

Come, Let Us Reason – Isaiah 1:18 in the Spanish Versions

When I witness to someone concerning their need for salvation, there is a verse that I like to use as it is very applicable to rational Westerners (which we in America are – like it or not). That verse is Isaiah 1:18, which states:

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)

The verse contains much in the way of doctrine. Primarily, I like to point out that the LORD God desires to reason with every one of us. I want the person I am witnessing to, to understand that believing in Christ Jesus for one's salvation is not an issue of superstition or blind belief. Rather, what I emphasize is that the Lord is not pleased by someone coming to Christ for salvation without actually knowing the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that He is real, a real person who you can know through the operation of faith. Using blind belief to trust in either the Father or the Son is neither sufficient nor acceptable. No, the LORD God desires that we are fully persuaded by knowledge and reason. To be certain, this reasoning is not reasoning with the mind, although that does occur in the process. Instead, it is a reasoning with the soul. The reasoning primarily focuses on the state of that person's soul as the LORD God sees it and knows that it is. The reasoning is about God's righteousness versus man's ability to become righteous by his own effort. And further, this reasoning also brings the person to consider who Christ is, why He died on the cross, and why Christ is qualified to pay the price for that individual's sin, and conversely, why that individual is not qualified to stand on their own merit. In all the reasoning which the Holy Ghost does with the

individual, there is not an agreement between them until that person yields on each particular point. It is rather an adversarial process that can take months or years with the person denying the truth of their state, and/or the truth of who God is, and how and why Christ came, along with who Christ actually is. This last point is a very critical point that must be thoroughly understood and agreed to willingly before the LORD will accept the profession of that person. Why? Because the LORD is not pleased by blind belief, nor is He pleased by superstition as they who engage in such practices have no sure knowledge of who and what they are trusting. Instead, the LORD God desires that everyone come to know, not guess, but know Him personally. And, to know and fully understand that they can indeed trust Him and the provision He has made for us in Christ Jesus. This is what glorifies the LORD God, whereas blind belief doesn't glorify at all. To persuade an individual, and have them come to the knowledge of their Creator and His love for them, and for that individual to be sure and certain of it, is indeed a glory and honor to God. After all, that soul turned to the truth willingly, and became obedient to the truth willingly; and all because the Holy Ghost persuaded them in their heart. Any fool will believe blindly and without proof, and that is no glory to God. Thus, there is extreme importance attached to the phrase in Isaiah 1:18 which states "*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD:*" However, that phrase suffers when we decide to use the Spanish Bible. Now, for those who are not familiar with this issue, we in the English-speaking world are not the only ones to suffer from a proliferation of Bible versions. However, we at least do have a right Bible that we can turn to as the need arises. Unfortunately, that is not the case in the Spanish world. I wish I could state differently, but based upon dealing with translating English into Spanish over the last several years, I cannot. I work with a translator that is qualified to translate, and normally does medical interpretation and translation. She, along with a brother in my home church, have translated the Reproach of Men

site into Spanish. In so doing, the Statement of Faith was also translated, in which each and every supporting verse of each article was checked to see that it properly supported the statement made. The variation of the Spanish verses from the English is simply astounding. Now, to be sure, the Spanish Bible used was not the RV 1960, rather the Bible used was the Reina-Valera 1602, which is supposed to be the most like the KJV. However, considering all that was discussed above about the LORD God reasoning with individuals (through the instrument of faith) and what the LORD God requires of them in the way of belief, what is one to make of the following rendering of Isaiah 1:18:

Venid luego, dirá el SEÑOR, y estemos a cuenta: si vuestros pecados fueren como la grana, como la nieve serán emblanquecidos; si fueren rojos como el carmesí, serán tornados como la lana.

And now, the literal translation of that passage:

The Lord will say come and let's agree: if your sins are as scarlet, like the snow, they shall be made white; if they are red like crimson they shall be as wool.

I don't know about you, but I do not like what I read in the translation above. If, . . .? If . . .? If your sins are as scarlet. . . Uh . . . no, – I don't think so. Our sins "are," . . . not "if," but are, as scarlet. The price of our sin is blood, and the shedding of it to cover them. Moreover, (and I asked specifically about this) since when is the snow, scarlet? No, that cannot be right either. It must mean that some punctuation is incorrect.

The Lord will say come and let's agree: if your sins are as scarlet; like the snow, they shall be made white;

Which, with the replacing of the comma with a semicolon, is better, but it still does not resolve the first clause and all

