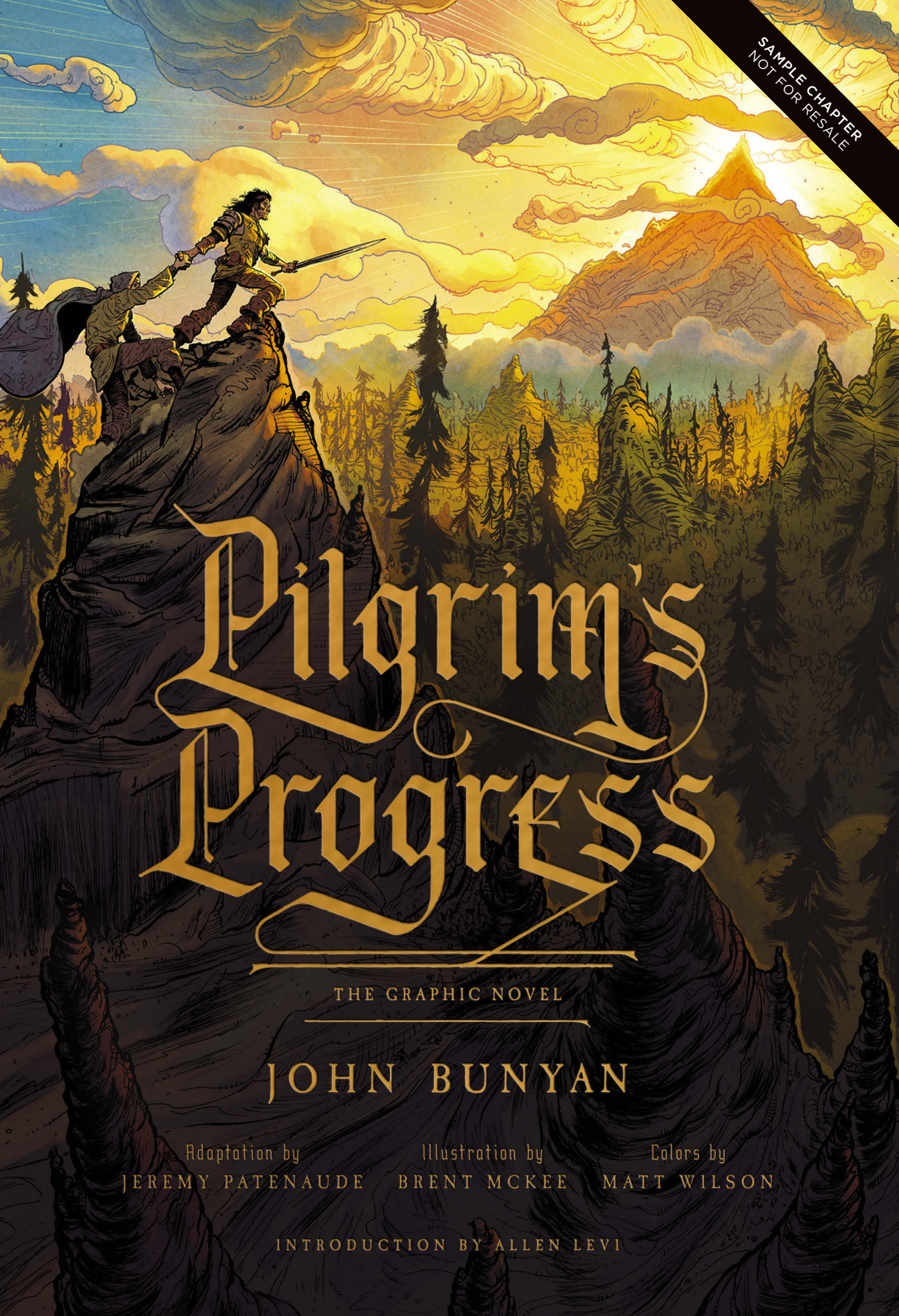
SAMPLE CHAPTER
NOT FOR RESALE



Pilgrim's Progress

THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

JOHN BUNYAN

Adaptation by
JEREMY PATENAUDE

Illustration by
BRENT MCKEE

Colors by
MATT WILSON

INTRODUCTION BY ALLEN LEVI

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NOT FOR RESALE

Pilgrim's Progress

THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

STORY BY
John Bunyan

ADAPTATION BY
Jeremy Patenaude

ILLUSTRATION BY
Brent McKee

COLOR BY
Matt Wilson

LETTERS BY
Taylor Esposito

CROSSWAY®
WHEATON, ILLINOIS

To Moonyoung Oh

Whose faithfulness and passion for Bunyan's extraordinary tale we witnessed firsthand when she brought the legendary story of Christian's journey to life for the precious children of our two churches, even in the shadow of a global pandemic.

Jeremy

For my Crystal

I couldn't imagine a more perfect wife, mother to our children, or friend.

Brent

To Steve Owens

At every turn, your example reminds me of the path I want to follow.

Matt

Pilgrim's Progress: The Graphic Novel
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INTRODUCTION

RECENTLY I BUMPED INTO AN OLD FRIEND, a lawyer, who told me of a men's group that gathers weekly at his office to drink coffee and study a book together. He shared with me that, at the time, the group was reading the 1678 version, the original, of *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan. He commented on the liveliness of the discussions surrounding the text and the surprise often expressed about its relevance to twenty-first-century life.

That sidewalk conversation occurred shortly before I was invited to write an introduction to this new rendition of that literary classic. My friend's comments were a well-timed reminder that great works of literature, much like Scripture, have no expiration date. They endure largely because they deal with the deep, immutable longings of the human heart and because they treat seriously our individual and communal lives—our pilgrimages—in this world. The great books address universal questions: Why are we here? What is truth? Why is the world so broken? What is our hope? How ought we to live?

To answer those questions, John Bunyan, a prisoner at the time for unlawful preaching, employed the use of "similitude," that is, an allegorical dream about "a man clothed in rags standing in a certain place, with his face [*turned away*] from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden on his back."[1]

