

LUKE

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Chapter Twelve

This chapter is mostly colored in red!

Luke 12:1-3

Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. (2) "But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. (3) "Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops.

Luke is tying this discourse with what has just preceded with the Pharisees stalking Jesus and trying to trap Him. Their accusations failed and many thousands of people gathered to hear more of the teachings of Jesus. Jesus is now driving a wedge between His disciples and the false teachings of the Pharisees. He tells them to beware of the leaven of such teachers. In Scripture leaven is a symbol of corruption and the infectious power of evil (Exod 12:17-20; 23:18; 34:18; Lev 2:11; 6:17; Hos 7:4; 1 Cor 5:6-8; Gal 5:9). Matthew also shows the connection between leaven and their words: *Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.* (Matt 16:12) The Pharisees appear to be loyal teachers of the Word but their interpretations are false and they are misleading the people; thus, they are hypocrites.

That which is covered up and hidden by the false teachings is the significance of the teachings of Jesus and the relationship of Jesus to the Father and those truths will be revealed and made known to many people in spite of the efforts of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The word "accordingly" links verse 3 with verse 4 meaning that the truth of Jesus will be proclaimed much as stated by Matthew:

Matt 10:26-27 "Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. (27) "What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops.

Luke 12:4-7

"I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. (5) "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him! (6) "Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. (7) "Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

This is the first time Luke records Jesus addressing His disciples as friends. The meaning is that those who are friends of Jesus are His protégés and are thus under His spiritual protection. Their enemies may persecute them and even kill them but Jesus protects His friends in eternity. They are then not to fear man but to fear God who has the authority to cast someone into hell forever. Jesus then reminds them of their importance to God. He compares what might seem insignificant to man with the lives of sparrows sold in the market and the number of hairs on anyone's head. Jesus is not saying that God will rescue them from danger (remember Stephen in Acts 7:54-60), but that they should only fear the one who knows the number of hairs on their heads and the number of sparrows that are sold. Only God has the power and authority to cast someone into everlasting punishment in hell. This should be very comforting to His faithful disciples and fearsome to those who do not remain faithful to Him.

Luke 12:8-10

"And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; (9) but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God. (10) "And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.

This prophecy is for those who confess or reject Jesus after His death and resurrection and is more fully discussed in chapter 21, verses 12-19. Jesus is telling them that there will be a future scene when Jesus will either confess before angels of God that people confessed Him as Lord or denied Him before men. The Pharisees are respected among others on earth but the disciples of Jesus will be persecuted and rejected on earth. Jesus promises them that their response will be properly addressed later. Verse 10 has been a frightening verse for many people who think that they may have committed the "unforgiveable sin". It states however that people who say some harmful things against Jesus will be forgiven as was the case of Peter who rejected being a disciple of Jesus three times (22:34, 57, 61). There will also be people who reject Jesus and call for His death. Those sins can be forgiven if they repent since they acted in ignorance (Acts 3:12-15, 19-21). However after Jesus is seated at the right hand of God and God's promise of the Holy Spirit has been poured out on His disciples (22:69; Acts 2:33) the people who deliberately and without repentance reject the signs worked through the Spirit will not be forgiven. Matthew shows that what is in the heart comes out of the mouth and so a person speaking evil of God reveals an unrepentant heart:

Matt 12:33-37 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. (34) "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. (35) "The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. (36) "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. (37) "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Mark makes it clear also that the person speaking evil has an unclean spirit:

Mark 3:28-30 "Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; (29) but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has

forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"-- (30) because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

People blaspheming the Holy Spirit are actually attributing His actions to that of the devil. People may reject Christ and later repent and be forgiven but a total rejection of the works of the Holy Spirit closes the door to forgiveness. This status of being unforgiven seems related to:

- Heb 6:4-6 *For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, (5) and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, (6) and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.*
- Heb 10:26-27 *For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, (27) but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.*
- 2Peter 2:20-22 *For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. (21) For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. (22) It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."*

