

# Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



## I Was Answering Before You Were Even Asking

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### Devotion and Discussion Questions

**Key Texts (TLV):** *Is 65:1-7; Is. 5:4; 30:1; 55:6-9; 59:1-2; 63:15; 64:7-1; Rom. 10:20*

There is something deeply human about crying out, “Lord, where are You?” Isaiah 63–64 captures that ache with honesty and grief. Jerusalem is in ruins, the people are broken, and the watchman on the wall pleads with God not to remain silent. The people confess their uncleanness, their rebellion, and the devastation that has come upon them. Yet even in the middle of that confession, there is still an appeal rooted in relationship: *“All of us are the work of Your hand... All of us are Your people”* (Is. 64:7–8). The prayer is not simply about pain; it is about longing for restored fellowship with the God who once dwelled among them openly.

But when Isaiah 65 begins, the Lord answers in a way that completely reframes the conversation. The issue was not that God had been absent, silent, or unwilling to save. The Lord declares that He had already been reaching out before anyone was even seeking Him. He had been revealing Himself before anyone was asking. While the people accused Him of silence, He was saying, *“Hineni! Hineni! Look at Me! Look at Me!”* The tragedy was not God’s distance from His people, but their stubborn refusal to respond to the God who had been calling all along.

#### 1. GOD WAS REACHING OUT BEFORE ANYONE WAS LOOKING

The Lord’s response in Is. 65:1 is astonishing because it reveals His initiative. *“I let Myself be sought by those not asking. I let Myself be found by those not seeking Me.”* Before the people prayed, before they turned, before they even cared to seek Him, God was already making Himself available. He was not hidden behind unwillingness or indifference. He was actively disclosing Himself, calling out, *“Hineni! Hineni!”* The picture is almost heartbreaking: God continually revealing Himself while His people barely even notice Him. The accusation that God was silent collapses in light of His persistent self-disclosure.

This truth matters deeply because we often imagine that our relationship with God begins with our search for Him, when in reality it began with His pursuit of us. Long before we prayed sincerely, long before we understood truth clearly, the Lord was already calling, drawing, convicting, and revealing. Even the desire to seek Him is evidence that He has first been seeking us. Israel’s problem was not divine silence; it was spiritual stubbornness. And if we are honest, the same struggle still exists today. We can become so distracted by our own plans, ambitions, and disappointments that we fail to recognize the God who has been reaching toward us the entire time.

## **2. THE REAL PROBLEM WAS NEVER GOD'S DISTANCE**

The Lord says in Is. 65:2, *"I have stretched out My hands all day to a rebellious people."* The image is one of continual appeal. God is not pictured as distant and withdrawn, but as One pleading, reaching, and calling His people back to Himself. The tragedy is that the people are described as "headstrong" and stubborn, walking in ways that are "not good," following after their own thoughts and calculations. The relational breakdown was not caused by God refusing to listen; it was caused by people insisting on living life on their own terms.

Isaiah had already made this clear earlier: *"ADONAI's hand is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear. Rather, your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God"* (Is. 59:1-2). The issue was never about God's capability of rescue, but humanity's unwillingness to surrender. We often want God's blessings while still clinging tightly to our own ways. We ask Him to endorse our plans instead of yielding ourselves to His thoughts and His wisdom. Yet the Lord lovingly reminds us in Is. 55:8-9 that His ways are higher than ours. Real restoration begins when we stop demanding that God follow our path and instead humble ourselves enough to walk in His.

## **3. False Piety Cannot Replace Real Obedience**

The people described in Is. 65 were deeply religious, but their religion was disconnected from obedience and intimacy with God. They offered sacrifices in unauthorized places, sought supernatural guidance apart from God's Word, embraced uncleanness, and yet still declared themselves "holier" than others. The crowning irony is that profoundly unclean people believed themselves spiritually superior. Their version of holiness produced pride, division, and self-exaltation rather than humility, repentance, and covenant faithfulness.

The Lord says these things were *"smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burns all day."* God was not impressed by outward spirituality that ignored His heart and His instructions. They had created a version of holiness built around their own preferences and self-made religion. And that danger remains just as real for us today. It is possible to know religious language, maintain spiritual appearances, and even participate in ministry while still resisting God's voice. True holiness is not elitism or performance. True holiness flows from surrender, obedience, humility, and relationship with the Lord. The remnant in Isaiah are not the impressive ones; they are the responsive ones—the servants who finally hear His voice and turn back to Him.

## **CONCLUSION**

Even in the midst of warnings about judgment, Isaiah 65 contains a thread of extraordinary hope. The Lord declares that there is still a remnant, still a cluster with blessing in it, still servants whom He will preserve. Judgment is real, but it is not God's final word. His final word is restoration. He continues to call, continues to stretch out His hands, and continues to invite people to turn from stubbornness and return to Him. The

same God who said, "*Hineni! Hineni!*" in Isaiah still calls out today through Messiah Yeshua.

The invitation of this passage is deeply personal. The Lord is not hiding from you. He is not reluctant to save. He has been reaching out far longer than you realized. But we must stop insisting on our own ways and surrender to His. We must stop mistaking religious activity for true obedience. The call today is to respond while He may be found, to forsake our own thoughts, and to trust His ways above our own. The remnant are simply those who finally stop resisting the God who has been calling them all along.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Why do you think people so often interpret spiritual distance as God's silence rather than their own resistance to Him?
2. What does the repeated phrase "*Hineni! Hineni!*" reveal about God's heart toward His people?
3. In what areas of your life are you tempted to follow your own thoughts and calculations rather than trusting God's ways?
4. How can outward religious activity sometimes hide inward stubbornness or compromise in modern believers?
5. What practical steps can help you become more responsive to God's voice and less resistant to His leading?

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

*Avinu Malkhenu*, Our Father, Our King, thank You that You are not distant, silent, or unwilling to save. Thank You that even before we sought You, You were already reaching toward us and calling us by name. Forgive us for the times we have stubbornly insisted on our own ways while blaming You for the distance we created. Teach us to forsake our own thoughts and trust Your higher ways.

Lord, soften our hearts so we would not resist Your voice. Remove pride, compromise, and false holiness from us, and form within us true obedience and humility. Help us to become part of the faithful remnant that hears Your call and responds with surrender. Draw us close to You through Messiah Yeshua, and let our lives reflect Your character and Your glory

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