That descriptive opening was not only the start of a new book, it was, according to scholars, the start of a new *sort* of book. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is considered by many to be the first English novel. Narrative fiction as we know it now was, at best, in its infancy when Bunyan wrote of the pilgrim's long journey. That being the case and apparently anticipating some opposition to his profane use of storytelling and metaphor to explain the gospel, he prefaced the book with an "apology," a defense, of his intent.

A good fisherman, Bunyan argued,

> . . . engages all his wits,
> Also his snares, lines, angles, hooks, and nets . . .[2]

in reaching his desired goal.

Bunyan's desired goal as a preacher, writer, and pamphleteer was unambiguous: reach the masses, especially the working class, with the gospel. He "was not the first poor man to write English literature," states one scholar, "but he was the first to write in the language of the poor."[3]

Bunyan deliberately wrote with words and in a fashion that were accessible to his audience. Christ did the same with his parables. And both—Jesus and Bunyan—incurred opposition from those who felt that the things of God might best be left to the intellectual high ground.

For prophets of old, for priests of the ancient order, for writers and preachers such as Bunyan, and if I might be so bold, for Christian artists today, there was and will always be heavy reliance on types, shadows, metaphors, parables, allegory, and plain language to proclaim the kingdom of God. There are, after all, many ways to tell a story. And no story more than Christ's gospel deserves to be told in as many ways as we can possibly tell it. Write it, sing it, dance it, paint it, film it, build it, live it. "Go . . . and make disciples" is broad enough to include all manner of expression (Matt. 28:19).

It is difficult to write a short introduction about a book that is considered by many to be the most widely influential ever written in English, a book that, since its inception in 1678, has never been out of print, a book that has been translated into more than two hundred languages and has been cited in works by Cowper, Dickens, Thackeray, Hawthorne, Alcott, Twain, Forster, Kipling, and Shaw. Its praise, while not universal, is exceptional for its depth and intensity.

