

An highway and a way

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[0 : 00] Isaiah chapter 35 and at verse 8. And an highway shall be there and away, and it shall be called the way of holiness.

The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those, the wayfaring men, O fools, shall not err therein.

No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon. It shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads.

They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Isaiah is pre-eminently the evangelical prophet, and his book is sometimes spoken of as the gospel according to Isaiah.

And indeed, it would be possible to construct a biography of our Lord Jesus Christ from his writings.

[1 : 24] Certainly, nowhere else in the Old Testament do we have such a clear view of the grace of God. Now, the word salvation is very prominent in this book.

Indeed, in no other book, with the exception of the book of Psalms, is this word so frequently found.

Now, the name Isaiah means literally salvation is of the Lord, and this is the message of the book.

Now, friends, as we meditate on these words for a little time tonight, let us think first of all of the highway of salvation.

The highway of salvation. And a highway shall be there and away, and it shall be called the way of holiness.

[2 : 36] Now, you remember in the Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan tells us of the pilgrims who were traveling from the city of destruction on the way to the celestial city.

They had been delivered from captivity, from a cruel bondage. They had passed through the wilderness of sin.

And now they were seeking the way to Zion with their faces to their war. The city of destruction was left behind.

They had turned their backs upon sin. They had set out on the way of repentance. Now, in ancient times, the roads in the Holy Land were mere trails.

But this road is different. This is a highway. This road is one. A highway shall be there and away, and it shall be called the way of holiness.

[4 : 01] There are no two highways. There are no two ways. This is the king's highway.

This highway has been set up by the royal authority. That is the plain teaching of Scripture. We read the words of the Lord Jesus, I am the way.

No man cometh unto the Father but by me. And this is the divinely authorized way of salvation.

There are those who pretend that there are other ways. But you remember what the apostle said, let no man deceive you with vain words.

This is the king's highway. God has made the way through the deserts of sin, through the wilderness of sorrow, over the hills of doubt and the mountains of fear.

[5 : 17] Oh, what joyful news this is, that there is a highway, that God in his grace has bridged that gulf that separated sinful man from a holy God.

What joyful news. Ah, my friend, this is the way that God has made for us. Not a way through the shifting sands, a way through that wilderness of sin, where if a man loses his way, he is doomed to certain death.

This is the king's highway that leads to the celestial city. And this highway has been erected by the divine power.

Whoever travels by this road is under the protection of the king of kings. And this highway is a way of holiness.

It is a way of holiness. Those who travel by this highway have turned their backs upon sin.
[6 : 50] To enter this highway means a turning to God. Do you remember how the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Thessalonica that ye turned from God to idols?

You turned to God from idols? and again let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

Let him depart from iniquity if he would walk in the king's highway. A highway shall be there and a way and it shall be called the way of holiness.

and this is a clearly marked way. There are good road signs on the way.

Now you know that when you travel by car in a strange part of the country how thankful you are for good road signs.

[8 : 05] How helpful to have clearly marked signs to guide you. Now a man cannot easily lose his way on this highway.

It would be easy to lose the way on these ancient trails that were only mud tracks. But even those who are utterly inexperienced those who have never used the road before they shall not err. The wayfaring men though fools shall not err therein. He that followeth me said the Lord Jesus shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.

It is the way of holiness not the way for the unclean for the uncircumcised in heart. They are excluded from the way those who deliberately go on and sin.

This is the highway of holiness the highway of the Lord redeemed who shall come to Zion with song and everlasting joy upon their heads.

[9 : 37] But then too friends think of the security of the way the security of the way no lion shall be there nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon it shall not be found there but the redeemed shall walk there.

no lion shall be in the way no ravenous beast shall be found there or they will not defile it.

They will not be able to disturb those who walk in it. There shall be none to hurt nor to destroy in all my holy mountain saith the Lord.

and those who keep closely in this way will be out of the reach of Satan the roaring lion.

You remember what John said that wicked one touches them not. He is chained.

[10 : 50] he may roar but he cannot bite. And those therefore who walk in the way of holiness may proceed in it with serenity of mind knowing that nothing can ever do them any real hurt.

They shall be quiet from the fear of evil. Do you remember how we are told that in the reign of King Hezekiah sometime after the captivity of the ten tribes that God in his displeasure sent lions among the people.

But those that walk in the way of holiness must separate themselves from the unclean and the ravenous we are to save ourselves from this wicked and pervert generation.

Now this is a way by itself. It is distinguished from the ways of the world for it is a way of separation.

It is a way of non conformity to this world. Our friend, if the way that we follow is not a holy and a separated way, it is not God's way.

[12 : 30] God's way is a way of holiness, the highway of holiness, and all the dangers that are involved in travel are eliminated for us, no lion shall be found there nor any ferocious beast shall come up upon it.

And although the lion may be one of the chief terrors to meet the traveler, no lion will ascend this road from the surrounding desert, those who journey by this way will travel in perfect safety.

Those that thou gavest me I have kept in our Lord in the intercessory prayer, those that thou gavest me I have kept and none of them is lost.

Everyone that travels by the king's highway will land safely at the journey's end in the gateway of the celestial city.

But then friends the last thing we would notice in our text is this the travelers and their destination. The travelers and their destination.

[14 : 07] The redeemed shall walk there and the ransomed of the Lord shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.

They shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion.

The ransomed of the Lord. Ah, that speaks of the price that was paid to set them free.

The price that was paid. Remember the words of Hosea, I will ransom them from the power of the grave.

I will redeem them from death. Oh, death, I will be thy plague. Oh, grave, I will be thy destruction.

