

A Highway through the Wilderness

Isaiah 34:1 – 35:10

Halifax: 21 February 2010

Introduction

Today we are going to look at two chapters in Isaiah, two chapters that stand together.

- These two chapters are very much related to chapter 33.
 - You will remember that in chapter we saw the last of six woes,
 - and while the other five woes were addressed to God's people, this woe was addressed Assyrian their adversary.
 - God was going to bring down the mighty Assyrian empire because He was going to rise up to bless His people.
- In chapter 34 and 35, it seems that Isaiah focuses in on the way that God reduces the great kingdoms of this world to a wilderness,
 - and then in that wilderness makes a highway to bring His people to Himself.
 - Chapter 34 shows how God turns the city of man into a wilderness...
 - and chapter 35 shows how He makes a highway in the wilderness to bring His people back.

This is really the pattern of world history—over and over again.

- Great empires arise, empires that become proudly independent of God and corrupted,
 - and in every case, these empires become a wilderness.
 - But God always raises a people out of the wilderness to be His own...
 - A people rescued by His election and grace,
 - and He places these people on His highway that carries them back to Himself, right through the wilderness of this world.
- The LORD began to work in this way as soon as man fell.
 - God had placed our first father Adam in the Garden of Pleasure, Eden,
 - But as soon as Adam rebelled, God drove him out of the garden and placed him in the wilderness.
 - But even as He did,
 - He also graciously promised that a conqueror would come from the seed of the woman—a conqueror who would crush the head of the serpent who had led man into rebellion.
 - And God promised that He would turn the hearts of the woman's seed against Satan so that they would no longer follow him in the rebellion...
 - This was the promise that Christ would come to save His people.
 - It was a promise of a highway to God in the wilderness of this world.

- And this same promise is repeated and provisionally fulfilled again and again...
 - In the day of Noah, proud men rebelled against God in their prosperity and become a violent, immoral, and godless kingdom...
 - And the LORD turns the world into a wilderness by the great flood.
 - But even in the very midst of that great deluge,
 - He made a way for His people's salvation...
 - He appointed an ark to bring them through the "wilderness of the flood" into communion and life with Him.
 - At Babel, proud men come forth to build a great city and the LORD cursed them and brought them into confusion—to the wilderness...
 - But God comes to Abraham and renews His promise to make a way in the wilderness of this world... a highway of salvation in the promised seed.
 - And then in Egypt, man builds a great empire of rebellion and God turns this empire into a wilderness by the ten plagues,
 - and by this means brings forth His people out of Egypt,
 - making a highway for them through the Red Sea and through the barren wilderness into a land flowing with milk and honey where they come to obtain His everlasting blessing as His own people.
 - And then in the time of Israel's kingdom years,
 - The covenant people were raised to great heights by the Lord under David and Solomon,
 - but soon pride and rebellion began to flourish so that by the time of Isaiah, Israel and Judah were as rebellious as the nations around them.
 - The whole nation was sick and had become like chaff, yet, within that chaff was the true seed of God.
 - Even though the elect were among them,
 - God still purposed that He would turn the whole nation into a wilderness.
 - He purposed to raise up Assyria and Babylon to bring that about...
 - These great empires would swallow up Israel and Judah,
 - but then they also would be turned into a wilderness, and when they were, God would make a highway for His people to return to Zion.
 - That is what chapter 34 and 35 are about...
 - Chapter 34—The world will become a wilderness...
 - Chapter 35—God will make a highway for His people through the wilderness to save them.

