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Christian & Evangelist

Words to Know:

Lighted – to descend and rest upon

Den – a squalid, neglected place

Lamentable – mournful, sorrowful, expressing grief

Plight – a place or situation of danger

Frenzy – mental agitation

Distemper – an unnatural temper, as showing loss of balance

Surly carriage – a rude and abrupt manner of carrying one's body or self

Deride – to laugh at with contempt, to mock

Chide – to rebuke, scold, admonish, or reprove

Parchment roll – an animal skin prepared for writing on and rolled into a scroll

Wicket gate – a small gate or door inside a larger gate or door

Tophet – hell, utter chaos, darkness



Memory verses: Psalm 38:4-8

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Isaiah 64:6
Luke 14:33
Psalm 38:4
Acts 2:37; 16:30
Habakkuk 1:2–3

AS I WALKED THROUGH THE wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den,¹ and 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 restrained 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 at length he brake his mind to his wife and children; and thus 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 certainly informed that this our city will be burnt 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 (the which yet I see not) some way of escape can be found whereby we may be delivered.”

At this his relations were sore amazed; not for that they believed that what he had said to them was true, but because they thought that some frenzy distemper had got into his head; therefore, it drawing towards night, and they hoping that sleep might settle his brains, with all haste they got him to bed. But the night was as troublesome to him as the day; wherefore, instead of sleeping, he spent it in sighs and tears. So when the morning was come, they would know how he did. He told them, “Worse and worse:” he also set to talking to them again; but they began to be hardened. They also thought to drive away his distemper by harsh and surly carriage to him; sometimes they would deride, sometimes they would chide, and sometimes they would quite neglect him. Wherefore he began to retire himself to his chamber to pray for and pity them, and also to condole his own misery; he would also walk solitarily in the fields, sometimes reading, and sometimes praying: and thus for some days he spent his time.

¹ Bedford jail, in which the author was imprisoned for conscience' sake.



Now I saw, upon a time, when he was walking in the fields, that he was (as he was wont) reading in his book, and greatly distressed in his mind; and as he read, he burst out, as he had done before, crying, “What shall I do to be saved?”

I saw also that he looked this way, and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still because (as I perceived) he could not tell which way to go. I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist coming to him, and he asked, “Wherefore dost thou cry?”

He answered, “Sir, I perceive, by the book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment, and I find that I am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second.”

Acts 16:30–31

Hebrews 9:27
Job 10:21–22
Ezekiel 22:14

Then said Evangelist, “Why not willing to die, since this life is attended with so many evils?” The man answered, “Because, I fear that this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the grave, and I shall fall into Tophet. And Sir, if I be not fit to go to prison, I am not fit to go to judgment, and from thence to execution; and the thoughts of these things make me cry.”

Meeting with Evangelist

This allegory frequently draws its characters from real people who moved across the landscape of Bunyan’s life. John Gifford, the pastor of the church in Bedford, was one such person. He was a man who was faithful to his calling, and in so doing, became Evangelist to Bunyan himself.



The people who come into our lives either for good or evil are frequently remembered because of their words or conduct that, in part, have shaped us into what we are today. The first minister of the gospel whose words sank deeply into our souls and awakened us from that fatal ease surely holds an esteemed place in our hearts.

Scripture makes it clear that there are those who are given to the church with peculiar giftings for evangelism (Ephesians 4:11). They may have a more official capacity with both gift and recognition, or they

may be a Sunday school teacher, a youth pastor or just a friend speaking from the heart and doing “the work of an evangelist” (2 Timothy 4:5).

The liberal church of today has not changed much since Bunyan’s day. Its message is that a sense of danger for one’s soul is only imagined and that a burden of guilt is the product of an overly sensitive conscience fed by the religious extremism that is inherent in the preaching of many pulpits across the land—the God who keeps track of our sins in a book somewhere is nothing but a cosmic bully and any who follow this kind of thinking need psychiatric help. Bunyan’s Evangelist would surely be singled out as an extremist as he gives the warning, “Fly from the wrath to come.” Of course, we recognize these words as those of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:7), who was also deemed an extremist by some, and who consequently lost his head.

The Apostle Paul, in like fashion, reminds those in the church at Corinth that “knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). It seems quite clear that the message of the evangelist is couched in the understanding that God will deal with the impenitent heart in judgment and in wrath. Yet if the message simply stopped there, how dark and hopeless would our plight be? Evangelist asks, “Dost thou see yonder shining light? Keep that light in thine eye.” All is not without hope because Christ is the Light that shines in the darkness and offers Himself freely in the gospel to all who will (by faith) come to Him.



Then said Evangelist, "If this be thy condition, why standest thou still?" He answered, "Because I know not whither to go." Then he gave him a parchment roll, and there was written within, "Fly from the wrath to come."

The man therefore read it, and looking upon Evangelist very carefully, said, "Whither must I fly?" Then said Evangelist, (pointing with his finger over a very wide field,) "Do you see yonder wicket-gate?" The man said, "No." Then said the other, "Do you see yonder shining light?" He said, "I think I do." Then said Evangelist, "Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do."

Matthew 3:7

Matthew 7:13-14

Psalms 119:105

2 Peter 1:19