[15:15] And you remember how our Lord defined his mission. The Son of Man is come, he said. The Son of Man is come, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Oh, think, friend, of the price that was paid to open up the king's highway. He was redeemed not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, said Peter, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

The redeemed shall walk there, the redeemed. Those who have been purchased by his precious blood, those who bear the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Matthew Henry said rather quaintly that the flock of the good shepherd have two marks.

They have a mark upon the foot and they have a mark upon the ear. The mark upon the ear they hear my voice and the mark upon the foot they follow me, they follow me.

[16:52] And my friend, if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, then you have been redeemed by his precious blood, then this way of grace is yours.

Oh, ask yourself, my friend, are you resting upon Christ alone for salvation? Is his finished work all your trust for eternity?

If so, you are in the way and you may walk therein without any fear of ever being driven out of it.

For he that once comes into this way shall in no wise be cast out. For Christ himself is the Lord of the way.

It is the king's highway. Oh, for grace to enable us to walk in this way, in the way of holiness, until we see his face with joy.

[18:13] And the gospel proclaims that this way is open. It is open to all who come with willing hearts, with all who come to repentance, who turn their box upon sin, who set their faces towards Jerusalem.

It is a way of holiness. But it is too narrow a way to admit a sinner with his sin.

Ah, no, sin must be put away without holiness. No man shall see the Lord.

It is the king's highway. They shall come to Zion with songs, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the city of the living God, to the innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly of the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.

They shall come to Zion with song, and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall enter into the highest halls of heavenly happiness.

[19:46] And this is their song, worthy is the lamb, for he was slain for us. The way of holiness.

Do you remember how John Bunyan's pilgrim entered that way? How at first he tried to climb Mount Sinai, thinking to satisfy God, by his obedience, by fulfilling the works of the law.

But do you remember the thunder and the lightning frightened him? And he turned back in despair.

Then he met with evangelists who said, do you see that wicked gate?

Go by that way. And Christian traversed the way and he said, at last I saw a cross and one hanging there.

And as I looked and looked upon him, my burden fell from off my back and it rolled away.

[21:11] It rolled and rolled down the hill until I saw it no more. And Christian sang blessed cross, blessed sepulchre, blessed rather be the man that there was put to shame for me.

They shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, everlasting joy, everlasting joy, not the pleasures of sin which are but for a season, but everlasting joy.

Remember these beautiful words that John writes of the redeemed in heaven, the lamb in the midst of the throne doth feed them and lead them unto the fountains of living water, and God wipes away all tears from their eyes.

It is related of one of the noted ministers of the disruption, the Reverend Hector MacPhail of Resolace that towards the close of his ministry he was asked to conduct a series of services in Alannockshire town.

And one evening Mr. MacPhail collapsed and the doctor was sent for. He appeared to be unconscious and the lady with whom he was staying asked the doctor for his opinion and the doctor shook his head and he said, poor Mr.

[23 : 09] MacPhail, poor Mr. MacPhail. And unexpectedly there came a voice from a patient, not poor doctor, not poor at all, but bordering upon the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Bordering upon the unsearchable riches of Christ. Ah, that is the destination of the redeemed. That is the terminus of the way of holiness. holiness. They shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.

They shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. It is the king's highway. My friend, are you walking in this way? Is this the way of your choice? It is a way that is despised by the world.

[24 : 28] Ah, yes, just as you remember in the Old Testament story, the Syrian general who was a leper said, are not Abana and Farper, the rivers of Damascus?

Are they not better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean? And, oh, there are those who tell us of other ways.

There are those who would put the false teaching of heathenism on the same plane as the gospel of Christ. But, oh, remember, friend, Jesus said, I am the way.

I am the way. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. There is no other way.

And in the providence of God, we look forward tomorrow to gathering at the table of the Lord where those that love him pay their vows in his presence and they are declaring that they are seeking the way that leads to Zion.

[25 : 53] Ah, my friend, is this your way or do you prefer the way of the world? Remember how the wise man said, there is a way, there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

It is only Christ who can bring us into glory. It is only the atoning work of Calvary that can reconcile us to God.

oh, my friend, then, then cast aside every other thought, cease to go about trying to establish your own righteousness, and oh, that with the psalmist each one of us would be enabled to say from our hearts, I will go in the strength of the Lord God.

I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. A highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness.

The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

[27 : 29] May the Lord bless our meditation on his word. Let us pray. O Lord, we bless thee for the way of holiness.

We marvel at the revelation of thy word, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

O did thou give us, Lord, more of the spiritual mind, that we may never cease to adore thee, and to admire thy plan salvation, to wonder at that glorious means that God has devised, whereby his banished ones might be restored to his fellowship and to his favor.

And grant then that with the eye of faith we may see Jesus, that we may hear him say to us tonight, I am the way.

O make him precious to us. And grant Lord that we would by the Spirit's enabling cast ourselves upon him alone for salvation, that we too would be enabled to say through grace with thine apostles, those things that were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ, yea, doubtless, and I count all things but lost, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

[29 : 32] Lord, make thy word to dwell richly in us. O may its fruit be made evident in our lives, that our heavenly Father may be glorified.

Lord, prepare us for thy holy day, that if it please thee still to spare us, we may awake on the morrow to do thee service, and to live to thy praise, and remember all who shall gather around thy word and thy table, as we hope to do, bless all faithful preachers of the gospel in every place, and grant to thine own children, that they may have the anointing of the spirit, that they may be a fragrance of Christ in every place.

Now Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing, go with us on our homeward way, watch over us throughout the night, and oh, grant us that humility that would make us realize our dependence upon thee alone, for life and for breath and for all things, forgive us our shortcomings in thy service, and look upon us in the face of Jesus, thine own anointed one, in whom thou shalt have the glory forever.

Amen.