- But you must not limit Isaiah's prophecy to the return from Babylon...
- As we have seen, it speaks of the way God works throughout redemptive history,
 - and is usual with Isaiah,
 - he sees the return from Babylon as but one piece of God's great redemptive plan to gather a people out of this world for salvation.
 - In the specific events of his day,
 - Isaiah sees the big picture that God turns the rebellious kingdom of Satan into a wilderness
 - while at the same time providing the way of salvation for His people—a highway through the wilderness.
 - And we who live today know what God has done to bring this about.
 - He provided Christ for us (if we are indeed His people).
 - Right here in this fallen world, He is the highway to God, and at the last day, all who taken this way will arrive in the true Zion,
 - completely restored to full happiness in communion with God.
- Throughout world history,
 - empires rise, empires rebel, and empires are reduced to a barren wilderness...
 - but the LORD makes a highway in the wilderness for His people.

Let us now turn to the words of Isaiah that we may see how he, by the Spirit of God, presents to us this great work of our Creator!

- Isaiah calls upon the whole world to pay attention to this message because it is a message that concerns the whole world.
- You see in verse 1 that Isaiah summons all the nations—the entire world to hear!
 - Isaiah 34:1: Come near, you nations, to hear; And heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, The world and all things that come forth from it.
 - This is a message that every person needs to pay attention to!
 - It is a message that every one of you need to pay attention to.
 - It will be your own undoing if you do not hear!

So first of all,

I. See how the LORD will turn this rebellious world into a wilderness.

A. His great anger against the nations of this world is revealed...

1. Two words are used to describe it in verse 2—
 - **Indignation** translates the Hebrew word *keh' tsef*.
 - This word speaks of explosive anger...a terrifying kind of anger.
 - it is related to the word “break” or “snap off.”
 - The second kind of anger is *khay'maw* translated by the word **fury**.
 - This speaks of a settled anger that burns against the one on whom it is fixed.
- a. Such anger as this in humans is very often sinful anger,
 - the first is what we would call blowing up...
 - the second is what we would call holding a grudge...
 - Often, individuals are given to one or the other of these kinds of anger...
 - They either blow up or clam up...
 - But when they are together, they speak of an ongoing explosion of anger.
- b. This combination of both sorts of anger is freely associated with God here, and throughout the Bible...
 - There is never an apology because with God, this anger is never inappropriate.
 - It is especially a subject that our LORD Jesus Christ dwells upon where He speaks of God's wrath as a fire that will not be quenched.
 - We need to come to terms with this.
 - We very much want to think that it would be inappropriate for God to blow up at us and have a settled fury that burns against us.
 - We are disposed to think that way because we do not want to admit what we are before God—
 - rebellious, wicked, sinners who have spurned our Maker...
 - We are the very objects of His indignation of fury, and justly so!
 - This is terrifying!
 - Of course it is something we very much want to deny!
 - But denying it does not make it go away...
 - Instead, it keeps us from looking for God's remedy!
 - So don't try to avoid the truth.
2. You see that this wrath is universal.
 - a. It is not isolated to one or two nations...
 - It is against **all** the nations!

- That is what Isaiah says in verse 2: “all the nations and all their armies.”
 - No one is excluded here!
- b. God is angry with us because of our idolatry and our rebellion...
 - The Bible makes it clear that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...
 - There is none righteous, no not one...
 - And God is angry with the wicked every day!
 - We plead ignorance, but God knows that our ignorance is the result of our corruption and hatred of Him as our Creator and lawgiver.
 - He knows that we are ignorant of Him because we do not want to think about Him or give thanks to Him.
 - He is angry with us because we were made in His moral image and we have defiled His image, corrupting ourselves by sin.
- c. My friends, this means that every one of us is properly the object of God’s indignation and fury.
 - The words are clear!
 - Apart from God’s mercy in Christ, we are under His wrath and curse.
 - He will rage against us with a settled fury that will not be quenched.

