Christian has gone into the Valley of Humiliation and he is met by “a foul fiend” whose name is Apollyon.

The name Apollyon is found only once in Scripture, in Rev. 9. There, the apostle John is shown the evil forces of the bottomless pit being unleashed on an unsuspecting and sinful world (v.1-3a). The chapter describes the greatest horrors that will befall the ungodly as the end of this present dispensation approaches. The ruler-king of these angels of wickedness is called Abaddon in Hebrew, and in Greek Apollyon … meaning “Destroyer”.

John Bunyan presents Apollyon not as being Satan, but as being a subordinate of Satan, for at the end of this contest Christian describes him as a captain under the “Great Beelzebub” (“Great Beelzebub, the captain of this fiend, Designed my ruin; therefore to this end he sent him harnessed out, and he with rage That hellish was, did fiercely me engage.”). … Satan has given Apollyon the title of “king” … thus defining his absolute authority over all who accompany him from out of the bottomless pit … that is his realm.

… And the very moment Christian saw him, he was plunged into a terrible fear. He would have ran, had he not considered how open a target he would have been to the fiery darts of the enemy since his back was completely unprotected. “So he went on, and Apollyon met him”.

Apollyon’s confidence was in stark contrast to Christian’s fearfulness … and his complex nature was the complete opposite of Christian’s simplicity. In this close stand-off Christian was immediately frightened of the devilish ugliness of his opponent, “the monster was hideous to behold”. Using Biblical imagery Christian described Apollyon:

* … as having fish-like scales, referring to his proud and seemingly impenetrable defence (cf. Job 41:15 His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. 16 One is so near to another, that no air can come between them. 17 They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered.)
* … His wings as a dragon spoke of the power of his mobility that allows him to roam relentlessly in search of his prey.
* … His feet were like the feet of a bear … so strong he can trample almost anything.
* … His fiery breath was like fire and smoke, defining his desire to consume and destroy.
* … His mouth as the mouth of a lion illustrates his savage and devouring appetite. … A horrible and fearsome creature!

This enemy Apollyon is epitomised as a most serious and implacable foe, of the very worst kind … not to be played with, or to be taken lightly. He hates all travellers to the Celestial City, and it is his mission to stop them in their journey. … **Apollyon, - his description** …

**APOLLYON, - HIS DECEPTION**

As he watched from his vantage point, Bunyan could clearly see, “when he came up to Christian, he beheld him with a disdainful countenance, and thus began to question him”. So … when Christian saw Apollyon, he began to be afraid … and when Apollyon saw Christian, he looked down upon him with a contemptuous and sneering expression. He looked at him in much the same way Goliath would have looked at David in the valley of Elah.

Apollyon quizzed Christian as to where he had come from, - he knew fine rightly! Christian told him he had been a citizen of the City of Destruction, but he was glad to be out of it for now he was looking forward to his new home in the Celestial City. That’s where he was going to!

Nevertheless, the devil doesn’t give up that easy, and Apollyon wasn’t ready to relinquish him just yet, “I perceive that thou art one of my subjects: for all that country is mine, and I am the prince and God of it”. In other words, “you still belong to me, and I’m going to get you back!” … The devil never likes to lose any of his people … and that is why he keeps on pursuing us … even after we are saved. He doesn’t understand for he doesn’t want to understand He cannot undo God’s work of grace when God sets the soul free from sin!

And when Christian replied that yes, he was born in the kingdom of Satan but he had come out, the enemy tried to tease and tempt him back with the attraction of better wages and a better lifestyle. However, Christian told him he wasn’t interested any longer … he was in the employment of Another for he now belonged to the King of princes and had no intention of going back.

Then, in a very condescending and patronising manner, Apollyon tells Christian, “I’ve heard it all before, - you’ll be back! … Come on, save yourself a whole lot of trouble, and return now!” …
Christian wasn’t for turning though. No way! He had given his life over to the Saviour, - he had fully committed himself to the journey he was on … and he had no intention of listening to Apollyon and returning to the City of Destruction. … “No turning back, no turning back”!

Notice how Christian’s confidence was growing, - not in himself, but in his knowledge of what the Lord had done in his life. He had no hesitations telling the tempter he would never return to his former home, in the City of Destruction … That is what it was, - it was his former home … and he was glad he had left it behind. It wasn’t for him anymore. And besides, he was now under the authority of the Prince … and allegiance to Him was far more rewarding, “I like His service, His wages, His servants, His company and country”. The old land he had come from held no attractions any longer. What a statement he then declared, “I am His servant, and I will follow Him”.

Not wanting to give up just yet, Apollyon tried again. He told Christian the journey would inevitably become more difficult, and he would be better giving in now and saving himself a whole lot of trouble and heartache. And Christian was made to think about those such as Pliable who didn’t persevere, but simply gave up and returned to their old life. … “Come on back with me”, Apollyon teased, “for I know you better than you know yourself, for I know you will eventually give up this silly journey. You will not be able to keep it. Don’t make yourself out to look a fool … Come on back with me now”. … And Apollyon put such tremendous strain upon Christian, “How many of them have been put to shameful deaths!”

