

Series: Isaiah
Title: Journey through the Ages
Text: Isaiah 52: 11-12
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Isaiah 52: 11: Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean *thing*; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD. 12 For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel *will be* your reward.

YOU AND I AS A FAMILY OF GOD, WANT A LIVING SAVIOR.

We want a Savior who can deliver us out of soul-trouble as we walk through this valley of the shadow of death. When we are full of sorrow; When we fall under temptations, trials, afflictions, discouragements. We want a Savior who can hear our prayer, who can answer our prayer and who can speak a word in season with power in our heart.

Believer, we have just such a God and Savior. Have you been praying to God this week? Have you been asking him to direct you? To give you a word to light your path?

He puts those prayers in the hearts of his people and he puts a scripture in the hearts of his preacher. So when you hear his preacher read that passage you hear the answer God is giving you. This is the passage he laid on my heart this week. He did it for someone.

Isaiah 52: 11: Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean *thing*; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

The God who rules heaven and earth says to you child of God, concerning all this worlds idolatrous religion, this worlds treasures, its honors, and its applause. Flee all that hinders you from communion with your Savior. That Savior that we just said we want to speak to us, now says, “Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean *thing*; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.”

Christ has redeemed his people out of Babylon, the Holy Spirit has quickened us, broken our chains and called us out. Now, we are journeying through this world as in a foreign land. We are pilgrims, strangers going toward our heavenly city, Jerusalem. We are still IN this world but we are not OF this world. We live IN this world but we are not to live FOR this world. And he calls us to make a clean break from it, it is what is best for us:

1 John 2: 16: For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17: And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Now here we have God answering us just as we have been asking him to do. He has set before us the way—depart ye, depart ye. This is the way glorifying to him, the safe way for you where he promises his blessing upon us.

Now, if he spoke this word effectually—in power—into your heart—you will obey him! In fact, without moving a toe, already, in your heart you have begun departing—like Levi—he departed then stood up. God has just made up your mind for you, loosened your grip. So you will depart from whatever it is that has been holding you in bondage.

But for those who have only heard the earthen vessel read the scripture: you’ve already put this scripture beside the traditions you would rather follow. Or put it up against the way your friends are going who you would rather follow. Or you’re thinking, “This will make me unsuccessful in the thing I want to do.” **WE HAVE FOLLOWED BABYLON’S FORMULA FOR SUCCESS SO LONG WE THINK LOSS IS SUCCESS.**

Illustration: Remember the day I brought in bubbles: “There is Rocky Hill, Pennington, Spotswood, Newtown, all Your religious works to gain God’s favor—bubbles.” All is a vapor that is heard for a moment then vanishes away.

Truth would not be truth if it walked hand and hand with heresy. The children of God are described by God as light in a dark world. Can light and darkness abide together? Can truth and error be one? Can holiness and self-righteous, self-exalting, self-made religion walk hand in hand? God says no.

2 Corinthians 6: 14: Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15: And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16: And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?

We’ve seen it time and again in scripture, and in life, you will not turn darkness to light but darkness will most assuredly turn you aside to darkness.

II. BUT HOW COMFORTING IS THIS NEXT WORD. GOD NOT ONLY SAYS GO OUT, HE GIVES THIS PROMISE. Isaiah 52: 12: For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your reward.

Notice our Savior does not say, “IF ye go out, you shall not go out with haste” No, he says, “For ye shall not go out with haste.” There is no question that you are going out. When God calls his child AND commands effectually we shall go out.

Are you afraid of leaving your false religion behind? Your fools gold? Your honors? Or are you afraid you will be overcome somehow? The Lord God says, “touch not the unclean, be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.”—you do not need the weapons or the gold and silver of this world—**12: For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you;**—Jehovah—all powerful—will go before to be our guide and protector—**“and the God of Israel your reward.**—the covenant God of his elect people—who forgives all the troubling sins behind us, in our past, through the blood of Christ—he will be the rear guard, “to gather you up.”

Proposition: I want to persuade you that our God shall lead us safely and gather us up, by following God our Savior as he leads his people through some of the history of the church.

Title: A Journey through the Ages

I. FIRST, OUR TEXT SAYS, “the LORD will GO BEFORE you.” SO WHEN DID GOD BEGIN GOING BEFORE HIS PEOPLE?

Micah 5:2: But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose GOINGS FORTH have been from of old, **from everlasting.**

Our LORD God began going before his people in the eternal counsel when the triune God entered the everlasting covenant of grace before the foundation of the world. Then God determined to form a people for himself who would glorify him in praise. God determined the Father would give the Son, the Son would give his life, and the Holy Spirit would create and call his children into union with Christ through faith.