B. And look at the dreadful consequences of this ever burning fury for mankind...

1. It is said to bring about their utter destruction (*khaw-ram'*)
 - a. *Khaw-ram'* is the word that was used to describe the nations of Canaan that were to be utterly destroyed so that no trace of them was left.
 - Men, women, children, animals, even their possessions were all to be utterly destroyed.
 - Curses fell upon God’s people whenever they did not obey this.
 - This is what happened when Achan tried to keep back what was devoted to destruction.
 - We saw that Saul was rejected as king for his failure to utterly destroy the Amalekites last week.
 - Verse 2 says that it has been God’s way to utterly destroy nation in the past.
 - It is something He has done...
 - And it says that He has devoted others to destruction.
 - What He did in Canaan is what He has purposed for all nations and peoples that forget His salvation in their rebellion.

- b. A terrible picture of their destruction is given in verse 3:
 - Isa 34:3: Also their slain shall be thrown out; Their stench shall rise from their corpses, And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.
 - It is such a great slaughter that their blood, running down the mountains, causes them to erode.
 - It is so great a destruction, that verse 4 says even the heavens themselves are shaken,
 - withered, like a dried up leaf and rolled up like a scroll!

- 2. In verses 5-8, the destruction of the world is represented as Edom sacrificed.
 - a. You see in verse 5 how it says that God's sword will fall upon Edom.
 - And how in verse 6 they are compared with lambs and goats that were sacrificed to God to atone for sin—the fat and the blood being God's part...
 - Verse 6 says that the LORD will have a sacrifice in Bozrah which was the capital of Edom.
 - Verse 8 explains that in this way, God will get what is His due.
 - It is not just a capricious act of random indignation,
 - but a carrying forth God's vengeance,
 - a recompense for Edom's sin.
 - Those who refuse to sacrifice to God what He commands will themselves become the sacrifice...
 - The whole idea of the sacrifice was that God's wrath fell on the sacrificial animal instead of the sinners who offered the sacrifice.
 - But if they do not avail themselves of God's appointed way of atonement,
 - the wrath must fall on them—they become the sacrifice...
 - The Lord will get what is His due.

 - b. But why is Edom chosen to represent the nations under God's wrath?
 - 1) Edom is perfectly suited to represent the rebellious world.
 - The Father of Edom, you may recall, is Esau!
 - Jacob and Esau were twins.
 - They were both circumcised and had the promise of God.
 - They were both taught the way of God's righteousness.
 - But Esau spurned his inheritance and found his portion in this world rather than in the LORD.

- Over the years, Edom was a perpetual enemy of Israel.
 - Edom utterly refused to submit to God's salvation.
- 2) What a fitting picture of the whole rebellious world!
- a) The nations refuse to submit to God's salvation and seek their own fortune and blessing in independence from God!
 - They refuse to sacrifice, so they become the sacrifice!
 - They refuse to look to Jesus crucified who was cursed in place of guilty sinners,
 - so they become the object of God curse—
 - b) You must understand that all the nations who are without God have at some point *rejected* His salvation.
 - They all come from Adam to whom God promised salvation in the woman's seed—and somewhere along the way they rejected it.
 - Like Esau, they refused to submit to it and sought their own way.
 - The nations were even given a fresh start under Noah,
 - but again, they departed...
 - And now the gospel has gone out to the whole world, and by and large, the world has rejected...
 - You need to see that the whole world is like Esau,
 - not just ignorant of salvation, but having refused God's salvation.
3. For this reason, verses 9-15 declare that the world shall be turned into a wilderness.
- a. Verse 9-10 shows that world becomes an inferno.
 - Even the streams which usually are not destroyed by fire are seen to become pitch that burns...
 - and the dust itself is said to become brimstone.
 - The fire is said to be everlasting and perpetual...
 - It will never be quenched—
 - It will continue to burn night or day forever and ever.
 - This is the ultimate habitation of the wicked...in hell fire.
 - Isaiah has spoken of such a place before... Valley of Hinnom

- Adam was turned out of paradise into the wilderness where he had to labour hard for his bread and face death and sorrow...
- but the final end of the rebellious is described in these two verses.
 - This world under the curse is not Hell—Hell is the place of everlasting burnings.

TRANS> Understand Isaiah's method as he speaks of this.

