

IS THERE ANY WAY TO ESCAPE PUNISHMENT AND BE BROUGHT BACK INTO GOD'S FAVOR?

ANSWER: Yes, to satisfy his justice, God himself, out of mere mercy reconciles us to himself and delivers us from sin and from the punishment for sin, by a Redeemer.

Bible Passage: Isaiah 53:10–11

Memory Verse: Isaiah 53:10–11

Big Idea: There's a clear way back into God's favor through Jesus the Redeemer.

Virtue: Gratitude

LEADER'S NOTES:

The world appears to be increasingly content to remove God from public life and to ignore the idea that there is a God who is not only intimately involved with his world but who also longs to be in relation with those who have been created in his image and likeness. This lesson will help us consider the seriousness of sin. There is amazing joy, hope, and comfort to be found in this lesson. We will be reminded that God is in control, and that God had a plan of how to bring people back into his favor. This lesson aims to give Christians increased confidence and hope in God and his plan of redemption through Jesus. It will also challenge those who aren't yet believers to consider the reality of their situation very carefully.

Things to remember:

- Some people may be frightened or overwhelmed at the thought of God's punishment. Help them to engage with the question in a sensitive and caring manner.
- Some may not all have a good Bible timeline in their minds. You may need to help them understand the chronology of the Bible and show them where Isaiah fits in.
- Some will be familiar with the gospel story and may seem to take it for granted. Work hard to engage their hearts and cause them to experience renewed gratitude as they encounter God's redemption plan.

Question 18 Review: Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished? No, every sin is against the sovereignty, holiness, and goodness of God and his righteous law. God is righteously angry with our sins and will punish them both in his just judgement both in this life, and in the life to come.

INTRODUCTION TO QUESTION 19

Ask the group to imagine what it would be like to be sentenced to death and placed on death row to wait for execution. There is no doubt that it would be terrifying!

Ask the group to then imagine what it would be like for someone else to take their place just at the last minute, just as they were about to be executed. Explain that it would be the most amazing feeling ever!

Ask them if they think anybody would ever do that.

Introduce Question 19: "Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God's favor?"

Explain that this question is going to consider what it would take to free people from the punishment due to them for disobeying God.

TEACHING OUTLINE

Introduce this time by explaining to the group that this question is considering whether there is any way for those who are under the judgment of God to escape and be brought back into God's favor. Ask them if they think a man on death row could save himself.

Can sinners under God's judgment save themselves?

The answer is definitely no. Ask them why men and women and boys and girls cannot save themselves. Clarify that there is no possible way that people can make themselves right with God. Explain that the situation is deadly. It is just like being sentenced to death—the chances of saving oneself are nonexistent.

Read Isaiah 53:10–11

10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

QUESTION 19

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Isaiah was written hundreds and hundreds of years before Jesus left heaven to come to earth as a man, and yet the words tell a story that is wonderfully familiar.

Look over chapter 53 and identify who you think the words are referring to.

Explain to the group that this passage of Isaiah is often referred to as a Servant Song because it refers to one who would come as God's Servant to redeem and deliver. Hopefully we are aware that the passage is referring to Jesus, who is the Redeemer. Point out that this was written hundreds of years before Jesus was born. Tell them that the amazing truth is that God always had a plan. He had determined a way by which people who deserved judgment and death would know freedom and life.

God always knew that he would send Jesus to earth to live a sinless life in perfect obedience to God's law so that he might become the sin offering. God demanded someone without sin to die in order to satisfy his judgment, and Jesus was the perfect spotless One who was sent to be the Redeemer.

Help the group to realize how amazing this is! Help them to appreciate that Jesus left the glory of heaven to come humbly to earth in order to do what his Father commanded.

Observe that Isaiah 53 not only talks about Jesus's death but also his resurrection. Isaiah was talking about an entirely new kind of sin offering. Usually an animal was offered, and once it died, it stayed dead. But verse 10 explains that the One who would die would also live again.

Jesus is the One who saves the sinner on death row.

He is the One who steps in to take his punishment and redeem him.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

When people are sentenced to death, they are given the chance to choose their last meal before their execution. Draw or list on paper what you would want for your last meal. They can ask for anything they want!

Allow a few people to share their last meals, but don't let it take too much time. Tell the group that while it is fun to imagine the best meal ever, it would be a very sad meal. We need a Redeemer!

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

(Allow for several answers within your group before reading the provided response.)

- 1. Why did Jesus have to die?** Understand that Jesus died in order to fulfill the prophecy and to be obedient to his Father's command. He trusted his Father and knew he must die in order to bring people into a restored relationship with God.
- 2. How did Isaiah know about Jesus's life and death?** All Scripture is God-breathed and God caused Isaiah to write down the words that he did.

More to consider:

How is your understanding of God's plan increased by this passage?

Are you confident that you have been rescued from your own death sentence and have been brought back into God's favor?

How would you explain this to a non-Christian?

VIRTUE VISION: Gratitude

How does it make you feel when you think about Jesus taking your death sentence for you?

You might think of joy, sadness, or other emotions, but what about gratitude?

Write a few words of gratitude to Jesus for being your Redeemer.

Consider how your gratitude to God might flow over into other areas of your life.

Memory Verse

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Isaiah 53:10–11