Admittedly the language of Bunyan's seventeenth-century England is a challenge to many modern, especially young, readers. *The Pilgrim's Progress* was written only fifty years after the death of Shakespeare and only eleven years after *Paradise Lost*. While a loyal few among us still insist that antiquated works should be read only in their original iterations, charity might forgive those of us who have limited time or inadequate training for such demanding texts. I for one am grateful for adaptations that have made stories like *The Pilgrim's Progress* accessible to contemporary minds.

It makes me doubly grateful that we now have—you are holding it—a graphic novel that depicts Bunyan's allegory through the use of clear, concise text and beautifully evocative illustrations. What a treasure!

I have wondered what Mr. Bunyan might say about this twenty-first-century rendition of his magnum opus. The aforementioned "apology" gives a strong clue. From it, I am confident that he would heartily applaud Jeremy Patenaude, Brent McKee, Matt Wilson, Taylor Esposito, and everyone involved with this project from Crossway for adding this graphic novel to the tackle box of gospel proclamation. He would thank them for the kindness it reflects, a kindness that wishes for all, not just a learned few, to know the Story that guides us "from this world to that which is to come."[4]

Might we find ourselves, one and all, among the vast tribe of pilgrims heading safely home.

To the King,
Allen Levi
author, *Theo of Golden*

BUNYAN'S DREAM

As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where there was a den, and I laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream.

JOHN BUNYAN'S

Pilgrim's Progress

1 · EXODUS

I SAW A MAN CLOTHED IN RAGS.

HE HELD A BOOK IN HIS HANDS.

AND AS HE READ, HE WEPT AND TREMBLED.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED? PLEASE TELL ME. BECAUSE I CANNOT TAKE THIS ANY LONGER.

BEFORE HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN, HE FOUGHT TO RESTRAIN HIS FEARS.

BUT HE COULD NOT HIDE THEM FOREVER.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, CHRISTIAN?

YOU HAVEN'T HAD FOOD IN DAYS. YOU'VE BEEN HIDING FROM US, BURIED IN THAT BOOK.

MY DEAR CHRISTIANA. MY SWEET CHILDREN.

THIS BOOK. IT HAS TOLD ME THAT OUR CITY, EVEN OUR VERY HOME, IS DOOMED FOR DESTRUCTION.

IF WE DON'T LEAVE THIS PLACE, WE WILL ALL PERISH.

A BOOK TOLD YOU THIS, CHRISTIAN?

THEN GET RID OF IT.

NOTHING LIKE THAT COULD EVER HAPPEN. IT'S FOOLISHNESS TO EVEN THINK OF IT.

IF THIS BOOK IS CAUSING YOU SO MUCH PAIN, YOU SHOULD THROW IT AWAY.

I CANNOT DO THAT, MY LOVE. SOMETHING TELLS ME IT'S THE TRUTH.

THEN YOU SHOULD GO TO BED.

SLEEP THIS OFF, AND PERHAPS YOU WILL WAKE UP TO FIND THAT THIS BOOK'S THREATS WERE ONLY A DREAM.

BUT THE NEXT MORNING THE THREATS WERE NOT A DREAM.

NOR THE NEXT.

NOR THE NEXT.

IT WAS THEN THAT CHRISTIAN KNEW...

...THINGS COULD NOT CONTINUE AS THEY HAD BEFORE.

SOMETHING HAD TO CHANGE.