- We have seen before that when he speaks of either judgement or blessing,
 - he does not tie himself down to one particular period in the history of God's dealing with man.
 - And so here, he speaks of the ultimate coming destruction in verse 9-10, but in the same breath,
 - he speaks of the immediate destruction that shall come upon the nations in his day in verses 11-15.
 - It is the same destruction that we see in world history as nations rise and then are reduced to a wilderness.
- b. In verse 11-15, he shows that the kingdoms of the world are reduced to a habitation of wild beasts.
 - He tells us that God will give these great places to wild animals and to thorns!
 - The men are unfit to live there any longer, so God is seen measuring out the land to portion it out to these creatures.
 - The radical environmentalists are right in this regard!
 - I mean the really radical ones who say that we should rid the earth of mankind so that animals can inhabit the earth!
 - Indeed, the guilt of man is so great that he is destroyed and his place is given to the beasts!
 - God is the one who gave man the dominion of the earth, but He who gave it takes it away because of our wickedness.
 - It is a reversal of dominion.
 - As the Canaanites were driven out of Canaan because of their wickedness,
 - so the great kingdoms and empires of this world rise and flourish until their wickedness and corruption is such that God drives them out and brings in wild animals to take their place!

C. Isaiah stresses that this sort of judgement really is going to come.

1. It is very hard for a great nation to believe that they could ever be brought down like this...
 - Great nations are full of pride and they feel that their cities and their prosperity and their power will last forever.
 - They think that their houses will last forever.
 - It is hard for an Egypt or a Babylon or an Assyria or a Rome or a Jerusalem or an England or a USA or a Canada to believe that they could ever be reduced to a wilderness...
 - and that is why Isaiah adds the words found in verses 16-17...
 - Isa 34:16-17: "Search from the book of the LORD, and read: Not one of these shall fail; Not one shall lack her mate. For My mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them. He has cast the lot for them, And His hand has divided it among them with a measuring line. They shall possess it forever; From generation to generation they shall dwell in it."

2. With these words Isaiah stresses that what God has spoken will be done!
 - a. If God decrees that He will bring down mighty nations and give the land to pelicans and porcupines, jackels and ostriches, snakes and hawks,
 - it does not matter how strong those nations may appear to be.
 - If God has willed that they should fall, they will fall.
 - It was so for Egypt and the nations of Canaan.
 - It was so for Assyrian and Babylon and Rome and Jerusalem.
 - It is so for England and the Soviet Union and Canada and the USA.

 - b. God's decree goes forth and His Spirit gathers the new inhabitants of the land and establishes them there—the pelicans and the snakes...
 - He gets out His measuring line and divides the land and marks out the territory that belongs to each.
 - He gives to each his possession and no one can reverse it.
 - The cry of lament is heard over the city of man...
 - Babylon is fallen is fallen!

 - c. Do not doubt God's word.
 - He has proven Himself again and again to be the One who raises up kingdoms and destroys kingdoms.
 - His judgement falls upon all the nations of the earth that do not know Him.

TRANS> And now, seeing that the proud nations become a wilderness,

- we come to chapter 35 where the people of God are seen to flourish in the wilderness.

II. See how the LORD will make a way for His elect in the midst of the wilderness.

- This is beautiful my friends!

A. God causes the wilderness to become fruitful for His people!

1. It seems that the Jackals and the ostriches and the wild goats are the remnant of God's people that emerge from the fall of the mighty empire...

- They are the lowly ones, the slaves of Egypt, the captives of Assyria and Babylon, the followers of the carpenter's Son from Nazareth...
- God gives them the land in place of the nobles and princes of the city of man who become a sacrifice.

2. And the barren, unfruitful wilderness rejoices to support them!

a. Isaiah describes how it becomes fruitful for them...

