

# Christiana's Progress - Part 2 of the book "Pilgrim's Progress"

## November 26th, 2017 - Christiana's Progress Stage 5 - Part 2 - (pages 52-55)

Going through the valley of the shadow of death. Have you been there before or are you going through it?

I'd like to share some statistics from The DeathList 2017. It doesn't sound too encouraging but read on ahead as it's an interesting topic today. It says;

*"This is a record breaking year with 16 deaths out of 50 predicted.*

*Below you will find DeathList 2017, a list of 50 celebrities selected by an expert committee for their likelihood to die during 2017. There are a few rules to DeathList summarised as follows: Candidates must be famous enough such that their death is expected to be reported by the UK media; Candidates cannot be famous solely for the fact they are likely to die in the near future and only 25 candidates can reappear from the previous year's list. 2016 was billed as the year of the celebrity death by some and, although DeathList 2016 started strongly, it hit a very lean period from June to November and ended with a final score of 12, two below the all time record of 14. Has the big celebrity clear-out of 2016 made the task more challenging for 2017 or will the rate of celebrity deaths continue apace? Only time will tell..."* On this website you can see the list if you desire.

There is a group of people who have celebrities in the grave, before they're even there. For example, as of today, they even have Billy Graham as one of the 'celebrities' on this deathlist. It's no wonder these celebrities are dying when there's a 'deathlist' verbalizing who is going to die in that year. That's why it's important to watch out for the death snares in the world around you, that will have you in the grave before your time, untimely deaths. That's why Mr. Great-Heart told them to watch for the snares when they were passing through this valley.

Here is a list, based on natural secular statistics derived from the top ten causes of yearly global death. It's from CNBC.com, they are:

1: Ischaemic heart disease	Global deaths: 7 million	Cost to United States: approx. \$108.9 billion per year
2: Stroke	Global deaths: 6.2 million	Cost to United States: approx. \$43 billion per year
3: Lower respiratory infection	Global deaths: 3.2 million	Cost to United States: pneumonia and influenza, approx. \$40.2 billion in 2005
4: Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Global deaths: 3 million	Cost to United States: approx. \$50 billion per year
5: Diarrhoeal diseases	Global deaths: 1.9 million	Cost to United States: \$365 million allocated to improve global sanitation and access to safe drinking water in 2014
6: HIV/AIDS	Global deaths: 1.6 million	Cost to United States: approx. \$29.7 billion (combined domestic and global spending) in 2014
7: Respiratory cancers	Global deaths: 1.5 million	Cost to United States: lung cancer, approx. \$10.3 billion per year
8: Diabetes mellitus	Global deaths: 1.4 million	Cost to United States: approx. \$245

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		billion per year
9: Road injury	Global deaths: 1.3 million	Cost to United States: \$70 billion
10: Prematurity	Global deaths: 1.2 million	Cost to United States: approx. \$26 billion per year

These are 10 of the giants in the world, that secular statistics are saying that can or will happen to a certain percentage of you, based on certain factors. I think we need to start a life list, of those that are going to live and not die as a result of their faith in Christ this year.

Christiana, her boys, Mercy and Mr. Great-Heart come to borders of the Shadow of Death as we read today. Let's read **Psalm 23:3-5**, a familiar verse to many, but maybe today after reading these statistics, might have more meaning after reading the 'deathlist' and the top 10 reasons for death. It says; "*He restores my soul; he leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.*"

In life there is always going to be the announcement of death, some more painful than others, however for the Christian DEATH carries no sting. We read about that in **I Corinthians 15:54-55**; "*So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"*

You can say; 'O deathlist, where is your sting? And, O 10 great reasons for death, where is your sting?' Many are the afflictions of the righteous but the Lord delivers them out of them all! Christians are not immune from sickness, but what we're making clear today as to what determines your future to help keep you off the deathlist, and top 10 reasons for death, is finding out what the word of God has to say about them.

