

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



“The WILLING Sacrifice to Deal With Our WILLFUL Rebellion”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Isaiah 53:6-12; Is. 50:5-7; Lev. 16:21; 17:11; Matt. 27:57-60; Jn 10:17-18

In Isaiah 53, the prophet is not merely describing suffering in a general sense, nor is he showing us a Servant who suffers alongside guilty people as though he were simply sharing in their pain. He is unveiling One who suffers for the guilty. That distinction matters. *“We all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us turned to his own way. So ADONAI has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”* (Is. 53:6). The whole point of the passage is that the wound belongs to us, the wandering belongs to us, the rebellion belongs to us, and yet the burden is laid on **Him**. He is not caught in our disaster by accident. He is God’s provision for it.

Isaiah is also careful to show us that this is not merely about human weakness, but about human willfulness. We did not only stumble; we turned to our own way. We did not only drift; we rebelled. And this is why the Servant must be unlike every other sacrifice that came before Him. The blood of bulls and goats could picture substitution, but they could not willingly stand in for willing rebellion. Only a spotless person could substitute for guilty people, and only a consenting, submissive will could stand in for defiant wills. That is exactly what Isaiah shows us in the Servant of ADONAI.

1. WE WANDERED WILLFULLY, BUT THE SERVANT BORE WHAT BELONGED TO US

Isaiah says *kulanu*—all of us. The verse opens and closes with the reality that every one of us is involved in this problem. *“We all like sheep have gone astray”* is not a poetic exaggeration. It is a true diagnosis of the human condition. Like sheep, we are often single-minded, fixated on what is right in front of us, unaware of where our choices are leading. And when fear takes over, we bolt. Yet Isaiah will not allow us to hide behind herd instinct. He adds, *“Each of us turned to his own way.”* This is personal. To a man, to a person, each one turned aside to his own path. Our sin is not only collective; it is individual. We wandered, and we chose our wandering.

That is why the second half of the verse is so staggering: *“So ADONAI has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”* In verse 4, people wrongly assumed the Servant was being struck by God for His own wrongdoing. Here we learn that, in one sense, they were right about the source but wrong about the reason. Yes, God had laid something upon Him—but not His own guilt. Our iniquity, our twisting, our rebellion, was made to fall on Him. This is the language of substitution, and it brings to mind Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) in Lev. 16:21, where the sins of the people were confessed over the head of the goat. But now Isaiah shows us something greater: not merely one from the flock for the flock, but the Servant Himself given for the wandering flock. He takes the effects of what we caused. He bears what belonged to us.

2. THE SERVANT DID NOT ONLY DIE INNOCENTLY—HE DIED WILLINGLY

The sheep imagery continues in verse 7, but now it takes on a very different meaning. When we are compared to sheep, the emphasis is on our tendency to wander. When the Servant is compared to a lamb, the emphasis is on His quiet submission. *“He was oppressed and He was*

afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter, like a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth” (Is. 53:7). He offered no physical resistance to the violence done to Him, and He offered no verbal resistance either. But unlike literal sheep, He was not ignorant. Animals go uncomprehendingly to slaughter or shearing. The Servant knew exactly what lay before Him, and still He submitted.

That willingness is one of the most important truths in this passage. Isaiah 50 had already prepared us for it: *“ADONAI Elohim has opened My ear, and I was not rebellious, nor did I turn back. I gave My back to those who strike”* (Is. 50:5–6). The Servant’s suffering was not forced upon Him by surprise. He accepted it in obedience. This is why He can do what no animal sacrifice could ever fully do. Sin as failure is tragic, and sin as iniquity is grievous, but sin as rebellion is the deepest problem of all. We sin because we want to. And because our sin is willful, only a willing substitute can truly answer it. The Servant fulfills every requirement: He is innocent, pure, acceptable before God, and yet He willingly steps into the place of rebels. This is not only innocent suffering. This is voluntary substitution.

