

## *The Holy War* Study Guide – Week 9

### The Joy of Salvation

What primary Bible passages come to your mind as you read this assignment?

To what degree does the story accurately reflect Bible teaching?

As a believer it would be very difficult to read this portion without a smile growing on one's face. The section begins with the townsmen standing in great uncertainty and ends with their leaping for joy. The prisoners—Lord Understanding, Mr. Conscience, and Lord Will-be-will—had gone to meet Shaddai “in black, but they came back to the town in white. They went down to the camp in ropes, they came back in chains of gold. They went down to the camp with their feet in fetters, but came back with the steps enlarged under them. They went to the camp looking for death, but came back from thence with assurance of life. They went down to the camp with heavy hearts, but came back again with pipe and tabor playing before them.”

They looked for nothing but the axe and block [a reference to a style of execution typically reserved for gentry – beheading!]; but behold joy and gladness, comfort and consolation, and such melodious notes attending them, that it was sufficient to make a sick man well.

What joy! What transformation of circumstance! What sleepless wonder is instilled in the hearts of those who are beneficiaries of Shaddai's grace mediated through His Son, Immanuel! We can enter into the joy of the liberating power of the Gospel, and taste together with the citizens of Mansoul the magnitude of the mercy of God displayed in our own salvation! It would do us well to read this portion audibly and be tutored by Bunyan how to verbalize the joy of God's salvation wrought in us.

Can you think of any New Testament Bible examples of believers who expressed the exuberant joy of their salvation?

The prisoners' triumphant return far exceeds what the townsmen had hoped, yet they naturally ask how Immanuel will deal with the rest of the town. Will He be as gracious to them as He was to the prisoners? As the reunion scene unfolds, the promise of Immanuel's pardon for ALL of Mansoul is announced and received with more shouts of joy. In the scenes that follow, we can watch the invasive and pervasive work of the Gospel – it does not simply redeem parts of men, but it redeems them in their entirety. Such wonder-full, merciful provision causes them to praise Shaddai and Immanuel for their unique excellencies.

Pardoned sinners will ever magnify the exceeding riches of divine grace. It cannot but appear marvelous beyond expression. In vain the laboring soul attempts to measure the breadth, the length, the depth, and the height of the love of Christ; it surpasses knowledge [Ephesians 3:18-19] (*The Holy War*, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 212).

The pardon is initially announced to the town by the forgiven prisoners, and they wait expectantly for a fuller revelation of the pardon from Immanuel Himself. Our own understanding of the nature and extent of our pardon is unfolded in stages also.

When the full pardon based on Exodus 34:6-7 and Matthew 12:31, Bunyan notes that even the pardons “seals . . . made a brave show.” The reference to the seals is probably an attempt to incorporate Scripture's teaching concerning the role of the Holy Spirit in a believer's salvation. In Ephesians 4:30, Paul teaches believers not to *grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption*. Earlier in the book (Ephesians 1:13), Paul had also taught them that the Spirit Himself was the seal of their salvation. What does this mean? The following quotation from John Owen may be helpful here:

“God's sealing of believers is His gracious communication of the Holy Ghost unto them, *so to act by divine power in them as to enable them unto all the duties of their holy calling*, evidencing them to be accepted with Him both to themselves and others, and asserting their preservation unto eternal salvation. The effects of this sealing are, gracious operations of the Spirit in and upon believers, and but the sealing itself is the communication of the Spirit unto them. For it is not said that the Holy Ghost seals us, but that we are sealed with Him. He is God's seal unto us. . . .Where God sets this seal, such effects will be produced as shall fall under the observation of the world.” ~John Owen (1616-1683).

Into the festive moments reveling in the new found mercies of Immanuel, a foreshadowing of future trouble is cast. In exuberant, bold (not proud) language, the townsmen welcome Immanuel's making residence with them and promise Him that the town is fully at His disposal and the disposal of His soldiers, and that every preparation will be made for His long residence there. They pledged,

“We have room for thee, we have room for thy men, we have also room for thy weapons of war, and a place to make a magazine for thy carriages. Do it, Immanuel, and thou shalt be king and captain in Mansoul for ever, yea, govern thou

also according to all the desire of thy soul, and make thou governors and princes under thee of thy men of war, and we will become they servants, and thy laws shall be our direction.”

In the marginal note of Bunyan’s original edition, he penned the words, “Say and hold it, Mansoul.” The words send a slight tremor through the joyful, optimistic promises flowing from the mouths of the townsmen, and we who know our own propensity to spiritual weakness understand that our zeal often diminishes, and that promises once made to our Savior are easily forgotten with time and their force loses its grip on our memories and affections. In ensuing conversation with Immanuel the townsmen clearly do recognize the treacherous nature of their hearts.

Coupled with the warning [marginal note] is a direct allusion to the presence of Diabolonians probably still living among the townsmen of Mansoul. The Mansoul vs. Diabolonian dichotomy has been apparent throughout the story, and it appears that Bunyan is equating the Diabolonians to represent the flesh – that part of man that is *not subject to the law of God and neither indeed can be* (Romans 8:7); however, in other cases, he seems to represent them as fallen angels who fell with Diabolus. Whatever is precisely the case, in the first half of the story, the Diabolonians were useful, willing pawns in the hands of Diabolus, and their same role in the second half of the story will become increasingly apparent. Some of the Diabolonians whom we have already encountered in the story include: Mr. Incredulity (who will prove to be the most infamous of them all), Mr. Lustings, and Mr. Forget-good. [In the next assignment we will see these characters up close once more as well as some of their comrades.]

The tender exchange between the townsmen and Immanuel moves the heart to Immanuel to assent to their invitation to dwell in Heart Castle and to establish His men of war as their rulers. He entered the town in a fashion resembling Christ’s triumphal entrance into Jerusalem – with great fanfare, great welcome – He entered to dwell in their hearts by faith [Credence] (Ephesians 3:17).

Notice the eagerness with which the townsmen attempt to house the king’s men and the sorrow of the people when their homes are not large enough to hold more. The identified arrangements are indicative of great spiritual care. Based on what you know of Immanuel’s captains from earlier in the story, what reasons might you discern for their placement?

<i>Immanuel’s Men</i>	<i>Residence</i>	<i>Spiritual Placement?</i>
Captain Innocency	Mr. Reason	
Captain Patience	Mr. Mind	
Captain Charity	Mr. Affection	
Captain Good-hope Captain Boanerges Captain Conviction	Mr. Conscience	
Captain Judgment	Lord Will-be-will	

Captain Execution		
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The transparency of Immanuel with the townsmen, and their open joy in His frequent presence, His laws, and His conduct is heartwarming. Their desire for access to Him, the importance they attach to His smallest word, and the way they emulate His smallest deed communicate the personal affection growing in their hearts while they have fresh remembrance of His having delivered them. The scene in which they enjoy the riddles further illustrates their delight and absorption with Immanuel. What was the content of the riddles Immanuel shared with them at the feast?

The riddles seem to refer chiefly to the types of Christ, which abound in the Scriptures, which are full of divine entertainment to gracious and enlightened souls. The very portraiture of Jesus is seen in them; meditation on these adds greatly to the delight of the gospel feast (*The Holy War*, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 226).

Another foreshadowing of future struggle is the preparation through which Immanuel leads them to protect their city from within and without. What offensive and defensive measures does Immanuel prescribe?

**Vocabulary:**

Magazine - an item or place in which ammunition is stored.