John 17:24: Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

Ephesians 1: 3: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,

1 Peter 1: 18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Our incarnate Lord Jesus was from old:

- He is older than Adam and Eve
- Older than the mountains
- Even older than the sun and stars.
- He made them all!

II. HE WENT BEFORE US AND WAS OUR REReward WHEN ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN AND WHEN THEY WERE CAST OUT.

After Adam sinned and plunged mankind into sin, before casting them out, he went before and gathered them up: calling them both out of darkness to himself.

- He revealed their sin to them.
- He preached Christ to them.
- He gave them both the promise of Christ, the Woman's Seed in Gen 3: 15.
- He clothed them both in coats of skins from a sacrifice who died in their place.
- Then he sent them forth.

As he went before Adam and Eve outside the garden he gathered up his own from their descendents. He taught Abel the gospel probably through Adam. Abel came before God with the blood of a lamb and God had respect to Abel but not to Cain who came by works. As far as we know, the first child of God that the LORD God of Israel gathered up to cross over into victory into glory with our Redeemer—was Abel. A little later “Enoch was translated that he should not see death...for he had this testimony, that he pleased God”—that through faith in Christ. (Heb 11: 5)

III. THEN WE SEE OUR GOD GOING BEFORE US AND GATHERING UP HIS OWN IN NOAH'S DAY.

He raised up Noah, a preacher of righteousness.

Genesis 5: 29 [Lamech] called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.

God gave Noah instruction to build the ark, informing Noah he would destroy the world in judgment.

Genesis 6: 5: And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6: And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8: But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Our Savior preached the gospel through Noah through that Ark. That Ark would bear the flood of judgment. All those in the Ark, in type, died under that flood like those outside the Ark, the difference was the difference grace made—the Ark bore the flood for those inside the Ark. That Ark is a picture of Christ.

So Noah preached the gospel to his generation, saying, as our text says,

“Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing;...for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your reward.”

But God showed us what man will do if God lets man choose for himself: none, not one out of millions, heeded Noah’s gospel. They chose the world instead. They inherited lungs filled to capacity with water—and after that they inherited terrors of God in hell for eternity.

Yet, Jehovah’s purpose was not frustrated. He did not lose one that he purposed to save from the beginning. He shut Noah and his family inside the ark before the first springs of water came up from the ground and before the first drops fell from heaven. Do you see Jehovah going before the church and providing for her?

IV. AFTER THE FLOOD, GOD WENT BEFORE US, SAVING THOSE THREE BOYS OF NOAH AND USING THEM THE LORD REPOPULATED THE WHOLE EARTH.

Some would be his elect, his true chosen people therefore saving their fathers, those three boys, Jehovah saved them so that his elect were born into the world. Then he birthed them anew in regeneration

Some descendants would be inhabitants of Babylon, Sodom, Gomorrah, Ur from whom Jehovah would manifest his glory he caused his people to depart from them but he left others to themselves. He shall be gracious to whom he shall be gracious, but whomsoever he will he hardens—that is his glory!

So from Noah’s son, Shem, came sons, on down the line to Terah and from Terah comes Abraham—the father of the faithful. The Lord has gone before us the whole way—protecting his own, gathering us up.

V. THEN IN ABRAHAM’S DAY, JEHOVAH WENT BEFORE HIS PEOPLE, CALLING ABRAHAM OUT OF UR OF CHALDEES, THAT LAND OF IDOLATRY, SAYING TO HIM—

“Depart ye, depart ye, go out from her midst go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing...”

Abraham went but he took much uncleanness with him: he took his father and his nephew Lot. All he did was cause himself much pain and sorrow because God separated Abraham from those things: God took his father away in death and he took Lot away.

That whole time Abraham sojourned in the enemy’s territory, this is how the LORD went before the church to protect her:

Psalm 105: 13: When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people; he suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

- He suffered no man to do them wrong
- He reprov'd kings for their sakes
- If he did that for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob he shall do that for his people in our day—saying, touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

Application: Sometimes the LORD's going before us would appear to us as being against us. But always continue trusting him, because Jehovah always goes before us to work all things together FOR his people not against us. Here is an example.

VI. WE SKIP FORWARD TO THE TIME OF JOSEPH.

Psalm 105: 16: Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread. 17: He sent a man before them, *even Joseph, who* was sold for a servant: 18: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: 19: Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him. 20: The king sent and loosed him; *even the ruler of the people*, and let him go free. 21: He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: 22: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.

Joseph later told his brothers, this,

Genesis 45:5: Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life...7: And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8: So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God:

Application: Likewise, God our Father called for a famine in the land—**there is none righteous no not one**—but he sent Christ before us to preserve life.