All three of these sets of verses show that sinning without repentance reveals an unclean heart. The Hebrew 6 verses clearly show that the works of the Holy Spirit have been totally rejected similarly: He enlightened the person, He made the person taste the gift by participation in worship, He made them partakers of Him via church baptism and other means of worship, He made them taste the Word of God in worship and other services, He made them understand the powers of the new creations. These are very similar to the first three instances of the seed of God being planted without any fruit. Paul is an excellent example of someone who opposed the Holy Spirit and persecuted Jesus by persecuting the church (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2; Gal 1:23; 1 Cor 15:9; 1 Tim 1:14-16) but he then responded to the call of Jesus. If he had continued in his unrepentant state then he would have died with no hope of forgiveness. However Paul did receive God's forgiving grace:

1Tim 1:12-14 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, (13) even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; (14) and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.

So, it ain't over until it is over!

Luke 12:11-12

"When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; (12) for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

The word "defend" relates to the law court when one defends himself against charges. This relates to the future that Jesus warns of in:

Luke 21:12-19 *"But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake. (13) "It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. (14) "So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; (15) for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute. (16) "But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, (17) and you will be hated by all because of My name. (18) "Yet not a hair of your head will perish. (19) "By your endurance you will gain your lives.*

They will be defended by the Holy Spirit whose charge will not be to have the accused set free but to convict the hearers of the gospel truth. They will give sermons and not speeches for a defense! See examples in: Acts 4:5-23; 6:15-7:60; 22:1-21; 26:1-23).

Luke 12:13-15

Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." (14) But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?" (15) Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

Someone in the crowd has the audacity to interrupt Jesus to ask Him to interfere with a family squabble. Mosaic law included cases for civil and criminal considerations as well as ritual and moral law so inheritance disputes were common (Num 27:10-11; 36:2-10; Deut 21:15-17). The man represents many who are so wrapped up in their petty concerns that they are unresponsive to the teachings of Jesus on weightier issues. He only wants to have Jesus get more money for him from a family inheritance. Jesus probably replies curtly because His calling is not to be an arbitrator of legal squabbles. Note that then Jesus responded to His disciples and not to the man seeking help. However the man should have heard and learned from His response also. The man was an example of greed that must be avoided by His disciples and hopefully the man would also learn not to covet. Everyone's life consists of much more than worldly possessions as Jesus will teach in a parable that follows.

Luke 12:16-21

And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. (17) "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' (18) "Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. (19) 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" (20) "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' (21) "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

The man of this parable is totally self-centered and does not recognize that everything belongs to God as should the Jews (Ps 24:1; 50:10-12). In the parable of the sower we have already seen that God is the cause behind the growth and harvest. Note throughout the parable how the man

uses words like “my crops”, “my barns”, “my grain”, “my goods”, “my soul”, etc. His soliloquy also contains six “I’s”. In his mind the entire sequence is about himself and not God or anyone else. He does not understand his moral dilemma but only as a practical problem involving himself with no concern for anyone else.

His solution is to tear down his barns and build bigger ones to hold the harvest increase. He does not understand that his real problem is his greed. Jesus taught His disciples to ask for their daily bread but this man looks at his crops as providing bread for many years. He echoes the philosophy of:

- Ecc 8:15 *So I commended pleasure, for there is nothing good for a man under the sun except to eat and to drink and to be merry, and this will stand by him in his toils throughout the days of his life which God has given him under the sun.*
- Ecc 2:24 *There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God.*
- Ecc 5:18 *Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward.*
- 1Cor 15:32 *If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE.*

By his words and deeds, this man reveals that he is a practical atheist for he has completely forgotten about God and gives Him no credit. Thus this man is truly a fool:

- Psa 14:1 *The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.*
- Rom 1:21-22 *For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (22) Professing to be wise, they became fools,*

He has the biggest problem of all in that he does not understand his mortality and the sovereignty of God who can demand His soul at any time. Our understanding of our mortality and the needs of others should be a guide in how we treat our worldly goods. God is the sole owner of all of our possessions:

1Chron 29:14-15 "But who am I and who are my people that we should be able to offer as generously as this? For all things come from You, and from Your hand we have given You. (15) "For we are sojourners before You, and tenants, as all our fathers were; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no hope.

