

# Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



## Wait... What? WHO is the "ARM of the LORD?"

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### Devotion and Discussion Questions

**Key Texts (TLV):** Isaiah 52:13-53:3; Is. 52:6-12; Is. 2:11, 17; 6:1; 33:10; 57:15; 48:6, 8, 16; 4:2; 6:13; 10:33-11:1; Ps. 44:4; Jn. 12:32-34; Phil. 2:5-11; Matt. 13:54-57; Jn. 7:41-43; Rom. 15:21

The suspense has been mounting throughout Isaiah. The Lord has been preparing His people for something they did not yet understand, hinting that He would act personally, decisively, and redemptively. In Is. 52:6, He says, *"Therefore My people will know My Name. Therefore in that day: I am the One—I (I MYSELF) am He who is saying, 'Here I am.'"* Then immediately the scene seems to leap ahead to the announcement of victory: *"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces shalom, who brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'"* (Is. 52:7). Something has happened. The Lord said He Himself would come. The good news is being proclaimed. But Isaiah has not yet told us what that saving intervention will look like.

Then suddenly the mystery tightens instead of loosening. The Lord says, *"Behold, My Servant will prosper. He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted"* (Is. 52:13). That sounds glorious, victorious, and unmistakably divine. Yet the very next lines confront us with suffering, disfigurement, rejection, and disbelief. The One who is exalted is also appalling to look at. The One who is called the Servant is described in language Isaiah uses elsewhere for ADONAI Himself. And the One through whom God's power is revealed does not appear in the form anyone expected. That is the holy shock of this passage: the Arm of ADONAI is revealed, but not in the way human pride, human power, or human instinct would ever have imagined.

#### 1. THE SERVANT'S EXALTATION IS GREATER THAN WE EXPECTED

Isaiah begins with a declaration that we are meant to mark carefully before we see anything else: *"Behold, My Servant will prosper"* (Is. 52:13). The word "prosper" (שָׁכַל, *sakal*) carries the sense of acting with the kind of wisdom that leads to true success. The point is not simply that the Servant will be wise, nor that he will be outwardly successful in the way people *usually* define success. It means he will know and do exactly what is necessary to fulfill the purpose for which he has been sent. The Lord tells us this in advance because what follows will not look like success to at all. It will look, to natural eyes, like failure. But the suffering of the Servant will not be a contradiction of his mission. It will be central to it. What appears to be defeat will actually be the very path by which he accomplishes the will of God.

Then Isaiah says of this Servant that *"He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted"* (Is. 52:13). That language should stop us in our tracks. In Isaiah, that combination—"high and lifted up"—is used of ADONAI. In Is. 6:1, the prophet says, *"I saw ADONAI sitting on a throne, high and lifted up."* In Is. 57:15, it is *"the High and Exalted One who inhabits eternity."* Yet now **that same language** is applied to the Servant. This cannot be brushed aside. Nor can it be explained away as merely poetic exaggeration. Isaiah has already insisted that ADONAI alone will be exalted in that day (Is. 2:11, 17). So who is this Servant, spoken of in terms reserved for the Lord Himself? He cannot simply be the nation as a whole, nor merely another prophet among many. Through Isaiah, the Lord is pressing us into mystery. Something hidden is now being unveiled, something the Lord said beforehand His people had not yet understood.

## **2. THE SERVANT'S SUFFERING IS DEEPER THAN WE EXPECTED**

If verse 13 leaves us awestruck, verse 14 leaves us unsettled. *"Just as many were appalled at You—His appearance was disfigured more than any man, His form more than the sons of men"* (Is. 52:14). The Servant who is high and lifted up is also the Servant at whom many shudder. What??? The language is strong. It is the language of devastation, of shock, of something shattered almost beyond recognition. This is not a brief setback or a momentary humiliation. Isaiah is describing suffering in its totality—physical, mental, and spiritual. The Servant is not merely touched by grief. He is engulfed in it. He is so marred that those who see him step back in horror. The scene is deliberately jarring: how can the exalted Servant also be the disfigured Servant?

This is exactly where human expectation begins to break down. We expect the Arm of the Lord to look obvious, forceful, majestic, and unmissable. His Arm will *do* the crushing, not receive the crushing. We expect deliverance to arrive in visible strength, clothed in splendor that naturally attracts and commands. But Isaiah says that is not how this Servant comes. Is. 53:2 explains, *"He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, like a root out of dry ground. He had no form or majesty that we should look at Him, nor beauty that we should desire Him."* He does not come like a mighty cedar in full bloom. He comes like a fragile shoot in parched ground. He does not appear with the kind of outward impressiveness people instinctively follow. He is not the sort of figure human beings would naturally choose, admire, or rally behind. In fact, he is the very opposite. His glory is not on the surface, and those satisfied by superficial splendor will pass right by him without seeing what heaven sees.

