



December 3, 2023

Ancient Words, Present Hope
Good News

Isaiah 40:3-5; Malachi 3:1-5, 4:5,6; Luke 3:1-18

For Discussion and Reflection

1. Use the QR code below and watch the BibleProject videos on Isaiah. How does this set the context of Isaiah 40? (Excursus: As the BibleProject creator presents the possibility two authors of the book, I believe Isaiah is the sole author of these writings, collected and organized by his disciples.)
2. Read Isaiah 40 together. Remember the people have gone through a tragedy, probably the Babylonian captivity alluded to in chapter 39. What stands out to you in this about God's words to his people?
3. Malachi is writing disputes between God and his people after they have resettled Jerusalem. The first prophecy of God's messenger, 3:1-5, comes in the immediate context of 2:17. Read 2:17 and then the prophecy. How does the immediate context color the prophecy? What is the prophetic warning? What is the prophetic hope? How should the people respond?
4. Malachi's second prophecy, 4:5-6, comes after the story of God's faithful, those who "feared the LORD." Read 3:16-4:3. What hope is God giving his people? What hope is he giving us?
5. God's messenger will, as he says, "turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers," 4:6. The question of the promise is, "Is God referring to healing family relationships or referring to the children taking up the faith of their fathers and vice versa?" For a clear answer, read Luke's presentation of John's ministry as promised by the angel: Luke 1:16-17. How does the angel interpret that promise?
6. What hope does the preparatory work of John communicate to you about Jesus and what he came to provide?

