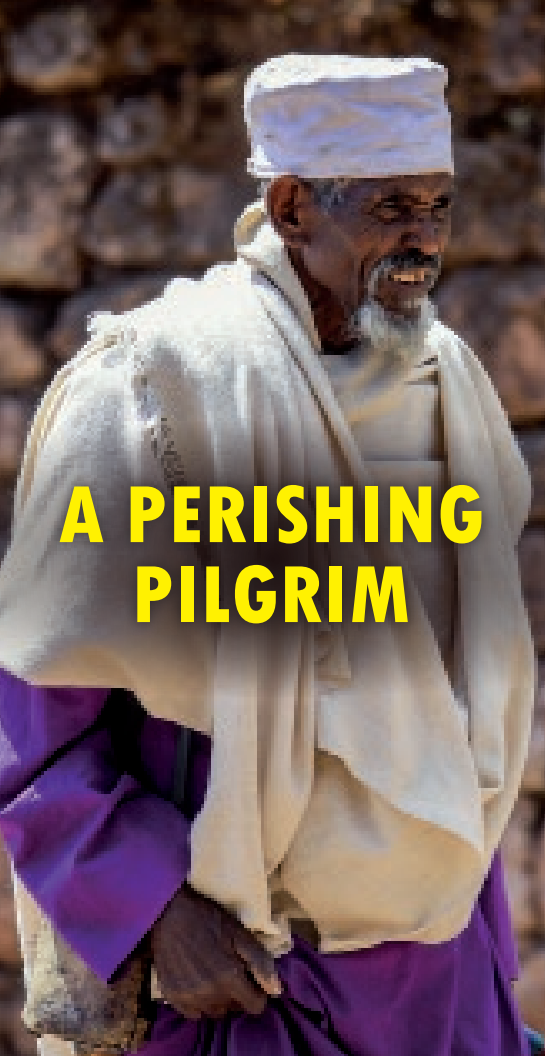




A PERISHING PILGRIM

His Devotion

The weary pilgrim shuffled through the overflowing streets crowded with devout people. Despite his fatigue, after having traveled almost 2,500 miles, he pressed on, driven by enthusiasm and excitement. Several days earlier, he had left Ethiopia, determined to reach the most sacred site of his newfound religion, the temple in Jerusalem (Acts 8.26-40).

His Disappointment

There, the pilgrim would encounter merchants selling sheep, doves, perhaps even calves, which would soon be offered according to the religious rituals he practiced. Of course, he would get as close as possible to the temple, where he might see the priests, dressed in their religious vestments. Without a doubt, he would have been very excited to see everything that religion had to offer.

At some point on this trip, the man obtained a copy of Isaiah's prophecy from the Old Testament. Now, with the sacred scroll in hand, the pilgrim began his long journey homeward. He returned having had a religious experience, but it seems that he came back disappointed because he returned the same as he had

left: empty—without salvation, without forgiveness of sins, and without peace with God.

His Discovery

On his way back, he read these words aloud: *“He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opened not His mouth”* (Acts 8.32 NKJV). Suddenly, Philip, a preacher sent by God, approached him. The pilgrim had previously read: *“‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the Lord, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool’”* (Isaiah 1.18 NKJV), and he understood that God seeks the sinner to resolve the problem of his sin.

His Delight

Now, the pilgrim is faced with a question concerning the sufferer in Isaiah 53: Was the prophet speaking of himself or of another? In answering him, Philip announced to him the good news of Jesus (Acts 8.35). He did not mention a religion, nor did he recite certain steps to be saved. He did not speak of rites or sacraments, but only spoke to him about Jesus Christ. Philip explained to him that when the

prophet Isaiah said: *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement (punishment) for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed"* (Isaiah 53.5 NKJV), he was speaking of what the Lord Jesus Christ suffered on the cross for our sins. The preacher described to him that it was God's plan that the Lord Jesus Christ suffer on the cross for the sinner's sins, so that the sinner can believe on Jesus Christ for salvation. Imagine how the pilgrim's heart would have been filled with peace and contentment as he realized all that the Lord Jesus Christ had suffered for him, a poor perishing pilgrim. For him, it would be an unforgettable day, the day he trusted Jesus Christ as his Savior. No wonder he went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8.39).

What about you? Are you disappointed with religion? Empty? Have you sacrificed much, without obtaining the peace you are searching for? Only Jesus Christ can satisfy your heart and save you from sin.

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