

# *“The Highway To Heaven”*

**Isaiah 40:3**

May 31, 2020

**INTRO:** *Do you know the way to heaven?*

- God’s HOLY pattern is: **Hear, Heed, Hone...**
- God’s HOLY Calling, Command, & Commission

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**CONTEXT:**

- A. **Series: Gospel Gardening:**
  - a. Understanding Christ, Christianity & Church
  - b. *Roots, Fruits, & Boots...*
  - c. **Roots = Patterns, Promises, & Presence!**

**Proverbs 29:18**

*Where there is no **prophetic vision**  
the people **cast off restraint**,  
**but blessed is he who keeps the law.***

- **BIG IDEA #1:** *Gospel Gardening is Acts 1:8 in Action... it is the grace-based, blood-bought, miraculous & missional, Christ-like learning, loving, & living-out of God’s Word, God’s will, and God’s ways - **no matter what!***
- **BIG IDEA 2:** *Jesus is not ON every page of the Bible BUT make no mistake... Jesus is IN every page. Jesus the Christ is the Bible’s A.M.E.N.*
  - Author / Message / Engine / Nucleus

- **BIG IDEA 3:** It is the exalted God of the Word who exalts & empowers the Word of God.

*(Jesus the Christ is BOTH the Bible's Blueprint & Bullseye.)* - JDP

- **BIG IDEA 4:** *ALL of Scripture, from start to finish, tells you the gospel's truth... shows you its proof... and calls you to loving, faithful obedience.* (“Some things NEVER change”)

- **BIG IDEA 5:** *The colossal gospel has eternal guardrails!*

*(Obedience brings joy, disobedience brings pain.)*

- Only Creator vs. all-created
- Dark vs. light
- Truth & Love vs. Lies & lust
- Father of love vs. father of lies
- Disciples vs. Deceivers
- Gatherers vs. Scatterers
- Good news vs. bad news
- Faithful vs. phonies
- Christlike churches vs. cultural crowds
- Those in Obedience vs. those who “balance”
- Narrow way vs. the broad way
- The few vs. the many
- The Saved vs. the lost
- Worship vs. warfare
- Following vs. feelings
- Inspiration vs. emotion
- Repent & obey vs. persist in pride

- **BIG IDEA 6:** God's Word, will, & ways, in **EVERY part & pattern**, are designed to make disciples who EXALT Christ & EXHORT the Church.

B. Isaiah:

- a. God's prophet
- b. Hezekiah's prophet
- c. Psalm 46's prophet

C. Sermon: Isaiah 40:3

- a. Isaiah is prophesying into the future...
  - i. **Sinner's** Babylonian *captivity*
  - ii. **Savior's** Divine *activity*:
    1. Future - *comfort in coming home*
    2. Fulfillment - *comfort in Christ coming*
    3. Finale - *comfort in Christ coming back*

**BIG IDEA:** *The Gospel is God's narrow highway!*

**PREVIEW:**

- |                                    |                    |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. The Highway's <b>CALLING</b>    | The <i>miracle</i> |
| 2. The Highway's <b>COMMAND</b>    | The <b>MESSIAH</b> |
| 3. The Highway's <b>COMMISSION</b> | The <i>mission</i> |

**TEXT:** Isaiah 40:3

*A voice cries/is calling out:*

*"In the wilderness, prepare the way of the LORD; make straight/smooth in the desert a highway for our God.*

# I. The CALLED

## 1. "A voice"

### ➤ Evidence of Communication & a Communicator

○ Begg the question: "Whose voice?"

○ **THIS POINT IS CRITICAL!**

▪ **Person** of God

▪ **Prophets** of God

▪ **People** of God

a. *Person of God* (Hebrews 1:1ff)

i. *Beginning*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 & Genesis 1:1

Genesis 1:28

God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 2:15-18

15The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

ii. *Middle* Isaiah 40:3&5

*A voice cries:*

*“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God...”*

5And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it together,  
for *the mouth of the LORD has spoken.*”

iii. *End*

Revelation 21:3-8

3And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
“Behold, the dwelling place of God is **with man**. He will  
dwell **with them**, and they will be his people, and God  
himself will be **with them as their God**. 4He will wipe  
away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no  
more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain  
anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

5And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I  
am making all things new.” Also, he said, “Write this down,  
for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6And he said to  
me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the  
beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the  
spring of the water of life without payment. 7The one who  
conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and  
he will be my son. 8But as for the cowardly, the faithless,  
the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral,  
sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the  
lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second  
death.”

## b. Prophets of God

### i. *Moses*

#### Deuteronomy 18:17-20

**17**And the LORD said to me (Moses)... **18**I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. **19**And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. **20**But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.'

### ii. *Isaiah* (35:8 & 40:1-3)

A highway will be there, a roadway, And it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it,  
But it will be for him who walks that way,  
And fools will not wander on it.

### iii. *Jeremiah* (1:4ff)

**4**Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

**5**"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." **6**Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." **7**But the LORD said to me,

“Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’;  
for to all to whom I send you, you shall go,  
and whatever I command you, you shall speak.  
**8**Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver  
you, declares the LORD.” **9**Then the LORD put out his  
hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to  
me, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.  
**10**See, I have set you this day over nations and over  
kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy  
and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

#### iv. *Malachi*

##### Malachi 4:5

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great  
and awesome day of the LORD comes.

