

November 16, 2025

## Study Guide: Isaiah 52:11–12 — Longing for Home

**Theme:** Departing from Captivity

**Passage:** *Isaiah 52:11–12*

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### 1. Warm-Up / Context Reflection

1. The sermon opened with a story about American POWs in WWII receiving pamphlets announcing their freedom.
  - **Q:** What emotions or images did that illustration raise for you?
  - **Q:** How does that story prepare your heart to understand Israel's experience in Isaiah?
2. Israel had been exiled for 70 years in Babylon.
  - **Q:** Why might some people hesitate to leave captivity even after freedom is announced?
  - **Q:** In what ways can people today grow "comfortable" in unhealthy conditions?

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### 2. Read the Passage (Isaiah 52:11–12)

"Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! ... For the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard."

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### 3. Depart From Exile — Understanding the Command

1. Isaiah repeats the command "Depart, depart."
  - **Q:** Why is repetition important here? What does it reveal about human tendencies?
2. Israel is told to leave behind the "unclean things" of Babylon.
  - **Q:** What were some of the cultural, religious, or moral "unclean things" they needed to leave?
3. The people are told that God will go before them and behind them.
  - **Q:** What does this reveal about God's character?
  - **Q:** How does God's presence change the experience of leaving the familiar to return home?
4. Compare this deliverance with the Exodus.
  - **Q:** How is this deliverance different from leaving Egypt?
  - **Q:** What does that teach us about the way God works in different seasons?

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#### 4. Depart From Sin — Personal Application

1. Like Israel, believers today can grow comfortable in captivity.
  - **Q:** What are modern examples of “comfortable captivity”?
  - **Q:** Have you ever stayed in a harmful pattern simply because it felt familiar?
2. The sermon noted that Jesus’ death and resurrection is like a “pamphlet drop” announcing our freedom.
  - **Q:** Why do you think people often remain in sin even after hearing the gospel message?
3. The illustration about “bacon in the backpack” emphasized not carrying old attachments with us.
  - **Q:** What “connectors” to sin might Christians be tempted to bring with them when they try to change?
4. Pursuing God is part of leaving sin.
  - **Q:** What helps you pursue God wholeheartedly?
  - **Q:** What practices or environments (church, community, disciplines) help you walk in freedom?
5. John Owen wrote, “Be killing sin or it will be killing you.”
  - **Q:** How seriously do you typically view the presence of sin in your life?
  - **Q:** What helps you stay vigilant in pursuing holiness?

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#### 5. Repentance — The Turning Point

1. Repentance is more than a change of mind; it is a change of direction.
  - **Q:** How would you describe repentance in your own words?
2. Mark Dever wrote, “It is turning from the sins you love to the Holy God you’re called to love.”
  - **Q:** What sins do people “love”—even as they hurt them?
  - **Q:** What helps a person shift their affection from sin to God?
3. Consider the rope illustration (pulling, tugging, entangling).
  - **Q:** What does the rope represent in your life right now?
  - **Q:** Where do you sense God calling you to “depart, depart” today?
4. Returning home in Isaiah required preparation and purification.
  - **Q:** What does preparing your heart for God’s presence look like this week?

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## 6. The Promise — God Goes Before and Behind

1. God promises to go before His people and guard them from behind.
  - **Q:** How does this promise encourage you as you attempt to leave sin or unhealthy patterns?
  - **Q:** Where in your life do you need to trust God's leadership and protection?
2. Israel's journey home was guided by God at every step.
  - **Q:** What next step is God inviting you to take toward spiritual freedom?

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## 7. Prayer & Reflection

- **Pray:** "Lord, help me hear Your call to depart from anything that keeps me from You. Give me courage to leave captivity and joy to walk in Your freedom. Go before me, come behind me, and purify my heart."
- **Reflect:** Write down one area of life where God is calling you to leave captivity and step toward home.