



‘But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’

2 Peter 3:18

December 20

Advent 4

Gospel reading: Luke 1:39-45

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

Looking around

Immediate context

Our passage follows on from the angelic birth announcements made to Zechariah (1:5-25) and Mary (1:26-38) and is followed by Mary’s song of praise (1:46-56) and the respective births of John and Jesus (1:57-66; 2:1-20).

Its place in the structure of the book

It is set within Luke’s Infancy Narrative (1:5-2:52).

Its contribution to the message and purpose of the book

The book’s message centres on Jesus Christ as Saviour of the world. Elizabeth’s Holy Spirit-inspired recognition of Mary’s baby’s identity as ‘Lord’ (1:43) is a reference to the divine Messiahship of Mary’s child. The world’s Saviour is also God’s Son, Messiah (see also 1:32-33, 35).

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

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

The Holy Spirit revealed to Elizabeth that Mary’s child was Elizabeth’s ‘Lord’ (1:43). All the many references to the ‘Lord’ in Luke’s Infancy Narrative are to none other than God himself. This child is the Messiah (Psalm 110:1) and Son of God (Psalm 2:1-12).

Looking behind

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

Looking within

Movements or structure in the passage

Important or repeated words, ideas, themes

The Holy Spirit, 'my Lord,' 'blessed.'

In the space of just seven verses Luke tells us twice that Elizabeth's child leaped at the sound of Mary's voice (1:41, 44). Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth interprets this as her unborn baby expressing joy at the arrival of the one carrying the Messiah.

Luke also refers twice to the blessed state of Mary (1:42, 45). The reasons are that Mary is carrying the Messiah, Son of God (1:42; see also 1:28, 30-33, 48-49) and that she believes God's word about her child (1:45; see also 1:38).

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

'At that time' (1:39) indicates that Mary left for her relative, Elizabeth's place, straight after receiving the angelic announcement about the birth of Jesus.

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