- Isa 35:1-2: The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, The excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, The excellency of our God.
 - You remember—Lebanon, represents the place of permanence,
 - Carmel, the place of fruitfulness,
 - and Sharon, the place of beauty!
 - God makes the wilderness into a paradise for His people.
 - All things are made new for them, even while they are yet in this world.

b. This is clearly a reference to what happened when Israel came out of Egypt into the wilderness...

- There in the uninhabitable land, they found fountains that bubbled up from the rock to give them drink...
 - They found bread that came down out of heaven to feed them.
 - In the wilderness, they saw the glory of God as He sustained them.
 - And Paul tells us in 1 Cor 10 that the Rock from which they drank was Christ.
 - The barren wilderness became a place of God's gracious provision!

3. Oh my brothers and sisters, be encouraged by this!

a. Do you see what this is saying to you?

- 1) When God's judgements fall upon the great nations of this world, they fall on you who belong to Jesus Christ also!

- If Canada becomes a wilderness, then you will be found in the wilderness!
 - If famine and disease and destructive storms comes through the land, these will come upon the godly and the ungodly...
 - If our economy collapses and enemy nations come in, it collapses for us too and oppression comes upon us also.
- 2) But whenever this happens, God makes the wilderness into a fruitful place for His people!
- What is death for the city of man becomes life to the people of God!
 - We are in the same wilderness, but for us the wilderness is fruitful because God makes it fruitful...
 - For you, dear child of God, sickness and poverty and oppression bring forth life and blessing, not death and cursing.
 - In the great calamities as well as in your personal calamities that are common to this world.
- b. Dear child of God, do not grow weary in the wilderness!
- 1) Isaiah addresses the words of verse 3-4 especially to those who minister His word...
- To preachers, to husbands, to fathers, he says:
 - Isaiah 35:3-4: Strengthen the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you."
 - The weak hands are those that are tired of serving and feel that it is no use...
 - The feeble knees are those who are not stable and about collapse under the pressures of the wilderness...
 - The fearful-hearted are those who despair of the future...
 - But our gracious LORD says to His ministers,
 - Strengthen the weak hands!
 - Make firm the feeble knees!
 - Tell the fearful-hearted to be strong and fear now!
 - This is what Paul did so faithfully when he encouraged God's people in their trials,
 - and Peter and James and John in their epistles...

- and the book of Hebrews where very similar words are given in chapter 12 to those who are chastened by the LORD.
- 2) God loves us and He wants us to be encouraged and to encourage each other in the wilderness.
 - He wants us to know that He will deal with our enemies who persecute us and who try to destroy us...
 - and that He will save us...
 - Salvation is His work and we need not fear the wilderness, nor ought we to fear the battle He calls us to fight.
 - He will be with us in the wilderness and He will bless us with His salvation—right there in the wilderness!
 - 3) This is the precious word of God’s promise—His promise to save us!
 - It comes to us in the wilderness and we receive it and we live!
 - This is our comfort in the wilderness—
 - That God Himself promises to undertake for our salvation.
 - That He takes the work into His own hands.
- B. Verses 5-7 show you how the LORD makes you fit to go through the wilderness of this world to His city.
1. You are not fit by nature—not at all...
 - By nature, you are part of the fallen race of Adam.
 - You are cut off from God, dead in your trespasses and sins.
 - You are blind so that you cannot see His glory...
 - You are deaf such that you cannot hear His call or receive His word...
 - You are lame such that you cannot walk along His path...
 - You are dumb so that you cannot offer up acceptable praise to Him.
 2. But look at what God does for those He has appointed to salvation!
 - Look at what He does for those who look to Him for life when they hear His word of promise!
 - Verse 5-6: Then [when the word of encouragement is brought to us] the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing.
 - The word **then** is very important in these verses...
 - It is when the promise comes to us and we believe that we are changed.
 - The promise turns us to Christ...
 - And He creates us anew when we believe.

