

Isaiah

The Lord Is Salvation

**Let's
Be
Reasonable**

Isaiah 1:18-20

Lesson Four

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum

Isaiah

The Lord Is Salvation

Let's Be Reasonable

Today we deal with a verse which has so often been misunderstood and/or misused. Let's Read Isaiah 1:18-20.

Often, the words, "Come now, let us reason together" are taught or preached as an invitation from God to sit down and talk it over. Or, as an invitation to see that scarlet sins can be white, like snow. Some have even taught this as a promise from God of unconditional forgiveness, like "do whatever you want, and God will forgive you."

However, that is not what Isaiah is telling us in this oracle. The invitation is to court. Israel is brought before the judge, God Himself. They are accused of turning their backs on God...of behaving as the people of God should or would never behave.

The word "reason" is used numerous times in the Old Testament. It means to rebuke, or scold as in Isaiah 29:21; 37:4 or Genesis 31:42. It can also mean bringing a charge or a complaint against someone as in Genesis 21:25. It means to argue your case as in Job 13:3. It means to make a decision, like a judge on the bench as in Isaiah 11:3, 4. So, we see, this is not an invitation to sit down and chat. It is a command for Israel to appear before the Judge, God Himself.

God is not talking debate here, He is calling Israel to stand before Him and hear what God offers as their options. The idea that God is promising forgiveness for everyone regardless of their behavior is quickly undone when we read the nineteenth and twentieth verses.

Actually, the New Testament makes it very clear that God's forgiveness is contingent on our plea for mercy. I John 1:9 says that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to purify us from all unrighteousness."

The lines "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool" must be seen as God questioning, "Is this what I am hearing you say?"

And we should see this not as God saying the idea is wrong. It is right! God does cleanse us from all sin. But, making us clean...white as wool, white as snow...is offered by God only to those who want it and ask for it in the right way. See again I John 1:9. God is trying to get the people of Israel to see that they can't just assume that God will take care of them and make

Isaiah

The Lord Is Salvation

everything right just because they are Israel. As a matter of fact, the next two verses make that very clear.

Where the people saw themselves as being white as snow, God saw them very differently. God is telling them that they must make a decision. He is insisting that they be reasonable.

First, He pointed out to them the truth which they already knew. It is the positive side of the future. God said there is the option of following God's plan and living it out. The verse says, "If you are willing and obedient." We must be willing. That means understanding our place in God's plan. We are His creation and should respond to Him as the Creator. He has a plan for each of us. We can be obedient to His plan. If we do this, things are going to go very well for us. This doesn't mean, as some would have us believe, that we are going to be healthy, wealthy and wise. It means that when we are in God's plan, life is going to be right and valuable.

Second, God pointed out that rebellion and refusal to follow God's plan would be a really bad thing. The outcome would be the opposite of what we just said.

There is an interesting play on words the way Isaiah wrote it down. The word which is translated in English as "you will eat," in verse nineteen and "you will be devoured," in verse twenty are from the same Hebrew word. It's like the prophet is quoting God as saying, "If you obey, you will eat; if you disobey, you will be eaten."

The final statement in our Scripture lesson for today is, "For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Of course we believe that all the Bible is God's word. However, such a statement reminds us how serious the words that quote God really are. Some of the history, or stories about people, are just that, but when God the Father, or Jesus are quoted, it is even more important for us to read it carefully, and live it exactly as God, or Jesus, speaks it.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

Page Three

Scripture Memory: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be like wool." Isaiah 1:18

Lesson Goal: To let students see that God doesn't approve of faking it.

Isaiah

The Lord Is Salvation

Student Worksheet

Let's Be Reasonable—Isaiah 1:18-20

As the teacher goes through the lesson, look for answers to these:

1. What does the word “reason” mean as used in our lesson today?
2. What does I John 1:9 say?
3. Why should we pay special attention to words in the Bible which are obviously the words of God the Father or of Jesus?

Scripture Memory: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be like wool.” Isaiah 1:18

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.