

Zilwaukee Milwaukee



Thank God He's not like Daniel or Solomon Johnson!

Zilwaukee is a small town on the Saginaw River just north of Saginaw, Michigan. In 1848 when Daniel and Solomon Johnson, two brothers from New York City, built a saw mill there. The Johnson brothers gave the town the name, "Zilwaukie." Having built a large fast producing sawmill and needing immigrant workers, and needing settlers for the town, the Johnsons purposely named it Zilwaukie to cause people to confuse it with the more popular melting-pot city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A large German migration was taking place in the 1840's and Milwaukee was fast becoming an attraction for new immigrants.

When the immigrants arrived there, they were 186 miles "as the crow flies" east of Milwaukee. But since Lake Michigan stretched her water mass between them, any land route would have been over 400 miles! They had little choice but to stay where they hadn't intended to be!

The settlement of Zilwaukee, much to the pleasure of Daniel and Solomon Johnson began to swell, flourishing also due to the lumber boom that occurred throughout the State of Michigan in the mid to late 1800's. With the lumber industry driving the economy of the area, the residents of the community believed that it was time to separate from the other townships in the county. On January 3, 1854 the board of directors established the "Township of Zilwaukie". Available records indicate the spelling of "Zilwaukie" changed to the current "Zilwaukee" sometime between 1877 and 1896.

Our human nature is vulnerable to the spiritual Daniel and Solomon Johnsons. Vulnerable to the deceits of the wicked one and misguided advice, but, Isaiah promised for the Lord, "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye (mistakenly or stubbornly) turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Isaiah 30:21.

I had my first experience with one of those little "tom-toms" recently when a friend heard I was going to be traveling and loaned me one. I knew where I was going for at least part of the trip. The rest of the trip, especially since my destination was a large city, it would prove to be helpful. It was set to the "shortest route" option.

At the first major juncture where I had to turn either right or left, the tom-tom was telling me to go the way I didn't want to go...I knew the other way better. I didn't mind going "the long way around." But, the voice persisted. "Stop, turn around, go back." Since it was my first time with one of these highly educated devices, I wondered if I was destined to hear those chiding commands the rest of the way on my trip. Amazingly, after 100 feet or so, the little bugger had figured out that I

was choosing an alternate route and began again to assist me, giving me the right stops, starts and turns the rest of the way!

I didn't go the way the tom-tom "planned" but I didn't get lost! When I listened, the voice was right there telling me where I had gone wrong. But, just like in life, some "*mistaken* turns" are irreversible. So, we have a tender God who continually "adjusts" his invisible "map" so we arrive at our destination, sometimes in spite of ourselves!

This should be an exciting trip with an unfathomable destination! Can you believe it? With a "system" for more sophisticated and infinitely more accurate than a tom-tom, we still "lose" our way? Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity (the root of "iniquity" is rebellion) of us all." Forgiving, He is, but not giving up on us, Praise the Lord! David got off track and prayed: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; *seek thy servant*; for I do not forget thy commandments." Psalm 119:176.

God just wants to get us to our destination! He's got a great reward for us and, if it's up to him, we're not going to miss it!

"That's why we have this Scripture text:

No one's ever seen or heard anything like this,
Never so much as imagined anything quite like it-
What God has arranged for those who love him."1 Cor. 2:9 (MsgB)