

August 28th, 2016
Chapter 36

Instead of ending Pilgrim's Progress on a high and glorious note of Christian and Hopeful entering heaven, John Bunyan leaves his readers on a somber tone in this last chapter. With a true passion to make sure that not one person is ignorant regarding the protocol of entering heaven, he makes you examine your heart to see that you won't be deceived as Ignorance was. **Matthew 7:21-23** says; *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"* Ignorance appeared a few times in the course of the book with numerous deep conversations with Christian about the plan of salvation, and as you well remember, he was a man who depended on his own good heart, good works, self-righteousness, religious rearing and pride, self-will, self-sufficiency and ultimately was stubborn and full of pride as to not repent of these ways. He rejected the Wicket Gate (salvation). In essence, he had everything except he was not born again. Such spiritual blindness leads a fool like him, to believe he's right, everyone believes as he does and that God will surely accept him with his long list of 'good' things. It couldn't be farther from the truth. Jesus said that He is the way, the truth and the life and that no one can come to the Father except through Him. The greatest of fools depend on their self-righteousness and human works! It totally shelves the need of God's infinite grace, our faith in salvation and the redemptive work that Jesus did at the cross. **Ephesians 2:8-9**; *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*

The most heart-wrenching thing about people like Ignorance is that they are sitting in pews and chairs in churches around the world right now, and from the outside and superficial point of view, they 'look' like bona fide true blood bought Christians who have been born again by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. But they're not. **Luke 13:24-28** says; *"Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and you taught in our streets.' But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out."* Not all religious people will go to heaven.

As Ignorance crosses the River of Death seemingly without a care, he's shown as catching a ferry ride with Vain-Hope. What does that mean as we saw Christian and Hopeful wade into the river and cross over? It means in death, Ignorance has hoped in vain that he'll enter heaven; he's believed a demonic lie. But still in his arrogance and pride, he sheds his earthly body, steps on to the banks of eternity, not being greeted by a

single angel, trumpeters nor the host of heaven to celebrate his arrival. We notice how the deaths of Christian, Hopeful and Ignorance are all different. But it must be stated, that the way in which a person dies; whether it be tragic, peaceful, turbulent, or too early, does not give the connotation that that person will be going to heaven or hell. What must be questioned is whether they died in their sins, did they die in unbelief and did they die before they were born again. They're facial expressions or bodily conditions have nothing to do with their eternal destination.

Ascending to the Celestial City, Ignorance goes through the clouds to the beautiful gate in his own self-righteousness and pride. It sounds very much like Lucifer did when we read of his account in **Isaiah 14:13-14** where it says of him, *"For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'"* Ultimately, Ignorance is acting like his father - Lucifer. In his self-righteousness, he misinterprets the inscription above the gate which reads from **Revelation 22:14**; *"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."* The misinterpretation is that he believed his obedience to God's commands were sufficient and qualified him with access to heaven, yet he utterly failed to understand that what was required were works as a result of justification NOT works which produce justification. It's the error of all who believe that their works are good enough to enter heaven, they believe a lie. **Romans 10:9-10** says; *"that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

Presumably the same saints - Enoch, Moses and Elijah peer over the wall upon hearing the knocking on the gate and ask for his scroll (certificate) and testimony, to which Ignorance fumbles as he embarrassingly searches his chest pocket because he knows now that he's been found out, he has no scroll and is left speechless! The chest pocket signifies the heart, so he's searching inside his heart to see if he's received Jesus as his Saviour, and not finding Jesus there, he doesn't have the seal of redemption of the Holy Spirit living in him. **I John 3:24** says; *"Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us."* Again, trying to justify himself Ignorance blurts out that he has listened to the teachings of King Jesus and that Jesus' name was respected where he lived. Ignorance was a church goer, knew the teachings of Jesus and became acquainted with good morals for every day life and yet Ignorance deceived himself. It sounds like he could have lived in any Western Country with religious freedoms where countless millions are able to speak and preach in the name of Jesus and go to church without being harassed yet are doing so religiously, not out of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Being speechless is like what Jesus talked about in the following parable of the banquet in heaven in **Matthew 22:12-13**; *"So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"* The wedding garments refer to the white robes the

redeemed saints receive in heaven and servants refer to the angels. His demise has come; the King won't come down to reconcile with him, give him a second chance or even engage in conversation. Ignorance had his opportunity and he relentlessly, enthusiastically and knowingly chose to live a lie and not listen to people like Christian and Hopeful who told him the truth of salvation; there was no court of appeal for Ignorance. The judge, Jesus Christ, did not know him personally, did not see His own blood as a sign redemption on him and ultimately saw that Ignorance's heart was impure. Christ's blazing light of truth revealed the darkness. The gavel came down and the sentence was passed. Ignorance was bound hand and foot as a prisoner, taken by the angels and thrust into the depths of outer darkness and hell. His separation from God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is eternal. Forever and ever, dead but very much alive, Ignorance is vanquished to live with the regret of his self-righteousness and self-sufficiency in the place of eternal fire, brimstone and gnashing of teeth. **II Timothy 3:5, 7** says; *"having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!"* *"Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."* His demise was like that of Judas Iscariot, who was privileged to have access to the Son of God yet when Jesus told him of his imminent betrayal, Judas with tongue in cheek says, *"surely not I, Lord?"* **Matthew 26:22.**

Revelation 20:11-15; *"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."*

I'd like to end by a quote from William Mason (a religious writer) who quotes: *"This is a most awful [full of awe] conclusion. Consider it deeply. Weigh it attentively, so as to get good satisfaction from the Word to these important questions: - Am I in Christ, the way, the only way, to the kingdom, or not? Do I see that all other ways, whether of sin or self-righteousness, lead to hell? Does Christ dwell in my heart by faith? Am I a new creature in Him? Do I renounce my own righteousness, as well as abhor my sins? Do I look alone to Christ for righteousness, and depend only on him for holiness? Is he the only hope of my soul, and the only confidence of my heart? And do I desire to be found in him; knowing by the Word, and feeling by the teaching of his Spirit, that I am totally lost in myself? Thus, is Christ formed in me, the only hope of glory? Do I study to please him, as well as hope to enjoy him? Is fellowship with God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, so prized by me, as to seek it, and to esteem it above all things? If so, though I may find all things in nature, in the world, and from Satan, continually opposing this, yet I am in Christ the way, and he is in me the truth and the life."*

Receive Christ Jesus into your heart today by praying; Jesus, I ask that you forgive me of my sins, I believe you are the only Son of God and I ask that you come into my heart to

be my Lord and Saviour so that I can life eternally with you in heaven, amen. In conclusion, I'd like to leave you with this short video to watch.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fseBvbyd60>