the attendant problems of using the word "if" rather than the Spanish equivalent of the word "though." In Spanish, the word for "if" is "si" and the word for "though" is "aun." Thus it is not a "mistake" in the sense of a typographical error. Rather, the word "si" was deliberately chosen when the word "aun" was a clear and unambiguous rendering of the underlying Hebrew (at least in the Masoretic). Moreover, the word "aun" would give the Spanish reader the plain sense and understanding that they are sinners in need of salvation. As this passage stands, the reader is given to option of questioning the validity of the LORD's charge laid against them. Of course, the error was repeated in the last phrase as well. Again, the question "if" our sins are red. No. Sorry They ARE red like crimson. Beside the use of the word "if" in place of "though" there is serious concern for the statement "*The Lord will say come and let's agree:*" and what it means with its attendant implications for the doctrine of salvation. Now, I am certain that in the minds of many, the question will be raised: 'What's wrong with that statement, isn't the Lord still seeking to call man to agree that man is a sinner?' Yes, He is. But the problem lies not in the fact that the LORD is seeking to bring man to the understanding that each and every person is a sinner, as that is very much the case. Rather, the problem lies in the fact that this statement is placed in the future. Instead of "*saith the LORD,*" which is present perfect tense. What is given in the Spanish is "*The Lord will say*" which is future tense. Why is this an issue, and what real difference does it make? Well, of you are an ultra-dispensationalist, or are one that holds that salvation is different in the different periods of man's history, I guess it doesn't really make that much difference. However, if you believe that God has never changed, and that since the fall, man has never changed, and you understand that the LORD God knew in eternity past that man would need a Savior, then it is a destructive rendering of the underlying Hebrew text, and inconsistent with the rest of the Scripture. How so? Consider the following passages:

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (*Revelation 13:8*)

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: . . . (*Luke 1:67-70*)

But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. (*Acts 3:18*)

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. (*Hebrews 11:4*)

Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together. All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these things? The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans. I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me. (*Isaiah 48:12-16*)

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. (*Hebrews 12:8*)

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet

that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (*Hebrews 9:24-26*)

Now, I won't quote all of Isaiah, chapter 59 as it is lengthy, but well worth reading as it details the condition of man. However, the last part of the chapter states:

Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. (*Isaiah 59:15-17*)

Just when did the LORD see the condition of man? In Revelation chapter 13, quoted above, it plainly states that "*the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.*" Please note this places the sacrifice of Christ to have occurred before the creation of man. Clearly, the Scripture details that the LORD created man on the sixth day, which is after the foundation of the world. So then, the LORD saw the fallen state of man before He made the heavens and the earth, before man was ever created, and already had a resolution to the problem of man being justified in the sight of the LORD God. But, it is argued, how could the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, be slain on the cross before the world was ever made, and long before the Gospels detail His crucifixion? Isn't that a contradiction, and doesn't that cause problems in the Scripture? Only if one's understanding of God is incomplete or flawed. Consider the following passage and its implications as touching what the LORD tells us in Scripture:

Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. (*Romans 4:16-17*)

When God "*calleth those things which be not as though they were.*" what He is telling us is the following:

The LORD God sees all time all at once and differentiates every point in time from every other point in time.

Hence, in eternity past, when the LORD God made a covenant with Himself for the salvation of man, the outcome of Christ's earthly ministry was never in doubt. The fact that the Word would become flesh, live perfectly before the Father, and go to the cross to pay for our sins, was a sure and certain thing:

It was impossible for the Lord Jesus Christ to fail.

Hence, the gospel, and means of salvation for man, throughout the entire history of man from the fall has *NEVER* changed. In Ephesians, chapter 2 it is expressly stated:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (*Ephesians 2:8*)

And just so men know that grace and works for salvation don't mix, we are told in Romans:

And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. (*Romans 11:6*)

So then, when it states in Hebrews, chapter 11 that “*by faith Abel*” and in Genesis, chapter 6 “*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*” (Genesis 6:8) we know that both Abel and Noah believed in Christ to come and were justified in the sight of God based upon that belief and trust in God’s promise of a Savior. (Of course, one **could** read Job 19:23-27 or Hebrews 3:15-4:2) Hence – the gospel has always been the same. Therefore, it is reasonable to pose the question: Is it “*the Lord will say . . .*” concerning our sin, or is it far more accurate to understand that it has always been “ . . .*saith the LORD*” in addressing the wicked and sinful condition of man? Plainly, the LORD God has always stated, and continues to state that we, individually are sinners in need of salvation. He has made it clear that there exists no other means of salvation outside the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the Word, long before the world ever was, chose to take on the form of a man and become our next of kin so that He would pay the price of our sin. The statement and declaration of God is *present perfect*, not *future* tense. It is not ‘*He will say.*’ He has said and continues to say what He knew in eternity past. Thus instead of:

Venid luego, dirá el SEÑOR, y estemos a cuenta: si vuestros pecados fueren como la grana, como la nieve serán emblanquecidos; si fueren rojos como el carmesí, serán tornados como la lana. (*Isaías 1:18*)

To be accurate it must state:

Venid ahora, y razonamos dice el SEÑOR: aun vuestros pecados son como la grana, como la nieve serán emblanquecidos; aun son rojos como el carmesí, serán como la lana. (*Isaías 1:18*)

Sadly, this is not the only passage in the Spanish Bible(s) which is flawed in this way. In the Statement of Faith, many verses from the 1602 (and it is worse in the 1960 RV) had to be modified to match what is stated in the King James Version. And yes, this verse was rewritten to match the KJV:

Venid ahora, y razonamos dice el SEÑOR: aun vuestros pecados son como la grana, como la nieve serán emblanquecidos; aun son rojos como el carmesí, serán como la lana. (*Isaías 1:18*)

And there's not a problem with the Spanish Bibles? Is it any wonder that the Bible seems to have no significant impact upon the Hispanic world?