

# THE CELESTIAL RAILROAD

## June 30th, 2019 – The Celestial Railroad Part 19 – The Triumphant Arrival and Conclusion

The train ride for the passengers on The Celestial Railroad has reached its final destination, the River of Death. The question is, do they cross over to The Celestial City or not? Please [click on this link](#) and scroll down to read ‘The Triumphant Arrival and Conclusion’. If you’d like to review this part in Pilgrim’s Progress, please [click on this link](#) and read Chapters 34 and 35.

The sounds and visuals of this arrival would appear to be like a military leader coming back from war, someone great and heroic, with great fan fair, music, song, instruments, crowds and multitudes of fans. It must have been someone very, very important. But to their astonishment, the celebration was for the two pilgrims whom they had mocked along their journey. How many are mocking those in the body of Christ who are living and walking on the straight and narrow path? How many in the easy ‘believism’ crowd are mocking those who take seriously the things of the Lord?

In **Ecclesiastes 7:1** we read this about the value of practical wisdom; “7 A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one’s birth;” A sobering statement isn’t it and very true for those who are born again.

**Philippians 1:21-23** also says this about death; “21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I [a]cannot tell. 23 [b]For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.”

We can hardly wrap our mind around dying to be gain can we. But in Christ, this is true. Jesus said to pick up your cross and be willing to die for Him. Everyone will physically die some day, but will it be gain for you?

Let’s read a commentary of what happens when Christian and Hopeful encounter the River of Death in Pilgrim’s Progress. It says in [BunyanMinistries.org](#) the following; “*For the true believer, death is the last enemy. Presently, death has not been destroyed; this is obvious since all men still die without exception. Death has been conquered by Jesus Christ alone (I Cor. 15:20), and death will eventually be put to death as the “last enemy” (I Cor. 15:25-28), that is at the time of the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-14). However, victory through death is possible only through faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1-5). Believers still die, yet they approach this “dark river” with hope, as did Paul, in Christ’s resurrection (Acts 23:6). What is the ground of this hope? It is the promise of Christ himself: “Because I live, you shall live also” (John 14:19).*”

**1 Corinthians 15:25-28** states; “25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. 27 For “He has put all things under His feet.” But when He says “all things are put under Him,” it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. 28 Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

The commentary continues; “*For the true believer, a trouble-free death is not guaranteed. It is folly for the child of God to automatically anticipate a peaceful and painless death. He may experience relative ease, but on the other hand God may appoint for him a death which will demonstrate the Lord’s revelation to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you” (II Cor. 12:9). Peter was to suffer death glorifying God (John 21:18-19), as was also the case with Stephen (Acts 7:55-60).*”

*Illustration. Concerning the early apostles, tradition declares: Matthew suffered martyrdom by the sword in Ethiopia. Mark died at Alexandria after being dragged through the streets of that city. Luke was hanged on an Olive-tree in Greece. John was put into a cauldron of burning oil but escaped death, and was banished to Patmos. Peter was crucified at Rome with his head downwards. James was beheaded at Jerusalem. James the*

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*Less was thrown from a pinnacle of the temple, and beaten to death below. Philip was hanged against a pillar in Phrygia. Bartholomew was flayed alive. Andrew was bound to a cross, whence he preached to his persecutors till he died. Thomas was run through the body at Coromandel in India. Jude was shot to death with arrows. Matthias was first stoned and then beheaded. Barnabas was stoned to death by Jews at Salonica. Paul "in deaths oft," was beheaded at Rome by Nero.*

These men are the leaders of our faith! They are the ones we read about every day in the Bible.

Continuing to read in the Celestial Railroad: *"How amazingly well those men have got on!" cried I to Mr. Smooth-it-away. "I wish we were secure of so good a reception."*

*"Never fear, never fear!" answered my friend. "Come, make haste; the ferry-boat will be off directly, and in three minutes you will be on the other side of the river. No doubt you will find coaches to carry you up to the city gates."*

Mr. Smooth-it-away was such a liar! While the two pilgrims have passed thru the river of death and are welcomed into heaven, those on The Celestial Railroad are preparing to be taken over the river of death on a comfortable ferryboat instead, that signifies the eternal security of easy believism in the Bible that is void of a living a crucified Christian walk like those two pilgrims.

Have you been smoothed away into believing that death is a comfortable ferryboat ride to the shores of heaven? We hear it all the time that when this or that person died, they went on to be with Lord because they had faith to believe, regardless of having not made him Lord of their lives and becoming born again of the Holy Spirit. They looked peaceful and angelic when they died, so therefore they must be in heaven. Our facial expressions do not dictate if we go to heaven or hell. Remember what we just read about all the early Apostles. I'm sure their faces were wincing and there were great cries of pain in their bodies, but they went on to be with Christ Jesus.

How many celebrities today are confessing that they are a Christian and some even say that they are born-again, yet they don't bear fruits of repentance? They make Christian music albums and movies, but out of the abundance of their mouths they're speaking and behaving like the world, the flesh and the devil. They may say how much they love and believe in Jesus, but Jesus says as we studied last week that He'd rather have they hot or cold, but being lukewarm, He'll vomit them out of His mouth! You must bear fruits of repentance.