The script says; "*When they were entering this valley, they thought they heard groaning, as of dying men; a very terrible groaning. They thought also that they heard words of lamentation, spoken as of someone in extreme torment. These things made the boys tremble; the women also went pale; but their guide told them to be of good comfort.*"

If you've ever visited the sick in a hospice, psychiatric ward, or old age home, you can often hear the groans of people dying, either mentally or physically, it can be quite a chilling moment.

The script continues; "*Then said the boys, "Are we not yet at the end of this mournful place?" But the guide also bid them be of good courage, and look carefully where they put their feet, "lest perhaps", said he, "you are taken in some snare."* How can you avoid getting snared as you're to continually watch for them?

The announcements of death, the sounds and the smell of it, can seem overwhelming, but it's very important to not walk as the world walks through these valleys, but to establish your footing on the rock of Jesus, meditating in his words of life, instead of the fearful reports of the world that ultimately will snare you and fill you fear instead of faith. Be careful where you're walking in this valley, be mindful of your footing.

Jesus clearly said in **Matthew 7:24-25** that we're to build our life on him, the Rock; "*Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish*

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*man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."*

You could maybe paraphrase that by saying; 'then the heart disease came, the stroke came, respiratory infection came, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease came, etc., or would try to come upon you, your family, neighbours, or friends . . . but you have a promise that you'll stand and won't be taken out when you build your life on the rock Christ Jesus.

The script continues;

*"CHRISTIANA. "I think I can see something yonder on the road before us, a thing of a shape such as I have never seen before."*

*JOSEPH. "Mother, what is it?"*

*CHRISTIANA. "An ugly thing, child; an ugly thing."*

*JOSEPH. "But, mother, what is it like?"*

*CHRISTIANA. "It's like something I cannot tell what; and now it is but a little way off. It is near!"*

*MR. GREAT-HEART. "Well, let those that are most afraid keep closest to me."*

*So the fiend came on, and the conductor met it; but when it came up to him, it vanished from sight. Then they remembered what they had had been told some time ago: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."*

This 'thing' didn't have a name nor was it described as a person, but in this valley where they were walking, it could have easily been anything that we've mentioned above. Disease is ugly and is a fiend, an enemy or a giant. You may have seen things afar off coming to you, but now they're knocking at your door or at your body. But as we keep close to Jesus and in his word we are safe. **James 4:7** says; *"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."*

As you resist the worlds ways of fear, doubt and unbelief, those phantoms of death that want to snare you, the devils behind them have to flee as you humble yourselves submitting unto Gods word. Whose report are you going to believe in the valley of the shadow of death? You don't have to receive the deathlist or top 10 diseases, numerous other infirmities or things the devil wants to throw at you to take you out. You can look at them in the name of Jesus and speak the word of God and see them flee. In the 'natural mind', you may think it's your lot in life and it's natural and rational, but we're to stay in the spirit and not in the flesh. So when these giants come, we have to address them in the spirit and in the name of Jesus. That's the report that we're to believe in the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

**1 Peter 5:8-9** says; *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."*

The devil is good at getting you to look at the natural, the proven, the tested, the studied, the logistical and rational. But we're to resist the devil. Are you going to open up the door to the devil and say; 'come on in, take a seat, I was expecting you because the stats showed that I am on your list to take out'. Sounds silly maybe but that's what we do if we don't resist him!

We're going to read Psalm 91 please take time to meditate on it. It talks about the safety and protection of abiding in the presence of God. It says; *"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 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*

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*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."*

A valid question is; since the Lord promises to deliver you from and pestilence (other words are plague, deadly disease, epidemic, virulent disease, virus, endemic or pandemic), why is it then as a child of God, they're getting snared and attached by these diseases and even winning? Is this the word of God or isn't it? Do we actually believe that God will deliver us? How then are people getting snared by these diseases that we've mentioned along with numerous other calamities? Angels have been assigned to you if your born again, like Great-Heart was to Christiana to deliver you and protect you! Is your love set upon Jesus, do you know his name and are you calling on his name? I think that's the answer. That's the covenant Jesus made with you! He's promises you long life, not a life cut short dying before your time because of statistics.