As do all humans, he will die and he cannot take any of his possessions with him. He is not dead yet and he has until tonight to repent but he does not understand this finality approaching him:

James 4:13-16 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." (14) Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. (15) Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." (16) But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

God then asks him who will have all of his “stuff” after he is dead. We can imagine the people surrounding his coffin arguing with each other over who gets what is left much as the man who

interrupted Jesus (12:13). As water flows downhill, our lives are heading toward death and we all need to carefully consider what to do with our worldly possessions that really belong to God.

Luke 12:22-24

And He said to His disciples, "For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. (23) "For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. (24) "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds!"

Jesus then wraps up this parable with sage advice for His disciples. The man in the parable made disastrous decisions that will cause him sorry for ever. He ended life spiritually bankrupt. Jesus warns them to not worry about life here. It is this anxiety over whether we will have enough to take care of ourselves and our family while we live that keeps us from being generous to others. I wrote a paper on anxiety (<http://livingtheology.com/Anxiety.htm>) that I would encourage all to read for it fits within this chapter of Luke. In that article, I wrote the following:

"Thus we see that anxiety is a human response which God has used to enable us to know that a problem exists. It can be used spiritually in the same way that the knowledge of someone having a fever can be used physically. If a fever exists, a problem exists and the solving of the physical problem will remove the symptom. If we treat only the symptom of a fever, we may be heading for big trouble since the real cause has not been found. Similarly if we feel anxious about a situation, we know that this means that we must begin to attack the real cause of our anxiety: our distrust of God."

Anxiety prevents us from being focused entirely upon God. Our focus on our physical needs keeps us from understanding our need for spiritual help. Jesus lifts up the example of the ravens who have no barns perhaps in comparison with the fool of the previous parable who was so concerned about needing bigger barns. Ravens are categorized as unclean (Lev 11:15; Deut 14:14) and yet God takes care of them. We also read that God commanded ravens to feed Elijah (1 Kings 17:4, 6). Jesus reminded them that they were far more valuable than birds so we should have no anxiety about our daily bread. It is critical to understand that worry reveals a lack of trust in God.

Luke 12:25-27

"And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span? (26) "If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? (27) "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these."

Jesus then adds that nobody by worry can add any time to their lifespan. Mortality remains at 100% and even those who take care of their bodies cannot add any time to the lifespan given them by God: *Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.* (Psa 139:16) Since people's lifespan is fixed by God regardless of how much effort we put into a healthy lifestyle then why should we worry about anything? We should plan and take care of our bodies for that is of a little value and may be what allows us to attain to the age fixed by God. But we must

acknowledge the sovereignty of God over all that exists and know that God loves His children and will take care of their needs. Jesus then tells His disciples to consider the state of the lilies for they do not toil for their benefit but just maintain their glorious state by the grace of God. He tells them that even Solomon in his highest state could cloth himself like one of those (1 Kings 9:26-10:29; 1 Chron 9:13-28; Eccl 2:1-11).

Luke 12:28-32

"But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith! (29) "And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. (30) "For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. (31) "But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. (32) "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.

The grass of the field was a common expression for something of little value and its short lifetime is an image for the short time of human existence. He calls His disciples “men of little faith” because they have been given enough faith to remain in allegiance to Jesus but they will be given more at Pentecost. Such a characterization is not a putdown but is a statement of their current condition of faith. Jesus then tells them to not anxiously seek after the bread of life. After all, He has already told them to pray for their daily bread with the assumption that God will take care of His children’s basic needs. He tells them that the pagans seek eagerly after their needs but the Father knows their needs. When we understand the love that God has for His children then the anxiety of worrying over basic needs will cease. Our goal should be the kingdom of God to be fulfilled and such thoughts should drive our everyday concerns. Jesus is not saying that we will have an abundance of “stuff” if we seek first God’s kingdom but such an attitude will rid ourselves of worry over basic supplies. Paul understood this life philosophy very well:

Phil 4:12-13 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. (13) I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

When we truly understand that God has written our names in the book of life and given us His kingdom, there should be no fear at all in our life. The verse Phil 4:13 has been misused a lot by people who don’t know that the promise is that, because God has strengthened us, we can then accomplish all that He has given us to accomplish for His kingdom and not just for our little kingdoms.