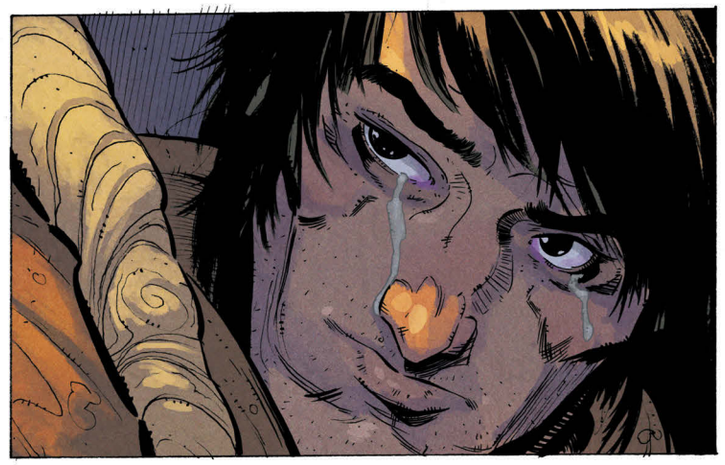
As he read more of the book, the weight of what he read began to feel like a **burden.**

A great burden he could not remove.

The words of the book drove him to despair, until he could not take it any longer.

What shall I do to be saved?











YET IF WHAT YOU READ IS TRUE, WHY THEN DO YOU STAY?
IF YOU DESIRE LIFE, YOU MUST FLEE FROM THE WRATH TO COME.
BUT WHERE CAN I GO?
DO YOU SEE THE NARROW **WICKET GATE** IN THE FAR DISTANCE?
NO.
DO YOU SEE THE **LIGHT** THEN?
I THINK I DO.
THEN KEEP THAT LIGHT IN YOUR EYES AND FOLLOW IT.
CHRISTIAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE?
MY PRECIOUS WIFE. WE CANNOT WASTE ANY MORE TIME.
WE NEED TO LEAVE THIS PLACE. WE NEED TO LEAVE **NOW!**
NO, CHRISTIAN.
WE CANNOT COME WITH YOU.
IF YOU LEAVE OUR CITY, YOU GO **ALONE.**
PLEASE, I BEG OF YOU, MY LOVE. COME WITH ME.
THIS CITY WILL BE LAID WASTE.
I'M PLEADING WITH YOU. SPARE YOURSELF AND SPARE OUR DEAR CHILDREN.
WE CANNOT COME WITH YOU, CHRISTIAN.
WE **WILL NOT** COME WITH YOU.
FATHER, PLEASE DON'T GO.
LIFE. LIFE ETERNAL.

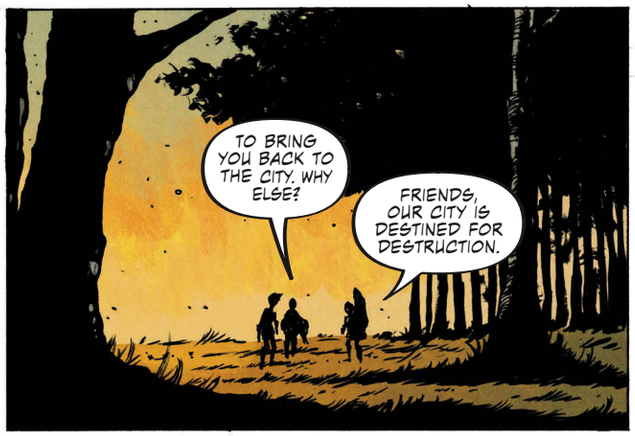
WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOUR HUSBAND?

MADNESS.

THEN WE WILL FETCH HIM BACK. COME, ***PLIABLE.***




CHRISTIAN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING SO FAR FROM HOME?
OBSTINATE. PLIABLE. WHY HAVE YOU COME?


TO BRING YOU BACK TO THE CITY. WHY ELSE?
FRIENDS, OUR CITY IS DESTINED FOR DESTRUCTION.