#### v. *John the Baptist*

##### John 1:23

*“I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make  
straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”*

#### c. **People of God** (The Remnant & The Church)

- i. John 17
- ii. Acts 1:8
- iii. Matthew 28:18-20

##### Malachi 3:1-5

**1**“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. **2**But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. **3**He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. **4**Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

**5**“Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

## 2. *“cries / is calling out”*

### ➤ **Passion!**

- **Inward** passion
- **Outward** passion

### ➤ **Abrupt! Urgent!!! Essential Necessity**

### ➤ **Why?** Simple.... *God’s loving wrath!*

### ➤ **To Whom?**

- Those to be **SAVED**
- Those to be **SANCTIFIED**

## II. The **COMMANDED**

(“physical Israel”)

### *The Great Commandments come to Invade, Invite, & Invest*

- To the **HIDING**
- To the **HURTING**
- To the **HOPEFUL**
- To the **HUNGRY**
- To the **HEALING**

#### 1. *“in the wilderness...”*

- a. Metaphor for **the world**
- b. **Historical parallel** to past wilderness
- c. ***A sad reality where sin reigns*** (S&G) - JDP
- d. **Darkness... dangers... deceit... destruction...**
- e. ***Gospel cries = rays of light in the darkness***
- f. Wilderness is the opposite of Eden’s Garden!
- g. Here... ***“the land of the lost!”*** - JDP

#### 2. *“PREPARE”*

- a. **KEY!** This is a **COMMAND** / imperative!
- b. **WORKS!!!** Do you part! (Gen. 1:28 & Eph. 2:10)
- c. **PROACTIVE** vs. REACTIVE
- d. **BE READY!**
  - i. *Offensively*
  - ii. *Defensively*

### 3. Prepare *“the way”*

- a.** From Babylon **back to Jerusalem**
- b.** For the Messiah’s **eventual coming**
- c.** For the Messiah’s **immediate arrival**
- d.** For the Messiah’s **promised return**
  - i.** John 14:6!
  - ii.** Early Church was called *“The Way”*
- e.** For the Messiah’s **eternal reign & rule**

### 4. *“of the LORD”*

- a.** **STOP** for a moment of reflection & reverence...
- b.** **Royal reverence is required!** -JDP
- c.** **“LORD” = YAHWEH!**
- d.** Contrast preparing for:
  - i.** Mail-carrier...
  - ii.** Meetings... (*news man seen with no pants...*)
  - iii.** Mother-in-law visit...
  - iv.** Meeting the Almighty!!! **Messiah, King Jesus!**

#### Matthew 3:1-12

1In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” 3 For this is He who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

*“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’”*

**4**Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. **5**Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, **6**and they were **baptized** by him in the river Jordan, **confessing their sins**.

**7**But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who **warned** you to **flee from the wrath** to come? **8 Bear fruit** in **keeping with repentance**. **9**And **do not presume** to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, ( **BELIEVE** ) God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. **10**Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not **bear good fruit** is cut down and thrown into the fire.

**11**“I baptize you with water for **repentance**, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will **baptize** you **with the Holy Spirit** and fire. **12**His winnowing fork is in his hand, and **he will clear** his threshing floor **and gather his wheat into the barn**, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

### III. The COMMISSIONED

(“spiritual Israel”)  
The Remnant / The Church

## *The Great Commission calls us to Inform, Inspect, & Inspire*

### 1. *“make straight”*

- a. **KEY!** COMMAND / Imperative #2
- b. *The Commissioned are Commanded too!* - JDP
- c. Most direct & purest form of obedience
- d. **Expeditious vs. Excuses** of being stalled & delayed
- e. Opposite of “crooked”
- f. *HIT vs. miss the mark!*
- g. See the **implied RESPONSIBILITY to choose...**
  - i. Proverbs 3:5-6
  - ii. Titus 2:15
  - iii. Revelation 2-3
  - iv. John 20:21
  - v. Jude 1:1-4...

### 2. *“in the desert”*

- a. Deserts are *“circumstances & consequences.”* - JDP
- b. Christian deserts are their times & places of:
  - a. Doubt
  - b. Darkness
  - c. Despair
  - d. Discipline
  - e. Deliverance

- c. See Jude 1:5-7...
  - a. BE a Joshua & Caleb
  - b. BE a fully devoted light in a dark world!
- 3. ***“a highway”***

***“The Gospel is a narrow highway!”*** - JDP

- a. Open & obvious way to connect start/finish!
- b. Clear away any & all obstacles...
  - a. Read Hebrews 12:1-2 (*sins & encumbrances*)
- c. ***It was & is a way for war & kings!*** - JDP

*Your highway preparation  
is your way of passion presentation.* - JDP

***Biblical DISCIPLESHIP  
is the way to build biblical highways!*** - JDP

- 4. ***“for our God.”***
  - a. ***“for”***
    - i. **PURPOSE** and **intent** here identifying...
    - ii. **“for”** reveals the fruit's root & motive. - JDP
  - b. ***“our”***
    - i. Great Commandment people
    - ii. Great Commission people
    - iii. Great Church people

