

# Sermon Study Questions

## Sunday, February 8, 2026

1. Read Isaiah 29
2. There are three movements in Isaiah 29. In v.1-8 we see God's sovereign judgment over all. In v.9-16 we see His mysterious dealings with His people. And in v.17-24 we see His wonderful promise of restoration. As Isaiah begins in v.1 he refers to Jerusalem as Ariel. What is an Ariel? Why does he say in v.3 that Jerusalem, the city of David, will become "an Ariel"? What does that mean?
3. In v.5-8 Isaiah says that God will also judge the foreign foes who oppose His people. What is the principle here? Moreover, what is the point of v.7-8 where he likens these foes to a hungry man who sleeps but dreams he is eating and wakes up hungry, and to a thirsty man who dreams he is being satiated but wakes up thirsty? What is the point of this analogy?
4. What is the problem Isaiah is identifying in v.9 where he says, "Astonish yourselves and be astonished; blind yourselves and be blind!" What is he saying was happening among the people of Jerusalem? Remember to think about the historical context. What is the parallel to this in our current society?
5. In v.11-12 Isaiah gives another analogy to describe the attitude of God's people, saying "the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, 'Read this,' he says, 'I cannot, for it is sealed.' And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, 'Read this,' he says, 'I cannot read.'" What is he saying about God's people? What is the lesson you are to learn from this?
6. In v.13 Isaiah summarizes the spiritual condition of the people, saying, "This people draw near with their mouth and honor with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their

fear of me is a commandment taught by men.” How would you describe this spiritual condition? What is it about this spiritual condition that makes it so dangerous?

7. As one commentator put it, “The blindness Isaiah is lamenting is not the darkness of a primitive pagan culture out in the bush. The blindness he is so worried about is the tiring, rote worship of the people in covenant with God.” I.e. the people Isaiah is saying God is bringing blindness upon aren’t those outside the church, but it’s those in the church who aren’t interested in Him or what He has to say. How can you help to ensure this danger, which threatens all churchgoers, is mitigated in your life and the life of your family (especially your children)? Think back to the analogy in v.11-12 and ask how you can promote an authentic desire for God and His Word in your life and the life of your children.

8. In v.14 the Lord says He will do wonderful things with His people and the wisdom of the wise men will perish. What does this allude to? Prove it from the NT.

9. Isaiah concludes by once again giving us a promise of future restoration. What does this restoration point to? Think both of the journey as well as the end.

10. Pray!

#### **Reading of Law: Deuteronomy 6:4-6**

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup> You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup> And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

#### **Prayer of Confession:**

Our Father in heaven, You are great and greatly to be praised. Truly, there is none like you in heaven or on earth. You are worthy of all our love, affection, adoration, attention, and devotion. As our Creator and Redeemer you are to be honored, revered, obeyed, and submitted to with all gratitude and humility at all times and in all circumstances. But Father,

how far we are from doing this. Though we praise you with our lips, our hearts are often far from you. We ponder, desire, love, and pursue the things of this world more than we ponder, desire, love, and pursue you. We confess we fail to love you with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might, and that our love for you is often lukewarm and tends to ebb and flow like the tides of the sea. Father, please forgive us. Please also work in our hearts that we would grow in our love for you. We thank you that in confessing our sin we have assurance that in Christ we are forgiven, as He took the punishment for our sins upon Himself. We thank you that through faith in Him His perfect obedience is imputed to us and we are counted as righteous in your sight. We thank you and we praise you in Jesus' name, Amen.

### **Assurance of Forgiveness: 1 John 4:9-10**

“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

### **Heidelberg Catechism: Lord's Day 23**

Q. 59. What does it help you now, that you believe all this?

A. That I am righteous in Christ before God, and an heir of eternal life.

[1] Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Jn. 3:36; \*Tit. 3:7; \*Rom. 5:1; \*Rom. 8:16.

Q. 60. How are you righteous before God?

A. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ: that is, although my conscience accuses me, that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have never kept any of them, and am still prone always to all evil; yet God, without any merit of mine, of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never

committed nor had any sins, and had myself accomplished all the obedience which Christ has fulfilled for me; if only I accept such benefit with a believing heart.

[1] Rom. 3:21–25; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8–9; Phil. 3:9. [2] Rom. 3:9–10. [3] Rom. 7:23. [4] Tit. 3:5. [5] Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8. [6] 1 Jn. 2:2. [7] 1 Jn. 2:1; Rom. 4:4–5; 2 Cor. 5:19. [8] 2 Cor. 5:21. [9] Jn. 3:18; \*Rom. 3:28; \*Rom. 10:10.

Q. 61. Why do you say that you are righteous by faith only?

A. Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith, but because only the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God; and I can receive the same and make it my own in no other way than by faith only.

[1] 1 Cor. 1:30; 2:2. [2] 1 Jn. 5:10. \*Isa. 53:5; \*Gal. 3:22; \*Rom. 4:16.

#### **NT Reading: Matthew 15:1-14**

Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, <sup>2</sup> "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat." <sup>3</sup> He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? <sup>4</sup> For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' <sup>5</sup> But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or his mother, "What you would have gained from me is given to God," <sup>6</sup> he need not honor his father.' So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. <sup>7</sup> You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: <sup>8</sup> "'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; <sup>9</sup> in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" <sup>10</sup> And he called the people to him and said to them, "Hear and understand: <sup>11</sup> it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person." <sup>12</sup> Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" <sup>13</sup> He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. <sup>14</sup> Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit."