

# Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



**"Wow. Just Wow. What Grace!"**

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**Devotion and Discussion Questions**

**Key Texts (TLV):** Isaiah 57:16-21; Is. 55:8-9; Is. 53:11; Ex. 34:6-7; Ps. 30:6; Ps. 103:8-11; Is. 12:1-2; Is. 6:5-7

As we come to the end of Isaiah 57, the overwhelming impression is simply this: what grace. What kindness. What a revelation of who the LORD is. Even as we hold to the hope that is still to come, we are still being called right now to abandon our thoughts and our ways and to turn to God's thoughts and ways. That has been the call since Isaiah 55, and Isaiah 57 shows us what that call looks like in the middle of present realities. The chapter has already shown us the contrast clearly: the righteous enter into shalom, while the wicked do not.

The earlier part of the chapter exposed the present condition of the people: compromise, spiritual adultery, empty religion, self-serving devotion, and a stubborn insistence on getting their own way. The issue was not merely gross idolatry out there in the open. The issue was also the deeper perversion underneath it all: giving God lip service while still trying to secure life, comfort, power, and control on our own terms. Yet into that very setting, the Holy One speaks words that are astonishing. He sees the waywardness fully, and still He speaks of restraint, healing, comfort, and peace. That is where this passage becomes so stunning.

## **1. HIS ANGER IS REAL, BUT IT IS NOT HIS FINAL WORD**

The LORD says, *"For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry. For the spirit would grow weak before Me—the breath of those whom I made"* (Is. 57:16). That is a remarkable statement. His contention is real. His wrath is not imaginary. There is real guilt, real rebellion, and real reason for divine opposition. The language carries the sense of legal contention, of a case rightly brought against the guilty. But then the LORD says He will not contend forever. He will not remain angry without end. In Himself, He is eternal, but His anger is not eternal. That restraint rises out of His own character.

This is who He has always shown Himself to be. When He proclaimed His own Name to Moses, He declared Himself to be *"compassionate and gracious... slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth"* (Ex. 34:6). As the psalmist says, *"For His anger lasts for only a moment, His favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may stay for the night, but joy comes in the morning"* (Ps. 30:6). That does not make sin small. It magnifies mercy. The LORD Himself says that if He were to carry out the full, uninterrupted course of what our sin deserves, the very breath He made would collapse before Him. That is the dilemma expressed in the passage: the Holy God is dealing with people He Himself made. The One who formed life is not eager to utterly destroy it. His heart is not to leave us under wrath forever.

## **2. HE HAS SEEN OUR WAYS, YET HE SAYS, "I WILL HEAL HIM"**

Verse 17 tells us why wrath was provoked: *"Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I was angry; I struck him, I hid My face and was angry—but he went on backsliding in the way of his heart"* (Is. 57:17). That phrase, "unjust gain," gets at the crooked pursuit of self-interest. It is the twisting of life around self. It is greed, yes, but more than greed. It is the relentless insistence that life revolve around me, that I get my way, that I secure my comfort, my control, my safety, my pleasure. That is why idolatry and self-will go together. Religion itself can become part of that distortion when it

substitutes the outward acts of religion that are focused on perception in place of actual heart engagement with the heart of God. The heart remains untouched. The LORD says He struck, He hid His face, He opposed—and still the human heart kept turning in its own way.

Then comes one of the most beautiful turns in the chapter: ***“I have seen his ways, but I will heal him. I will lead him and restore comfort to him and his mourners”*** (Is. 57:18). Not, “I have seen his ways, so I am done with him.” Not, “I have seen his ways, therefore there can be no more mercy.” He says, “I have seen.” He has not overlooked sin. He has not softened the diagnosis. He has not pretended rebellion was righteousness. And still, smiting turns to healing. That is not because man has changed. It is because something is true in the heart of God. He Himself made the way for cleansing. In Isaiah 6, when Isaiah was crushed by the recognition of his uncleanness, the LORD Himself provided atonement. In Isaiah 53, the Righteous Servant bore anguish so that many could be made righteous. So now, in Isaiah 57, the Holy One says He will heal, lead, and restore comfort. What He commands, He also provides.

### **3. PEACE IS FREELY PROCLAIMED, BUT IT MUST BE RECEIVED**

The LORD continues: *“Creating the praise of lips: ‘Shalom, shalom to him who is far and to him who is near,’ says ADONAI, ‘and I will heal him’”* (Is. 57:19). This is not a small peace. This is not partial peace. “Shalom, shalom” is peace in its fullness, peace in its wholeness, peace in its richest sense. And it is announced to the far and the near. The invitation is wide. The healing is offered. The comfort is made available. The LORD Himself creates what the mourner must say. Even the fruit of repentant lips is His gift. He leads the wounded into the words they need, into the turning they could not produce on their own. This is why salvation is such a miracle from beginning to end.

But the chapter does not end with universal peace regardless of response. It ends with a warning: *“But the wicked are like a troubled sea, for it cannot rest, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. ‘There is no shalom,’ says my God, ‘for the wicked’”* (Is. 57:20–21). The issue is not that God has failed to make peace available. The issue is whether we want peace on His terms. There is no shalom in insisting on our own way. There is no peace in clinging to pride, to self-protection, to self-rule, to the old demand: “my rights, my way.” The troubled sea is a vivid picture of the soul that refuses surrender. Everything stirred up from within is mire and dirt. God has declared peace, but those who will not come to Him remain without it.

### **CONCLUSION**

This passage brings us face to face with the mystery of divine mercy and human response. We are helpless to reconcile ourselves to God. We are helpless to make ourselves righteous. We are helpless to heal our own hearts. He must do it. He must cleanse. He must heal. He must lead. He must create the fruit of repentant lips. He must speak shalom. And praise God, He has done just that in His mercy and in the work of the Righteous Servant. The solution to the dilemma springs from the LORD Himself. That is the glory of this text: He saw our ways, and still He said, “I will heal him.”

But the passage also presses the question home to us personally. Do we want to be healed? Do we want His way more than our own? Do we want peace enough to surrender the thing we keep protecting? The altar call in this passage is not merely to admire grace. It is to respond to it. It is to lay down the insistence on self, to stop defending the way of our own heart, and to come to the One who says, *“Shalom, shalom.”* There is no peace in holding on to the old life. There is peace in surrender. There is life in trusting Him. There is healing for the crushed, the humbled, and the repentant. So come near. Let Him heal what your way has only wounded.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. In what ways does Is. 57:16–21 reveal the character of God more deeply than we often realize?
2. What does this passage show us about the connection between self-interest, pride, and the loss of shalom?
3. Why is it important that the LORD says, *“I have seen his ways,”* before He says, *“I will heal him”*?
4. Where do you most feel the struggle between “my way” and the LORD’s way in your own life right now?
5. What would it look like, practically, for you to receive His *“shalom, shalom”* instead of continuing in inner turbulence?

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

*Avinu Malkhenu, Our Father, Our Kings,* thank You for showing us again who You are. You are holy, exalted, and eternal, yet You dwell with the crushed and the humble in spirit. Thank You that Your anger is not Your final word over those who turn to You. Thank You that You have seen our ways fully and yet, in Your mercy, You still speak healing, comfort, and peace.

Lord, we confess how often we cling to our own way. We hold on to pride, self-interest, control, and the illusion that we can secure life apart from You. Forgive us. Soften us. Give us ears to hear Your voice and hearts that are willing to obey. Create in us the fruit of repentant lips, and teach us to walk in Your ways instead of our own. Heal what is broken in us, lead us in the path of life, and bring us into Your shalom.

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