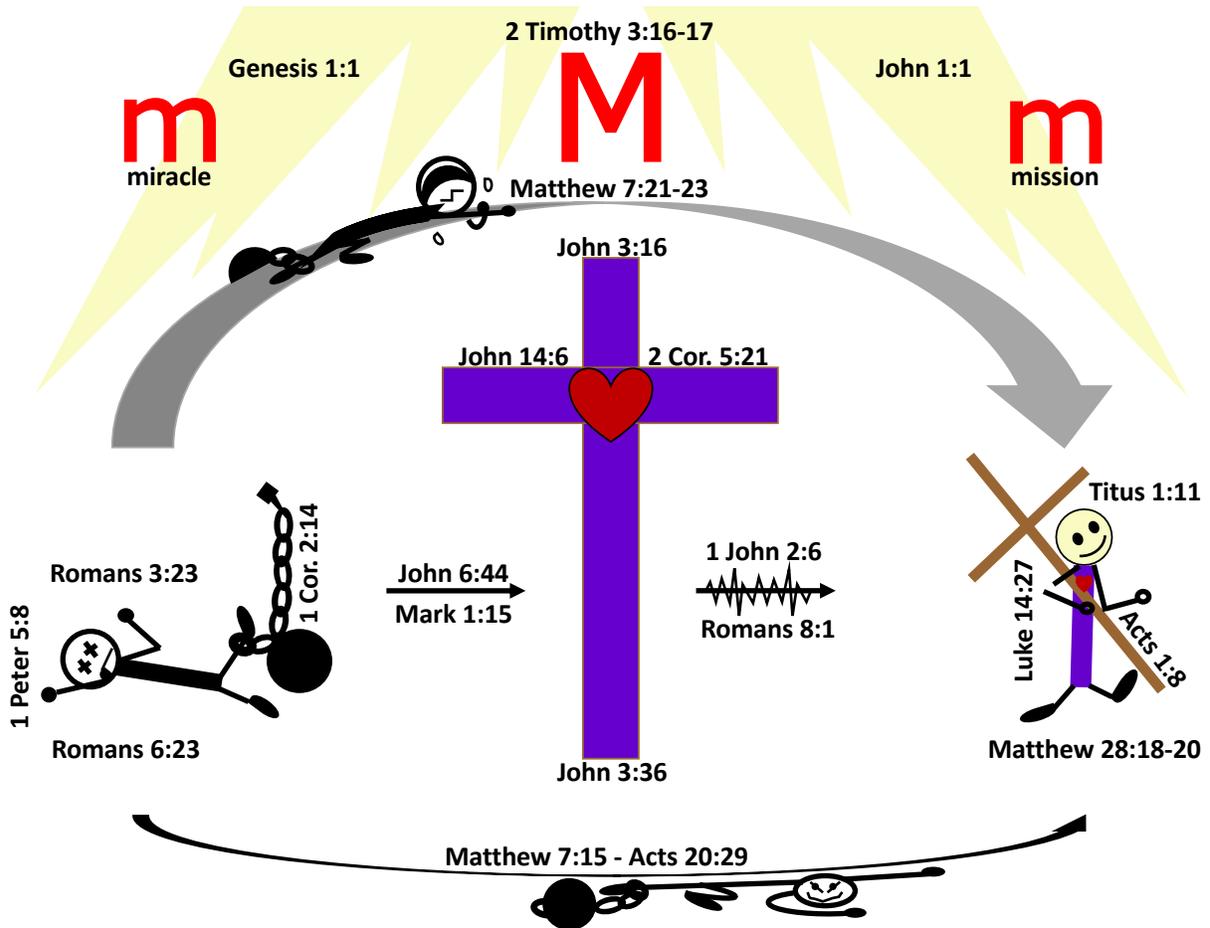
iv. Great Conflict/Combat people (spiritual warfare)

c. "God." - John 1:1... 3:3... 3:16... 3:36!

REVIEW:

1. The Highway's **CALLING**
2. The Highway's **COMMAND**
3. The Highway's **COMMISSION**

The *miracle*  
The *MESSIAH*  
The *mission*



**CLOSE:**

*I pray you now know God's Holy Highway to heaven!*



**One FAITH. One FAMILY. One FOCUS.**

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will BE My witnesses (locally, regionally, and globally).” – Acts 1:8*

One Question: **WHAT DO YOU WANT?**

One Offer: **COME AND SEE.**

One Promise: **TRUTH IN LOVE!**

### **Our Truth-in-Love Distinctives: We are...**

- 1.** Responding to grace & repenting of sin...
- 2.** Trusting the Bible & obeying God's Word...
- 3.** Growing in-Christ & living Spirit-led...
- 4.** Praying for guidance & following by faith...
- 5.** Dying to self & carrying our cross...
- 6.** BE-ing the Church & loving one another...(*truly loving* one another)
- 7.** Equipping the saints & exemplifying supernatural unity...
- 8.** Ministering as ambassadors & discerning matters shrewdly...
- 9.** Worshipping God vertically & experiencing Him horizontally...
- 10.** Proclaiming the Gospel (*no matter what*) & fishing for men...
- 11.** Making disciples-warriors & winning spiritual-warfare...
- 12.** Loving our King & serving His kingdom!

**Let's PRAY!**

## **PREP NOTES:**

*A voice cries:*

*“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”*

### **Lexicon**

#### **A voice**

קוֹל (qō·wl)

Noun - masculine singular

[Strong's Hebrew 6963](#): A voice, sound

#### **of one calling:**

קוֹרֵא (qō·w·rê)

Verb - Qal - Participle - masculine singular

[Strong's Hebrew 7121](#): To call, proclaim, read

#### **“Prepare**

פָּנָה (pan·nū)

Verb - Piel - Imperative - masculine plural

[Strong's Hebrew 6437](#): To turn, to face, appear, look

#### **the way**

דֶּרֶךְ (de·rek)

Noun - common singular construct

[Strong's Hebrew 1870](#): A road, a course of life, mode of action

#### **for the LORD**

יְהוָה (Yah·weh)

Noun - proper - masculine singular

[Strong's Hebrew 3068](#): LORD -- the proper name of the God of Israel

#### **in the wilderness;**

בַּמִּדְבָּר (bam·mid·bār)

Preposition-b, Article | Noun - masculine singular

[Strong's Hebrew 4057](#): A pasture, a desert, speech

## make a straight

יָשַׁר (yaš·šə·rū)

Verb - Piel - Imperative - masculine plural

[Strong's Hebrew 3474](#): To be straight, even, to be, right, pleasant, prosperous

## highway

מִסְלָה (mə·sil·lāh)

Noun - feminine singular

[Strong's Hebrew 4546](#): A thoroughfare, a viaduct, a staircase

## for our God

לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ (lə·lō·hê·nū)

Preposition-l | Noun - masculine plural construct | first person common plural

[Strong's Hebrew 430](#): gods -- the supreme God, magistrates, a superlative

## in the desert.

בְּעֶרְבָה (bā·'ă·rā·bāh)

Preposition-b, Article | Noun - feminine singular

[Strong's Hebrew 6160](#): Arabah -- a steppe or desert plain, also a desert valley running south from the Sea of Galilee

**vv. 3-5.** *A voice*, or the exclamatory use of the noun (13:4; 66:6):

## ‘Listen! Someone is calling out.’

Way is not an exodus-type picture of the Lord’s people journeying home from captivity (see 48:20-21), but the old picture of the Lord’s desert journey to his people’s aid (Deut. 33:2; Judg. 5:4; Ps. 68:4, 7); and there is also a reference elsewhere suited to this context. A Babylonian

hymn says, ‘Make [Nabu’s] way good, renew his road. *Make straight his path*’,

**referring to the creation of special processional routes** along which the images of the gods were carried on festivals.

*The creation of a road that is straight (v. 3d),  
unmistakable (highway, or causeway, v. 3e), level (v. 4ab)*

*and smooth (v. 4cd) pictures a journey made without difficulty and therefore with certainty of arrival.*

*The glory of the Lord (v. 5) means 'the Lord in all his glory', not necessarily with awesome manifestations but in the fullness of his personal presence.*

For the mouth: a typically Isaianic affirmation (1:20; 58:14; also 21:17; 22:25; 25:8), stressing both the origin of the word in the Lord (mouth) and the identity of what the prophet said with what the Lord said.

- Tyndale Commentaries - Isaiah.

vv. 40:3-5

***A prophetic exhortation told Israel to prepare for the revelation of the Lord's glory at the arrival of Messiah.***

Scripture sees John the Baptist in this role (Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4-6; John 1:23).

***It likewise sees the future forerunner who is to be like Elijah preparing for Christ's Second Coming (Mal. 3:1; 4:5, 6).***

vv.40:3, 4 *Prepare the way.*

- The remnant of Israel could remove obstacles from the coming Messiah's path through repentance from their sins.

- **John the Baptist reminded his listeners of this necessity** (Matt. 3:2),
- **as did Jesus** (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15).
- These verses reflect the custom of some eastern monarchs to send heralds before them to clear away obstacles, make causeways, straighten crooked roads, and level hills (cf. 45:1, 2).
- John had the task of getting people ready for Messiah's arrival.

- The MacArthur Bible Commentary.

(Missionary Sermon.)

Isa 40:3-5. *The voice of Him that crieth...*

*We are authorised by the four Evangelists to understand these verses as a prophecy of the ministry of John the Baptist, who appeared as the forerunner of the Messiah; and they may be properly applied to all missionaries and religious workers who go out to uncivilised, heathen, and superstitious countries, to prepare the inhabitants for the reception of pure Christianity.*

**The language is figurative, and is borrowed from an ancient Eastern custom.**

When monarchs went out to visit distant parts of their dominions or to invade neighbouring kingdoms, they sent

heralds or pioneers before them to clear the way and remove obstructions.

*In allusion to this custom, John the Baptist and all his successors in similar work are represented as going out before the Messiah to clear away obstructions and prepare the way for the establishment of His kingdom in the world.*

Let us notice—

## **I. THE CONDITION OF THE WORLD IN ITS SINFUL AND UNREFORMED STATE.**

It is here represented as a wild, pathless, and dreary wilderness. This figurative description suggests—

- 1. That it is unproductive of anything good.** The earth when left uncultivated will produce nothing valuable and useful; and so men in their sinful state will bear no fruit to the glory of God and the good of their fellow-creatures.
- 2. That it is productive of things worthless, noxious, and injurious.** A wilderness produces briars, thorns, and worthless weeds, and forms hiding-places for ravenous beasts and poisonous reptiles. This is a proper description of the heathen and uncivilised world. Men there rob, deceive, and devour each other. “The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.”

## **II. THE NECESSARY AND IMPORTANT PREPARATION FOR ITS MORAL TRANSFORMATION.**

- 1. Religious teachers must be employed to combat with the ignorance and thick darkness which cover the people.** To preach the Gospel to people without any kind of elementary education would be like throwing grain-seed among thorns or over hard rocks uncovered with any soil. This preparatory work is carried on most effectively in the present day. Eleven Protestant missionaries and assistants are now employed on the wide field of the heathen and superstitious world for every one so employed fifty years ago.
- 2. The Word of God must be made accessible to the rations in their respective languages and dialects.** Eighty years ago the Bible had not been translated into more than forty of the languages of the world; now the whole book, or portions of it, is translated into more than two hundred and fifty languages. We thus see that the Christian Church has done six times more to prepare the way of the Lord in the last eighty years than it had done in the previous eighteen hundred years.
- 3. The international communications which are rapidly opening in every direction** are promoted by men of the world simply for mercantile and scientific purposes, but they are evidently overruled by Divine Providence to prepare the way of the Lord. Many are running to and fro, and knowledge is increasing. *Pure Christianity will ultimately reap all the advantages of this, for every form of false religion can only thrive in the darkness of ignorance and thoughtlessness.*

### III. THE GLORIOUS TRANSFORMATION WHICH SHALL BE EFFECTED.

“Every valley shall be exalted,” &c., i.e., all the malarious morasses of immorality shall be drained and converted into healthy and productive land; all high hills and barren mountains of false systems of religion shall be levelled down and disappear; and all crooked and uneven dealings in the diplomacies of nations and commercial transactions shall be straightened and made conformable to the golden rule of the Gospel (Matt 7:12). When this blessed change is realised, “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed” —

1. In the number of converts to the true religion. The true followers of Christ in every age hitherto have been only a “little flock” in comparison with all the inhabitants of the world, but the time is coming “when they shall teach no more every man his neighbour and every man his

brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

2. In the beauty of their holy and consistent characters. "Holiness unto the Lord" shall be stamped upon every person and thing then; "and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts." The good works of God's people will so shine before men that they shall be led to glorify our Father which is in heaven.

3. In the temporal and spiritual happiness of the world. All the sources of misery and unhappiness shall be dried up entirely. Wars and bloody contentions between nations shall cease unto the ends of the earth. All tyranny, oppression, and every form of injustice shall be removed, and kindness, charity, and justice will occupy their place. Men who used to be likened to bears, wolves, lions, leopards, and poisonous serpents, shall be changed and become tame and as harmless as the lamb, the kid, and the weaned child (chap. 11:6-8). The whole earth will become the holy mountain of the Lord. The spiritual condition of the Church will then be indescribably happy and glorious. There will be no lifeless religious service, and no worshipper groaning and downcast under the hidings of the Lord's face, for "the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud of smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence."

#### **IV. THE CERTAINTY OF THE REALISATION OF THIS TRANSFORMATION.**

"For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

1. The Lord has ample power to fulfil all His promises. The opponents and obstructors of the promised transformation are described in the next three verses as grass and withering flowers. And what is grass to withstand Almighty power?

