

THE CELESTIAL RAILROAD

March 17th, 2019 – The Celestial Railroad

Part 9 – The Valley of the Shadow of Death

Psalm 23 is probably one of the most well-known Psalms in the Bible where King David says; “...Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil...” Today, the message in The Celestial Railroad shows that the broadness of contemporary Christianity has removed the darkness, fear and warfare from the Valley and assures its passengers, that they can bolt headlong through it at amazing speed, coming out unscathed. Please read the section of the script on The Valley of the Shadow of Death by [clicking on this link](#).

We start by reading in The Celestial Railroad; *“The respectable Apollyon was now putting on the steam at a prodigious rate, anxious perhaps to get rid of the unpleasant reminiscences connected with the spot where he had so disastrously encountered Christian. Consulting Mr. Bunyan’s road-book, I perceived that we must now be within a few miles of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, into which doleful region, at our present speed, we should plunge much sooner than seemed at all desirable.”*

Does the devil view you today in the same way, wanting to avoid you because he remembers the battle or battles where you took him down and out with the word of God, wielding it as a sword? The description here is like a fast carnival ride, with all sorts of scary and frightening images appearing in front of you to get your heart pumping.

Let’s read about Pilgrim’s Progress from BunyanMinistries.org where it says this about Christian’s encounter with Apollyon; *“Now Christian had not gone far in this Valley of Humiliation before he was severely tested, for he noticed a very foul fiend coming over the field to meet him; his name was Apollyon [Destroyer]. At this Christian became afraid and immediately pondered whether he ought to retreat or stand his ground. But on further consideration he realized that he had no armor on his back, and therefore to expose himself there in fleeing would probably give this foe the advantage with his use of piercing darts. So he determined to risk confrontation with this enemy. For he further thought, “If I only had in mind the saving of my life, then it would still be best to stand my ground.” So he continued on, and Apollyon met him. Now this monster was exceedingly hideous to behold; he was clothed with scales like a fish of which he was most proud; he had wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, and out of his belly belched forth fire and smoke through a mouth like that of a lion.”*

The visuals are very descriptive here and I’m not sure if many have encountered a beast in the natural like him, but at times in spiritual warfare, the demons we fight would seem to match this character.

The commentary continues; *“(1) He receives a fatal blow. Like his Prince (Matt. 4:1-11), Christian deeply wounds the enemy with the Word of God and not the words of men. He then claims victory on behalf of his Prince (Rom. 8:37). (2) He withdraws seriously wounded. Like his Captain Beelzebub, Apollyon flees the power of the Word of God so powerfully ministered by the resistant Christian (Jas. 4:7). He retires, as was the case when repudiated by Christ (Matt. 4:11), to snare pilgrims who are not so well equipped and faithful.”*

Who is this Prince? Jesus. Who received the fatal blow? Apollyon or satan. Who wounded Beelzebub? Jesus did at the cross when He defeated satan. Are you well equipped today with the full armour of God on, to defeat the onslaught of the devil? Who will the devil mainly attack? Those who are luke-warm, the ones walking in pride and compromise, the ones who have left their sword at home and those who have their shields hanging on the wall for something good to look at.

Christian defeated Apollyon with the word of God and angelic assistance. We read what Jesus did when He was tempted in the wilderness by satan in **Matthew 4:1-11**; *“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness*

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to be tempted by the devil. 2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. 3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" 5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" 7 Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" 8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" 11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him."

The devil will question and try to get you to contradict your Christianity by saying, 'if you are a Christian...do such and such.' In the temptations and battles that we face, like Jesus, we conquer by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, that is the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, the Bible. Jesus knew the power of the written words as they were actually His words as He was the Word that became flesh. [John 1:1-5](#)

James 4:7 says; "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

In the Celestial Railroad, Apollyon has now been employed as the Chief Engineer of this railway, and is described as follows the section entitled Apollyon that we've already reviewed: "*Apollyon: The engine at this moment took its station in advance of the cars, looking, I must confess, much more like a sort of mechanical demon that would hurry us to the infernal regions, than a laudable contrivance for smoothing our way to the Celestial City. On its top sat a personage almost enveloped in smoke and flame, which (not to startle the reader) appeared to gush from his own mouth and stomach as well as from the engine's brazen abdomen. "Do my eyes deceive me?" cried I. "What on earth is this? A living creature? If so, he is own brother to the engine he rides upon." "Poh, poh, you are snippety," said Mr. Smooth-it-away, with a hearty laugh. "Don't you know Apollyon, Christian's old enemy, with whom he fought so fierce a battle in the Valley of Humiliation? He was the very fellow to manage the engine, and so we have reconciled him to the custom of going on pilgrimage, and engaged him as chief engineer."*

Did you see that? They've *reconciled him to the custom of going on pilgrimage, and engaged him as chief engineer*. In other words, they've employed him to engineer the 'christian pilgrimage for those who just believe'.