And the lies continued to flow out of him, “How many times, as all the world very well knows, have I delivered, either by power or fraud, those that have faithfully served me, from Him and His … And so I will deliver thee”. The devil is the greatest of fools for it seems he believes his own deceit! He must have had his ears covered when Jesus said, Jn. 17:12 I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost. … The devil never delivers anyone … Instead, he binds them in chains. He has no hold over the people of God. He cannot rip them out from the hand of God! He’s fibbing when he chases after us with all his lies! He is powerless to tear the truly born-again child from the arms of God.

And so Christian is not afraid to stand up to him. He was timid at the beginning when he entered the valley, but his fear has turned into a strong confidence. …
Yes, he acknowledged in previous days Apollyon had the rule over him … but not anymore, that was in the past. He is a new person now … and he’s not trusting in himself or his own abilities anymore. He is ‘under new management’ … and he realises it, more than ever! He tells Apollyon he is looking forward, - with all the saints, - to the coming of the Prince. But even at that Apollyon wasn’t about to relent … and he made another attempt to dampen Christian’s enthusiasm, “Thou hast already been unfaithful in thy service to Him”. … The enemy is always ready to remind of our failures!

And Christian confessed he had made his mistakes … and he had not taken the care he ought to have taken … even up until his entrance into the Valley of Humiliation. Apollyon, in his role as the “accuser of our brethren” (Rev. 12:10,11) took him away back to almost the beginning and reminded him of his struggles in the Slough of Despond, and his wasted attempts at getting rid of his burden, and how he had slept under the arbour tree when he should have been continuing on to the top of the hill, and how he was almost for turning back when he saw the lions along the way … and maybe even many more occasions also … The devil often throws up at us our failings, and we cannot deny them … but we can glory, - as Christian did, - in the Christ Who continues to keep us! “The Prince whom I serve and honour is merciful and ready to forgive … I have obtained pardon of my Prince”.

Yes, Christian is sure of his Prince. His faith is unwavering for he knows the decision he made to come out of the City of Destruction was the correct one. He had no desire to return, and to look back. He was looking forward to entering into that city where He would forever dwell with the One Who had changed His life. … And no matter how much Apollyon tried to ‘turn it round’, Christian stood firm for he could see through his deception.

Apollyon, - his description and his deception … When he doesn’t get his own way his true ugliness at last comes through …

**APOLLYON, - HIS DEFIANCE**

He enters “a grievous rage”. In fact, he is never in anything else but a grievous rage … He doesn’t know what happiness is, - he has long since forgotten. He is a miserable being since he forfeited his place in Heaven because of His iniquitous desire to be like God. And at last, he can keep up his pretence before Christian no longer, “I am an enemy to this Prince; I hate His person, His laws and people; I am come out on purpose to withstand thee”. He cannot hide how much he despises God and the things of God and the people of God.
No matter how much he sought to conceal his animosity, it eventually came out.

He was ‘getting nowhere with’ Christian, so his anger boils over. The devil and his minions can never be appeased. They cannot stand the mention of Christ’s Name and the work He has achieved … It riles them, as it did here in the valley. He and his forces are the enemy, and there can be no negotiation with them! Christian was right to stand his ground and contend with him … and on each part of the conversation Christian brought it back to Christ. The devil hates our Saviour … all Hell hates Him! It was like the ‘red rag to the bull’ when he mentioned Jesus, “Apollyon, beware what you do, for I am in the King’s highway, the way of holiness, therefore take heed to yourself”.

But the devil is not interested. He will never become right before God. He is a damned, condemned and doomed foe! There is coming a day when he will be cast into the eternal lake of fire and brimstone … and the inexpressible punishment of God’s wrath will torment him forever. … And John Bunyan describes how Apollyon’s smooth cloak of dialogue and deceit fell away to reveal the true foul mouth of an irreconcilable enemy of God and His people.

Apollyon exploded, and he stretched himself across Christian’s pathway, and uttered the devastating words, “I am void of fear in this matter”. That is what he has done to himself, - he has blanked it from his mind.

**CONCLUSION**

**Apollyon, - his description, his deception, and his defiance.** Aren’t you glad you don’t belong to him any longer! You have left the City of Destruction behind you and the Lord is bringing you home to the Celestial City.

On this journey we are resting in the power and authority of God, Ps. 25:8 Good and upright is the LORD … 9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. … He will victoriously lead us through the Valley of Humiliation and remove the areas in our lives that need His sanctifying grace.

There is more of the journey yet to be travelled but He has every step already planned. He knows what is around the next corner … and at the end, He will be waiting for us. On that day we shall not have any spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing for we shall stand before Him holy and without blemish. … Yes, we shall be more than conquerors through Him. … Saved by His grace alone!