2. The Lord is omniscient, and no unforeseen contingencies can derange His plans, as it is often with us (chap. 46:9).

3. The Lord is the God of truth, and it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of His law and promises to fail (Num 23:19).—Thomas Rees, D.D.

- Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah.

**Isa 40:3**

*The voice;*

an abrupt and imperfect speech, such as there are many in the Hebrew language. Methinks I hear a voice; or, a voice shall be heard.

*Of him that crieth in the wilderness;*

which words declare the place either:

1. Where the cry was made; Or,
2. Where the way was to be prepared,

- as it is expressed in the following clause, which is added to explain this.
- And **such places being commonly pathless,**
- and **many ways incommodious to passengers,**
- it was the **more necessary to prepare a way there.**

*“Both come to one thing, for the cry was to be in that place which was to be prepared. This place seems to be understood immediately of the deliverance of the Jews out of Babylon, and of smoothing their passage from thence to Judea, which lay through a great wilderness; but ultimately and principally concerning their redemption by the Messiah, whose coming is ushered in by the cry of John the Baptist, who did both cry and prepare the way in the wilderness...”*

- Read **Mt 3:1** where this text is directly expounded of him.
- *But withal the terms of wilderness and desert seem to be here chiefly used in a metaphorical sense, to express the desolate and forlorn condition of the Jewish nation, and especially of the Gentile world, when Christ came to redeem them; for so these*

*words are frequently used in prophetic writings*, as hath been noted in divers places.

### *Prepare ye the way;*

1. **you to whom this work belongs**. He alludes to the custom of princes, who send pioneers before them to prepare the way through which they intend to pass.
2. **The meaning is only this, that God shall by his Spirit so dispose men's hearts, and by his providence so order the empires and affairs of the world, as to make way for the accomplishment of this promise.**

### *Of the Lord;*

- **for the Lord**, as it is expounded in the next clause,
- **that the Lord may walk in it**; which...
- *though it may be understood of their coming out of Babylon, when God might in some sort be said to march in the head of them, conducting and preserving them, yet it was much more evidently and eminently fulfilled when Christ, who was and is God blessed forever, came into the world in a visible manner.*

### *Straight;*

- **either direct, in opposition to crooked**, or...
- even and level, in opposition to the mountains and valleys mentioned in the next verse.

## Isa 40:4

- This is only a more particular explication of that which was generally expressed Isa 40:3.
- The sense is, All obstructions shall be removed, and the way made in all respects convenient and easy for the passenger.

## Isa 40:5

*The glory of the Lord shall be revealed:* so

- it was in some sort, when God brought them out of Babylon, which was a glorious work of God;
- *but far more properly and eminently when Christ, who was the glorious God, was manifested in the flesh, and gave much clearer and fuller discoveries of God's glorious wisdom, and holiness, and goodness*, and other Divine perfections, than ever yet had been imparted to mankind and to the church.

*All flesh;*

- all nations, both Jews and Gentiles.

*For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it;*

- though this may seem incredible...
- yet God is able to accomplish it!

The time to favour Zion, yea, the set time, having come, **the people of God must be prepared, by repentance and faith, for the favours designed them;** and, **in order to call them to both these, we have here the voice of one crying in the wilderness, which may be applied to those prophets who were with the captives in their wilderness-state, and who, when they saw the day of their deliverance dawn, called earnestly upon them to prepare for it, and assured them that all the difficulties which stood in the way of their deliverance should be got over.**

It is a good sign that mercy is preparing for us if we find God's grace preparing us for it, Psa. 10:17.

**But it must be applied to John the Baptist;** for, though God was the speaker, he was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, and his business was to prepare the way of the Lord, to dispose men's minds for the reception and entertainment of the gospel of Christ.

## The way of the Lord is prepared:

**I. By repentance for sin;** that was it which John Baptist preached to all Judah and Jerusalem ([Matthew 3:2, 5](#)), and thereby made ready a people prepared for the Lord, [Luke 1:17](#).

1. **The alarm is given; let all take notice of it at their peril;** God is coming in a way of mercy, and we must prepare for him, v. 3-5. If we apply it to their captivity, it may be taken as a promise that, whatever

difficulties lie in their way, when they return they shall be removed.

*This voice in the wilderness (divine power going along with it) sets pioneers on work to level the roads. But it may be taken as a call to duty, and it is the same duty that we are called to, in preparation for Christ's entrance into our souls.*

- (1.) **We must get into such a frame of spirit as will dispose us to receive Christ and his gospel:** "Prepare you the way of the Lord; prepare yourselves for him, and let all that be suppressed which would be an obstruction to his entrance. Make room for Christ: Make straight a highway for him." If he prepare the end for us, we ought surely to prepare the way for him. Prepare for the Saviour; lift up your heads, O you gates! Psa. 24:7, 9. Prepare for the salvation, the great salvation, and other minor deliverances. Let us get to be fit for them, and then God will work them out. Let us not stand in our own light, nor put a bar in our own door, but find, or make, a highway for him, even in that which was desert ground. This is that for which he waits to be gracious.
- (2.) We must get our hearts levelled by divine grace. Those that are hindered from comfort in Christ by their dejections and despondencies are the valleys that must be exalted. Those that are hindered from comfort in Christ by a proud conceit of their own merit and worth are the mountains and hills that must be made low. Those that have entertained prejudices against the word and ways of God, that are untractable, and disposed to thwart and contradict even that which is plain and easy because it agrees not with their corrupt inclinations and secular interests, are the crooked that must be made straight and the rough places that must be made plain. Let but the gospel of Christ have a fair hearing, and it cannot fail of acceptance. This prepares the way of the Lord; and thus God will by his grace prepare his own way in all the vessels of mercy, whose hearts he opens as he did Lydia's.

2. When this is done the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, v. 5.

(1.) When the captives are prepared for deliverance Cyrus shall proclaim it, and those shall have the benefit of it, and those only, whose hearts the Lord shall stir up with courage and resolution to break through the discouragements that lay in their way, and to make nothing of the hills, and valleys, and all the rough places.

