



Good Shepherd  
Sermon-Based Study Guide

Isaiah 40:1-5 | Dec. 7, 2025

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## I. Introduction to this Study

This week in our Advent series *The Light of the World*, we move from the **Light Promised** to the **Light Prepared**. Isaiah spoke comfort to exiled Israel, announcing that God Himself would come and that “the glory of the Lord will be revealed.” John the Baptist later took up this same call—preparing hearts for Jesus through repentance and acts of mercy.

Preparing for Jesus is not just emotional or internal; it is relational and ethical. Advent invites us to clear whatever keeps the Light from shining in us and through us.

## II. Connecting with One Another

When you are expecting visitors, what kinds of things do you do to prepare—cleaning, cooking, making space, etc.?

## III. Study the Text

*Read Isaiah 40:3–5*

- Verses 3–5 describe preparing a “highway for our God”—raising valleys, lowering mountains, leveling rough places. What do these images symbolize spiritually?
- Why might God use such dramatic language to describe preparing for His arrival?
- How does the promise that “all people will see God’s salvation” expand the hope beyond Israel?

*Read Luke 3:1–6*

- What does John mean by preaching “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins”?
- How does repentance prepare the way for Jesus?
- What does it mean today to “make straight paths” for the Lord?

*Read Luke 3:7–14*



- Why is John so stern with those who believe they are the “in-group”—Abraham’s children?
- How does John answer the crowds when they ask, “What should we do?”
- How might John’s words challenge some of our assumptions about what it means to be spiritually prepared for Jesus?

*Read Luke 3:15–20*

- How do the reactions of the crowds, the religious leaders, and Herod highlight the various ways people respond to the call to repent?
- What obstacles to receiving Jesus does John expose—both then and now?

*Reflect and Respond*

- What specific “fruit of repentance” might God be inviting you to produce?
- Like Israel, we often assume spiritual preparation means religious activity. According to this passage, how does preparing for Jesus involve the way we treat others?
- Where might pride, comfort, busyness, or neglect be keeping you from preparing well for Christ’s coming—both at Christmas and at His return?

#### IV. Prayer

*Spend time in prayer together:*

- Thank God for sending both Isaiah and John to prepare His people to receive the Light.
- Confess areas where your life has become cluttered, distracted, or resistant to change.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to “make straight paths” within you—to level what needs leveling and to raise what needs lifting.
- Pray for a heart marked by generosity, honesty, repentance, and readiness for Christ.
- Intercede for those who feel stuck in darkness this season—that they may encounter Jesus, the Light of the World.

#### V. Digging Deeper

*For further study ...*

- **Malachi 3:1–4** — Another prophecy of a messenger preparing the way.
- **Isaiah 57:14–15** — God removes obstacles so His people can return to Him.
- **John 1:6–9, 19–28** — John the Baptist’s identity and mission as a witness to the Light.
- **Psalms 85:8–13** — A vision of God preparing the way for His salvation.
- **2 Peter 3:8–15** — How Christians are called to prepare for the Lord’s return.