- Our gracious LORD uses His word of promise to bring life into you so that you can find the way and walk in the way through the wilderness!
 - He fills you
 - with heavenly wisdom (your blind eyes see Christ),
 - with heavenly doctrine (your deaf ears hear Christ),
 - with heavenly strength (your lame legs follow Christ),
 - with heavenly praise (your dumb tongue gives thanks to Christ)!

- 3. Even though you are still in the wilderness, still in a fallen world with all its trails and difficulties and oppression...
 - He causes His life-giving Spirit and Word to come to you in the middle of the wilderness.
 - Verse 6 goes on to say:
 - Isa 35:6-7: For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool, And the thirsty land springs of water; In the habitation of jackals, where each lay, There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.
 - Christ ministers to us by God's word and Spirit right in the wilderness...
 - He is the Rock who gives us the living water that breaks forth in the wilderness of this world...
 - Even the Holy Spirit whom He gives to us to refresh us with true spiritual life.
 - In the middle of this barren world, God brings life to us.
 - He even uses the wilderness itself to make His word more effective to us.
 - In the wilderness, we learn to trust Him.
 - He comes to us with such striking power and carries us through the times of greatest difficulty by His mighty hand.

TRANS> That is how God makes us fit to make our way through the wilderness to His city...

- This is a wonderful thing,
 - But it does no good to be fit unless He also provides a way for us through the wilderness.
 - And this is the next thing that Isaiah tells us...

C. In verse 8-10, He tells that God makes a highway for us through the wilderness...

- A highway that brings us at last to God Himself!
1. According to verse 8, God is the one that makes this highway.

- Isa 35:8: “A highway shall be there”...
 - Right there!
 - Right in the middle of the wilderness!

- 2. And this highway leads us right to place we need to go!
 - It leads us to God Himself.
 - At the end of this wonderful highway, we are fully restored to Him!

 - Verse 10 tells you...
 - Isa 35:10: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, And come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

 - You see that it is a *return* to Him...
 - In Adam we were cut off from God, estranged from Him, rejected by God on account of our rebellion...
 - but here you see that the highway that God sets up for us in the wilderness of this barren world brings us back to Him!
 - The highway brings us back to Him so that we may live in His glorious presence where there are pleasures forevermore!

- 3. This is the place of absolute joy and blessing.
 - We **return** to Him with singing!
 - Even while we are still in this world, we have joy on this highway because it is bringing us into fuller and fuller communion with God.
 - This wilderness world becomes a place of salvation.
 - It is a place where everlasting joy in communion with God begins...
 - a joy that will never end
 - A joy that will only attain to greater and greater heights until our communion with God is complete and we are with Him in glory...
 - and sorrow and sighing are banished forever and only unmitigated unmingled joy remains!

 - But the joy begins now—this world of death is transformed for us...into a wilderness bursting forth with life!
 - into a place where the glory of God is revealed to us!
 - on the cancer bed, in the poor house, as an oppressed slave, in bereavement, in warfare and broken relationships...

- no longer are these things ominous reminders of the coming judgement...
 - now they are stepping stones to glory...
 - the curse is gone for us because we have been ransomed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.
 - He has taken the curse for us,
 - and now we have joy begun...
 - Every blessing – every piece of bread we eat and cup of water we drink, every expression of love we enjoy from a friend, every work we perform by His grace, every trial we endure...
 - is a reminder to us of God’s great love and of the glory that He has promised to us—that we shall be with Him and have fullness of joy in fellowship with Him.

TRANS> What an excellent highway this is!

- Look at what else we are told about it.

