***Believers Together – Discovering the Word of God - Thursday, February 22nd, 2024.***

**Judgment and Salvation—Isaiah 65:1–16**

Topics: Abundance, Blessing, Call, Children, Choices, Death, Disobedience, Evil, Forget, Forsake, Holiness, Idolatry, Invitation, Joy, Listening, Name, Punishment, Rest, Revelation, Sacrifice, Self-centeredness, Self-righteousness, Shame, Silence, Sin, Sorrow, Stubbornness, Swearing, Truth

**Open It**

1. How does it feel to encounter people who think they are too good to associate with you?

**Isaiah 65:1–16 (ESV)**

**1I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, “Here I am, here I am,” to a nation that was not called by my name.**

**2I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices;**

**3a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and making offerings on bricks;**

**4who sit in tombs, and spend the night in secret places; who eat pig’s flesh, and broth of tainted meat is in their vessels;**

**5who say, “Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you.” These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all the day.**

**6Behold, it is written before me: “I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will indeed repay into their lap**

**7both your iniquities and your fathers’ iniquities together, says the Lord; because they made offerings on the mountains and insulted me on the hills, I will measure into their lap payment for their former deeds.”**

**8Thus says the Lord: “As the new wine is found in the cluster, and they say, ‘Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it,’ so I will do for my servants’ sake, and not destroy them all.**

**9I will bring forth offspring from Jacob, and from Judah possessors of my mountains; my chosen shall possess it, and my servants shall dwell there.**

**10Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down, for my people who have sought me.**

**11But you who forsake the Lord, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny,**

**12I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter, because, when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes and chose what I did not delight in.”**

**13Therefore thus says the Lord God: “Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame;**

**14behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain of heart and shall wail for breaking of spirit.**

**15You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse, and the Lord God will put you to death, but his servants he will call by another name,**

**16so that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth, and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my eyes.**

**Explore It**

1. To whom did God say that He had revealed Himself? (65:1)
2. What characterized the people to whom God reached out? (65:2)
3. By what activities did Israel provoke God? (65:3–4)
4. How did Israel evaluate their own morality in comparison to others? (65:5)
5. What did God promise He would do because of the people’s sin? (65:6–7)
6. How did God portray the fact that there was a remnant of faithful people even in an unfaithful nation? (65:8)
7. What did God promise to do on behalf of those who remained faithful? (65:9–10)
8. What did God say He would do to those who forsook Him and consulted other gods? (65:11–12)
9. Why did God hold the people responsible for their disobedience? (65:12)
10. How did God contrast the future of His servants with that of the disobedient in Israel? (65:13–14)
11. How did the names of the obedient and disobedient reflect their standing with God? (65:15)
12. Who would be the source of all blessings and all promises when God redeemed His remnant? (65:16)

**Get It**

1. Why is Christianity not a religion in which we can measure our righteousness and compare it to others?
2. What is challenging about being willing to remain faithful and wait to see God reward His servants and punish the wicked?

**Apply It**

1. How can you avoid the temptations that may come your way in the coming weeks to feel superior to other Christians whom you don’t like?