Those on the Celestial Railroad have the same Apollyon as their Chief Engineer and there is no battle with him as it was with Christian, for they have already bypassed the prerequisite of being born again to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Apollyon's job is easy now for those on the train, as there is no threat to his kingdom and he's making it a comfortable ride to **his** final destination. This gives clear understanding of his role in the lives of those believers who have not repented of their sins and become born again, and his role now seems to be transporting believers on this pilgrimage to what appears to be the Celestial City of Heaven, but in reality they are on a religious railroad, that for each one of them to arrive at their final destination after death, is the lake of fire in hell for eternity. Very sobering.

We continue to read in the Celestial Railroad the following; "*In truth, I expected nothing better than to find myself in the ditch on one side, or in the quag on the other. But, on the communicating my apprehensions to Mr. Smooth-it-away, he assured me that the difficulties of this passage, even in its worst condition, had been vastly*

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exaggerated, and that, in its present state of improvement, I might consider myself as safe as on any railroad in Christendom.”

The passenger/authors fear and apprehensions about the ride thru the Valley of the Shadow of Death, have been smoothed away by non other than Mr. Smooth-it-away who once again lies about the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Jesus, speaking to those who deemed themselves to be children of God thru Abrahams seed, says this in **John 8:41-45**; *“41 You do the deeds of your father.” Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.” 42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”*

It’s powerful how Jesus calls the devil a murderer and a liar, and indisputably, he has no truth in him, none. How many Bible believers who are not born again, have today bought into this lie of Mr. Smooth-it-away, who looks more and more like satan himself as we read thru this book?

We continue to read in The Celestial Railroad; *“Even while we were speaking, the train shot into the entrance of this dreaded valley. Though I plead guilty to some foolish palpitations of the heart during our headlong rush over the causeway here constructed, yet it were unjust to withhold the highest acclamation on the boldness of its original conception, and the ingenuity of those who executed it. It was gratifying, likewise, to observe how much care was taken to dispel the everlasting gloom, and supply the deficit of the cheerful sunshine, not a ray of which has ever penetrated these awful shadows. For this purpose the inflammable gas, which exudes plentifully from the soil, is collected by means of pipes, and thence communicated to a quadruple row of lamps along the whole extent of the passage. Thus a radiance has been created, even out of the fiery and sulphurous curse that rests forever upon the valley; a radiance hurtful, however, to the eyes, and somewhat bewildering, as I discovered by the changes which it wrought in the visages of my companions.”*

The devil has lied about this Valley of the Shadow of Death, by giving the passengers fake light, giving false light to their pathway by taking away the gloom, darkness, and scariness of it. It reminds me where the Apostle Paul says in **2 Corinthians 11:14**; *“For satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light”*.

For the born again Christian, there is no sting in death, but for those on the Celestial Railroad the sting of death is smoothed away with lies from their father the devil, making this valley seem like a thrilling high-speed ride at a carnival where they pass thru unscathed and safely arrive at the other side.

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 says; *“50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our*

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Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

The commentary from BunyanMinistries.org says this; “2. *It is mandatory for pilgrims to traverse. The only way to the Celestial City lies through this Valley. Certainly Pliable would have rebelled at the prospect of this place, if not before. None but an authentic pilgrim can understand the severe trials that such a passage brings, which Satan uses to obstruct and, at the same time, God ordains for spiritual growth (Ps. 25:16-20; 34:19; 88:6-9, 13-18; 143:12; Jas. 1:2-4).*3. *It is more terrible than the previous Valley. Whereas Apollyon had assailed with verbal taunt and fleshly temptation, and was repulsed by Christian’s sword (Eph. 6:17), yet this more soul wrenching trial requires the application of a different weapon in reply. Flame and smoke, hideous noises, the spirits of wickedness and princes of darkness, must be answered with a distinctive weapon called “Allprayer” (Eph. 6:18).”*

