

Journey to the Celestial City

A Study of Pilgrim's Progress

Two Valleys

The Valley of Humiliation

Christian has left Palace Beautiful and is led into the valley of humiliation. He has received a sword, a shield and a helmet. There he meets this foul fiend Apollyon (Rev. 9:11). This name means _____. Christian is filled with fear and His instinct is to turn and run. But if he is going to survive this attack he must use the armour of God and face Satan head-on. Apollyon is hideous; he is a monster-like creature who intends to conquer by fear.



- His fish-like scales mean he is not easily _____.
- His dragon-like wings allow him to roam throughout the four corners of the earth.
- His bear's feet are strong, that it is difficult to move him.
- His mouth like a lion, in order to devour.

This is Christian's mortal enemy, whom we cannot underestimate. Satan's devices include

1. **Challenging.** Apollyon does not begin with brute force, but with reasoning and dialogue. He challenges
 - a. Christian's identity – he reminds Christian of his origin in the city of destruction and thereby tries to lay claim on him.
 - b. Christian's difficulty – he tempts him to turn back because of the coming difficulties in the Christian life. Christian is firm and is committed to his new Prince. He likes his service, his wages, his servants, his government, his company, his country, and the glory to come.
 - c. Christian's fidelity – he points out Christian's unfaithfulness along the way. Christian cannot deny it, but claims the mercy of his Prince who offers full forgiveness
2. **Battling.** Before he was trying to be smooth. Now, he brazenly declares his hatred for Prince Jesus, and begins using fiery darts aiming them at the heart of Christian. The flaming dart is intended to fire up sinful desires, cause lust to burn, make anger rage, enflame jealousy and pride. Christian defends himself using the shield of faith and

draws his sword. Apollyon casts a hail of darts at him and Christian is wounded in his head, hand and foot.



3. **Wrestling.** “When the enemy hath hold of one there is no declining, but either he must resist manfully, or fall shamefully at his enemy’s foot. Satan comes close up, and gets within the Christian, takes hold of his very flesh and corrupt nature, and by this shakes him” (W. Gurnall). Apollyon throws Christian to the ground, his sword falls out of his hand. He can hardly fight anymore, and is ready to succumb. But God intervenes, and Christian recalled God’s word (Mic. 7:18) and Apollyon received a fatal blow and retreats at the words of Romans 8:38.

4. **Healing and Thanksgiving**

Lessons

1. The Christian is engaged in a spiritual battle.
2. That battle can be intense and become more intense.
3. We need to take refuge to the cross of Christ and wield the sword of the word of God.

The valley of the shadow of death

Continued Trials

At the end of the valley of humiliation was another valley. “Though this valley is thus gloomy, dangerous, mysterious and solitary, yet it is often traversed. Many more go by this road than some people dream. Among those who wear a cheerful countenance in public there are many who are well acquainted with this dreary valley – they have passed through it often – and may be in it now” (Spurgeon).

Here is a place of conflict, inward distress, the “dark _____ of the soul.”

Two men meet Christian and urge him to turn and flee, but they are children of the unbelieving spies who had given an evil report. They don’t have tools or weapons to deal with this kind of warfare, and they are ready to turn back. Christian is not turning back, because this is the way to the desired haven.

Ditches

The way is not easy, and there is a ditch on the right and a ditch on the left. Trying to avoid the ditch on the right, he is in danger of falling into a quagmire on the left.

Bunyan’s experience: “Wherefore still my life hung in doubt before me, not knowing which way I should tip.”



Christian walks through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Particular agony calls for constant entreaty

He passes by the pit of hell. He knows he deserves that judgment and condemnation. He shudders at it. What can he do? He puts his sword away and takes another weapon: All Prayer. All the noises around him in the valley lead him to constant prayer to God.

There are wicked ones creeping up behind him, whispering wicked blasphemies to him, which he thought had proceeded from his own mind.

Encouragement

But he is encouraged by a distant voice. Having just prayed: "O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul," he hears a distant voice call out: "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."

By day light he sees the hazards he has overcome, also the remains of saints martyred by Pope and Pagan.

He had entered this valley with fear and sighing, but he emerges at its end with singing and rejoicing.

Calvin: "Grant, Almighty God, since thou hadst formerly admonished thy servants, that thy children, while they are pilgrims in this world, must be familiar with horrible and cruel beasts, if the same thing should happen to us, that we may be prepared for all contests. May we endure and overcome all temptations, and may we never doubt thy desire to defend us by thy protection and power, according to thy promise. May we proceed through the midst of the numberless dangers, until after accomplishing the course of our warfare, we at length arrive at that happy rest which is laid up for us in heaven by Christ our Lord."

Questions for discussion

1. Why is Christian's experience of passing through the valley of humiliation different from Christiana's experience?
2. Can you think of times in your life when you have been confronted with your spiritual enemies? What did you learn while experiencing the oppression of the evil one?
3. Which piece of armour is particularly strong? In which areas do you need more protection? How can you best prepare for spiritual battle?
4. What are some ways that the devil can launch attacks upon the mind of believers? How can believers withstand these trials of the mind?
5. In what ways can the companionship of other Christians help a person to endure the valley?