(2.) When John Baptist has for some time preached repentance, mortification, and reformation, and so made ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:17), then the Messiah himself shall

be revealed in his glory, working miracles, which John did not, and by his grace, which is his glory, binding up and healing with consolations those whom John had wounded with convictions. And this revelation of divine glory shall be a light to lighten the Gentiles. All flesh shall see it together, and not the Jews only; they shall see and admire it, see it and bid it welcome; as the return out of captivity was taken notice of by the neighbouring nations, Psa. 126:2. And it shall be the accomplishment of the word of God, not one iota or tittle of which shall fall to the ground: The mouth of the Lord has spoken it, and therefore the hand of the Lord will effect it.

II. By confidence in the word of the Lord, and not in any creature. The mouth of the Lord having spoken it, the voice has this further to cry (he that has ears to hear let him hear it), The word of our God shall stand for ever, v. 8.

1. By this accomplishment of the prophecies and promises of salvation, and the performance of them to the utmost in due time, it appears that the word of the Lord is sure and what may be safely relied on. Then we are prepared for deliverance when we depend entirely upon the word of God, build our hopes on that, with an assurance that it will not make us ashamed: in a dependence upon this word we must be brought to own that all flesh is grass, withering and fading.

(1.) The power of man, when it does appear against the deliverance, is not to be feared; for it shall be as grass before the word of the Lord: it shall wither and be trodden down. The insulting Babylonians, who promise themselves that the desolations of Jerusalem shall be perpetual, are but as grass which the spirit of the Lord blows upon, makes nothing of, but blasts all its glory; for the word of the Lord, which promises their deliverance, shall stand for ever, and it is not in the power of their enemies to hinder the execution of it.

(2.) The power of man, when it would appear for the deliverance, is not to be trusted to; for it is but as grass in comparison with the word of the Lord, which is the only firm foundation for us to build our hope upon. When God is about to work salvation for his people he will take them off from depending upon creatures, and looking for it from hills and mountains. They shall fail them, and their expectations from them shall be frustrated: The Spirit of the Lord shall blow upon them; for God will have no creature to be a rival with him for the hope and confidence of his people; and, as it is his word only that shall stand for ever, so in that word only our faith must stand. When we are brought to this, then, and not till then, we are fit for mercy.

2. The word of our God, that glory of the Lord which is now to be revealed, the gospel, and that grace which is brought with it to us and wrought by it in us, shall stand for ever; and this is the satisfaction of all believers, when they find all their creature-comforts withering and fading like grass. Thus the apostle applies it to the word which by the gospel is preached unto us, and which lives and abides for ever as the incorruptible seed by which we are born again, 1 Peter 1:23-25. To prepare the way of the Lord we must be convinced,

(1.) Of the vanity of the creature, that all flesh is grass, weak and withering. We ourselves are so, and therefore cannot save ourselves; all our friends are so, and therefore are unable to save us. All the beauty of the creature, which might render it amiable, is but as the flower of grass, soon blasted, and therefore cannot recommend us to God and to his acceptance. We are dying creatures; all our comforts in this world are dying comforts, and therefore cannot be the felicity of our immortal souls. We must look further for a salvation, look further for a portion.

(2.) Of the validity of the promise of God. We must be convinced that the word of the Lord can do that for us which all flesh cannot—that, forasmuch as it stands for ever, it will furnish us with a happiness that will run parallel with the duration of our souls, which must live for ever; for the things that are not seen, but must be believed, are eternal.

It was promised (v. 5) that the glory of the Lord shall be revealed; that is it with the hopes of which God's people must be comforted.

- **Matthew Henry's Commentary**

\*\*\* Christians have “a living hope!”

Comfort is not the mere absence of anguish... Comfort is miraculous restoration!

- Freed from Alcatraz....
- Freed into a desert...

\*\*\* Culture = “more, more, more...”

\*\*\* Comfort = “enough”

\*\*\* If the demon leaves the house & it is not filled with God's Spirit, the bad spirit will return with 7 more...

Messiah

Mission

Mechanics

Methods

Message

Miracle  
Messiah

QUOTE:

Log on to social media:  
Doom & Gloom

Watch the news:  
Doom & Gloom

Answer my phone:  
Doom & Gloom

Go to the store:  
Doom & Gloom

Open my Bible:  
Comfort & Hope!

- Nate Pickowicz

**3 A voice cries:**

***“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.***

**4**Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

**5**And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

### **The Word of God Stands Forever**

**6**A voice says, “Cry!”  
And I said, “What shall I cry?”  
All flesh is grass,  
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

**7**The grass withers, the flower fades  
when the breath of the LORD blows on it;  
surely the people are grass.

**8** *The grass withers, the flower fades,  
but the word of our God will stand forever.*

### **The Greatness of God**

**9**Go on up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good news;<sup>e</sup>  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;<sup>f</sup>  
lift it up, fear not;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
“Behold your God!”

**10**Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
behold, his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.

**11**He will tend his flock like a shepherd;

he will gather the lambs in his arms;  
he will carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead those that are with young.

[12](#)Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand  
and marked off the heavens with a span,  
enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure  
and weighed the mountains in scales  
and the hills in a balance?

[13](#)Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD,  
or what man shows him his counsel?

[14](#)Whom did he consult,  
and who made him understand?  
Who taught him the path of justice,  
and taught him knowledge,  
and showed him the way of understanding?

[15](#)Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket,  
and are accounted as the dust on the scales;  
behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust.

[16](#)Lebanon would not suffice for fuel,  
nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering.

[17](#)All the nations are as nothing before him,  
they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

[18](#)To whom then will you liken God,  
or what likeness compare with him?

[19](#)An idol! A craftsman casts it,  
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold  
and casts for it silver chains.

[20](#)He who is too impoverished for an offering  
chooses wood that will not rot;  
he seeks out a skillful craftsman  
to set up an idol that will not move.

[21](#)Do you not know? Do you not hear?  
Has it not been told you from the beginning?  
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

[22](#)It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,  
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;  
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,  
and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;

[23](#)who brings princes to nothing,  
and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.

