

The Holy War Study Guide – Week 12

Mansoul Declines From Its First Love

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

To what degree does the story accurately reflect Bible teaching?

At the end of our last assignment, we were informed of the presence and pervasive influence of Mr. Carnal-security within the walls of Mansoul and informed that a more full account of his doings would follow. The reading this week summarizes the methods by which Carnal-security gains acceptance, identifies how he exercised influence, and the difficult, exposed, vulnerable position in which Mansoul found itself for having so fondly embraced Carnal-security.

The Lineage, Character, and Influence of Mr. Carnal-security

The story of Mr. Carnal-security's family is masterfully composed. His father is Mr. Self-Conceit, a Diabolonian, and his mother was Lady Fear-nothing, daughter of Lord Will-be-will. Lord Will-be-will, a native Mansoulman, had given his daughter as wife to Mr. Self-Conceit in the days in which Diabolus reigned. Such a mixed marriage – joining a native Mansoulman and a native Diabolonian – made the task of obeying Immanuel's command to expunge from the city all Diabolonians a bit more complex.

“When Mansoul first received Immanuel, a strict charge was given to discover and destroy the Diabolonians; but this was too much neglected; the consequence was that they [Diabolonians] became to Mansoul what the Canaanites were to Israel, according to the prediction, Numbers 33:55. ‘If ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then shall it come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell’” (*The Holy War*, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 305).

What aspects of Mr. Carnal-security's character appear?

- He, like his father, was self-conceited and bold
- He, like his mother, feared nothing (not even Shaddai)
- He stayed busy and familiarized himself with all the news of the town
- He chose sides very carefully, always opting to identify outwardly with the apparently strongest party or victor, though inwardly, he held aloof from embracing Shaddai

- i.e., he had worked hard for Diabolus, and then feigned subservience to Immanuel

How did Mr. Carnal-security gain a hearing with the Mansouliaus who had been warned by Immanuel about such men as he?

How effective was Mr. Carnal-security's strategy?

In following after Mr. Carnal-security, what teaching of Immanuel regarding the fortifications and power of Mansoul did the Mansouliaus overlook?

"[C]arnal security makes men trust to their fortifications, their privileges, rather than to the Lord; and while they boast of perseverance, take no care to persevere, but grow careless about prayer, communion with God, and coming to His table; while pride, sloth, and conformity to the world prevail" (*The Holy War*, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 290).

The list of ways in which the Mansouliaus neglect Immanuel is thought-provoking, and thankfully, it occurs in a context when Immanuel's perspective is also being considered, further heightening the spiritual tragedy in their choices. Read through the list below. Consider the ways in which each reflects an independence from Immanuel and an inappropriate, carnal security in our profession of faith:

- Leaving off of taking initiative in regular communion with Immanuel
- Disregarding His visits or lack of visits to them
- Diminishing estimation of the Love Feasts (Lord's Table)
- Reflecting growing confidence in themselves and less dependence on Immanuel

Immanuel's Response to Cooled Love

Neglected by the townsmen, Immanuel observes the trend in their affections and responds in a way suited to help identify to them the gravity of their choices and the far-reaching consequences of "falling in love" with just one of the Diabolonians.

He responds first by bemoaning the decline. He then commissions His Secretary, the Holy Spirit, to remonstrate with them, but sadly to no avail. Therefore, He begins to withdraw Himself from them by degrees that His absence might awaken them to seek Him once more.

- He pulls back His presence
- His Word to them is rendered less pleasant and refreshing
- His favors to them are less frequent
- He responds more reservedly to their occasional efforts to communicate with Him
- He withdraws His presence gradually but totally from the town
- His appointed ruler, Mr. God's-peace, steps down from his duties

Bunyan says, "Thus they walked contrary to Him, and He again, by way of retaliation, walked contrary to them" – Immanuel is not responding to spite the townsmen, but to awaken them to their loss.

Mr. Carnal-security Encounters Mr. Godly-fear

Mr. Carnal-security aimed to seduce Mr. Godly-fear to entice him also to succumb to complacency, and inviting him to a feast for that purpose, discovered at last that he had met his match.

How did Mr. Godly-fear respond to Mr. Carnal-security's efforts to entice him to sin?

"The fear of God in the heart is placed there to prevent utter apostasy, and to detect that carnal security which proves so mischievous. Godly-fear cannot enjoy that carnal mirth which security provides, nor stupefy himself with Forget-good's cordial but boldly remonstrates against that gradual decline in religion which occasioned the Lord to withdraw His gracious presence:

'So Samson, when his hair was lost,
Met the Philistines to his cost;
Shook his vain limbs with sad surprise,
Made feeble fight and lost his eyes.'"

(poem by Isaac Watts, notes and poem in *The Holy War*, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 296).

Mr. Godly-fear's words aroused Mr. Conscience to a heightened state of alarm, and he began immediately to echo the sentiments expressed by Mr. Godly-fear and impress them further on those at the feast, bringing them into a state of conviction.

The Mansoul's Response to Their Sin

Mr. Carnal-security's ruse ends abruptly and decisively – he and his house are burned to the ground, and the townsmen immediately begin searching for Immanuel.

"Carnal-security is such an enemy to the soul, that he should be utterly destroyed. When conscience is roused to oppose this deceitful foe, the business will be done;

and measures will be taken to procure, if possible, the return of forfeited blessings” (*The Holy War*, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 297).

Their early efforts to find Immanuel are discouraging and deepen the conviction they feel over their sin. Truly their affection for Mr. Carnal-security was a far greater sin than they thought at first, and familiarity with Diabolonians brought far more grievous consequences than they could have imagined. It certainly would take them longer to recover from it than they ever imagined.

- Their initial efforts to respond belatedly to the Holy Spirit’s warnings were in vain
- Powerful, awakening preaching pressed close upon them and deepened their sorrow for sin still further

“The people, when sermon was done, were scarce able to go to their homes, or to betake themselves to their employes the week after; they were so sermon-smitten, and also so sermon-sick, that they knew not what to do.”

- Mr. Conscience was himself smitten with great sorrow for having participated willingly in the sin and for his failure to alert the townsmen to their danger.
- Many of the people became lamentably sick and groaned continually
- Their white garments from Immanuel’s livery were soiled, torn, and ill-fitting
- Their initial and repeated delegations to find Immanuel in His Father’s home were not readily received
‘Why now in their trouble do they visit Me, from whom in their prosperity they went astray?’

Mr. Godly-fear helped them interpret the seeming silence – “[I]t is the way of the wise Shaddai to make men wait, and to exercise patience; and it should be the way of them in want to be willing to stay His leisure.”

“Prayer, at all times necessary, becomes particularly seasonable when a state of backsliding is discovered. Prayer may not immediately receive an answer, nor forfeited comfort return; but as Godly-fear said, there is no better way than to pray and pray again, and wait the Lord’s pleasure” (*The Holy War*, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 304).

- They found themselves vulnerable to increased influence from other Diabolonians, and they realized with increasing degrees of clarity that in the days of their spiritual prosperity, they had not conscientiously obeyed Immanuel’s dictates to rid the town of all Diabolonians.

Vocabulary:

Bonny and blithe – good and happy

List - to lean or tilt to one side

Jocund - full of high-spirited enjoyment of something