Luke 12:33-34

"Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. (34) "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The key to understanding these verses is that a person’s treasure is what means the most to him and he will keep his mind set on that treasure. If our possessions are our treasure then we have a severe problem like the “rich young ruler”:

Matt 19:21-23 *Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (22) But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property. (23) And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.*

In Matthew's narrative Jesus looked at the heart of the man and knew that his property was his treasure that had to be given up before he would have room in his heart for the love of God and neighbors. Does this command of Jesus mean that all of us should sell our possessions and give to charity? No, unless your possessions own you. We are told in Acts how the disciples did sell their possessions so as to provide for the needs of fellow Christians and it may be that God would tell us to do likewise. However this is not a universal command. I think that if selling your possessions and giving much to people in need fills your heart with fear then you do have a problem. Our identification of our treasure does indeed reveal the location of our heart, the center of our decision-making thoughts. If our heart's desires are tied to our earthly possessions then we are spiritually bankrupt.

The last section of this chapter deals with our readiness for the second coming of Jesus that can happen at any time, especially when we least expect it. All of His disciples should be faithfully executing their assigned duties.

Luke 12:35-38

"Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit. (36) "Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. (37) "Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them. (38) "Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

The order to be dressed in readiness meant a lot to the people of this era since they wore loose-fitting robes that needed to be girded for running. They should stay in a position of readiness for activity needed by their Lord. Moses gave Israel the same orders (Exod 12:11). The order to keep their lamps lit was also meant to imply that they would have to move quickly and they would need to be able to see their paths especially if they would be called to go into unfamiliar territory. Matthew 25: 1-13 also describes a time of waiting with burning lamps for the return of a bridegroom for his wedding but he describes a time when virgins would be waiting. In Luke, the people waiting are the servants who will be ready to open the door immediately when he comes and knocks. However there then is a role reversal as the master will gird himself to serve the slaves and have them recline at the table where the master will come and wait on them. The disciples should be prepared to serve their master but they should also be prepared to be served at the wedding feast. The time of the coming is unimportant for they should always be prepared for that unknown time when the Lord returns. The second or third watch corresponds to the middle and last division of the night hours according to Jewish standards. Whenever the master desires to return, those slaves who are prepared will be blessed.

Luke 12:39-40

"But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. (40) "You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

Thieves do not make appointments to break into a house so the head of the house should always be prepared to deal with a thief. Similarly Jesus does not need to make an appointment for His return so we should always be ready for that blessed day.

- Mark 13:32-33 *"But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. (33) "Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come.*
- Acts 1:6-7 *So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (7) He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;*

Thus trying to pin down a time when Jesus will return is a waste of time and is even spending time on something we are not supposed to know. We should just always be ready.

Luke 12:41-46

Peter said, "Lord, are You addressing this parable to us, or to everyone else as well?" (42) And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? (43) "Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. (44) "Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. (45) "But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; (46) the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

Jesus has been speaking to the disciples and the crowd so Peter asks Him if this parable is for the disciples or for everyone. Jesus does not choose to answer Peter directly so Peter and the others have to decide themselves. The answer of Jesus is actually an excellent answer as He replies to a question with a question and the correct answer to the question of Jesus will then answer the question of Peter. Jesus states that the faithful and sensible steward is the person to whom Jesus is addressing. Those stewards are those ones appointed by Jesus to do His duties of being in charge of other disciples and also serving them their needs. The person who is doing those duties assigned by Jesus will be blessed when He returns. When the Lord returns, those who have been faithful in those duties will even be put in charge of more.

However if the slave does not believe that his master will return anytime soon and begins to act as a pagan by beating the other slaves, being a gorgier and a drunkard, then he reveals his evil heart. When the Master returns and finds his slave acting in such a pagan manner then He will come at an unexpected time and tear him apart. He will then be assigned a place after death with unbelievers as he revealed that indeed he fit that category. Being cut into pieces is an extreme penalty and may not be literal but describing the understanding that the person has divided loyalties.

