

# I AM A PILGRIM

Traditional Gospel Song; **DATE:** 1862; **CATEGORY:** Early Southern Gospel; **RECORDING INFO:** Merle Travis on Capitol "Folk Songs of the Hills," 1947; Country Gentlemen; Bill Monroe, Stanley Brothers; Doc Watson; **RELATED TO:** "Wayfaring Stranger;" "Going Over Jordan;" **NOTES:** The origins of this song are entwined with "Poor Wayfaring Stanger" which appears in the Sacred Harp 1844; "I'm a Pilgrim" appears in *The Southern Zion's Songster* printed in Raleigh, NC in 1864 and in *Hymns For the Camp*, in 1862 and begins: "I'm a pilgrim and I'm a stranger/I can carry but a night." This hymn seems to have been a favorite in the South during the Civil War. The current song is similar to Merle Travis's version, who first heard a version of this song from Lyman Rager, who learned it while he was in the Elkton, Kentucky jail.

I am a pil - grim and a stran - ger tra - vel - ing through  
this wor - ri - some land I've got a home in that yon - der ci - ty  
And it's not (good Lord it's not) not made by hand.

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**D** **G**  
I am a pilgrim and a stranger  
**C** **G**  
Traveling through this worrisome land  
**C**  
I've got a home in that yonder city  
**G** **D** **G**  
And it's not (Good Lord it's not), not made by hand

I've got a mother, a sister, and a brother  
Who have gone on before  
And I'm determined to go and meet them, Good Lord  
Over on that other shore *Chorus*

I'm going down to the river of Jordan  
Just to cleanse my weary soul  
If I could touch but the hem of his garment, Good Lord  
I do believe it would make me whole *Chorus*