

# Seeing God #1 — A First Glimpse

Speaker: Pete Clayton

Scripture: Isaiah 1:1–23

This Sunday, Pete kicked off our new teaching series working through the Book of Isaiah, which we're calling "Seeing God". We're going to be working our way through this book for the next term or so as a whole church, and even our older kids and young people have started to study Isaiah in their monthly Friday group.

Because there's so much to the Book of Isaiah, in addition to covering the material on Sunday mornings and at Life Groups, there is a reading plan which will take you through the whole book. If you've not got one of those, and you'd like one, talk to your Life Group leaders or pick one up from the welcome desk on Sunday. This really is an opportunity for the whole family to dig in and see God from a new perspective as we work through this together. In his commentary on Isaiah, Phil Moore writes "if the Book of Isaiah doesn't make your head hurt, you're not reading it properly ... it tests our understanding to the limit as it explains to us that God is far bigger than any of us thinks." Nevertheless, we're going to give it our best shot, because knowing Him better is worth it!

## Introduction

Like the rest of the Bible, the Book of Isaiah is intended to point to Jesus, and this book has some of the clearest instances of prophecies that would later be fulfilled by Jesus. In Luke 4, Jesus explicitly draws the connection between Isaiah's writings and his ministry. **Read Luke 4:16–20.** The book is clearly written to a particular people at a particular time, but as Pete told us on Sunday, there are clear applications of these words for us today.

**Read Isaiah 1:1–23**

## Never forget your maker

At the time Isaiah began proclaiming God's Word, the nation of Judah was experiencing a time of great prosperity, and this had led God's people to become complacent. Judah had forgotten who it was that had made them great. "The ox knows its master, the donkey its owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand" (v. 3). **What does that mean for us today?**

In particular, it would appear that Judah had forgotten about the value God places on justice. Isaiah twice highlights the plights of the widows and the orphans who have been neglected in Judah (vv. 17 and 23), in contravention of the Mosaic covenant. **Read Exodus 22:22–24. Do we think this is more or less important under the New Covenant? Why?** One Bible commentator writes that at the time of Isaiah "the rich grew richer and the needs of the poor were disregarded ... the nation was already ripe for judgement". **Does that sound relevant today?**

## True worship involves action

So what does Isaiah propose as the solution? True worship! As we read, Judah was fulfilling the ceremonial aspects of the law — burnt offerings and religious holidays — and Isaiah says that these are meaningless to God. ***Why is this? Read Isaiah 1:16–17. What are our obligations under the New Covenant? Read James 1:22–27.*** It is clear that this is something that God has always cared about, and always will. ***Do we feel that we're living in light of this?***

## A glimpse of the cross

Though they'd broken their covenant with God, we cannot overlook the grace God offers in this chapter. ***Read Isaiah 1:18–20.*** This is a verse we're probably all familiar with, and it meets its fulfillment at the cross of Jesus. ***Read 1 Peter 2:23–25.*** We, like sheep, have gone astray, and by the blood of Jesus can once again enter into the presence of the Holy One.

Judgement proclaimed — Justice served — Hope restored

As usual, this profound truth can only lead to a place of prayer and worship. ***Close in prayer and worship.***