Everyone, at one time or another, will go through this valley, whether they die or make it through alive. We read about ‘All prayer’ in **Ephesians 6:10-18**, where the Apostle Paul says this about the armour that God has given to every born again Christian; “10 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with **all prayer** and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—”*

Continuing to read in The Celestial Railroad; “*In this respect, as compared with natural daylight, there is the same difference as between truth and falsehood; but if the reader has ever traveled through the dark valley, he will have learned to be thankful for any light that he could get; if not from the sky above, then from the blasted earth beneath. Such was the red brilliancy of these lamps that they appeared to build walls of fire on both sides of the track, between which we held our course at lightning speed, while a reverberating thunder filled the valley with its echoes. Had the engine run off the track (a catastrophe it is whispered by no means unprecedented), the bottomless pit, if there be any such place, would undoubtedly have received us. Just as some dismal fooleries of this kind had made my heart quake, there came a tremendous shriek careering along which proved to be merely the whistle of the engine on arriving at a stopping place.”*

It's like a carnival ride that's come to a halting end. They've gone through all sorts of emotions and fear, even though the devil has illuminated the Valley to help them in some way get through, they're glad to be at the stopping place. Exhilarated with emotion, thankful to have made it through this dreaded valley, not being killed by careening off the track into the bottomless pit, they arrive at a stopping place.

How many Bible believers who are not born again, are in this Valley today? Be it a physical sickness leading to death, or a mental illness leading to thoughts of suicide, etc., and the valley of the shadow of death has been smoothed away with a religious, traditional, Bible believing system, that has removed the battle with death in this valley, for there is no battle when the enemy of your soul is the Chief Engineer of the Religious Railway your riding on.

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You've heard it said time and time again that a person died peacefully, with what appears to be no battle with death. You know statements like, 'they had the face of angel when they died', or 'they had had so much peace when they went on to be with the Lord', but in reality, they weren't born again. Oh, they believed, but never truly repented and received the Holy Spirit, and therefore the battle with death had been removed. Or for those who make it thru the valley and come out unscathed by death, they say that the 'good Lord spared them', when in reality, the Lord in their life is the devil, and it's him who spared them for his plan and purpose. The appearance on the face of a person when they die does not determine their eternal destination.

If there's no battle while going thru this valley, it's a clear indicator that you're not born again, and you're not clothed in the full armour as described in **Ephesians 6:10-18** to fight the devil with. If you're not born again there is no need you to do the following:

- *“14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,*
- *15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*
- *16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which, you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*
- *17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;*
- *18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints”*

It would appear again, that those who only believe, have a religious image but are not the real deal. The true born again Christian's armour will look like they've been in the battlefield, soiled from the fight with nicks, scratches and dents. The non-born again person may have an appearance of protection, but there is no battle taking place in their lives against the devil as they are already under his headship and authority. Any armour they may have is not soiled and dirty from battle.

If you're a Bible believer that is not born again, you are still in the kingdom of darkness, therefore the battle has been removed, you're already conquered by the devil, and it's now just a matter of time for you to die and face the Judgement.

It's not God's will for you to spend an eternity separated from Him in hell, but without holiness, no man will see God. A salvation plan for you has already been made in that Jesus died for your sins, he rose from the dead and he ascended to heaven. He never left you as an orphan, he sent the Holy Spirit for you to receive into your body which in return makes you holy, and born again of His Spirit.

Remember that in order for you to become a citizen of heaven for eternity, you have to give up your present citizenship of the kingdom of darkness that leads to hell for eternity.

The Apostle Peter says in **1 Peter 1:22-23**; *“22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,”*

Jesus says also in **John 3:3**; *“Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

He also says in **John 3:6-7**; *“6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”*

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Again, Jesus says in **John 3:8** *“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”*

The Apostle John hears Jesus tell him this in **Revelation 3:20**; *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”*

Titus also says in **Titus 3:5-7**; *“5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*

These last scriptures show unmistakable proof that you must repent and be born again to be a true Christian. All of us in some way, shape or form have gone through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, maybe not to the point that Christian was with Apollyon. But we can say that it was pretty close to it, a close call. But because you rose up with the word of God, fought the good fight of faith, you pushed back your enemy because you had the full armour on and even if you look beat up, you conquered.