

Luke 12:1 ¶ In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

“In the meantime” seems to connect the gathering of this crowd during the time that Jesus was at dinner with the Pharisees during which He rebuked them so severely. The crowd is described as large and tightly packed. I would assume that they were gathering around the area of the Pharisee’s home.

Jesus doesn’t let up with His strong words, but at this time directs His address to His disciples. He warns them to “beware” or avoid the leaven of the Pharisees—hypocrisy.

Leaven is used consistently throughout scripture to picture sin. Leaven permeates the whole and causes it to grow or puff up; Webster includes the idea of “making light.” The Pharisees were actually making light of the truth of God’s word in deference to the traditions of men. Hypocrisy is giving a false appearance of virtue or spirituality. The hypocrisy of the Pharisees was evidenced by their show of religious zeal and integrity that masked a heart filled with pride, greed and selfishness (pointed out in His rebuke of the previous chapter). Jesus is warning His disciples to be careful not to develop that type of character.

Luke 12:2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

Luke 12:3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

In context, Jesus is saying that hypocritical spirituality will eventually be revealed. We know that God has given Jesus authority as judge of all; and as Judge, He will determine those with right standing before God.

John 5:22 “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son....”

The apostle Paul also affirms that when Jesus comes as Judge, He will reveal the true character of all as He alone can see into our hearts.

1 Corinthians 4:5 “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.”

Luke 12:4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

Luke 12:5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

The truth of these verses connects with the truth of the comments made in the previous verses. Jesus declares that we should fear the One who will pass judgment regarding our eternal future far more than we should fear those that can only kill the body.

This is a clear statement that the person is more than just the body that clothes him/her. It is through the body that we experience life on this earth, but it is the soul/spirit within us that is our eternal essence of life. We are eternal beings that will either live in the presence of God for eternity or suffer in hell—the true torture of which will be that it is devoid of His presence. The apostle John also records the words of Jesus declaring this truth.

John 5:26–29 “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

John 14:1–3 “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

Luke 12:6 Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

Luke 12:7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

In these verses Jesus declares that every sparrow, a bird of little value, is accounted for in God’s care. The point being that each person is much more valuable than many, many sparrows—so much so that God even determines the number of hairs on one’s head. Knowing that should relieve us of any fear that He will not take care of us.

Luke 12:8 Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God:

Luke 12:9 But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

Jesus goes on to assure that those who confess their faith in Him unashamedly, He will just as boldly acknowledge as His before the angels of God. “But”—warning—those who reject Jesus before men will just as surely be rejected by Him before the angels.

Luke 12:10 And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.

This is one of those verses that people like to isolate from context, but I believe the context (beginning in the previous chapter) is important.

Jesus is saying that you can choose to speak against Jesus the man and still have hope of repentance and forgiveness. The word “blaspheme” in the Greek means “to vilify, defame, or speak evil of.” In the last chapter the people were accusing Jesus of working miracles in the power of Satan; He was actually working miracles in the power of the Holy Spirit. I think this verse is declaring that those who are so determined to reject Jesus that they attribute His miracles to the power of Satan have hardened hearts; they are beyond coming to repentance. To refuse to repent of your sins and turn to Jesus in faith is to be condemned for eternity. Why are their hearts so hard? John records the words of Jesus that answer this question.

John 3:16–19 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life....He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

I liked this quote from David Guzik regarding this verse: “The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven - not because it is a sin “too big” for God to forgive, but because it is an attitude of heart that cares nothing for God’s forgiveness.”

Luke 12:11 And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:

Luke 12:12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

Those whose hearts are so hard that they reject Jesus will ever seek to accuse and persecute those that trust in and publicly proclaim Him as their Savior. Jesus is speaking to His Jewish disciples in Israel, the land of the Jews, a people whose lives were structured around the Law of Moses and the subsequent traditions of men that had corrupted it.

Jesus is basically saying: You are going to suffer persecution by choosing to be My disciple. You will be arrested and accused before the religious ruling authorities. Don’t worry about being able to defend yourself. The Holy Ghost will put the words in your mouth that I want you to say.

Yes, He was speaking to His disciples at that time. Still, as is true throughout scripture, the promises of God to His people are rooted in His character that never changes. I believe the time is coming soon when true believers in America and throughout the world today will face the same type of persecution that the disciples of Jesus in the early days of the church faced. I also believe that God’s

provision for His people in such times is just as sure today as it was then. It is important to note that the provision will be made at the time of need.

