

Christiana's Progress - Part 2 of the Book "Pilgrim's Progress"

September 10, 2017 - Christiana's Progress
Stage 2 - Part 2 (pages 23-25)

The house of the Interpreter in the script we're reading, I would venture to guess, would be a "house of entertainment". It's presented in both visually and dramatically. Innocence even says that Christiana has come to be 'entertained'. At this house, prophetic gifts are in operation using various creative illustrations which require the gift of interpretation to understand their biblical meaning.

2 Timothy 4:2-4 says; *"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."*

There are numerous scriptures in the Bible where interpreters are used to interpret dreams. Joseph interpreting dreams of Pharaoh, the baker, the cup bearer while in prison in **Genesis 40:8** says; *"And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it." So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please.""*

Daniel thoroughly interprets the dream in Nebuchadnezzar's courts in **Daniel 2:16** where it says; *"So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation."* As a result, Daniel was promoted, just like Joseph was. Your gifts will make way for you in life and as the Bible says in Psalm 75:6 that promotion or exaltation doesn't come from the east or the west, but from the Lord. Rather than using selfish ambition get you through life, let the gifts of the Holy Spirit promote you.

Those gifts of the Spirit are talked about in **1 Corinthians 12:9-11** where the Apostle Paul says; *"to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills."*

The gifts of the Spirit are distributed as the Lord and the Holy Spirit wills. **2 Peter 1:16-21** says; *"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."*

The gifts of the Spirit have to line up with the Bible, otherwise your operating in witchcraft involving familiar spirits in exchange for the work of the Holy Spirit. An example would be of a woman going to a church believing the Lord has told her to marry so-and-so man of God. But that 'so-and-so' is already married! It goes against the Bible because that would be adultery. It sounds funny but it goes on all the time with 'so called' confirmations from God, angelic visitations, dreams, prophetic words, etc. There are numerous example and subjects but it HAS TO line up with the Word of God. It doesn't matter how spiritual you believe it is or angelic visitations you think you've had....if it doesn't line up with the Bible...you're in error.

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Even if a 'prophet' speaks a word over your life, if it doesn't line up with the Bible, the more sure word of prophecy, reject that word because it's a false prophet wanting to tickle your ears with fleshly doctrines.

Let's continue on with Innocent where she says the following; *“Can you imagine who is at the door? There is Christiana and her children, and her companion, all waiting for entertainment here.”*

Christiana is compared by the Interpreter to the son in the parable found in **Matthew 21:28-32** where it says; *“But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said to Him, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.”*

God often used creative illustrations thru his prophets and preachers to deliver the word of the Lord for the saints. Ezekiel, Daniel, Jeremiah, Isaiah of the Old Testament of which some had the gifts of interpreting dreams and visions some used creative illustrations to deliver the Word of the Lord. Some of the most creative ways the Lord used a prophet are found in the book of Ezekiel where illustrated messages are done thru this Prophet to speak to the people of Israel.

Ezekiel 4 :1-17 is a clear example of this where God calls Ezekiel to prophesy about a siege that was going to happen to Jerusalem. The first verses says the following; *“You also, son of man, take a clay tablet and lay it before you, and portray on it a city, Jerusalem. Lay siege against it, build a siege wall against it, and heap up a mound against it; set camps against it also, and place battering rams against it all around. Moreover take for yourself an iron plate, and set it as an iron wall between you and the city. Set your face against it, and it shall be besieged, and you shall lay siege against it. This will be a sign to the house of Israel. “Lie also on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. According to the number of the days that you lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity. For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; so you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year. “Therefore you shall set your face toward the siege of Jerusalem; your arm shall be uncovered, and you shall prophesy against it. And surely I will restrain you so that you cannot turn from one side to another till you have ended the days of your siege.”*

You can only imagine how crazy it must have looked like to see Ezekiel doing this. As you read about him, you'll see how God used him many times in dreams, visions and creative illustrations to communicate His word to the people of Israel.

Jesus often used parables to deliver his messages and often required an interpretation. What were the purposes of his parables? We read about it in **Matthew 13:10-16**; *“And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear*

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with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.' But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;"

You are privileged as a child of God to be able to see and hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to you. Jesus knew that many would hear him, but wouldn't hear to be obedient to him. When Jesus spoke in parables, it was to give understanding to those who were his disciples only.

Matthew 13:34-35 says; *"All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world."*

2 Corinthians 4:1-6 also says this; *"Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."*

When you get a chance, read this week about Jesus speaking in parables to his disciples, with whom he also needed to give interpretation at times. [Matthew 13:1-52](#)

John 12:37-41

Who Has Believed Our Report?

"But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them." These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him."

I believe as long as we are serving the Lord there will always be a need for interpretation of dreams and visions, but the Lord has all ready given us a more sure word of prophecy in the Holy Bible that our dreams and visions must line up with. There are no new Revelations. They ceased with the Book of Revelation which was the last book in the Biblical Canon with John writing it on the Isle of Patmos. However, there are ongoing illuminations from reading the Bible, that will inspire us to illustrate the Bible in a visual or audible way that may help interpret what the Bible has already said, these are called illustrated messages.

The story continues saying; *"The Interpreter took them aside again, and took them first into a room where there was a man that could look no way but downwards, with a muck-rake in his hand. There stood also one over his head with a celestial crown in his hand, and offered him that crown for his muck-rake; but the man neither looked up nor regarded, but raked up for himself the straws, the small sticks, and the dust on the floor."*

CHRISTIANA. "I am persuaded that I know something of the meaning of this; for here is a figure of a man of the world, is it not, good sir?"

