



# ShalomAZ Ministries

*In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption*

## **"Why Am I Suffering If I'm Obeying God?"**

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### **Devotion and Discussion Questions**

#### **Key Texts: 1 Peter 4:12-16**

Have you ever asked, "How can this be happening if I'm doing what God asked?" That's the kind of moment Peter's audience is living in. These weren't rebels or troublemakers—they were believers trying to walk faithfully in the way of Yeshua, and yet they were being pushed to the breaking point. Loss, ridicule, pressure, and fear. They were experiencing real pain—and asking the most human question of all: "Why is this happening to me?" Peter doesn't scold them for the question. Instead, he speaks to them tenderly—"Loved ones." And then he says, "Don't be surprised."

Peter challenges us to reframe suffering. He tells them that what they're walking through isn't outside the faith—it's not strange. It's part of it. It's not a detour—it's the path. In fact, it's how God refines us. Not because He enjoys our pain, but because this is the way of Messiah—the road of self-denial, surrender, and trust. And when we walk that path, we walk with Him. When we hurt for righteousness, we're actually stepping into fellowship with His sufferings.

#### **1. SUFFERING ISN'T A SIGN YOU'RE LOSING—IT'S A SIGN YOU'RE ALIGNED**

We often assume that pain means something is wrong. That if we're truly following God, the road should be smooth. But Peter says the exact opposite. "*Loved ones, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal taking place among you to test you—as though something strange were happening to you*" (1 Peter 4:12). The word "fiery" evokes the image of smelting metal—burning away impurities to leave something stronger, more beautiful, and more reflective of the One who shaped it.

Peter is helping us understand something critical: suffering isn't God abandoning us—it's Him refining us. And more than that, it's evidence that we are sharing in something much bigger. "*To the degree you share in the sufferings of Messiah—rejoice!*" (1 Peter 4:13). When we choose His way over the world's, it will hurt. But it's in that very moment that heaven takes notice. And so instead of feeling ashamed, discouraged, or left behind, we can lift our heads. We're on the right road—even if it's narrow and painful.

#### **2. DON'T FIGHT LIKE THE WORLD—RESPOND LIKE YESHUA DID**

It's tempting, in the face of injustice, to want to fight back with the same weapons used against us. If the world takes by force, we want to force our way in. If they mock, we want to retaliate. If they take power, we want to rise up and take it back. But Peter reminds us: that's not the way of Yeshua. He didn't take the shortcut of control or domination. He took the long, painful road of the cross. And He invites us to follow Him there.

Yeshua didn't win by overpowering Rome—He laid His life down. And in doing so, He broke the back of sin and death. But that road looks like losing to the world. It looks foolish. It feels counterintuitive. And yet, that's the road that leads to resurrection. That's why Peter says, "*If you're insulted for the name of Messiah, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you*" (1 Peter 4:14). We're not called to conquer by force—we're called to lay down our lives in love. That's where real victory lies.

### **3. THERE'S GLORY ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GROANING**

Peter doesn't end this passage with mere endurance—he points to a deeper joy. He says, "Rejoice so that at the revelation of His glory, you may also rejoice and be overjoyed" (1 Peter 4:13). There's a kind of rejoicing that we can only access through suffering. It's the joy of knowing we're walking in step with our Messiah, that our pain has purpose, and that His glory will be fully revealed.

This isn't joy in the pain itself. This is joy in the One who walks through it with us. When you choose to suffer rather than sin—when you choose the narrow road rather than the wide one—you're not just losing in the short term. You're investing in the long-term reward: the full unveiling of His kingdom. That joy is unshakable. That reward is eternal. And Peter's urging us: Don't trade it in for short-term relief or worldly applause. Hold fast. You're loved. You're not alone. And glory is coming.

### **CONCLUSION**

You might feel like the fire is too hot right now. Like the losses are too heavy and the insults too loud. But don't be surprised. Don't give up. And don't try to fight like the world. This isn't a detour. This is the path. The One who walked it before you is walking it with you now. And He will walk you all the way home.

So here's the invitation: Yeshua said, "Follow Me." Are you ready to stop fighting with the world's weapons and start walking in Yeshua's footsteps? Are you ready to surrender your desire for control, ease, and applause—and take up your cross? If you are, then know this: you're not alone. You're part of a fellowship of sufferers, and Yeshua Himself is your companion. He's not ashamed of you. He delights in you. And His Spirit will rest on you.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Why do you think suffering is such a stumbling block for believers, even though Scripture speaks of it often?
2. In what ways have you been tempted to fight the world using its own strategies?
3. Can you identify areas in your life where God may be refining you through hardship?
4. What's the difference between suffering for righteousness and suffering for our own poor choices?
5. How can we practically walk in the way of Yeshua—in humility, self-denial, and trust—this week?

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

Abba, Father, we thank You that You have not abandoned us in the fire. We thank You that You are refining us, shaping us, and walking with us through every trial. Help us not to be surprised when suffering comes, but to see it as part of the narrow road that leads to life. Teach us to rejoice in the fellowship of Messiah's sufferings and to trust that Your glory will be revealed. Fill us with courage, endurance, and deep love for You. Let Your Spirit rest on us and strengthen us, that we may walk as Yeshua walked.

In Yeshua's Name we pray, amen.