

**A reading from the book of Isaiah 40:1-5, and Matthew 3:1-12**

**Isaiah 40:1-5**

**God's People Are Comforted**

**40** Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the LORD's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup> A voice cries out:

'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup> Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'

## **Matthew 3:1-12**

### **The Proclamation of John the Baptist**

**3** In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, <sup>2</sup> 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'<sup>[a]</sup> **3** This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight."

**4** Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. **5** Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, **6** and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

**7** But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? **8** Bear fruit worthy of repentance. **9** Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. **10** Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

**11** 'I baptize you with<sup>[b]</sup> water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with<sup>[c]</sup> the Holy Spirit and fire. **12** His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

*"The Word of God for the people of God, thanks be to God." OR "Here ends the reading."*