## **3. THE SERVANT'S REJECTION REVEALS MORE ABOUT US THAN ABOUT HIM**

Isaiah says the Servant will not only suffer; he will be dismissed. *"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. Like one from whom people hide their faces, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him"* (Is. 53:3). The Hebrew word translated as "despised" (בָּזָא, *baza*) is not a word that means intense hatred. Rather, it is to regard someone as of little worth, to treat him as unimportant, to look right past him. He was not counted as significant. He did not fit the category of a winner. He was not regarded as someone worth following. And because he did not fit the world's picture of power, the world concluded he could not possibly be the one through whom God would save. *"To Whom has the Arm of the ADONAI been revealed?"* Him???

But Isaiah is not only exposing the rejection of the Servant. He is exposing the bankruptcy of the human heart. We do not recognize him because we do not know how to measure rightly. Our emotions are drawn to surface beauty. Our wills are pulled toward visible strength. Our minds make false calculations about what matters. When all the natural human assessment is added up, Isaiah says, *"we did not esteem Him."* We counted him as nothing. That is why Is. 53:1 opens with the anguished question, *"Who has believed our report? To whom is the arm of ADONAI revealed?"* The problem is not that the Servant is unclear. The problem is that apart from divine revelation, we are blind. Nothing but the Lord opening our eyes will enable us to see that this humble, suffering, rejected Servant is in fact the very Arm of ADONAI revealed in saving power.

## **CONCLUSION**

This passage leaves us standing in holy wonder. The Servant succeeds, but not according to human definitions. He is exalted, but the path to that exaltation runs through humiliation. He is the Arm of ADONAI revealed, yet He does not arrive with the kind of visible force people crave. He comes in humility, suffering, undefensiveness, and grief. He is not adorned with the superficial splendor our flesh admires. He is the Servant whose glory must be discerned by revelation. Isaiah is teaching us that God's greatest act of power does not come clothed in human swagger, but in obedient

surrender. The Lord's saving strength is revealed in a Servant who suffers, in a deliverer who is rejected, in One whom the world does not esteem.

And that means this passage is not only about identifying the Servant. It is also about confronting our own hearts. What kind of savior are we looking for? One who fits our expectations, flatters our instincts, and triumphs according to worldly categories? Or the One whom God has chosen and revealed? The question is not merely, "Who is the Arm of the Lord?" The question is also, "Will we believe what has been reported to us?" Will we trust what God has made known even when it overturns our assumptions? Will we look beyond appearance, beyond surface, beyond power as the world defines it, and receive the Servant as He truly is?

We need to stop looking for God only in the forms that impress the natural eye. Stop measuring deliverance by outward strength, charisma, appearance, or visible dominance. Ask the Lord to reveal His Servant to you more deeply. Ask Him to expose every place in your heart that still resists the Messiah because He does not fit your instincts. The Arm of ADONAI has been revealed. The question is whether we will believe, whether we will receive, and whether we will bow before the One whom God has exalted.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Why do you think Isaiah emphasizes the Servant's success before describing his suffering in Is. 52:13-14?
2. What is the significance of the Servant being described as "high and lifted up," language Isaiah uses elsewhere for ADONAI?
3. In what ways do people still expect the "Arm of the Lord" to look different than what Isaiah describes in Is. 53:1-3?
4. What does the rejection of the Servant reveal about the condition of the human heart?
5. How can we cultivate eyes to recognize God's work when it does not come in outward impressiveness or worldly strength?

#### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

*Avinu Malkhenu*, Our Father, Our King, we thank You for speaking through Isaiah with such depth, beauty, and holy surprise. We confess that so often we look for Your power in the wrong places. We are drawn to what is impressive on the surface, and we miss the quiet, humble, obedient beauty of Your Servant. Forgive us for the ways we have failed to esteem what You esteem. Forgive us for the ways we have looked past the One You have revealed.

Open our eyes afresh to Yeshua, the suffering and exalted Servant, the One through whom Your Arm has been revealed. Teach us to believe what You have spoken, even when it overturns our expectations. Give us hearts that treasure what the world despises, and faith that rests in Your wisdom rather than our own. May we see the beauty of Messiah more clearly, love Him more deeply, and follow Him more faithfully.

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