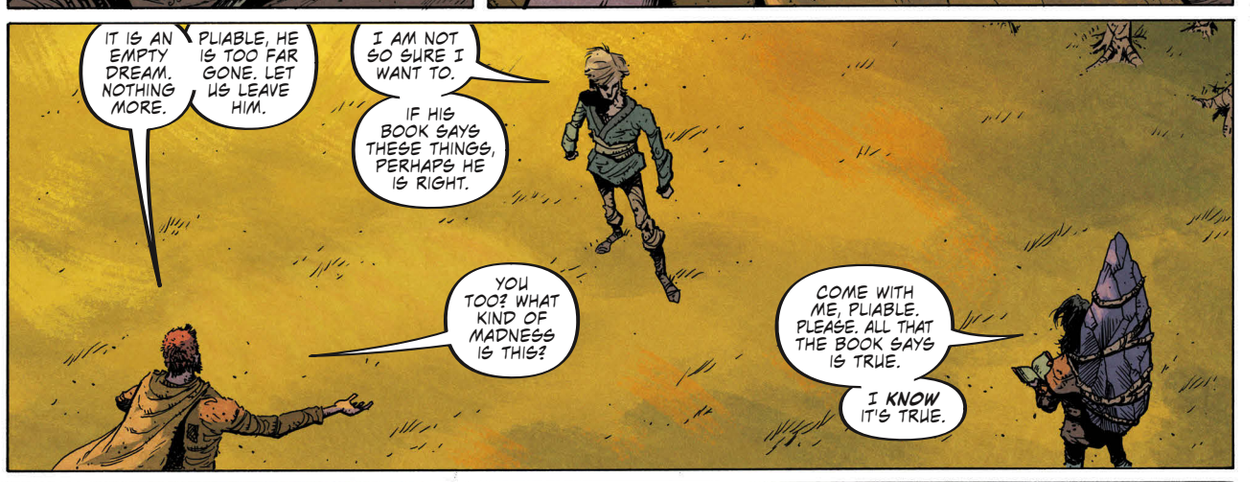



THE BOOK I HAVE SPEAKS OF A DAY WHEN IT WILL BE JUDGED.


IT IS DOOMED, BROTHERS. YOU MUST COME WITH ME.


AND LEAVE EVERYTHING WE HAVE? TO GO WHERE, EXACTLY?
A PLACE THAT WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED.
A PLACE OF JOY, PEACE, AND PURITY. IT IS ALL IN MY BOOK.


IT IS A FOOL'S BOOK THEN.
WHY WOULD WE LEAVE ALL THAT WE POSSESS FOR THE SAKE OF A DREAM?


IT IS AN EMPTY DREAM. NOTHING MORE.
PLIABLE, HE IS TOO FAR GONE. LET US LEAVE HIM.
I AM NOT SO SURE I WANT TO.
IF HIS BOOK SAYS THESE THINGS, PERHAPS HE IS RIGHT.
YOU TOO? WHAT KIND OF MADNESS IS THIS?
COME WITH ME, PLIABLE. PLEASE. ALL THAT THE BOOK SAYS IS TRUE.
I KNOW IT'S TRUE.



YES. I DO THINK I WANT TO SEE WHAT HE IS TALKING ABOUT, OBSTINATE...

PERHAPS I WILL GO WITH CHRISTIAN.

SUIT YOURSELF. EVIDENTLY, ONE FOOL IS NOT ENOUGH.

TELL ME, CHRISTIAN. WHERE ARE WE HEADED, AND WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE?

THE PLACE WE ARE GOING, MY FRIEND, IS FAR GREATER THAN YOU CAN POSSIBLY IMAGINE.

THE BOOK SPEAKS OF A GLORIOUS KINGDOM TO BE ENJOYED FOREVER BY THOSE WHO REACH IT.

NO MORE TEARS, NO MORE SUFFERING-- ONLY BEAUTY AND JOY.

I MUST ADMIT, THAT SOUNDS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT WE COULD EVEN HAVE SUCH AMAZING THINGS?

IT IS BECAUSE OF THE ***LORD OF THE KINGDOM.***

HE HAS PROMISED IT. BUT ONLY TO THOSE WHO FORSAKE ALL ELSE AND COME TO HIM.

IF WE SEEK HIM, MY FRIEND, THE BOOK SAYS THAT ALL OF IT WILL BE OURS.