[24](#)Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,  
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,

when he blows on them, and they wither,  
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

[25](#)To whom then will you compare me,  
that I should be like him? says the Holy One.

[26](#)Lift up your eyes on high and see:  
who created these?

He who brings out their host by number,  
calling them all by name;  
by the greatness of his might  
and because he is strong in power,  
not one is missing.

[27](#)Why do you say, O Jacob,  
and speak, O Israel,  
“My way is hidden from the LORD,  
and my right is disregarded by my God”?

[28](#)Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.

[29](#)He gives power to the faint,  
and to him who has no might he increases strength.

[30](#)Even youths shall faint and be weary,  
and young men shall fall exhausted;

[31](#)but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;  
they shall run and not be weary;  
they shall walk and not faint.

ISAIAH ch.35:

### **Barnes' Notes**

This chapter [Isaiah 35:1-10](#) is a continuation of the prophecy commenced in the previous chapter. See the Analysis of [Isaiah 34](#) for a general view of the design of the prophecy. The object of the whole is, to show that all the enemies of the people of God, and particularly Edom, which had so peculiarly and grievously

offended them, would be destroyed; and that the destruction of their foes would be followed by times of security, prosperity, and joy.

That this chapter refers in the Messiah is apparent from the slightest inspection of it. It so clearly describes the times of the gospel; so distinctly speaks of the very works which the Redeemer in fact performed; and is so full, and rich, and beautiful, that it cannot be regarded as referring to any other period. It has, in many respects, a strong resemblance to the predictions in [Isaiah 11](#); [Isaiah 12:1-6](#), and is incontestably among the most beautiful of the prophecies of Isaiah.

The chapter may be divided into the following portions:

I. The consolations which would follow the destruction of all their enemies - as great a change as if the wilderness were to blossom like the rose, and the glory and beauty of Lebanon and Carmel were given to the desert [Isaiah 35:1-2](#).

II. The exhortation addressed to those in office and authority to comfort the feeble, and strengthen the weak, with the assurance that those blissful times would come [Isaiah 35:3-4](#).

III. The description of the actual condition of the future period of happiness which is foretold.

1. The eyes of the blind would be opened, the deaf made to hear, and the lame man be cured [Isaiah 35:5-7](#).

2. It would be a time of holiness. The way of access to these blessings would be open and free to all - even to all nations, but it would be a way for the pure only [Isaiah 35:8](#).

3. It would be a time of safety. There would be no enemy that could overcome and subdue them [Isaiah 35:9](#).

4. It would be a time of elevated joy - represented by the return to Zion from a long and painful captivity [Isaiah 35:10](#). In the fullness of the blessings of the reign of the Messiah all their sorrow sad sighing would flee away [Isaiah 35:10](#).

ISAIAH 35:8

**Lexicon**

**And there**

שָׁם (šām)

Adverb

[Strong's Hebrew 8033](#): There, then, thither

**will be**

וַיִּהְיֶה (wə·hā·yāh-)

Conjunctive waw | Verb - Qal - Conjunctive perfect - third person masculine singular

[Strong's Hebrew 1961](#): To fall out, come to pass, become, be

**a highway**

מַסְלֹול (mas·lūl)

Noun - masculine singular

[Strong's Hebrew 4547](#): A thoroughfare

**called**

יִקְרָא (yiq·qā·rê)

Verb - Nifal - Imperfect - third person masculine singular

[Strong's Hebrew 7121](#): To call, proclaim, read

**the Way**

וַדֶּרֶךְ (wə·de·reḵ)

Conjunctive waw | Noun - common singular construct

[Strong's Hebrew 1870](#): A road, a course of life, mode of action

**of Holiness.**

הַקֹּדֶשׁ (haq·qō·deš)

Article | Noun - masculine singular

[Strong's Hebrew 6944](#): A sacred place, thing, sanctity

**The unclean**

טָמֵא (tā·mê)

Adjective - masculine singular

[Strong's Hebrew 2931](#): Unclean

**will not**

לֹא (lō-)

Adverb - Negative particle

[Strong's Hebrew 3808](#): Not, no

**travel it,**

יַעֲבֹרְנָו (ya·'ab·ren·nū)

Verb - Qal - Imperfect - third person masculine singular | third person masculine singular

[Strong's Hebrew 5674](#): To pass over, through, or by, pass on

**only**

וְהוּא־ (wə·hū-)

Conjunctive waw | Pronoun - third person masculine singular

[Strong's Hebrew 1931](#): He, self, the same, this, that, as, are

**those who walk**

הֹלְכִי (hō·lêk)

Verb - Qal - Participle - masculine singular construct

[Strong's Hebrew 1980](#): To go, come, walk

**in that Way—**

דֶּרֶךְ (de·rek)

Noun - common singular

[Strong's Hebrew 1870](#): A road, a course of life, mode of action

**and fools**

וְאִוִּילִים (we·'ě·wî·lîm)

Conjunctive waw | Noun - masculine plural

[Strong's Hebrew 191](#): Foolish

**will not**

לֹא (lō)

Adverb - Negative particle

[Strong's Hebrew 3808](#): Not, no

**stray onto it.**

יִתְעָוֶי (yit·'ū)

Verb - Qal - Imperfect - third person masculine plural

[Strong's Hebrew 8582](#): To vacillate, reel, stray

## [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

(8) **An highway shall be there.**--The raised causeway, as distinct from the common paths. (See [Judges 5:6](#).) We are still in the region of parables, but the

thought has a special interest as a transition, at the close of the first volume of Isaiah's writings, to the opening of the second. The use of the road has been referred, by some interpreters, to the return of the exiles from Babylon. Rather is it the road by which the pilgrims of all nations shall journey to the mountain of the Lord's house ([Isaiah 2:1](#)).

**The way of holiness . . .**--The name of the road confirms the interpretation just given. There was to be a true *Via Sacra* to the earthly temple, as the type of that eternal Temple, not made with hands, which also was in the prophet's thoughts. Along that road there would be no barbarous invaders polluting the ground they trod, no Jews ceremonially or spiritually unclean. The picture of the heavenly Jerusalem ([Revelation 21:27](#)) into which "there entereth nothing that defileth," presents a like feature. *It shall be for them, i.e. . . . It is appointed for those, for whosoever walketh therein* (the Hebrew verb is in the singular). Then, in strict order, comes the final clause: *Even the simple ones shall not lose their way*. A curious parallel is found in [Ecclesiastes 10:15](#), where "he knoweth not how to go to the city," is one of the notes of the man who is void of understanding.

