

If God Is In Charge

Isaiah 40:1-11; Acts 2:14-42 / Hosea 8:1-14

Dr. Edwin P. Elliott

I. The Times Can Confuse and Discourage

A. The murder of Jesus was the darkest moment in history and simultaneously the brightest moment in PROVIDENCE. “Him, being delivered by *the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*” (ACTS 2:23)

B. From God’s perspective there are no surprises. “*Known unto God are all his works from the beginning* of the world.” (ACTS 15:18)

C. God does in the world what He pleases to do. “Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times *the things* that are not yet done, saying, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.*” (ISAIAH 46:10)

D. No one can stop God from doing what He chooses to do. “And *all the inhabitants* of the earth *are reputed as nothing*: and *he doeth according to his will* in the army of heaven, and *among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand*, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (DANIEL 4:35)

E. Chance is only a matter of perspective. “*The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.*” (PROVERBS 16:33)

II. Look for Answers Where Answers Can Be Found

A. When life confuses and PROVIDENCE is obscure, ask for the wisdom to understand. “*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God*, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and *it shall be given* him.” (JAMES 1:5)

B. PROVIDENCE only comes into perspective as God opens the understanding. “Then *opened he their understanding*, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus *it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead* the third day:” (LUKE 24:45-46)

C. God tells His people what they need to know. “The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but *those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*” (DEUTERONOMY 29:29)

III. Work With the Known Rather Than the Unknown

A. A God big enough to manage reality and order it must be larger than the limits of human understanding. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! *how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*” (ROMANS 11:33)

B. In life’s shadows and tragedies there is enough human blame to go around. “For *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*” (ROMANS 3:23)

C. No one needs to look beyond humanity to understand why terrible things happen to people. “For *the wages of sin is death*; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (ROMANS 6:23)

D. God speaks across the storm and strife of human tragedy. “Comfort ye, *comfort ye my people*, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and *cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished*, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins.” (ISAIAH 40:1-2)

E. The church echoes the message as God spoke it through Isaiah and John the Baptist. “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, *Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed*, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for *the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*” (ISAIAH 40:3-5)

F. Life is always fleeting. “The voice said, *Cry*. And he said, What shall I cry? *All flesh is grass*, and all the goodness thereof *is* as the flower of the field: The *grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it*. surely the people *is* grass.” (ISAIAH 40:6-7)

G. As the fog rises, the mountain becomes more visible. “*The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.*” (ISAIAH 40:8)

H. In life’s darkest moments, tell the Savior’s story and trust in the living God. “O *Zion, that bringest good tidings*, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, *lift up thy voice* with strength; lift *it* up, *be not afraid*; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! *Behold, the Lord GOD will come* with strong *hand*, and *his arm shall rule* for him: behold, *his reward is with him*, and his work before him. *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*” (ISAIAH 40:9-11)