

THE CELESTIAL RAILROAD

April 14th, 2019 – The Celestial Railroad

Part 12 – Vanity Fair ~ Part 1

As we start reading this portion of the script today on Vanity Fair, you cannot help but see the exact parallels of the generation that we are living in. As King Solomon said in **Ecclesiastes 1:9**, “*What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.*” As it was in Pilgrim’s Progress and The Celestial Railroad, it is today, Vanity Fair has not changed. Please read it by [clicking on this link](#) and read ‘Vanity Fair’. If you’d like to review this part in Pilgrim’s Progress, please [click on this link](#) and read Chapter 21.

We start by reading this in the story; “*It was late in the day when the train thundered into the ancient city of Vanity, where Vanity Fair is still at the height of prosperity, and exhibits an epitome of whatever is brilliant, gay and fascinating beneath the sun. As I proposed to make a considerable stay here, it gratified me to learn that there is no longer the lack of harmony between the townspeople and pilgrims, which impelled the former to such lamentable mistaken measures as the persecution of Christian, and the fiery martyrdom of Faithful. On the contrary, as the new railroad brings with it great trade and a constant influx of strangers, the lord of Vanity Fair is its chief patron, and the capitalists of the city are among the largest stockholders.*”

There is a stark contrast now in Vanity Fair from when Christian in Pilgrim’s Progress and our author/rider on The Celestial Railroad visit it, that being that Christians (pilgrims) are welcome and are not persecuted to the point of being martyrs.

Jesus says this in **Luke 6:24-26 Amplified Bible (AMP)**; “*24 But woe (judgment is coming) to you who are rich [and place your faith in possessions while remaining spiritually impoverished], for you are [already] receiving your comfort in full [and there is nothing left to be awarded to you]. 25 Woe to you who are well-fed (gorged, satiated) now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now [enjoying a life of self-indulgence], for you will mourn and weep [and deeply long for God]. 26 Woe to you when all the people speak well of you and praise you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.*”

Jesus isn’t against wealth but is talking about priorities in your life, desiring possessions more than the spiritual life in Him. We need money to live, pay for bills, food, clothing etc., we need riches to live and survive. In Pilgrim’s Progress we see that the residence of Vanity Fair were tempting Christian and Faithful to buy whatever indulgence their flesh wanted, but their reply was a glaring difference saying they wanted to buy the truth. It’s what King Solomon says in **Proverbs 23:23**; “*Buy the truth and do not sell it – wisdom, instruction and insight as well.*”

Jesus reveals himself as the only Way, the only Truth and the only Life. Christian friend, don’t sell the truth that you have for anything! Don’t let the devil tempt you to sell it no matter what he offers you and whatever vanity he puts before your eyes; truth is far to valuable to sell.

When people speak well of you and praise you Christians, be careful because their fathers treated the false prophets in the same way. Those on the Celestial Railroad have entered the City of Vanity Fair where their forefathers persecuted Christian and martyred Faithful in Pilgrims Progress, because of their Christian witness which brought conviction of sin upon them. Have you felt conviction of sin when you’ve heard someone is talking about the things of the Lord? The conviction may be so strong that you don’t want to be around them anymore.

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In Pilgrims Progress we read; *“When a convenient time had been determined, the prisoners were brought forth to be tried in order that they might be found guilty and condemned. So that time having come, they were brought before their enemies to be formally accused; the name of the appointed judge was Lord Hate-good. The accusation was essentially the same as what had already been declared, though it included some minor variation. The contents were as follows: “That they [Christian and Faithful] were enemies of, and disturbers of the trading at the Fair; that they had caused both commotions and divisions in the Town, and had gained supporters for their most dangerous opinions, in contempt of the law of their Prince [Beelzebub].”*

