

Pilgrim's Progress

The First Part

By [John Bunyan](#)

*The Pilgrim's Progress from this world —
to that which is to come, in the similitude of a dream*

Retold for Children and Adapted to School Reading, by James Baldwin, 1913

THE MAN WITH THE BURDEN

As I walked through a great wilderness, I came to a certain place where there was a Den, and I laid myself down in that place to sleep — and as I slept I dreamed a dream.

I DREAMED — and I thought that I saw in my dream a man standing with his face turned away from his own house. He was clothed in rags, a *book* was in his hand, and a *great burden* was on his back.

Then I saw him open the book and read; and as he read, he wept and cried out, "What shall I do?"

By and by he turned and went into his house. His wife and children saw that he was in trouble, and they wondered; but he kept silent for a long time, and said not a word.

At last, when he could hold in no longer, he said, "Dear ones, do you see this great burden that is on my back? It is so heavy that I can hardly bear its weight."

But they could not see the burden, and they wondered at his words. "Dear father," they said, "you are very tired. When you have slept and are rested, you will feel much better."

"Ah, no," he answered; "it is not sleep that will relieve me. For this book says that the city in which we live will surely be burned with fire; and unless we escape from it soon — we shall all perish! Do you wonder that I am distressed?"

They looked at him sorrowfully; for they feared that he had lost his mind. Then they persuaded him to lie down. But he could not sleep. All night long he tossed upon his bed, groaning and weeping.

Very early in the morning he arose. His children came to him and said, "Dear father, how do you feel after your night's rest?"

"Worse and worse!" he answered. "There is no rest for me while this *heavy burden* is on my back."

"We cannot see any burden," said his wife. "You are surely losing your mind."

The man looked at her sadly and then went out into the fields. There he walked back and forth all day, sometimes reading from his book — and sometimes weeping most bitterly.

"*What shall I do to be saved?*" he cried; and he looked this way and that, as if he would run. But he did not know which way to go.

At length an old man, with long white beard and a gentle face, came that way and saw him weeping.

"What is the matter?" asked the stranger, whose name was *EVANGELIST*. "Why are you crying?"

"Oh, sir," answered the man, "this book which I have in my hand tells me, that unless I get rid of this heavy burden I shall surely die!"

"Then why do you stand here?" asked Evangelist. "Why don't you go and get rid of it?"

"Because I don't know which way to go," said the man, still weeping.

Then Evangelist pointed with his finger towards the blue hills far, far away.

"Look!" he said. "Do you see that wicket gate?"

"No."

"Then do you see a shining light yonder in the distance?"

"Yes, I think I do."

"Well, then, keep that light always in view. Go straight towards it, and by and by you can see the wicket gate. When you have come to the gate, knock, and the one who keeps it will tell you what to do."

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