
SINAI & EVANGELIST

MR. WORLDLY WISEMAN was a highly respected man in his circles, and with much sincerity he gave himself to the task of helping the pilgrim with his troublesome burden. His guarantee was one of remedy, safety, friendship and contentment. His prescription was the village of Morality—specifically the home of a man named Legality with his son Civility, where the pilgrim would find his answers along with the peace of mind and heart that he so desperately needs to rid him of his burden.

Respectable, moral religion is the path still preferred by countless multitudes, trying to reach Heaven, and Bunyan drives this lesson home by giving such attention to details in the landscape. The village of Morality boasts honest neighbors who pay their bills and treat their neighbors with decency and respect. People speak well of each other and know how to handle the burden of the traveling pilgrim. There is plenty of room in the village along with cheap rates. (No doubt, Bunyan was alluding to the Church of England of his day whose pews were largely empty and whose expectations were mostly few.)

Christian heeds the advice of Worldly Wiseman, but when he approaches a certain high hill he fears it would fall and crush him. Suddenly the burden he carries becomes heavier. The pilgrim with a burden and a sincere heart knows that the holy Law as delivered by Moses from the mountain that

thunders with lightning and belches smoke cannot help him in any way. It can threaten and alarm, but it can never take away the burden of sin fastened to his back. It is interesting in the allegory that those who live comfortably situated in the village of Morality don't seem to fear the danger from the mountain. Instead, they quietly go about their lives immersed in their respectability and decorum.

This is the way that another good man once lived who said, "If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more ... a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law a Pharisee ... concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Philippians 3:5–6). If any man dwelt in the village of Morality, it was the Apostle Paul. He not only lived in the village, he must have lived right next to the mountain, which for him was quiet and peaceful. Then one day the ground started to shake, and eruptions started to occur threatening to bury him.

For Pilgrim, Bunyan, Paul and anyone else who has perchance attempted to find peace at the foot of Sinai, it isn't long before the commandment arrives and brings with it threats and furies, instead of peace and relief from the burden and weight of sin. As Paul said, "I was alive once without the Law; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died" (Romans 7:9).
