

(Isa 40:3b, MKJV) Prepare the way of the LORD, make straight a highway in the desert for our God.

Well, the Christmas season is upon us...or is it? Actually, it's Advent, which, in 21st Century America, it's Shopping Season! Yes, we're preparing for Christmas, but not the way Isaiah meant.

In the Church year, Advent is more than just wrapping presents and making cookies. It's a time of reflection, both on ourselves and the Word of God. Of course, if we look at ourselves in the mirror of God's Law, we don't look so good. Personal reflection just emphasizes our sin (which is the reason we omit the joyful "Alleluia's" from our liturgy during Advent), so why would we rather do that than, say, watch "It's a Wonderful Life" again?

The point of acknowledging our sin is not to make us feel bad or guilty. God wants us to confess our sin so we are prepared for Christ's coming. How does that prepare us? The whole reason Christmas happened in the first place was our sin. Jesus came to forgive that sin on the cross. Confessing our sin means agreeing with God that we are sinners. If we're sinners, we need a Savior. Merry Christmas. Your sins are forgiven!