INTERPRETER. "You said right; and his muck-rake shows his carnal mind. And whereas you see him rather give heed to raking up straws and sticks, and the dust on the floor, than to do what He says who is calling to

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him from above with the celestial crown in his hand; it is to show, that heaven is just a fable to some, and that things here are counted the only things substantial. Now, whereas it was also shown you that the man could look no way but down, it is to let you know that earthly things, when they gain power in men's minds, quite take their hearts away from God."

Examine your life today and see if you're the person with that rake and you can't even look up to see all that God has for you. The Man with the muck rake has his mind set on the things of the flesh, in so much that he cannot hear from God who wants to give him eternal life. Are settling only for what you can get in your own strength? Are you settling for the scraps off of the table? Are you settling for what the world can give you?

Romans 8:5-8

"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

Colossians 3:1-3

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Where do you set your affections on throughout the course of a day?

The Interpreter encourages Christiana and Mercy to look harder at the beautiful spacious room that they're in. Why? Because they're missing an important illustrated message. We read;

"CHRISTIANA. "Here is nothing but an ugly spider, hanging by its hands on the wall."

INTERPRETER. "Is there only one spider in all this spacious room?"

Then the water stood in Christiana's eyes, for she was a woman quick of understanding.

CHRISTIANA. "Yes, Lord, there is more than one here; yes, spiders whose venom is far more destructive than that which is in her."

The Interpreter then looked pleasantly at her, and said,

INTERPRETER. "You have told the truth."

This made Mercy blush, and the boys covered their faces; for they all began now to understand the riddle.

INTERPRETER. "The spider takes hold with her hands, as you see, and is in kings' palaces. (Prov. 30:28)

Wherefore, this is recorded to show you that, however full of the venom of sin you may be, yet you may, by the hand of faith, lay hold of, and dwell in, the best room that belongs to the King's house above?"

As sinful as we are, we have a right and a privilege to lay hold of eternal and live with King Jesus. But this is only through what Jesus did on the cross for us. Christiana new by the spirit that everyone in the room was as that spider, privileged to be a children of God, being the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, while yet still having the venom of the sin nature which is at war with the spirit man.

The Apostle Paul says in **Romans 3:21-26** says; *"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."*

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He also says in **2 Corinthians 5:20-21**; *"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*

Psalm 103:11-13 says; *"For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."* You have the privilege as a son and daughter of God to come into his presence boldly. He hasn't left you as an orphan. You're his child! You can call him Abba - daddy.

When you've been entertained by the Interpreter - the Holy Spirit - through illustrations as Christiana and Mercy were, you'll be able to entertain those you come in contact with, whether it's family, friends, co-workers or those in the streets. Out of the abundance of your heart, your mouth will speak! Preach the gospel with boldness. Share what you've received at church, pray for those who are in need.

The author of Hebrews says this in **Hebrews 4:15-16**; *"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."*

You've heard the word 'privy' right? It's only to a few do you divulge information to. You're privileged to know certain information or get certain things. That's how it is with God being his son or daughter! So come boldly to see what the Interpreter wants to reveal to you today.

The story continues with this illustration;

"INTERPRETER. "See what this little chick is doing, and learn from her to acknowledge where your mercies come from, and, receiving them, by looking up. Yet again, observe and look."

So they looked carefully, and saw that the hen behaved in a fourfold way towards her chickens. 1. She had a common call, and that she made all day long. 2. She had a special call, and that she used only sometimes. 3. She had a brooding note. (Mat. 23:37) And, 4. She had an outcry.

INTERPRETER. "Now, compare this hen with your King, and these chickens with his obedient ones; for, answerable to her, he himself has his own methods which he employs towards his people. By his common call, he gives nothing; by his special call, he always has something to give; he also has a brooding voice for those that are under his wing; and he has an outcry, to sound the alarm when he sees the enemy approaching. I chose, my darlings, to lead you into the room where such things are, because you are women, and they are easy for you."

This example too comes from Jesus when he says in **Matthew 23:37**; *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"*

The heart of the father today is wanting to gather you and millions around the world under his wings, to bring comfort and salvation. As you read Psalm 91 below, know that it carries your privileges as a child of God. Put your name in and apply it to your life.

Psalm 91

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

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I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust."
Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler
And from the perilous pestilence.
He shall cover you with His feathers,
And under His wings you shall take refuge;
His truth shall be your shield and buckler.
You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
Nor of the arrow that flies by day,
Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness,
Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.
A thousand may fall at your side,
And ten thousand at your right hand;
But it shall not come near you.
Only with your eyes shall you look,
And see the reward of the wicked.
Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling place,
No evil shall befall you,
Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;
For He shall give His angels charge over you,
To keep you in all your ways.
In their hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.
You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.
"Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him;
I will set him on high, because he has known My name.
He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and honor him.
With long life I will satisfy him,
And show him My salvation."

So this is the privileged position of the Christian who obeys God's word, As a Christian you hear the voice of the Lord and another you will not follow. You understand the Bible and if you're in need of interpretation he has given you the spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit that lives in you. As a Christian you are privy to the understanding of the Bible. Don't take it for granted. Walk in the privileged authority that Christ has given to you. Your ungodly friends, co-workers or even family don't have this authority to walk in. You can bind up and cast out the devil who is wanting to harass yourself and those around you. That's your entitlement as God's child! Entitlement to have understanding knowing what the Bible says about you.

Bringing it back to the scripture we read at the beginning in II Timothy 4:2-4, you can either pursue false doctrines and whatever itches your ears, or you can listen to the Holy Spirit's interpretation of a more sure word of prophecy, found in the Bible.