In BunyanMinistries.org we read this commentary; *“Notwithstanding its pretended claims of commitment to religious tolerance, the world is never content with the toleration of biblical Christianity. Not only here in the town of Vanity, but also in the City of Destruction, the towns of Deceit, Fair-speech, Lovegain, Apostasy, Graceless, and the Village of Morality, there is identical resistance to the gospel of the saving grace of God. This opposition will often use the cover of local ordinances to enforce the suppression of gospel truth.”*

Saying that Jesus is the only way isn't tolerated in our generation is it? Everyone prefers the 'all-inclusive' religion and 'all-paths' leading to God, don't they? I don't know about you, but I'll shout it from the roof top that Jesus Christ is the only way, He totally excludes and rejects any other god. What can people do to you if they take you out of the world? The Bible says that to be absent from the body is to present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8) and for to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain (Philippians 1:21).

In North America we are living in the days of Vanity Fair, where it appears that Christianity is accepted as part of the community, and especially 'seeker friendly' churches.

A quote from Steve Shirley of [JesusAlive](#), says this about seeker friendly churches; *“A key trait of the "seeker friendly" church is a desire to reach the lost. Of course, this is AWESOME, however, the problem comes from HOW they are trying to do it. "Seeker" means someone who is "seeking" Christ. "Friendly" means basically doing or saying nothing that would offend or drive the person who is seeking Christ away. In regards to the Gospel, this means avoiding any negative talk regarding why we need Christ. There is no talk about the reality of Hell and that Hell is the destination of all people without Christ. There is no talk about sin and the need to repent. There is no talk about the "cost" of following Christ (Mt 16:24-25)(Mk 8:34-35)(Lk 14:25-33). Rarely is the importance of the resurrection mentioned. Instead, Jesus is presented as an answer to your problems, a way to meet your needs, a way to make yourself better, a way to give you a better life.”*

We must remember that the preaching of the cross of Jesus is offensive and foolish to those who are perishing (I Corinthians 1:18). We must preach repentance; the Word of God mirrors what is in the heart – sin – that needs to be repented of. Those riding on the Celestial Religious Railway are dedicated Bible believers that have not repented of their sins, have not become born again and they bring no conviction of sin to Vanity Fair, but rather preach an easy Believism, that is founded in Church tradition and is not the true Gospel of Jesus. Remember, these pilgrims on this Railway, have kept their baggage of sin safely stowed away, they haven't given up their sin and although it is out of sight and supposedly out of mind, they are still sinners who are not born again Christians.

Our author of Celestial Railroad states; *“As I proposed to make a considerable stay here, it gratified me to learn that there is no longer the lack of harmony between the townspeople and pilgrims, which impelled the former to such lamentable mistaken measures as the persecution of Christian, and the fiery martyrdom of Faithful.”*

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So long as you are not preaching the true Gospel of repentance, you will always be accepted by the world (worldly people), because your traditional religious Bible believing Church system brings no conviction of sin to their lives.

Acts 3:18-21 says this; *“18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”* There is refreshing in repentance!

2 Peter 3:9 also says; *“9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward [a]us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”*

In Celestial Railroad we read: *“Many passengers stop to take their pleasure or make their profit in the Fair, instead of going onward to the Celestial City. Indeed, such are the charms of the place, that the people often affirm it to be the true and only Heaven; stoutly contending that there is no other, that those who seek further are mere dreamers, and that, if the fabled brightness of the Celestial City lay but a bare mile beyond the gates of Vanity, they would not be fools enough to go thither. Without subscribing to these, perhaps, exaggerated encomiums, I can truly say that my abode in Vanity Fair was mainly agreeable, and my converse with the inhabitants productive of much amusement and instruction.”*

Now the City of Vanity Fair is being referred to as heaven on earth! Can you imagine that! Pilgrims on the Celestial Railroad are quite entertained and mesmerized with the city where all their indulgences can be realized. They think it's heaven. But the Bible says something quite on the contrary.

