I read in this book that I am condemned to die, and after that, I must face the judgment (Heb. 9:27), but I am not ready to do either."

"Why are you afraid to die?" asked Evangelist.

"Because I fear that the judgment will sink me lower than the grave, and I will be sent to the fires of hell."

Then Evangelist asked, "If you are not prepared to die, and your condition is so desperate, why are you standing here?"

"I don't know where to go," said Christian.

At this, Evangelist handed him a message with the words, "Flee the coming destruction."

Looking up, Christian repeated the words, “But I don’t know where to go. Where do I go?”

Pointing in the distance, Evangelist said, “Do you see that wicket gate? Beyond it, there is a shining light.”

Looking off into the distance, Christian finally said, “Oh yes, I think I see it.”

“Keep your eye on that light. Go directly towards it until you see the gate. Then, once you arrive at the gate, knock, and someone will tell you what to do.”

Hearing this, Christian immediately began to run, crying out, “Life! Life! Eternal life!”

Seeing Christian run away, most of his neighbors ridiculed him, but two of them determined to bring him back home. So, chasing after him, these two men, Obstinate and Pliable, finally caught up with Christian. When he asked what they were doing, they replied, “We’ve come to take you back.”

“I’m sorry,” said Christian, “but I can’t go back to the City of Destruction. It will soon be destroyed by fire, and those who die in that city will sink lower than the grave. Why don’t you come along with me?”

“And leave our friends and comforts?”

“Don’t worry. All that you leave behind will not compare to the things you will gain in the place I am going,” Christian assured them.

“What is it like,” Obstinate asked.

“I’m going to a place where nothing ever dies,” Christian explained. “Where there is no pain, heartache, tears, or death. It is peaceful and safe, with pleasures all around, and beauty as far as the eye can see. It’s all true. I read it right here in this book.”

Obstinate just shook his head and said, “You’re crazy. Keep your fairy-tales. I’m going home. Let’s go Pliable.”

But Pliable replied, “Wait a minute. If what this man says is true, I want to go with him.”

“Don’t be foolish,” said Obstinate as he let out a hearty laugh. “There’s no telling where this madman will lead you. Be wise and come back to the city with me.”

“No, don’t go back,” Christian urged, “Come with me, neighbor. We can experience the things I told you about, and more! If you don’t believe me, read for yourself. It’s all right here in this book, and I know it’s true because it is sealed by the blood of the One who gave it.”

At this, Pliable turned to his friend and said, “I’ve made up my mind. I’ve decided to go with this good man.” Then turning back to Christian, he inquired, “So where is this place?”

“A man named Evangelist told me to follow the light to the Wicket Gate,” said Christian, and at that, the two made their way down the path. As

they walked, Christian told his new friend about all the beautiful things that awaited them in the distant land. He told him of streets of gold and walls of jasper, where there would be no more pain.

As the two talked, the sky began to grow dark, but being so caught up in their conversation, the men were not paying attention and fell into a swamp called the Swamp of Despair. Because of the heavy load on his back, Christian started to sink in the muddy waters, but instead of helping him, Pliable called out, "Is this the happiness you were telling me about? If we run into such trouble this early, what can we expect along the rest of this path? If I can escape without dying, you can brave the far country alone!" Then, with a leap, Pliable made his way out and was not seen anymore, leaving poor Christian to struggle in the pit alone.

As he was sinking, a man named Help appeared, asking, "What are you doing there?"

Christian replied, "Evangelist sent me this way to escape the coming destruction, but as I was fleeing, I fell into this pit."

"Why didn't you take the steps," asked Help, as he pulled Christian out of the swamp.

Christian explained that he had not seen the steps. So after warning him to be more careful, Christian thanked the man for pulling him to safety, and Help sent Christian again on his way down the path towards the distant city.



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