

The Holy War Study Guide – Week 8

The Surrender of Mansoul

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

To what degree does the story accurately reflect Bible teaching?

With the battle for the town over, the previous reading ended with Immanuel sitting in Ear-gate, and Mr. Recorder's (Conscience) house having been taken. The present reading elongates the conversion process – the process that culminates when the will, conscience, and the understanding break and yield before Immanuel. All of the details are instructive and attempt to capture the inner-workings of a soul as it is moved repeatedly to petition Immanuel, and as it matures to a godly sorrow manifesting true repentance. Bunyan would not argue that every soul being converted displays these details to the same degree as he portrays here, but the elements are biblically-derived and should all be present.

Initially, this section seems dominated by a dramatic pause – not a pause of inactivity, but an uncomfortable pause of uncertainty. The townsmen are not at all secure in their status before Immanuel. Well aware of their grievous sin of rebellion, the process of reconciliation, though not complicated, requires of them the deepest evidences of contrition and trust in Immanuel.

The uncertainty of the townsmen's standing is highlighted in at least three ways in Bunyan's story:

- The silence and delayed answers of Immanuel to their several petitions and emissaries
- The reserved manner in which Immanuel first enters the town to encounter Diabolus at Heart Castle.
- Immanuel's return to His camp outside the city gates

Upon learning of the presence of Immanuel enthroned at Ear-gate, what seems to be the initial instinctive response of the people?

A convert's joy is not unmixed. Mourning for sin and the seeming preposterousness of a request for unmitigated mercy and grace are coupled with the joyous prospect of deliverance. The emotions may seem fickle, alternating quickly, or even to be

experienced simultaneously. Bunyan portrays the joys of the host of heaven throughout the reading, because heaven can see the soul yielding, so the joyous strains of the angels of heaven seep through the sobering events.

Perhaps the continuing soul perplexity of the people is best characterized by the description of their response to Immanuel's march into the city. Likening the people to Joseph's fearful brothers who are unable to interpret Joseph's actions and intentions correctly, the people are unable to discern Immanuel's intention for them, and they waver back and forth. Immanuel's reserved countenance caused them to fear Him and consider their rebellion and unworthiness of His presence. However, His great love for them, shown by His delivering them from Diabolus, caused gratitude and love for Him to well up in their hearts.

Jesus Christ is truly glorious; the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely; but converted sinners do not always enjoy great comfort at first. Sense of sin, and fear of His resentment may keep them low: Yet they cannot but admire Immanuel, and heartily desire He may be Lord of their hearts" (*The Holy War*, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 178).

Diabolus ultimately plays such a small role in the final conquest of the town. In this reading, all Diabolus does is reluctantly obey Immanuel when he is bid to come, then he submits to being bound, paraded through the streets, stripped openly of his armor, and being sent away. What are some of the spiritual realities Bunyan is attempting to communicate by how Immanuel deals with Diabolus?

- His being evicted from Heart Castle –
- His being bound in chains –
- His being openly stripped of his armor –
- His being bound to the wheels of Immanuel's chariot –
- His being escorted out of the city –
- His departure from the city to find a new place of rest –

The reading assignment also highlights the ministries of the original four captains sent by Shaddai to besiege Mansoul. Their law-preaching (though including the promise of mercy), warning messages to the townsmen will conclude at the end of the reading, but

throughout this section, their ministries are central to bringing the work of conversion to completeness.

Captain	Scutcheon (shield w/ coat of arms)	Significance
Boanerges (Mk. 3:17)	Three burning thunderbolts	Awakening preaching of the Word; led the procession
Conviction (Dt. 33:2)	Opened book of the law w/ flame	Stark exposure to offenses against the Law of God
Judgment (Mt. 13:41- 42)	Burning fiery furnace	Terror produced in an informed conscience
Execution (Mt. 3:10)	Fruitless tree with axe at the root	Stark finality of the penalty of rejection

Part of the captain’s ministry involved imprisoning the leading men of the town – Lord Understanding, Mr. Conscience, and Lord Will-be-will – under strong guard. While these men were in sympathy with Immanuel’s takeover, they had not yet surrendered themselves to His rule. The drastic move brought the spirits of the townsmen low and induced them to offer a series of petitions to Immanuel. God used the process of delayed answers to bring them increasingly to godly sorrow.

Compare the three petitions below:

	Petition	Delivered by	How it was received
Petition #1	Great and wonderful potentate, victor over Diabolus, and conqueror of the town of Mansoul, we the miserable inhabitants of that most woeful corporation, humbly beg that we may find favour in thy sight, and remember not against us former transgressions, nor yet the sins of the chief of our town, but spare us according to the greatness of thy mercy, and let us not die, but live in thy sight; so shall we be willing to be thy servants, and, if thou, shalt think fit, to gather our meat under thy table. Amen		
Petition #2	O that Mansoul might live before thee! (petition is written, but words are not in text)	Asked Captain Conviction, but he refused	

<p>“We must pray and pray again. We must pray in humility, confessing our desert of punishment, as it were ropes about our necks. The petition is sent by Mr. Desires-awake. The desires of an awakened soul are vented in prayer, and these move the compassionate heart of Jesus” (<i>The Holy War</i>, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 186).</p>			
Petition #3	<p>Prince Immanuel the Great, Lord of all worlds, and Master of mercy, we, thy poor, wretched, miserable, dying town of Mansoul, do confess unto thy great and glorious Majesty, that we have sinned against thy Father and thee; and are not more worthy to be called thy Mansoul, but rather to be cast into the pit. If thou wilt slay us, we have deserved it. If thou wilt condemn us to the deep, we cannot but say thou art righteous. We cannot complain, whatever thou dost, or however thou carriest it towards us. But oh! Let mercy reign and let it be extended to us! O let mercy take hold upon us, and free us from our transgressions, and we will sing of thy mercy, and of thy judgment! Amen.</p>		
<p>“Still the spirit of prayer prevails in Mansoul; for ‘men ought always to pray and not to faint.’ And it is observable how these petitions improve from time to time. How much more light and humility appear in the third petition than in the first. It was also wisely determined not to send Mr. Good-deed with it, for this would contradict the prayer of the petition, which was for mercy, not reward; and yet how absurd is the conduct of some, whose only hope of mercy is on account of their good deeds! It is a sense of our bad deeds, not our good ones, that will make us seek in earnest for mercy. If we plead good works, may not the Lord say—Let good works save them—What need of my grace? For if righteousness can be obtained by the law, grace is frustrated, and the death of Christ a needless thing” (<i>The Holy War</i>, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 191).</p>			

In keeping with Immanuel’s request following the third petition, the prisoners – Lord Understanding, Mr. Conscience, and Lord Will-be-will—meet Him outside His pavilion the next day. Immanuel interrogates them carefully, asking a series of eight questions. What was the purpose or value of Immanuel’s line of questioning?

Upon hearing their answers, Immanuel is able to declare that He had “gotten a perfect conquest and victory over Mansoul”; and therefore, He was ready not only to pardon

them, but to restore them to their rightful roles in the city. What was the response of Lord Understanding, Mr. Conscience, and Lord Will-be-will to the pardon and favor bestowed on them by Immanuel?