



‘But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’  
2 Peter 3:18

## **December 6**

Advent 2

Gospel reading: Luke 3:1-6

**Pray** for growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus and **read** the passage together...

### **Looking around**

#### ***Immediate context***

Our passage gives the historical/political and theological context for John the Baptist’s ministry. At a specific time in history God launched John’s preaching ministry, being preparation for the Christ, as predicted by Isaiah 700 years earlier. Our passage introduces John’s dialogue with those he baptises (3:7-18) and prepares for Jesus’ own baptism (3:21-22) and desert trials (4:1-13).

#### ***Its place in the structure of the book***

Our passage follows Luke’s birth/infancy narrative and highlights the promised re-emergence of prophecy in Israel, while preparing the reader for the emergence and public ministry of Jesus.

#### ***Its contribution to the message and purpose of the book***

Luke has written his carefully researched Gospel based on eyewitnesses in order that the reader may have certainty concerning these things (see 1:1-4). In keeping with this concern for historical veracity, our passage carefully locates the emergence of John the Baptist within early first century secular and Jewish history (3:1-2), as well as within the salvation purposes of God (3:3-6).

The book’s message centres on Jesus Christ as Saviour of the world and our passage supports this theme with John and Jesus’ ministry bringing God’s forgiveness and salvation for all (3:3, 6; see also 1:76-79).

***Is the passage or part of it quoted elsewhere in the Bible or does it quote other parts of the Bible?***

While only Luke includes John's conversations with his followers (3:10-14), the other three Gospels record John's ministry (Matt 3:1-17; Mk 1:1-13; Jn 1:19-36). Our passage cites Isaiah 40:3-5 as being fulfilled in the ministry of John (Lk 3:4-6).

***How the passage contributes to our understanding of God, Jesus, humanity, God's salvation, life together as Christians, discipleship***

God initiates and progresses each stage of his salvation purposes (see 3:2) and always keeps his Word and promises (3:3-6). Preaching of the good news is God's appointed means of bringing his salvation (3:3-6, 18; see also 1:76-79). Isaiah said that the forerunner would prepare the way for the LORD, which is God himself (3:4). God the Father identifies Jesus as this promised coming LORD and Son (3:21-22)! The Christ brings to the penitent both God's forgiveness and Holy Spirit and to the unrepentant, judgment and loss (3:3, 16-17).

**Looking behind**

***Relevant historical, political, social, geographical information helpful for understanding the passage***

'The fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar' (3:1) was August AD 28 to August AD 29. Jesus was 'about thirty years old when he began his ministry' (3:23).

**Looking within**

***Movements or structure in the passage***

- John's place within secular and Jewish history (3:1-2)
- John's place within God's saving purposes (3:3-6)

***Important or repeated words, ideas, themes***

'The word of God came to John' (3:2) – this signals the resumption of the long-dormant prophetic office with the last Old Covenant prophet. John is God's authoritative mouthpiece, preparing God's people for God's Christ (Son).

***Important contrasting words (but, although, whereas, whilst), explanatory words (therefore, so that, for, because, since, in order that), timing words (next, immediately, after, when)***

'When Pontius Pilate was governor' (3:1). This historical reference clearly locates John's ministry within secular history and introduces the one whom

God would use to bring about Jesus' death and thereby God's salvation (23:1-25).

### **Looking clearly**

Using all of the above, work out the passage's main idea and supporting ideas:

*Main idea*

*Supporting ideas*

Try to summarise these in a clear, succinct statement:

Try to represent what the passage **says** and **means** with a drawing. No art show entries necessary! Invite *willing* people to explain their drawings, unpacking what is being said and the meaning.

### **Looking at Jesus**

Doing this helps grow disciples of Jesus...

*How has this study enlarged or enriched your understanding of Jesus and his claims, call and promises?*

*How do you respond to Him?*

### **Looking in the mirror**

Doing this helps grow disciples of Jesus...

*What personal and corporate (your home group or church) beliefs you hold does this study confirm to be true?*

*What personal and corporate beliefs has this study challenged and corrected?*

*What personal and corporate values, attitudes and priorities has this study reinforced or challenged?*

*What personal and corporate behaviour and traditions has this study endorsed or challenged?*

### **Looking forward**

Doing this helps grow disciples of Jesus...

*What encouragements, comforts and changes will you or your group take with you today?*

*Resolve to help one another move forward in repentance and faith.*

### **Prayer and praise**