3. THE SERVANT’S DEATH WAS GOD’S PLAN (And His Sacrifice Secured Life, Righteousness, and Victory), Verse 8 makes the matter plain: the Servant died. *“He was cut off from the land of the living”* (Is. 53:8). In the Hebrew Scriptures, that language is unmistakable. It points to death. He was arrested, taken away, judged, and killed. And still, His contemporaries did not understand what they were seeing. They did not consider that this was done because *“of the transgression of my people—the stroke was theirs.”* Verse 9 adds yet another mystery: though condemned as a criminal, He is associated in burial not only with the wicked, but also with a rich man. *“His grave was given with the wicked, and by a rich man in His death, though He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth”* (Is. 53:9). He is utterly guiltless in deed and in word, and yet treated as guilty. The mystery only becomes clear when fulfillment arrives. (And the Servant CANNOT be Israel – as Israel is not guiltless of violence or deceit. Isaiah has repeatedly prophesied the guilt of God’s people that had led to their exile.)

Then Isaiah says something even more shocking: *“Yet it pleased (צַדִּיק, chafetz, His will, desire, delight) ADONAI to crush Him”* (Is. 53:10). This was no accident and no meaningless tragedy. The suffering of the Servant was the will of God because the sacrifice of the Servant was the plan of God. *“If He makes His soul a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the will of ADONAI will succeed by His hand”* (Is. 53:10). His *nephesh*, His very life, is laid down as the offering. That is why He endures it. That is why He submits. And the result is astonishing: the One who died – who was *“cut off from the land of the living”* will somehow see offspring, prolong His days, and prosper in the purpose of God. He’s alive. *“The Righteous One, My Servant will make many righteous, and He will bear their iniquities”* (Is. 53:11). He does not merely remove guilt; He brings accepted standing before God. Therefore ADONAI gives Him the many as His portion. He poured out His life unto death, was counted with transgressors, bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors. The willing sacrifice wins the victory.

CONCLUSION

Isaiah 53 leaves us with no room for distance or detachment. WE are in this passage. WE are the sheep who wandered. WE are the ones who turned to our own way. WE are the transgressors for whom the Servant was pierced, crushed, and chastised. And yet the glory of this chapter is that **our rebellion is not the end of the story**. The Servant of ADONAI stepped

willingly into the place of the guilty. He bore what we could not carry, paid what we could not pay, and accomplished what we could never accomplish for ourselves. The righteous One made a way for the unrighteous to be made righteous. The One who died now lives, and the will of ADONAI has prospered in His hand.

So the call is simple, weighty, and deeply personal: stop turning to your own way. Stop treating your rebellion lightly. Stop looking at the Servant from a distance as though this has nothing to do with you. It has everything to do with you. Come to the One who willingly poured out His soul unto death and now gives life to all who trust in Him. Bring Him your sin, your twisting, your stubbornness, your guilt, and your shame. Let the wandering sheep come home as children. Let the transgressor be met by the Intercessor. And let the One who bore the sin of many bring you near to God today.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it important that the Servant suffers **for** His people and not merely **with** His people?
2. What does Isaiah 53:6 reveal about both the collective and personal nature of human sin?
3. Why does the willingness of the Servant matter so much in understanding His sacrifice?
4. How does Isaiah 53 show that the Servant is both completely innocent and yet fully identified with transgressors?
5. What comforts or challenges you most in the truth that *“the Righteous One, My Servant will make many righteous”*?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Avinu Malkhenu, Our Father, Our King, we come before You humbled by Your Word and undone by Your mercy. We confess that we have gone astray like sheep and that each of us has turned to our own way. Thank You for not leaving us in our rebellion, but for laying on Your Servant the iniquity of us all. Thank You for the willing sacrifice, for the spotless One who bore our sin, carried our grief, and took upon Himself the correction that brought us shalom.

Lord, draw our hearts away from self-rule and back to Your ways. Teach us to hate our rebellion, to see our sin truthfully, and to treasure the Servant more deeply. Fill us with gratitude, reverence, and faith as we behold the One who was crushed for us and now lives in victory. Make us among the many who are made righteous through Him, and let our lives proclaim the good news of what He has done.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.