It's either God's word that you believe or he didn't really mean what he said. I chose to believe the word of God! We're not saying that as a Christian you won't get afflicted - the devil is good at putting false symptoms on people to get them to believe it's the truth. We can avoid a lot of unnecessary demonic attacks on your body using the authority that God has given you.

It's not a matter of if you're going to go through the valley of the shadow of death, but rather when. It may be the dying of family members, friends, coworkers, neighbors, etc. or yourself battling with death itself. But how are you going to go thru it, full of worldly fear, doubt, unbelief, or by faith in God's word the Holy Bible the sword you've been given to fight the devil with when he's doing that death rattle all around you.

An excellent story in the Bible is found in **Numbers 13:27-33** where the Israelite spies were sent in to Canaan to check out the promised land. It says; *"Then they told him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan." Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."*

These are the tribes, nations or people groups who the Israelites had to conquer, they were enemies of God; **Anak** - descendants of Nephilim who were giants.

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**Amalekites** - Amalek was a grandson of Esau; Esau was Jacob's twin brother to whom he sold his birthright; they were a nomadic tribe; they hated the Israelites; according to Jewish tradition, Amalek represents pure evil or 'those who have given themselves over to the darkside of impurity'. His Jewish numerical value is 240 the meaning of it which is the evil eye of doubt. He was a giant of fear to the Israelites.

**Hittites** - said to have been descendant of Heth who was the great-grandson of Noah; pagan worshipers of nature.

**Jebusites** - a Canaanite tribe who may be identical with the Hittites, they lived in the mountains around Jerusalem

**Amorites** - descended from one of the sons of Canaan (whose father was Ham, the son of Noah), fierce warriors, one king of theirs, Og, was tall and his bed was approximately 13.5 feet long (Deut. 3:11). Worshiped false gods and were pagans. It's said that they established Babylon, they were Semetic-speaking (origins in the Middle East) people from Mesopotamia. Their name (amar) means to utter, say or tell or 'to say in one's heart' or 'the act of speaking.'

Each of these people groups can be replaced with the 'deathlist' or top 10 diseases or sicknesses that want to take you out. They are giants, but don't be afraid of them and back away because their name and the numbers that follow them are massive. Don't be full of fear that they are stronger than you - they must bow their name to Jesus Christ, because he conquered and destroyed them at the cross of Calvary. People, even Christians, would say to you that you can't go against the devil like that, because he's big and ominous and that he'll devour you that you've got to be really careful. NO. Either we believe that Jesus conquered the devil or we don't. Either we use the word against the devil or we don't.

What giants of death do you have in your life now that are rearing its ugly head, discouraging you from believing Gods word and using it as a weapon against the kingdom of darkness. I believe allot of untimely deaths that occur in the body of Christ are a direct result of not using the word of God to fight off the spirit of death.

**2 Corinthians 10:3-5** says; "*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*" Sickness and disease exalt themselves against the knowledge of God...so you take it captive, bind it and cast it out of your body in Jesus name. The devils playground is your mind, he'll throw all kinds of thought into it to try to get you to believe it's truth. But he's a liar.

The script continues saying;

**"MR. GREAT-HEART**

*I have often gone through this valley, and have been much harder put to it than now; and yet you see I am alive. I would not boast in this, because I am not my own saviour; but I trust we shall have a good deliverance. Come, let us pray for light to Him who can lighten our darkness, and rebuke not only these, but all the Satans in hell."*

Like Joshua and Caleb when they said they could conquer the land, Mr. Great-Heart too said that he'd go after ALL the snares that the devil was laying for them. **2 Timothy 1:10** says; "*but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*" Death was abolished at the cross.

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**Hebrews 2:14-15** says; *"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."* An important part of salvation is also healing for our bodies.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-58**; *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."*

Again, if you're going through the valley of the shadow of death...do not fear. Take the sword of the spirit, the word of God, and use it against all the fiery darts and flaming missiles that the devil is throwing at you. You're the conqueror, Jesus has given you his name to use to bind the deathwish on your life or anything that would try to take you out and not fulfill all that God wants you to do. And besides all of that, death is swallowed up in victory, Death, O Death, where is your sting for the Christian. Regardless of the outcome, you still win eternal life as a Christian.