CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

The Pilgrim's Progress

John Bunyan · *1678 · original English text*

This is the First Part, the text hosted here: Christian's journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, told as a dream. The book is an allegory of conversion, trial and perseverance — a man fleeing the wrath to come, eased of his burden at the Cross, and kept on the way through slough, castle, fair and river.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What must a sinner do to be saved, and what will the way cost him?

"What shall I do to be saved?"

Christian · Part One, the opening

He must flee as he is, by the Light, to the Wicket-gate, and not turn back. The burden falls at the Cross, not by his own efforts; yet the way is still through humiliation, conflict, Vanity Fair and the river of death. Perseverance is the book's virtue; a way to hell opens even from the gate of heaven.

KEY CHARACTERS

Christian
the pilgrim; repentance and perseverance

Evangelist
the guide to the Gate

Faithful
companion; martyr at the Fair

Hopeful
won at Faithful's death; help in the river

Apollyon
the adversary in the valley

Giant Despair
prison of doubt

Worldly Wiseman
the easier, legal way

Ignorance
confidence without the way

HELP IN THE RIVER

> *"Be of good cheer, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole;"*
>
> **Hopeful to Christian** · Part One, the river

Grades 6–8
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

The Flight

THE CITY OF DESTRUCTION TO THE WICKET-GATE

A man reads, weeps, and runs.

- **Christian**, a burden on his back and a book in his hand, cries what he must do to be saved
- **Evangelist** points him to the shining light and the Wicket-gate
- He runs, crying "Life! life! eternal life!" while wife, children and neighbours call him back
- **Obstinate** turns home; **Pliable** starts and quits in the Slough of Despond
- **Worldly Wiseman** would send him to legality; Evangelist sets him right

> *"Do you see yonder wicket-gate? … Do you see yonder shining light?"*
>
> **Evangelist** · Part One, the flight

02

The Cross

THE GATE TO THE HILL

The burden is not taken off by climbing.

- Goodwill lets him in at the Gate and sets him on the way
- At the Interpreter's house he is shown rooms that explain the Christian life
- At the sepulchre his burden looses from his shoulders and is seen no more
- He is given new garments, a mark, and a roll (his assurance) to carry to the City

> *"just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back,"*
>
> **The dreamer** · Part One, the Cross

03

Difficulty and Palace Beautiful

THE HILL TO THE VALLEYS

Company is given, and then withdrawn, for the harder road.

- Formalist and Hypocrisy climb into the way by a shortcut and are lost
- Christian climbs Hill Difficulty, sleeps in the arbour, and loses his roll — then retraces his steps to find it
- At Palace Beautiful he is received by Discretion, Prudence, Piety and Charity, and armed
- He goes down into the Valley of Humiliation and fights Apollyon

04

The Shadow of Death

THE TWO VALLEYS

The way to the City lies through the dark.

- After Apollyon, Christian must pass the Valley of the Shadow of Death
- He hears, in the dark, a voice going before him: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me"
- He comes through; he is not alone, though he thought he was

> *"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."*
>
> **A voice ahead of Christian (Psalm 23)** · Part One, Valley of the Shadow of Death

05

Vanity Fair and Doubting Castle

THE FAIR TO THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS

The world will hate the pilgrims; despair will jail them, if they leave the way.

- Christian walks on with **Faithful**; they come to Vanity Fair, where all is vanity
- They will not buy; Faithful is tried and martyred; **Hopeful** is won by his death and goes on with Christian
- Leaving the way for easier ground, they are taken by Giant Despair into Doubting Castle
- The key Promise opens the door; they recover the way and reach the Delectable Mountains

06

The River and the City

THE ENCHANTED GROUND TO THE GATE

Death is still to be passed; and a way to hell opens even here.

- On the Enchanted Ground they must stay awake; they talk of grace to keep from sleeping
- They reach the river of death: Christian nearly despairs; Hopeful holds him with the promise of Christ
- Beyond the river the City is opened to them with joy
- Ignorance, who came by a shortcut, is turned away at the gate and sent down to hell
- The dreamer sees "that there was a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven," and wakes

> *"Then I saw that there was a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction. So I awoke, and behold it was a dream."*
>
> **The dreamer** · Part One, the close

Salvation · Perseverance · Faith & Hope · The World's Vanity · Despair Resisted · Death & the City

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 6–8

1. The hosted text is the First Part (Christian's journey), complete in itself. Do not expect Christiana's story here.
2. The burden comes off at the Cross, not in the Slough or at Sinai. Why does Bunyan place it there?
3. Watch the false ways: Worldly Wiseman, Formalist, By-ends, Ignorance. How does each miss the Gate?
4. Faithful dies at Vanity Fair; Hopeful is born there. Suffering in the book is not wasted.
5. The key Promise, not Christian's strength, opens Doubting Castle. What does that say about despair?
6. The last image is severe: a way to hell from the very gates of heaven. Who is turned away, and why?

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text, Project Gutenberg #131, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/the-pilgrims-progress/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.