- V18: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: Christ was laid in iron: Until the time that God's word came: the word of the LORD tried Christ our Savior:
- Satan was allowed to try Christ but found nothing in him.
- Rulers of this world tried him but found nothing against him.
- He was tried on the cross—that furnace of affliction heated to perfection—
- Yet even bearing the sins of his people
- Even bearing separation from God for his people
- He remained faithful—he cried, "It is finished and gave up the Ghost."
- V20: Then the king sent and loosed him; *even God*, the ruler of the people, and let him go free.
- v21: He made him Lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: 22: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.

When Christ calls his brethren out of famine, like Joseph said to his brethren, Christ says in our hearts:

- Genesis 45:5: Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life...
- 7: And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.
- 8: So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God:

And we hit our face, believe on Christ and praise God for his great wisdom in sending Christ before us to save us.

VII. THEN ISRAEL WENT DOWN INTO EGYPT. BUT BECAUSE OF JOSEPH THEY HAD FULL PROVISION MADE BEFORE THEY WENT—Psalm 105: 23: Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. 24: And he [God] increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.

Like I have been showing you, before we came into this world of Egypt, before Adam even came, God had made full provision for his people in Christ Jesus. But with Israel favored how will they be in a position for God to

deliver them from slavery and show the new generation his glory? God goes before us, turning the king's heart as he will.

Psalm 105: 25: He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.

In like manner, God overruled the fall in the garden so he could manifest his glory in saving his people from our sins. But then look what God did.

Psalm 105: 26: He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen. 27: They shewed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.

- Likewise, Christ sends his preachers.
- Through the gospel they show his signs and his wonders of grace.

Psalm 105: 37: He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and *there was not one feeble person among their tribes.* 38: Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.

- He does the same with us through Christ the PassOver Lamb
- He enriches us with the riches of his grace
- There is not one feeble person among his churches—in Christ all are complete
- Not only are we glad to depart Egypt, but Egypt is glad when you depart because God's fear falls on them. Another reason he says, "ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight:

VIII. So God brought the church out of Egypt. He goes before her through the wilderness.

Psalm 105: 39: He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night. 40: *The people* asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven. 41: He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places *like a river.* 42: For he remembered his holy promise, *and Abraham his servant.* 43: And he brought forth his people with joy, *and his chosen with gladness:* 44: And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people; 45: That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the LORD.

So it is as we journey through this wilderness:

- He feeds us with Christ the Bread from heaven
- He refreshes us with the Holy Spirit through Christ our Smitten Rock.
- For the sake of Christ, he remembers his covenant and He brings "forth his people with joy, *and his chosen with gladness:*" Moses said in Deuteronomy 1: 31:...the LORD thy God bare thee, [gathered them up] as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place.
- He has now delivered us from the bondage of the law by Christ observing his statutes and keeping his laws and paying our sin debt for all our transgressions.
- By his grace, we obey him by believing on Christ.
- We keep his ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Table
- And we delight in his law after the inward man

Application: So believer, depart from Babylon, not in haste, for the Lord shall go before thee and be thy reward. Every trouble you shall face has been preordained to meet your need. It is measured to what you can bear according to God's love and wisdom. God goes before you to have everything ready in providence when you come to each trial. And he will gather you up, take you over each hurdle, holding you to his bosom like a father his little child.

And when you come to death's door remember, Christ has gone before us there too:

- Into judgment on the tree
- Into the grave
- Then before us to reserve our inheritance within the veil--“Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

So death has no more sting. Death has nothing to say to the righteousness of God and eternal life. Christ our Righteousness stand ready to gather you up.

And if Christ shall come again before that, oh, imagine the day when our Rear Ward gathers up the last of the church out of this earth. Behind those last one the world shall burst into flames. But between his church and the fires of judgment shall stand our Rear Ward like he came between Pharaoh and the children of Israel. Then he will deliver up the kingdom to God and there will be no need for a Mediator. Then shall God shall be all in all and his church complete and completely saved. Then we shall sing in triumph

Daughter of Zion
 Awake from thy sadness,
 Awake, for thy foes shall oppress thee no more;

Bright o'er thy hills
 Dawns the day-star of gladness;
 Arise, for the night of thy sorrow is o'er.

Strong were thy foes,
 But the arm that subdued them,
 And scatter'd their legions, was mightier far;

They fled, like the chaff,
 From the scourge that pursued them,
 Vain were their steeds, and their chariots of war.

Daughter of Zion,
 The power that hath saved thee
 Extoll'd with the harp and the timbrel should be:

Shout, for the foe
 is destroy'd that enslaved thee,
 The oppressor is vanguard and Zion is free.”

Amen!