

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



“HE Carried What WE Had Done”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Isaiah 53:1-6; Is. 52:13-15; Is. 4:2; Is. 6:13; Is. 10:33-11:1; Is. 43:16-19; Is. 48:6; Mt. 13:54-57; Jn. 7:41-43; Lev. 16:21-22; Num. 25:1-13

As we come into Isaiah 53, we are standing in the center of one of the most powerful revelations in all of Scripture. But Isaiah does not let us rush in carelessly. He brings us in through the end of chapter 52, where the Lord first says of the Servant, *“Behold, My servant will prosper. He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted”* (Is. 52:13). That opening declaration matters, because what follows looks nothing like success to the natural eye. Everything about the Servant’s appearance, rejection, suffering, and humiliation seems to contradict that promise. And yet the Lord says at the outset: mark this well—He WILL succeed. What looks like failure to us is not failure to God. What appears to be defeat is actually the path of divine wisdom, priestly ministry, and final exaltation.

That is why Isaiah 53 begins with astonishment: *“Who has believed our report? To whom is the arm of ADONAI revealed?”* (Is. 53:1). The mystery is not merely that the nations are shocked, though they are. The deeper shock is that even those who had heard the promises of God still did not expect the arm of the Lord to be revealed like this. We expected visible strength, immediate conquest, outward majesty, and unmistakable splendor. Instead, the Lord reveals His power in a Servant who is overlooked, dismissed, and despised. The whole passage exposes not only who the Servant is, but how twisted our own instincts are. Left to ourselves, we would never have chosen this Deliverer, never understood this wisdom, and never imagined that our healing would come through His wounds.

1. WE DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE ARM OF THE LORD

Isaiah says the Servant *“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”* (Is. 53:2). That is the first problem for the human heart: the Servant does not look like what we expect salvation to look like. He seems to have a wholly earthly, ordinary origin. He comes up like a sprout, like a small shoot, like life struggling out of parched ground. There is nothing outwardly impressive about Him. Nothing in His appearance announces worldly greatness. Nothing about Him satisfies our appetite for spectacle. We were looking for the kind of deliverer that human nature always admires—forceful, magnetic, dominating, glorious on the surface. Instead, the Servant comes with a hidden splendor that can only be seen by those willing to look beyond appearances.

And yet Isaiah had already been preparing us for this. He had spoken earlier of the Branch of ADONAI, of the holy seed in the stump, and of the shoot that would come forth from the stem of Jesse (Is. 4:2; 6:13; 11:1). The imagery was there all along for those who had eyes to see. But this is the tragedy of the human condition: truth can stand right in front of us, and we still look past it when it does not fit our expectations. That is what happened so often with Yeshua. People stumbled over His ordinary background, His humble upbringing, and the lack of visible grandeur. But Isaiah shows us that this very hiddenness was part of the divine pattern. The

Servant's splendor was never on the surface. And if our eyes are fixed only on what impresses the flesh, we will miss the very One God has sent.

2. WE COUNTED HIM AS NOTHING

Isaiah continues, *"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. As one from whom people hide their faces, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him"* (Is. 53:3). The force of that verse is deeply searching. That the Servant was "despised" doesn't point to Him being hated in an emotional sense, but rather, it points to the fact that He wasn't even given much thought at all. He was thought little of. He was regarded as nothing worth noticing. He was passed over, dismissed, and reckoned insignificant. Human beings saw Him, added up what they could perceive with their eyes and minds, and concluded that He had no value. Isaiah uses language of reckoning and accounting here: when we did the math, the answer we came to was zero. We did not esteem Him. We did not count Him worthy. We looked at the Servant of the Lord and saw no reason to desire Him.

That diagnosis does not only tell us what people thought of the Servant; it tells us what is wrong with us. We see no beauty in Him because *our* desires are disordered. We reject Him because *our* wisdom is distorted. We count Him as nothing because our whole moral and spiritual judgment is corrupt. We do not naturally know *what* to prize. We do not naturally admire selfless obedience, meekness, suffering love, or sacrificial faithfulness. The Servant says in Is. 50 that He did not rebel, that He gave His back to those who struck Him and His cheeks to those who pulled out the beard. Nothing in fallen human instinct would invent such a way of redemption, much less celebrate it. That is why divine revelation is necessary. Left to ourselves, we would never arrive at the truth. We do not simply need more information; we need the Lord to uncover our eyes.