Luke 12: 47-48

"And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, (48) but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

Jesus then describes the different levels of punishment that will be given to those who know the master's will and do not do it and to those who did not know the master's will. Those who do not do their tasks will be punished but the level of punishment will depend upon their knowledge:

- James 4:17 *Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.*
- 2Peter 2:21 *For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.*

Luke 12:49-50

*"I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! (50)
"But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!"*

Fire is a negative image in Luke (3:9, 17; 9:54; 17:29) with an immediate context of judgment. This imagery is not related to the Holy Spirit coming on the disciples after the resurrection:

Acts 2:3-4 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

The fire that Jesus came to bring upon the earth is a destructive judgment that will separate good from evil with the chaff being consumed in the fire:

Luke 3:16-17 John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. (17) "His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Jesus has already set His path to His death in Jerusalem that will then bring about redemption to sinful humanity and He is ready for it to begin as He wishes it were already kindled. However He knows that He still has work to do with a baptism to accomplish. Some translations use "immersion" rather than "baptism" but the meaning is the same as He must still be persecuted horribly with the result of death by crucifixion. To say that He is distressed by this coming event may not be the best translation as what is meant is a reflection of His total focus to accomplish the task set before Him by the Father.

Luke 12: 51-53

"Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; (52) for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. (53) "They will be divided, father against son and son against

father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

Some thought that the Messiah would bring peace especially to the Israelites from verses like:

- *Isa 9:5-7 For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult, And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire. (6) For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. (7) There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.*
- *Zec 9:9-10 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (10) I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.*
- *Luke 2:14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."*

The last verse is often misquoted by leaving out "with whom He is pleased". Peace on earth was never the goal of Jesus for His kingdom is not of this world:

John 18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

Jesus clearly states that He came to establish division. He then describes the division between family members and, if an earthly family can be so divided, how about between people from all over the world? We have heard of such divisions when a person is converted to Christianity in a Muslim family and other such non-Christian families. We also read of such divisions in:

Mic 7:5-7 Do not trust in a neighbor; Do not have confidence in a friend. From her who lies in your bosom Guard your lips. (6) For son treats father contemptuously, Daughter rises up against her mother, Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; A man's enemies are the men of his own household. (7) But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.

A person who comes to accept Jesus as his Lord and Master must be ready to receive persecution and separation from family and friends as well as from people of the world. Jesus is quoted elsewhere of this hatred of His disciples:

- *Luke 6:22-23 "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. (23) "Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.*
- *Luke 14:26-27 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. (27) "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.*

- John 15:18-19 *"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. (19) "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.*
- Matt 10:22 *"You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.*
- Luke 21:16-17 *"But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, (17) and you will be hated by all because of My name.*
- Mark 13:13 *"You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.*

Luke 12:54-56

And He was also saying to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming,' and so it turns out. (55) "And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, 'It will be a hot day,' and it turns out that way. (56) "You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time?"

Jesus now turns His attention to the crowds and reminds them how well they can judge the coming weather patterns by the clouds and the direction of the winds. Most of them were very adept at predicting weather changes due to observing such phenomena. He probably calls them hypocrites because they are deliberately not noticing what He is bringing to the world. They are not applying what Jesus has been teaching to understand the coming judgment that is on the horizon.

Luke 12:57-59

"And why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right? (58) "For while you are going with your opponent to appear before the magistrate, on your way there make an effort to settle with him, so that he may not drag you before the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. (59) "I say to you, you will not get out of there until you have paid the very last cent."

Jesus tells them that they have enough initiative within themselves to judge what is right but they are not doing it. He gives a parabolic warning regarding a simple matter of dealing with a lawsuit. This account is similar to that given by Matthew:

Matt 5:25-26 "Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. (26) "Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent.

If they had been called to settle an account in court they would first try to settle the matter before going to court. Similarly this warning is for everyone, but primarily for Israel, in that they are guilty before God and they should settle the matter before the End Times when sure judgment

will fall upon them. The officer, or bailiff, was in charge of the prison and carried out the punishment. Their sins are so great that in comparison to just owing one cent, all of their transgressions against God must be settled by an infinite time in prison. Finite sins against the infinite God require an infinite sentence. So after the verdict is rendered, it will be too late to settle the account.