



Conducted by
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"In Isaiah 35:8 we read, "And the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Who are the 'wayfaring men'?"

THE WAYFARING MEN

The 'wayfarer' usually travels from place to place, invariably by foot. I suppose in these days we might refer to such an one as a tramp, although there is a class of 'traveller' today who is motorised, and takes his home with him wherever he goes.

Perhaps the nature of the 'wayfaring man' is made a little clearer to us in Jer. 9:2. In this part of the scripture, the prophet is bewailing the many sins of his people, and he says, "Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them: for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men". Here we learn that such men 'left the people', and had a lodging place in the wilderness. (Sometimes we say that a person is in 'the wilderness' if he is out of the mainstream activity of the people he usually associates with).

Later in the same prophecy, at 14:1-8, Jeremiah prays to God concerning the grievous famine which has stricken the land. In v8 he prays, "**O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night**"? The plain teaching here is that Jeremiah expected that God would be with them all the time, particularly in times of trouble.

There are two ways in which we can miss the presence of God. One is when we withdraw from Him; the other is when He withdraws from us. If he withdraws from us, this means that we have initially withdrawn from Him, because it is not in His nature to leave His children desolate. If we read on into Jer. 14, we shall see that the people chose to follow the teaching and prophecies of false prophets. If we want to keep the presence of God with us, then we must ensure that we, in this so-called sophisticated age, are not drawn from Him by following false teachers, of which there are many.

There is one other thing to notice relative to the question. Isaiah does **not** say that all wayfaring men are fools. What he does say is: "And the wayfaring men **though** fools". We sometimes get the impression that because wayfaring men choose to travel, that they are extremely foolish in not settling down somewhere. We may be right in this thought, and possibly there is a lesson to be learned here.

THE ITINERANT CHRISTIAN

Many of us have been, and still are, itinerant preachers. That means that we travel about from place to place preaching the teaching. Over the years this seems to have gained general acceptance in the Church. There is, however, a danger in this. Whether or not we are itinerant preachers, we are first and foremost, Christians, and generally we belong to some assembly. The danger is that we can give so many preaching appointments away from our parent assembly that any effectiveness we may have is lost to that assembly. We may believe that we have a responsibility to preach to as many people as possible in different localities, but we must never forget that we have also a responsibility to our parent

assembly.

This situation may be compounded by those Christians who are not preachers. some find great pleasure - especially if there are a number of churches within a short distance of each other - in meeting at such churches to the detriment of their own assembly. You cannot integrate well with a group from which you are continually absent. I have always been a firm believer in working from where you are. I don't know of any assembly in the British Isles which is not surrounded by sinners.

THE INERRANT WAY

In 'the way' prophesied by Isaiah, it is said that, "**the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein**". I think we can take this to mean that the traveller through life, even though he may be a fool, should not miss the way that Isaiah is speaking of.

When we look around the world today we have to wonder if this is so. There are many millions of people, travelling through life, who seem to have missed the way completely. According to our understanding of the passage in Isaiah they would seem to be more culpable than even fools. This is hardly surprising because God gives a warning, "**There is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death**". (Prov. 14:12).

How many times, when we have been travelling, have we seemed to miss the way. We're alright as long as we stay on the highway, but at times we have the inclination to travel the byways, and it is then that we can quite easily get lost. We travel the byways because it is pleasanter to do so; it gives us more pleasure. The pleasure can, however, turn to despair when we realise that we are lost. We then say to ourselves, "I wish I had kept on the way that I know best".

THE KINGDOM HIGHWAY

"Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert". (Isa. 43:18, 19). This prophecy of a spiritual highway confirms the prophecy in ch. 35. There will be a new 'highway' and a 'way', and the whole of ch. 35 is a prophecy of the flourishing of the Kingdom of Christ; the spiritual Kingdom which was to be. You will remember that Jesus said of himself, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me**". (John 14:6). The Kingdom prophetically represents the Church: the 'Way' is the Lord Christ Himself.

It is this spiritual highway, this kingdom highway, from which we should not err. Once having committed ourselves to 'the Way', we should be foolish indeed if we eventually missed the way. The Lord Himself is our guide. He knows the way because He is 'The Way'. We have seen, of course, that we can deviate from the highway, but never forget that there are countless thousands of fellow-travellers, and it is their responsibility to guide wayward souls back onto the highway. Later in his prophecy Isaiah says, "**Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people . . . say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord**". (Isa. 62:9-12).

In a sense, members of the Lord's Body are like the 'wayfaring men'. We must always be travelling on; ever onward to the prize that is set before us. We dare not spend too long in one place, indeed, there is no reason for us to do so. The Hebrew Writer puts it quite well, "**Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come**". (Heb. 13:13, 14). Let us travel to

the Master, where He is.

I am glad the questioner sent this question. In my early days in the Church I heard many fine sermons based on Isaiah ch. 35, but in recent years I haven't heard many. Perhaps we have lost sight of the fact that we are travelling the spiritual Highway; perhaps we have lost the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem. **"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness"**. Praise be to God that many of us have found 'the Way'. Let us not be foolish enough to lose it.

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