

The Canterbury Tales: General Prologue Themes

Writer: Geoffrey Chaucer | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

- **Picture of Society:** The General Prologue is a complete picture of medieval English society. Here we see all classes of people: rich and poor, clergy and soldiers, merchants and workers. Chaucer shows who is good, who is bad, and who is a hypocrite. Some are hardworking, some are lazy. Some are pious, some are corrupt. Through this pilgrimage, Chaucer presents the real life of society, their nature, profession, morality, and various sides of humanity.
- **Hypocrisy in Religion:** Chaucer satirizes religious hypocrisy and corruption. The Friar, the Pardoner, and the Summoner cheat people in the name of religion. They take money as if it were holy work. Yet, people like the Parson are truly pious and honest. Chaucer shows that even religious men are human; they also have greed, sin, and falsehood. Thus, he exposes the corruption of the Church and its influence on society.
- **Human Nature:** Chaucer shows many sides of human nature: love, greed, hypocrisy, joy, pity, pride, wisdom, and humor. The Knight is brave, the Parson is honest, but the Friar and Pardoner are deceitful. The Prioress is tender-hearted, and the Wife of Bath is confident and lively. Each character is like a real person. Their virtues and faults together create a full picture of human nature.
- **Satire and Humour:** Chaucer's writing blends satire and humor. He never mocks harshly but gently points out human faults through laughter. His soft irony is seen in the characters of the Friar, Summoner, and Pardoner. Yet, through the Knight, Parson, and Plowman, he expresses respect and admiration. His humor is mild, human, and moral. That is why The General Prologue is not only amusing but also deeply thoughtful.