

Pilgrimages - Godly or Not - 1 Peter 2:11

- current situation - people want to go on trips.
- many people going on pilgrimages; why?
- Wikipedia has an article on it, describing various religious activities.
- A pilgrimage is a journey or search of moral or spiritual significance. Typically, it is a journey to a shrine or other location of importance to a person's beliefs and faith, although sometimes it can be a metaphorical journey into someone's own beliefs. Many religions attach spiritual importance to particular places: the place of birth or death of founders or saints, or to the place of their "calling" or spiritual awakening, or of their connection (visual or verbal) with the divine, to locations where miracles were performed or witnessed, or locations where a deity is said to live or be "housed," or any site that is seen to have special spiritual powers. Such sites may be commemorated with shrines or temples that devotees are encouraged to visit for their own spiritual benefit: to be healed or have questions answered or to achieve some other spiritual benefit. A person who makes such a journey is called a pilgrim.

The Holy Land acts as a focal point for the pilgrimages of the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. According to a Stockholm University study in 2011, these pilgrims visit the Holy Land to touch and see physical manifestations of their faith, confirm their beliefs in the holy context with collective excitation, and connect personally to the Holy Land.

In the early 21st century the numbers of people of all faiths making pilgrimages has continued to rise, with 39 of the most popular sites alone receiving an estimated 200 million visitors every year.

- What does the Bible say about pilgrimages?

Genesis 47:9 - And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

Exodus 6:4 - And I have also established my covenant with them, to give

them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.

Psalms 119:54 - Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

Hebrews 11:13 - These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

1 Peter 2:11,12 - Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

- There is a difference between the Old and New Covenants.

- Under the Old, religious activities were mainly done on the physical plane.

Deuteronomy 16:16,17 - Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:

Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.

Genesis 12:1-3 - Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 31:11-13 - And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying , Jacob: And I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.

Acts 7:1-3 - Then said the high priest, Are these things so? And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And

said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

- In NT, an example for Paul to go on a mission, not a pilgrimage.**

Acts 22:17-21 - And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

- when persecuted, believers move on & spread Gospel.**

Matthew 10:23 - But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

- under the NC, there is no command from Our Lord Jesus Christ to go on a pilgrimage.**

- the desire is only from religious spirits, and the only benefit is for the religion making a lot of money from the devotees.**

- however, twice in the last year, pilgrims to Lourdes, have been caught in torrential rains, and some were killed.**

- recently in Kedarnath, India; a thousand pilgrims going to worship Shiva, were killed in mudslides.**

- what do believers do now?**

- take the amount of time that you were going to use for a pilgrimage, and go on a personal retreat; spending the time in Bible Study and prayer.**

- take any left over money, and give it for Bibles to the third world.
- this will deepen and strengthen your faith much more than getting a vial of water from the Jordan River, or Lourdes.

John 20:24-29 - But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Acts 20:7 - And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

Hebrews 10:23-26 - Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is ; but exhorting one another : and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

- what did Our Lord Jesus Christ do?
- after His Baptism, He went into the wilderness.
- this was not to visit shrines, and pray to Mary; He was being tested.
- He prayed a lot there, and all throughout His Ministry.

Luke 6:12 - And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

Mark 14:32-42 - And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to

be very heavy; And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

- in the OT, mostly men went on the pilgrimages; sometimes they took their families; Hannah, and Jesus at 12.

- but one woman was commended in the NT for her devotion.

Luke 2:37 - And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

- in the OT, pilgrimages and journeys were made to places, like Jerusalem.

- now in the NT, while we live on the earth, our home is in heaven; and we are preparing ourselves for it.

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**Pastor T. John Franklin
Church of Salvation, Healing, and Deliverance
COS-HAD.org**