WHAT IS THIS, CHRISTIAN?

I DO NOT KNOW!

IS THIS THE KINGDOM YOU SPEAK OF?

PLEASE HELP ME, PLIABLE!

I *CANNOT*, OR I TOO WILL BE SWALLOWED UP BY THIS SWAMP.

IF THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF OUR JOURNEY, NEITHER OF US WILL SURVIVE THE TRIP.

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO BELIEVE SUCH ABSURDITIES.

I WILL NOT ENTERTAIN THIS PILGRIMAGE OF YOURS ANY LONGER! I WILL RETURN TO THE CITY.

THANK YOU! I NEARLY DIED.

WHO ARE YOU, FRIEND?

I AM CALLED HELP.

WHAT WERE YOU DOING IN THERE?

I AM HEADED TO THE WICKET GATE. I DID NOT SEE THE BOG UNTIL I'D ALREADY FALLEN IN.

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

IT IS CALLED THE SLOUGH OF DESPOND.

THOSE WHO FLEE THE CITY LEAVE THAT PLACE FILLED WITH MANY FEARS AND DOUBTS ABOUT THE JOURNEY.

ALL OF THOSE THINGS COLLECT HERE, AND OVER TIME IT HAS BECOME A MIRY PIT.

WHY DID YOU NOT TAKE THE STEPS?

I WAS SO CONCERNED WITH MOVING FORWARD THAT I DID NOT EVEN THINK TO LOOK.

BY THE TIME I SAW THE DANGER, IT WAS TOO LATE.

IT IS NOT TOO LATE, MY FRIEND. NOT YET. LOOK CLOSER.

THE STEPS ARE HARD TO SEE, BUT THE KING HAS PUT THEM THERE FOR THE SAFETY OF PILGRIMS LIKE YOURSELF.

YOU MUST PAY CLOSE ATTENTION ON YOUR JOURNEY.

FROM HERE TO THE GATE THAT YOU SEEK, ALL THE GROUND IS GOOD.

NOW BE ON YOUR WAY, MY FRIEND. AND MAY THE LORD GUIDE YOU SAFELY TO YOUR DESIRED HAVEN.



CHAPTER 1: EXODUS

The Book

We were first introduced to a man with "a Book in his hand."[6] John Bunyan uses this book to represent Scripture. What the man found within this book, however, plunged his soul into despair, ultimately launching him on his perilous journey. The book's power to do this arose from the truth that

> the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Heb. 4:12–13)

The book showed **Christian** the truth about God and about himself. What he read terrified him. Everything that follows in this story flows from Christian's fateful encounter with the book.

Heavy Sin

The use of the name "Christian" anticipates a pivotal change to come. He is initially described as being distressed and clothed in rags, with a heavy burden on his back. These images express his increasing awareness of his own sin. We may think that sin is simply doing something that has been labeled as morally wrong. Scripture, however, tells us that sin is anything we do or say that does not acknowledge God as the all-sufficient provider he truly is and when we instead turn to embrace something else in God's place (Jer. 2:13; Rom. 14:23). To reject God in this way is to commit treason and to be deserving of a justice even "lower than the grave"[7] (Matt. 10:28; Rom. 6:23; Heb. 9:27). The heavy burden on Christian's back represents his newfound awareness of his sin.

Way of Escape

After being commanded by **Evangelist** to flee the wrath to come, Christian parted ways with his former life: the city of his birth and the family he desperately loves. This heartrending parting is not at all intended to promote the desertion of one's wife and children. Rather, it represents the total realignment of one's priorities once the true danger of sin is encountered. Those who remained behind in the city, including Christian's wife, have deliberately joined themselves to its destruction. Christian's departure is a vivid picture of what Jesus refers to as counting the cost: "Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33; see also 14:28) for "whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37).

