

Doctrinal Mastery: Isaiah 1:18

Repentance through Jesus Christ

Isaiah taught about the Savior's ability to cleanse us of our sins through His Atonement. The Lord promised that if we repent, our sins that are "as scarlet ... shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18).

Possible Learning Activities

Know the doctrine

Think about times when you have spilled something on your clothing, causing it to become stained.

How do you feel when this happens?

How might our sins be like stains?

As you study today's lesson, seek the Spirit's guidance to help you know what the Lord would have you do when you feel stained by sin.



These images represent the colors scarlet and crimson, which are bright red colors that come from certain dyes.

Sister Sharon Eubank of the General Relief Society Presidency shared how scarlet dye was used during Old Testament times:

The scarlet dye of the Old Testament was not only colorful but also colorfast, meaning that its vivid color stuck to the wool and would not fade no matter how many times it was washed [see "Scarlet, Crimson, Snow, and Wool," *Ensign*, Dec. 2016, 64–65]. (Sharon Eubank, "Christ: The Light that Shines in Darkness," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 75)

In Isaiah 1:18, the prophet Isaiah likened scarlet and crimson to the sins we commit.

How might scarlet and crimson be effective symbols of our sins and the impact they can have on our spirits?

Isaiah used these symbols to teach a powerful message about the cleansing from sin that we can experience through the Savior's atoning sacrifice.

Read Isaiah 1:18, looking for the Lord's message taught by Isaiah.

What stands out to you from this verse?

You may want to cross-reference Alma 5:27 and Mormon 9:6 with Isaiah 1:18 in your scriptures. Then read one or both of these verses, looking for the Savior's role in cleansing us of our sins.

What is a truth you learn from Isaiah 1:18 and these other scripture passages?

One truth we can learn from these verses is that **through His Atonement, Jesus Christ can cleanse us from our sins.**



How are snow and wool appropriate symbols of what will happen to our sins if we repent?

What are some reasons why people may not want to repent or think they cannot repent of their sins?

How could a greater understanding of Jesus Christ and the truths taught in Isaiah 1:18 help someone who may not want to repent or think they cannot repent of their sins?

Practice application

Use the three principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge you have developed to evaluate the following scenario. If you need to review these principles, see paragraphs 5–12 in the “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” section of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*.

Gwen feels discouraged by her sins. Although she tries to do what is right, recently she has fallen to temptation more frequently and has committed some sins that are more serious. In a moment of despair Gwen says, “The sins I have committed are so bad that God would never want me back. I don’t think I could ever be clean again.”

1. Suggest specific ways Gwen could act in faith and view her concern with an eternal perspective. It might be helpful to include suggestions of what Gwen could do to feel God’s love for her.
2. Share one or more scripture passages or other divinely appointed sources that could give Gwen direction and comfort. Isaiah 1:18 and Doctrine and Covenants 58:42–43 might be good places to start. It might also be useful for you to search for terms such as “Repentance” and “Forgiveness” in the Topical Guide or Guide to the Scriptures or by using the keyword search feature in the Gospel Library app.
3. Share your testimony of Jesus Christ’s power and willingness to forgive because of His atoning sacrifice.

Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to be cleansed of our sins as we exercise faith in Him and repent. Ponder how you can better apply the principle of repentance in your own life. Consider recording your thoughts and impressions in your study journal.

If you would like to increase your understanding about how you can repent of your sins, consider studying the “Repentance” section in *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 28–29).

Memorize the reference and key scripture phrase

Think of a memory aid for Isaiah 1:18 to help you remember the key scripture phrase: *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.*

When you have your memory aid figured out, consider sharing it with someone. You may also want to recite the reference and key scripture phrase throughout the day.

Review the passage

What is the reference to the key scripture phrase, *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow*?

What memory aid do you use to remember this?

If you do not have a memory aid for Isaiah 1:18, consider working with someone or coming up with one on your own.

Commentary and Background Information

The Savior can forgive us of our sins

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified of the Savior’s power to forgive us of our sins.

However late you think you are, however many chances you think you have missed, however many mistakes you feel you have made or talents you think you don’t have, or however far from home and family and God you feel you have traveled, I testify that you have *not* traveled beyond the reach of divine love. It is not possible for you to sink lower than the infinite light of Christ’s Atonement shines. (Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Laborers in the Vineyard,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 33)

Brother Tad R. Callister, former Sunday School General President, shared a misconception that some people have about the Savior’s Atonement.

On occasion, I have met with good Saints who have had trouble forgiving themselves, who have innocently but incorrectly placed limits on the Savior’s redemptive powers. Unwittingly, they have converted an infinite Atonement to a finite one that somehow falls short of their particular sin or weakness. But it is an infinite Atonement because it encompasses and circumscribes every sin and weakness, as well as every abuse or pain caused by others. (Tad R. Callister, “The Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 85–86)

Repentance is a blessing

President Russell M. Nelson spoke of the need for each of us to repent and the blessings we can receive from doing so.

“Does *everyone* need to repent?” The answer is yes.

Too many people consider repentance as punishment—something to be avoided except in the most serious circumstances. But this feeling of being penalized is engendered by Satan. He tries to block us from looking to Jesus Christ [see Doctrine and Covenants 6:36], who stands with open arms [see Deuteronomy 26:8; 2 Nephi 1:15; Mormon 6:17; Doctrine and Covenants 6:20], hoping and willing to heal, forgive, cleanse, strengthen, purify, and sanctify us. ...

Whether you are diligently moving along the covenant path, have slipped or stepped from the covenant path, or can’t even see the path from where you are now, I plead with you to repent. Experience the strengthening power of daily repentance—of doing and being a little better each day.

When we choose to repent, we choose to change! We allow the Savior to transform us into the best version of ourselves. (Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 67)

Supplemental Learning Activity

Alternative way to begin the lesson

How is what happened to this water similar to what happens to our spirits when we sin?

How is the Atonement of our Savior Jesus Christ similar to the bleach?

Think about any sins that you might currently be struggling with, or think about how you have felt when you have sinned in the past. As you study today’s lesson, seek the Spirit’s guidance to help you know what the Lord would have you do when you feel stained by sin.