

## FROM THE VERY BEGINNING

Isaiah 1:1-20; Ephesians 1:1-14 / Exodus 20:1-21

### I. God Calls Believers to Deal with Him

**A. God is ready to discuss the problem between heaven and earth and restore a right relationship.** “Come now, and *let us reason together*, saith the LORD: *though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow*; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (ISAIAH 1:18)

**B. God calls because the people have not called Him.** “Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, *neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins*, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, *am* he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. *Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.*” (ISAIAH 43:24-26)

**C. The gulf between God and people is not God’s fault.** “Thus saith the LORD, *What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?*” (JEREMIAH 2:5)

### II. God Has a Plan

**A. Get right and go right.** “*Wash* you, make you clean; *put away the evil* of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; *Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.*” (ISAIAH 1:16-17)

**B. Eliminate the empty thoughts which substitute for good.** “O Jerusalem, *wash thine heart* from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. *How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?*” (JEREMIAH 4:14)

**C. Approach God intentionally and with a fixed purpose.** “*Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*” (JAMES 4:8)

**D. Pass on the freedom which is in Christ.** “*Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?*” (ISAIAH 58:6)

**E. Eliminating sin and cultivating righteousness are complementary parts of the same process.** “That ye *put off* concerning *the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt* according to the deceitful lusts; And *be renewed in the spirit* of your mind; And *that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*” (EPHESIANS 4:22-24)

**F. Grace transforms all parts of life, not just salvation.** “For *the grace of God that bringeth salvation* hath appeared to all men, *Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly*, in this present world; *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*” (TITUS 2:11-14)

### II. Prospects Are Bright

**A. God gives away the good things in life.** “Ho, **every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.** Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which* is not bread? and your labour for *that which* satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and **eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live;** and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” (ISAIAH 55:1-3)

**B. The good life is available now; there is no need to wait.** “**Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.**” (ISAIAH 55:6-7)

**C. Backsliders have a personalized invitation.** “Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, **Return, thou backsliding Israel,** saith the LORD; **and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful,** saith the LORD, **and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity,** that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. **Turn, O backsliding children,** saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and **I will bring you to Zion.**” (JEREMIAH 3:12-14)

**D All things are becoming new.** “And **I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem,** coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as **a bride adorned for her husband.** And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, **the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.** And **God shall wipe away all tears** from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, **neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain:** for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, **I make all things new.** And he said unto me, Write: for **these words are true and faithful.**” (REVELATION 21:2-5)

+ Dr. Edwin P. Elliott