

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



Blessed to BE A Blessing: A Kingdom of Priests

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Isa 61:5-9; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 56:3, 6; Isaiah 19:24-25; Psalm 67:2-8

Isaiah 61 begins with the testimony of the Anointed One, the Servant, the Messiah. *"The Ruach of Adonai Elohim is on me, because Adonai has anointed me to proclaim Good News to the poor"* (Is. 61:1). He comes to bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to captives, comfort those who mourn, and make a great exchange: beauty instead of ashes, joy instead of mourning, praise instead of heaviness. Those who had been afflicted, captive, and broken are now called *"oaks of righteousness, the planting of Adonai, that He may be glorified"* (Is. 61:3).

That transformation does not stop with them. **The ones restored by the Lord are sent into His purposes.** They rebuild ancient ruins, restore former desolations, and repair what has been broken for generations. Isaiah 61:5-9 shows the extended impact of the work of the Anointed One. God blesses His people, not so they can hoard blessing, but so they can become a blessing. He restores them into their calling as a kingdom of priests.

1. Former Strangers Are Not Enemies to Fear, but People God Intends to Draw Near

Isaiah says, *"Strangers will stand and shepherd your flocks, children of foreigners will be your plowmen and vinedressers"* (Is. 61:5). This is a total reversal. The nations that once oppressed Israel will no longer lord it over her. Israel will no longer bow down to them or to their gods. History may have seemed, at different points, to suggest that the gods of the nations were stronger, just as it may have seemed to Hebrew slaves in Egypt after centuries of bondage. But the end of history will make one thing crystal clear: the God of Israel is King of the universe.

Yet this passage does not simply reverse the roles so that the formerly oppressed become the new oppressors. The picture is *not* one of revenge, humiliation, or second-class citizenship. The strangers stand, shepherd, plow, and tend the vines. They take their place in glad cooperation within the life of God's restored people. This fits what Isaiah has already said: *"Do not let a son of a foreigner who has joined himself to Adonai say, 'Adonai will surely exclude me from His people'"* (Is. 56:3). The nations are not merely defeated; they are being drawn to the God of Israel.

2. God's People Are Not Called to Rule the World, but to Serve as Priests to the World

The Lord says, *"But you will be called the kohanim of Adonai. They will speak of you as the ministers of our God"* (Is. 61:6). Israel's restored position is not about privilege, arrogance, or finally being "on top." Israel is not called to be ruler of the world, but priest of the world. This was God's purpose from Exodus: *"So as for you, you will be to Me a kingdom of kohanim and a holy nation"* (Ex. 19:6). A priest mediates, teaches, serves, and helps others draw near to God.

God discredits the idols of the nations so the nations may come to know the one true God and Savior. His blessing on Israel is meant to reveal His character to the world. Isaiah gives us that stunning picture where Egypt, Assyria, and Israel are brought together in worship: *"Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria My handiwork, and Israel My inheritance"* (Is. 19:25). That is the heart of God's calling. His people are blessed so His way may be known on the earth, and His salvation among all nations.

3. The Double Portion Is Not for Hoarding, but for Carrying the Father's Responsibility

Isaiah continues, *"Instead of your shame, double portion; instead of disgrace they will sing for joy. Therefore in their land they will inherit a double portion; they will have everlasting joy"* (Is. 61:7). This is another beautiful "instead of" in Isaiah 61. Shame is replaced with inheritance. Disgrace is replaced with singing. The Lord takes away the humiliation of defeat, captivity, and failure, and restores honor, possession, and joy.

But the double portion is not merely more blessing for personal comfort. The double portion belonged to the firstborn, and it carried responsibility. The firstborn received more because he was entrusted to carry forward the father's estate and care for the family. In the same way, God restores His people not so they can greedily hoard what He gives, but so they can walk in the responsibility of His heart. *"For I, Adonai, love justice"* (Is. 61:8). He loves when things work as He intended—relationally, covenantally, and faithfully. He blesses His people so that through them, His justice, mercy, and faithfulness can be seen.

CONCLUSION

The Lord says, *"Then their offspring will be known among the nations, their descendants among the peoples. All who see them will recognize them, for they are the seed that Adonai has blessed"* (Is. 61:9). His covenant faithfulness is not fragile. What He promised to Abraham, He will fulfill. But Israel's continuity is not merely survival; it is witness. The world will recognize the blessing of Adonai upon His people. Just as later people recognized that Yeshua's disciples had been with Him, Isaiah says the nations will recognize that God has blessed His people. And that blessing has a purpose: *"May God be gracious to us and bless us. May He cause His face to shine upon us—so that Your way may be known on earth, and Your salvation among all nations"* (Ps. 67:2–3). Lord, bless us that we may be a blessing. As a child of God, do not stop at receiving the blessing. Surrender to the responsibility of being a kingdom of priests—to reflect His heart, serve His purposes, and become a conduit of His blessing to others. Let Him bless you in such a way that His salvation becomes known through your life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What stands out to you about the nations no longer oppressing Israel, but also *not* being oppressed by Israel?
2. How does the calling to be a "kingdom of priests" reshape the way we understand blessing?
3. Why is the double portion connected to responsibility rather than selfish gain?
4. Where might God be calling you to stop hoarding blessing and begin pouring it out?
5. How can your life help others recognize that Adonai is faithful, just, and good?

CLOSING PRAYER:

ADONAI, bless us that we may be a blessing. Thank You for the great exchange You bring through Yeshua—beauty instead of ashes, joy instead of mourning, praise instead of heaviness, and honor instead of shame. Make us oaks of righteousness, planted by You for Your glory. Teach us to walk as a kingdom of priests. Remove arrogance, fear, bitterness, and selfishness from our hearts. Help us carry the responsibility of Your blessing with humility and joy, so that Your way may be known on the earth and Your salvation among all nations.

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