

The Pilgrim's Progress
Chapter 9 – The Pilgrim Goes Through Valleys (Part 2)
The Valley of the Shadow of Death
August 27, 2014

- I. DVD #9 “The Valley of the Shadow of Death”

- II. The meaning of the Valley of the Shadow of Death
 - A. The Valley of the SOD in Scripture (20X)
 - 1. Job 10:21-22 – We note the confusion of those who enter the valley. The darkness shows their helplessness to see their way out of the valley.
 - 2. Psalm 23:4 – An allusion to the loneliness of the valley.
 - 3. Psalm 107:10 – The people in this valley are sick in spirit and are captive to their own mental torments.
 - 4. Jeremiah 2:6 – Compares the Jews wandering in the wilderness to the shadow of death. (cf. Deut 8:2-3)

“And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. ³And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”

- B. John Bunyan's and Charles Spurgeon's description of the Valley (John Bunyan: Grace Abounding and CHS: Lectures to my Students – Look for parallels)
 - 1. The valley represents the inner doubts, temptations and confusion concerning one's spiritual state into which one often falls.
 - a.i. An array of outward evils (sickness, poverty)
 - a.ii. The light of God's countenance is gone (also comfort, evidence and hope of heaven is gone)
 - a.iii. A sense of the wrath of God is kindled in the conscience

About a month later “the great storm” arrived and mauled me twenty times worse than anything I had met with before.... First, all my comfort was taken from me and darkness seized upon me. After this, whole floods of blasphemies against God and Christ and the Scriptures seemed to pour into my spirit, to my great confusion and astonishment. These blasphemous thoughts were stirred up by questions in me against the very being of God and His only beloved Son, whether there were really a God or Christ.... The tempter also struck me heavily with this question, “How can you tell that the Turks may not have as good Scriptures to prove their Muhammed as the Savior as we have to prove our Jesus?” ...Everyone thinks his own religion is right, whether he is a Jew or a Muslim or a pagan, and what if all our faith in Christ and the Scriptures were just our imagination? I felt nothing else but these from morning to night, and I concluded that God had in very wrath against my soul given me up to them to be carried away with them as a mighty whirlwind.... I often found my mind suddenly begin to curse and to

swear, or to speak some grievous thing against God or Christ, His Son, or against the Scriptures.

Now I thought, Surely I am possessed of the devil. And at other times I thought I had become insane.... I often compared myself with a child who had been kidnapped and carried away from friend and country, kicking and screaming. Kick I did, and also shriek and cry and yet I was bound in the wings of the temptation and the wind carried me away. I thought also of Saul and of the evil spirit that possessed him, and I greatly feared that my condition was the same as his ([1 Sam. 16:14](#)).

2. The advantages of Bunyan's trials
 - A. They made him more aware of the blessedness and glory of God and Christ.
 - B. Helped him see more clearly the nature of the promises of God.
 - C. The Scriptures became very wonderful to him.
 - D. He saw new heights and depths of God's grace, love and mercy.
3. The Seven evils in Bunyan's heart
 - A. Not believing
 - B. Forgetting the love and mercy that Christ gave
 - C. Depending on the works of the Law
 - D. Allowing thoughts to wander and being cold in prayer
 - E. Forgetting to watch for answers to prayer
 - F. Murmuring
 - G. Failing to do what God wants because my sins keep interfering
4. Spurgeon: Why would God allow a Christian to go through the Valley?

"Besides this, another form of strength comes of weakness, for by it *our sympathy is educated*. When you and I become weak, and are depressed in spirit, and our soul passes through the valley of the shadow of death, it is often on account of others. One Sabbath morning, I preached from the text, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and though I did not say so, yet I preached my own experience. I heard my own chains clank while I tried to preach to my fellow-prisoners in the dark; but I could not tell why I was brought into such an awful horror of darkness, for which I condemned myself. On the following Monday evening, a man came to see me who bore all the marks of despair upon his countenance. His hair seemed to stand upright, and his eyes were ready to start from their sockets. He said to me, after a little parleying, "I never before, in my life, heard any man speak who seemed to know my heart. Mine is a terrible case; but on Sunday morning you painted me to the life, and preached as if you had been inside my soul." By God's grace, I saved that man from suicide, and led him into gospel light and liberty; but I know I could not have done it if I had not myself been confined in the dungeon in which he lay. I tell the story, brethren, because you sometimes may not understand your own experience, and the perfect people may condemn you for having it; but what know they of God's servants? You and I have to suffer much for the sake of the people of our charge. God's sheep ramble very far, and we have to go after them; and sometimes the shepherds go where they themselves would never roam if they were not in pursuit of lost sheep. You may be in Egyptian darkness, and you may wonder why such a horror chills your marrow; but you may be altogether in the pursuit of your calling, and be led of the Spirit to a position of sympathy with desponding minds. Expect to grow weaker, brethren, that you may comfort the weak, and so

may become masters in Israel in the judgment of others; while, in your own opinion, you are less than the least of all saints." CHS

III. Questions

1. What would King David and the saints in the Book of Revelation call the Valleys?
2. Are spiritual valleys unusual for Christians?
3. Where is God when we are in a spiritual valley? (Jehovah Shammah: God is There [Ez 48:35])
4. Should we ever give up in prayer?
5. How should Scripture be used in prayer?
6. Will God's love for His children ever fail?
7. Christian sang as he left the Valley. Is there any spiritual benefit to singing?

IV. Next Week: DVD#10 "The Valley the Shadow of Death" and *The Pilgrim's Progress* Chapter 10 "xx".