### **Pulpit Commentary**

Verse 8. - *And an highway shall be there, and a way* (comp. [Isaiah 30:21](#)). There shall be a clear "way" marked out in which all shall be bound to walk - a "strait and narrow way" doubtless ([Matthew 7:14](#)), but one not readily missed. *The way shall be called The way of holiness*. It shall be that path through the dangers and difficulties of life which holiness points out and requires. The unclean shall not pass over it. It is tempting to imagine that there is here a reference to the famous **chinvat peretu** of the Zoroastrians - the "bridge of the gatherer" - along which all souls had to pass in order to reach the abode of the blessed, but which the souls of the wicked never succeeded in passing ('Ancient Monarchies,' vol. it. p. 339). The 'bridge of the gatherer' is, however, in the other world, not in this world; but Isaiah's "highway" is here. It is that right course of life, which "the unclean" do not follow, though they might do so if they chose, but which the righteous follow to their great gain and advantage. *But it shall be for those*; rather, as in the margin, **but he shall be with them**; God, **i.e.** shall be with those who seek to walk in the way, and not to err from it. He shall direct them, support them, sustain their footsteps. *The wayfaring men*; rather, **they that walk in the way - that** make up their minds to try to walk in it. Though fools; **i.e.** however simple and unlearned they may be - "Ne simplicissimi quidem" (Rosenmüller). *Shall not err therein*; shall not wander from the way through mere simplicity. It shall be easy to find, difficult to miss.

## Barnes Commentary Notes:

And an highway shall be there - (see the note at [Isaiah 11:16](#)). This is language which is derived from the return of the Jews from captivity. The idea is, that there would be easy and uninterrupted access to their own land. The more remote, though main idea in the mind of the prophet seems to have been, that the way of access to the blessings of the Messiah's reign would be open and free to all (compare [Isaiah 40:3-4](#)).

And a way - It is not easy to mark the difference between the word "way" (דרך derek) and "a highway" (מסלול maseulûl). Probably the latter refers more particularly to a raised way (from סלל salal, to cast up), and would be expressed by our word "causeway" or "turnpike." It was such a way as was usually made for the march of armies by removing obstructions, filling valleys, etc. The word "way" (דרך derek) is a more general term, and denotes a path, or road of any kind.

And it shall be called the way of holiness - The reason why it should be so called is stated; - no impure person should travel it. The idea is, that all who should have access to the favor of God, or who should come into his kingdom, should be holy.

The unclean shall not pass over it - There shall be no idolater there; no one shall be admitted who is not a pure worshipper of Yahweh. Such is the design of the kingdom which is set up by the Messiah, and such the church of Christ should be (see [Isaiah 40:3-4](#); [Isaiah 49:11](#); [Isaiah 62:10](#)).

But it shall be for those - For those who are specified immediately, for the ransomed of the Lord. The Margin is, 'For he shall be with them.' Lowth reads it,

'But he himself shall be with them, walking in the way.'

And this, it seems to me, is the more probable sense of the passage, indicating that they should not go alone or unprotected. It would be a holy way, because their God would be with them; it would be safe, because he would attend and defend them.

The wayfaring men - Hebrew, 'He walking in the way.' According to the translation proposed above, this refers to God, the Redeemer, who will be with his people, walking in the way with them.

Though fools - Hebrew, 'And fools.' That is, the simple, the unlearned, or those who are regarded as fools. It shall be a highway thrown up, so direct, and so unlike other paths, that there shall be no danger of mistaking it. The friends of God are often regarded as fools by the world. Many of them are of the humbler class of life, and are destitute of human learning, and of worldly wisdom. The sense here is, that the way of salvation shall be so plain, that no one, however ignorant and unlearned, need err in regard to it. In accordance with this, the Saviour said that the gospel was preached to the poor; and he himself always represented the way to life as such that the most simple and unlettered might find it. Go

No doubt Malachi would have welcomed an Elijah-like challenge to religious compromise and complacency (1 Kings 18). It seems most likely, however, that Malachi recognized that of all the OT prophets, Elijah best fit the portrait of the messianic prophet "like Moses" predicted in Deut. 18:15 and 34:10-12. As such, Elijah stands alongside Moses in Mal. 4:4-6 as the representative of the entire OT line of prophets, much as he functions on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9:4 and parallels). The promise to send Elijah the prophet **before the great and awesome** "day of the Lord" confirms the interpretation given here of Mal. 3:1-5, that the promised messenger is not Malachi himself but some future prophet. It is likely that this future prophet is identified with Elijah not because Elijah was spared from death, as if this might permit a literal return to life, but because the future messenger would have a prophetic ministry similar to that of the historical Elijah. Compare the many OT predictions of a future "David" that do not suggest David's literal return to life (Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23-25; 37:24). The NT identifies John the Baptist as the fulfillment of Malachi's prophesied Elijah (Matt. 11:10-14; 17:10-13; etc.). When John the Baptist denied that he was Elijah (John 1:21, 25), it is possible either that he was denying that he was Elijah in person, or that he rejected not the ministry predicted in Malachi but misguided popular elaborations of this promise based on other notable features in the original Elijah's ministry, especially his many miracles, which pointed more to Christ than to John (John 10:41;

see note on Matt. 11:14). (For more on “the day of the Lord,” see note on Amos 5:18–20.)

**Mal. 4:6** John the Baptist prepares hearts for the coming of the Lord in the person of Christ (**Luke 1:17**).

Comfort KNOWS that as good as it is to receive comfort... “It’s BETTER to give than to receive!” - Jesus the Christ (cf. Hebrews 12:1-2)

We don’t comfort for the purpose of trophy collecting...No. We comfort so as to know, the blessing of bringing glory to our God!