4. It is a highway of holiness.

- Verse 8 says,
 - “Nothing unclean can pass over it, but it is for others”...that is, those who are clean.
 - “Holy” and “unclean” were terms that were used in the Old Testament to distinguish between those who could approach God and those who could not.
 - Those who were holy could come near and could have communion with Him, but those who were unclean could not have access to Him.
 - And the way a person became clean was by offering the sacrifices that God had commanded and keeping the statutes God had appointed.
 - The sacrifices provided cleansing for them so that they could come and meet with God (from a distance) at the temple.
 - God provided this way for them under the ceremonies of the Old Covenant.
 - If you were unclean, the way to God was closed...
 - If you were holy through the appointed offerings that God commanded, you could draw near.
- But all this points, of course, to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

- He is the true way to God, and this way is opened to us by the shedding of his blood.
 - Remember that we saw in verse 10 that it is the ransomed of the LORD who are able to come to God on this highway.
 - It is only those who have been sanctified by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
 - The Old Testament ceremonies only provided ritual purification, but the true cleansing is from Christ alone.
 - They too were dependent on what Christ was going to do for their acceptance with God.
 - They were waiting for Him to come and looking in faith through a veil at what He would do for the.
- But now Christ has done it and we are made holy by trusting in his sacrifice on the cross for our sins.
 - He is the way that God has made for us in the wilderness!
 - And what a way it is!
 - Jesus Himself has undertaken for us.
 - He has taken all that indignation and fury we looked at before upon Himself to redeem us.
 - And now we are sanctified (or made holy) by the blood the covenant so that we can draw near to God with confidence.
 - In Christ, we are on the highway to holiness in this barren wilderness!
 - He is everything to us—He is the way to God!
- TRANS> And there is yet more..

5. It is also a way that cannot be missed...

- Anyone who wants to come to God by the way that He has appointed—by Jesus Christ—can find this way.
 - Now I know some people that are really bad with directions,
 - but verse 8 says that even a fool cannot get lost on this highway!
- There is nothing complicated about it.
 - It is a raised road in standing out in the wilderness—a person has to deliberately avoid it to get off track.
 - God has make His way of salvation unmistakably clear.

- It is a remarkable thing that so many miss it... even when they are church goers and all the rest...
 - but why do they miss it?
 - It is because they don't really want it!
 - It is not because of ignorance, but because of rebellion.
- The gospel is not complicated...
 - It is only made complicated by wicked men whose hearts have not been renewed by God's grace.
 - The gospel is simply a call to return to God through faith in Jesus who was crucified to take away our sins.
 - People who don't want to come God, to be restored to Him, to live for Him, are only kidding themselves when they claim to trust in Christ for forgiveness.
 - And those who claim to trust in "doing the best they can" or in bare rituals (whether baptism or walking an aisle and praying a prayer) are also kidding themselves...
 - It is not that the way is too complicated,
 - it is rather that reconciliation with the true God is not really agreeable to them.

6. And lastly, I want you to see that this way is a safe way—

- In verse 9, Isaiah says,
 - Isa 35:9: No lion shall be there, Nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it; It shall not be found there.
- This, of course, refers to those who would come along to hinder us and keep us from advancing to the city of God on this way.
 - It is Satan, the roaring lion who seeks whom he may devour, and all who are in league with him in heaven and earth...
 - It is those who try to keep you from going to the city of God.
- But you see that they are not found on this highway!
 - This does not mean that Satan and the world do not tempt us and persecute us and all the rest...
 - but it means that we are in the Father's hand and no one can snatch us out of it.
 - It means that on this highway, the wicked one cannot touch us...
 - so us to keep us from reaching our destination.

- Oh yes, my brothers and sisters!
 - You are in Christ and no power in heaven or on earth or under the earth can never shake you loose!
 - Once you have come to Him, you are secure—you are as secure as if you were already in heaven.
 - You are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation.
 - You will reach your destiny and no one can stop you.

Conclusion: My dear brothers and sisters,

- Is this not a glorious way that God has made for us?
 - Right here in the middle of this sin-cursed world?
 - Right here, in the very same world, we are on this glorious highway that God has made for us...
 - And this highway is going to bring us into full communion with God!
 - That communion begins when you turn to Jesus Christ and all along the way you make progress until at last you have full communion with God.
 - Without His grace, you are barren and destitute and hopeless,
 - but through Him, you are brought from ruin to glory!