

Isaiah 1:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

This verse contains one of Scripture's most gracious invitations: 'Come now, and let us reason together.' God initiates dialogue despite rebellion, offering rational discourse rather than arbitrary decree. The promise that scarlet sins become 'white as snow' and crimson sins like 'wool' employs vivid imagery of complete cleansing. This isn't moral improvement but divine transformation—God removes sin's stain entirely through grace, anticipating the gospel's forensic justification (Romans 3:24-26).

Historical Context

In ancient dyeing, scarlet and crimson were permanent stains from costly dyes. The impossibility of removing such stains emphasizes the miraculous nature of divine forgiveness—what humans cannot accomplish, God does freely.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Do you approach God expecting harsh condemnation or gracious invitation to dialogue?
2. How does complete forgiveness differ from gradual moral improvement in your understanding of salvation?

Interlinear Text

לְכוּ H1980	נָא H4994	וְנִגְדָה ה' H3198	יֹאמַר H559	יְהוָה ה' H3068	אִם H518	יְהִי ו' H1961
		and let us reason together	saith	the LORD		
חַטָּאֵיכֶם H2399	כַּשְׂנִים H8144	כַּשֹּׁלֶג H7950	וְלִבֵּי יֵנוּ H3835	אִם H518		
though your sins	be as scarlet	as snow	they shall be as white			
יֵאָדָּ יֵמוֹ H119	כְּתוֹלַעַ H8438	כַּצֹּמֶר H6785	יְהִי: H1961			
though they be red	like crimson	they shall be as wool				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 44:22 (Sin): I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

Revelation 7:14 (Parallel theme): And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Psalms 51:7 (Parallel theme): Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Isaiah 41:21 (References Lord): Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.

Isaiah 41:1 (Parallel theme): Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.

Romans 5:20 (Sin): Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

Acts 18:4 (Parallel theme): And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

1 Samuel 12:7 (References Lord): Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.

Acts 17:2 (Parallel theme): And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

Jeremiah 2:5 (Sin): 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?