Pilgrim

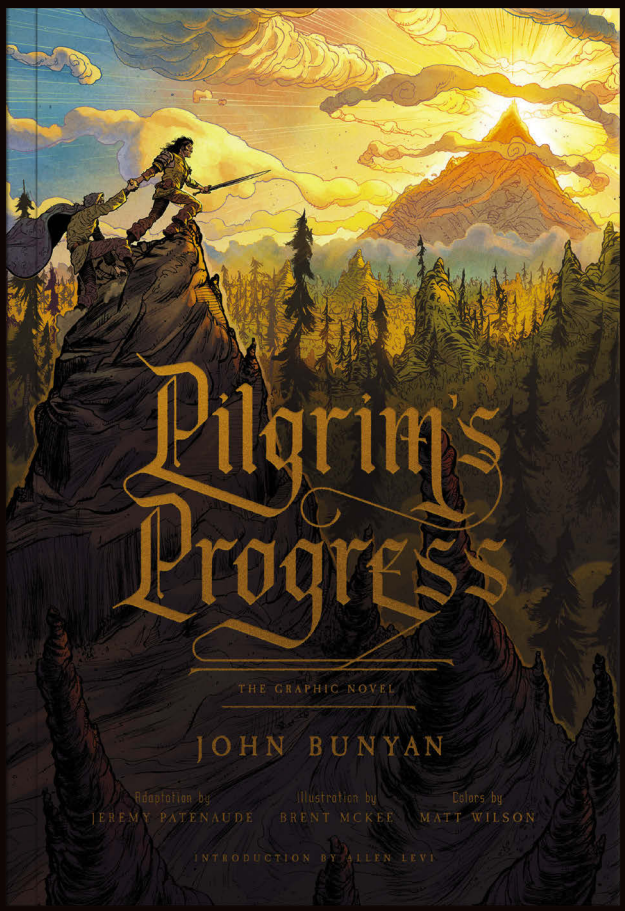
As soon as Christian set out on his journey, he began to embody the word *pilgrim* found in our book's title. In the simplest of terms, a pilgrim is a traveler. Hebrews 11:13 tells us that the saints of old "acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth." Both the Geneva Bible and the KJV Bible translate the Greek word for "exiles" as "pilgrims." It is no surprise then that this passage feels so true to our protagonist, Christian, nor that he was headed to a city, since the Lord "has prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16).

Difficulties Ahead

After escaping the city, Christian was first met by **Obstinate** and **Pliable**, seeking to persuade him to return. Soon thereafter, he failed to take the stone path across the Slough of Despond and found himself sinking in the treacherous bog. (*Slough* simply means bog or marsh.) Both events introduce a pattern that will continue throughout his entire journey: Christian will encounter many people and places that attempt to prevent him from reaching his final destination. Obstinate refused Christian's request to join the pilgrimage, while Pliable agreed at first, only to abandon Christian when things got difficult. The Slough of Despond would have certainly killed Christian right at the start of his journey if it had not been for **Help**'s timely rescue. The difficulties that lie ahead will test the pilgrim in various ways, but God has promised to faithfully safeguard his people every step of their journey (Phil. 1:6; Heb. 13:5–6).

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

PSALM 119:105



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Pilgrim's Progress follows the tumultuous journey of a pilgrim traveling from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. Brimming with hope and excitement while demonstrating the inevitable perils along the way, John Bunyan masterfully illustrates the Christian experience, helping readers of all ages understand the path to spiritual formation.

This graphic novel visually tells Bunyan's well-loved story to a brand-new generation of readers. Adapted with the utmost care, this condensed edition retains the same rich and timeless language consistent with the original work. For lifelong readers of *Pilgrim's Progress* and those picking up this work for the very first time, it will captivate the senses, reveal beauty and truth, and help fix their eyes on Christ.

JOHN BUNYAN (1628–1688) was a nonconformist preacher in the seventeenth-century English church. He is most famous for his celebrated *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which he penned while in prison. Bunyan was author of nearly sixty other books and tracts, including *The Holy War* and *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*.

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