3. HE CARRIED WHAT WE HAD DONE

Then Isaiah breaks open the mystery with these words: *"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our pains, yet we esteemed Him stricken, struck by God, and afflicted. But He was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities. The chastisement for our shalom was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed"* (Is. 53:4–5). Here the great contrast becomes clear: He and we. He Himself bore what belonged to us. He carried our griefs, our pains, our sorrows, our burden. And while He was doing that very thing, we misread the whole scene. We thought His suffering had nothing to do with us. We assumed He was simply being judged for His own wrongdoing. But Isaiah says no—His suffering was substitutionary. He was not merely suffering *with* His people. He was suffering **FOR** them.

This is priestly, sacrificial, Levitical language. The Servant bears away what *we* could not remove. Like the goat on the Day of Atonement, the burden of guilt is laid upon another and carried away (Lev.16:21–22). The piercing *we* deserved fell upon *Him*. The crushing our rebellion called for came down on **Him**. The discipline necessary to restore our shalom was placed upon **Him**. The wounds of our condition, described back in Is. 1 as untreated, festering, and beyond our power to heal, find their answer in **His stripes**. This is the heart of the passage: the Servant did not deserve these blows for Himself. He took them in *our* place. And Is. 53:6 makes it plain: *"We all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way. So*

*ADONAI has laid on **Him** the iniquity of us all.*” The problem is all of us, and the provision is Him alone.

CONCLUSION

Isaiah 53:1–6 leaves us with nowhere to hide. It tells the truth about the Servant, and it tells the truth about us. We were the wandering sheep. We were the ones who turned to our own way. We were the ones who appraised the Servant wrongly, looked past Him, and counted Him as nothing. Yet the wonder of this passage is that the Lord did not wait for us to understand before He acted. He gave notice in advance. He revealed what we never would have guessed. He sent His Servant to carry what we had done, to bear what had broken us, and to receive in Himself the discipline necessary to bring us peace. The One we would not have chosen is the only One who could save us.

That means the call of this passage is both humbling and deeply hopeful. We are called to lay down our pride, our shallow measurements, our confidence in human wisdom, and our tendency to soften the seriousness of our sin. And we are invited to trust the Servant completely—to stop looking to our own ways, and look to the One upon whom ADONAI laid the iniquity of us all. Bring Him your guilt, your striving, your woundings, your rebellion, and your exhaustion. Do not merely admire the truth of this passage—receive it. Depend upon Him. Amen the report. Believe what God has made heard. The healing, the peace, and the restoration you cannot create for yourself are found in the One who carried what you had done.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Isaiah begin by declaring that the Servant will prosper and be exalted before describing His suffering?
2. What does Is. 53:1–3 reveal about the difference between God’s wisdom and human expectations?
3. In what ways do people still tend to look for “superficial splendor” instead of the hidden beauty of God’s Servant?
4. How does the language of bearing, carrying, piercing, and crushing deepen your understanding of substitution and atonement in Is. 53:4–6?
5. What does it look like in practical terms to stop turning to your own way and to entrust yourself fully to the Servant?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Avinu Malkhenu, Our Father, Our King, we confess that apart from Your revelation, we would never have understood Your wisdom. We would have looked past Your Servant, misjudged His suffering, and trusted our own broken instincts. Thank You for speaking in advance, for unveiling what we could not have discovered on our own, and for showing us that the One we would not have chosen is the very One You appointed for our redemption. Thank You that He bore our griefs, carried our pains, was pierced because of our transgressions, and was crushed because of our iniquities. Teach us to look beyond the surface and to treasure what heaven treasures. Bring us to true repentance where we have wandered like sheep and turned to our own way. Let the reality of His stripes, His wounds, and His priestly work sink deeply into our hearts. Heal what is broken in us, restore our shalom, and draw us into deeper trust, gratitude, and worship.

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