If someone tells you they are a Christian, you have every right to look for fruit, and ask them what makes them a Christian. Some would say you're too judgemental to say that. But why not? If a person says they're a Christian, they need to be asked what made them a Christian. Everyone has a testimony of when they became born again, most remember the day and place where it happened.

Jesus says in **Matthew 16:24-27**; *"24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."*

At the judgment seat of Christ, there will be a righteous judgment made about the decisions you made in life, especially as to whether or not you're born again. Do you qualify to enter heaven if you die today? There is a dying that leads to eternal life in heaven and a dying that leads to eternal life in hell. What do you qualify for today?

In **Galatians 5:19-25**, the Apostle Paul says this; *"19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: [a]adultery, [b]fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, [c]murders, drunkenness, revelries, and*

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*the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 [d]gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."*

If any of the above mentioned of fruit of the flesh are in you as a lifestyle, you must repent because you will not inherit the kingdom of God. This scripture clearly shows that the true born again Christian is not walking in just 'beliefism' that those who are on The Celestial Railroad cling to, because remember, they never gave up their baggage – the burden of sin. They clung onto the flesh and sin nature and refused to give it up.

Again, as we've said many times over this series of messages, it's good to believe in Jesus, but it goes beyond that. You must receive Him as Lord and Saviour of your life and be born of His Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

**2 Corinthians 5:1-10** talks to us about the assurance of the resurrection; *"5 For we know that if our earthly [a]house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our [b]habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as [c]a guarantee. 6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. 9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."*

Every one is going to die some day, are you ready to cross over the river of death and be judged by God on the other side?

**Hebrews 9:27-28** says; *"27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation."*

You can believe all you want in the Bible and believe in Jesus, but it won't save your soul unless you repent of your sins and receive Jesus, the Holy Spirit, to come into your body and become born again of His Spirit.

**John 3:3** states; *"3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born [a]again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

Don't be smoothed away by the lies of the devil into believing that you can enter the kingdom of heaven without being born again as what happened to our traveller on the train. It's a lie and will cost you an eternity separated from God, in a place called hell where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

Referencing [BunyanMinistries.org](http://BunyanMinistries.org) about Pilgrim's Progress we read; *"In the realm of human experience, two great realities face us, namely life and death; they seem so antithetical, and worst of all, death seems to triumph over life with such an insatiable thirst. Hence, it is commonly agreed that life is good and death is bad. For this reason man is fond of probing the depths of being and existence, and celebrating life by participating in as many aspects of it as time will allow. Nevertheless, death seems to sour life, to spoil it, to devour it. Death seems so irrational, such a waste. For this reason death is, if we are honest, not at all appealing. Quite the reverse, death is terrifying; it haunts mankind; it proves him to be a coward who, ostrich like, devises all manner of reasons for blocking death out of his mind. He is humiliated to think that he should return to dust*

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*((Gen. 3:19). Hence, in the light of the gospel, when death truly confronts us, then is the measure of our faith manifest, or its lack! Though genuine faith, whether it be weak or strong, will experience deliverance on account of the unchanging greatness of its object.)*

Sounds like someone's 'bucket list' that so many in our society have today doesn't it. Celebrating all that life has to offer, but have not prepared for eternity. One way or another, your faith is going to be confronted with death. This scripture in **1 Corinthians 15:50-58** is the truth, hope and victory of the born again Christian when they die; "50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a [a]mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 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. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 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." 55 "O[b] Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 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."

For the true born again Christian, death has no sting, but death does have a sting over the easy believism crowd as those on this train ride, together with every other unbeliever in life who has not made Jesus Christ Lord of their lives and having been born of His Holy Spirit. Death may come to the born again Christian in many ways, be it natural, peaceful or in martyrdom, that we do not know, only God does. But the spiritual sting of it has been taken away by Christ Jesus.

We've concluded this story, so let me ask you; have you asked Jesus Christ to be Lord of your life and have you received His Holy Spirit in you to become born again? The reason why this story and message series is so profound is because of God the Father's love for you. Jesus came willingly to become the one who paid the penalty for sin, although He himself was sinless. God has made a way for you to be redeemed back to Him through His only son, Jesus Christ. You see at the end of this story, the devil revealed his bluff and the passengers saw the flames of hell darting out of his eyes, assuring them that they'd see him again in hell, not heaven. He fooled and deceived all those on the train. Today, you're without excuse. The true message of the gospel of Jesus Christ and His salvation plan for you has been revealed. God is not willing that any perish but that all should come to repentance so that all can live in heaven with Him for eternity. If you're not born again, pray this prayer of salvation with me.

*Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that I'm a sinner. I repent of my sins right now. I repent for having thought that by just believing in you and Jesus was sufficient to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven but I see now that I must be born again. Jesus, forgive me of my sins and now I receive you into my life to be Lord and I receive the Holy Spirit in me to become born again, in your name, amen.*