The Apostle John says in **1 John 2:15-17**; *“15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”*

Jesus also says in **John 15:18-20** about the hatred that the world will have towards those who truly know Him; *“18 ‘If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”*

Harsh words by Jesus you may say, because we all want to feel the love and be loved. But Jesus knew and knows the truth and knows the persecutions that arise on behalf of His name. Remember, Jesus is exclusive to any other god.

Jesus solidifies his claim in **John 14:1-3, 6**; *“14 ‘Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.’ 6 Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”*

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This world, the City of Vanity of Fair, is not heaven according to what Jesus just said. Jesus is preparing a mansion for each and every one who is called by His name! What a great hope that is for us.

When you're not born again, not having the Holy Spirit living in you, the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. We read in **1 Corinthians 2:6-16**; *"6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. 16 For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ."*

No matter how vivid your imagination is, or how many movies or pictures you've seen of heaven, or what you've heard heaven to be like, is truly incomparable to what heaven actually is because it has not even entered into your heart all the things God has prepared for those who love Him. There is, however, a spiritual discernment that comes when the Spirit of God is living in you. That's why Christian was able to see through the facade of Vanity Fair and why the rider of the Celestial Railroad was not able to see through the facade; he could not discern right from wrong because he was not born again.

We continue in the Celestial Railroad reading; *"Being naturally of a serious turn, my attention was directed to the sold advantages derivable from a residence here, rather than to the effervescent pleasures, which are the grand object with too many visitants. The Christian reader, if he have had no accounts of the city later than Bunyan's time, will be surprised to hear that almost every street has its church, and that the reverend clergy are nowhere held in higher respect than at Vanity Fair. And well do they deserve such honorable estimation--for the maxims of wisdom and virtue which fall from their lips, come from as deep a spiritual source, and tend to as lofty a religious aim, as those of the sagest philosophers of old."*

The enticements and lures of Vanity Fair have not only stopped the persecution of true Christians, but have opened the doors to churches, or religion, to appease the desires of apparent pilgrims who want some type of spiritual encounter. As we read the Reverend's names though of these churches, they are anything but Christ centered and are compared to philosophers of old.

Pulpits are full of Reverends like in Vanity Fair listed below: *"In justification of this high praise, I need only mention the names of the Rev. Mr. Shallow-deep; the Rev. Mr. Stumble-at-truth; that fine old clerical character, the Rev. Mr. This-today, who expects shortly to resign his pulpit to the Rev. Mr. That-tomorrow; together with the Rev. Mr. Bewilderment; the Rev. Mr. Clog-the-spirit; and last and greatest, the Rev. Mr. Wind-of-doctrine."*

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Do you want to sit under ministers who are shallow, stumbling at the truth, saying one thing today and another thing tomorrow, who are bewildered, clogging the spirit and teaching winds of doctrines? If you're not born again, like the pilgrims on the Celestial Railroad, these are the ones who will entice you and lead you astray.

2 Corinthians 11:12-15 says this; *“12 But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. 13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”*

When you're not born again, you will be tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, and without the Holy Spirit living in you, you're not able to discern the truth from the lies.

The Apostle Paul says this in **Ephesians 4:11-15**; *“11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, but, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.”*

This is God's will for you today; that you are not tossed to and fro, that you're walking the straight and narrow pathway, and that when the pleasures and temptations of Vanity Fair come your way, you flee them, because you are heaven bound. The Holy Spirit will put a skip in your step when you're born again, continually filling you and freeing you from oppression and depression. That's how much Jesus loves you. Just thinking about what Jesus has done for you and the mansion He's preparing for you should put a new step in your walk. No matter what the world has to offer you, it cannot replace what Jesus has to offer you.

King Solomon, the richest man ever in the world says in **Ecclesiastes 1:2**; *“Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”* He should have said; Vanity, everything is great because I've experienced everything there is to know under the sun! But he didn't. It was all chasing after the wind. Solomon came to know that this world has nothing to offer compared to the treasures that only God gave him. It is the same for you if you're truly born again of the Spirit of God.