Luke 12:13 ¶ And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

Luke 12:14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

Luke 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

I guess the connecting factor in these verses to the previous is the mention of appearing before a court of judgment. After hearing Jesus tell the disciples that the Holy Spirit would give them the words they needed when taken to court for their beliefs, this man figures Jesus could speak on his behalf now concerning a family inheritance dispute. He wants the Lord to tell his brother to divide his inheritance with him. Jesus basically tells him that He is not the established authority to deal with such issues. Then, probably much to the man's surprise, the Lord warns him against covetousness. It seems the Lord was addressing the man according to His insight of the man's heart. Jesus then declares that a man's life is not defined by how much he possesses.

This is a very important truth for believers today in light of the popularity of the false teaching of the prosperity gospel. I truly believe that some of the "richest" people in heaven will prove to be some of those who were considered poorest on this earth.

It is also important to note that though Jesus is content to leave mundane judgments to earthly authorities, but He is always ready to address issues requiring spiritual judgment/discernment that have eternal consequence.

Luke 12:16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

Luke 12:17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

Luke 12:18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

Luke 12:19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

Luke 12:20 But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

Luke 12:21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

As He often does, the Lord tells a parable—a story that illustrates a spiritual truth. The story concerns a certain rich man whose crops are so abundant that he doesn't have enough room to store them. His solution—I will build bigger barns and enjoy the leisure such bounty affords. God then tells him what a foolish man he is and declares that he will die that very night leaving his wealth to others.

The moral—That is the same consequence facing every man that spends his time and energy focused on gaining earthly riches rather than investing in eternal riches through serving God in faith and obedience. Earthly wealth can only benefit one in this lifetime; spiritual wealth will benefit one for eternity.

It is interesting to note that thinking that is honored by the world today is identified as foolishness by God. I think it is also important to note that the Lord isn't making an indictment against possessing wealth; the indictment is against the greed and selfishness of the person as to how he uses his wealth. This man is only interested in providing for self without regard to how he might use his wealth to honor the Lord.

David Guzik made a very thought-provoking statement on this section: "Most of us are afraid of poverty; we should be afraid of wealth."

1 Timothy 6:9 "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

This parable also brings another scripture to mind.

Proverbs 27:1 "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

Luke 12:22 ¶ And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

Luke 12:23 The life is more than meat, and the body *is more* than raiment.

Luke 12:24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

Luke 12:25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

Luke 12:26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

Luke 12:27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Luke 12:28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more *will he clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

The whole point Jesus is making in this section of scripture is that we (His disciples in context) should be able to rest in faith in His provision for us in light of creation's testimony. There are more important things in life than what we eat or have to wear. God provides food for the ravens (an unclean bird), and they don't even have to work for it. We are of far more value than the ravens. God makes the lilies beautiful and provides the sun and rain to nourish them even though they only blossom for a short while. Do you really think He cares less for you than He does the lilies?

As He often does, Jesus poses a rhetorical question—Can you control adding one inch to your height or one hour to your life (depending on the translation)? The answer—obviously not. The implication—God can and does; He has determined our heredity and our days while yet unborn.

Psalms 139:16 “Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.” (NKJV)

That thought alone should assure us that He is going to provide for us according to His own purpose—and that purpose we have no right to question.

Isaiah 64:8 “But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.”

Romans 9:20–21 “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?”

Luke 12:29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

Luke 12:30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

Luke 12:31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

I think it is important to remember that in context Jesus is talking to those that have chosen to follow Him, His disciples. The main point in these verses—God knows your needs; you should not waste your time worrying. You should be different than the rest of the world. Your time and energy should be spent seeking “the kingdom of God.” This just means that we should be focused on learning and doing His will as revealed to us in scripture. When our focus is on pleasing Him, He promises that He will take care of everything we need. I think it is important to note that the promise concerns our needs—not our wants; but I have found that He provides for me far in excess of my true needs. I may not be wealthy by the standards of those around me, but I know that I am wealthy and greatly blessed in Jesus.

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Luke 12:33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

Luke 12:34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Still talking to His disciples, Jesus again encourages them not to fear. His reference to them as a “little flock” I think is a term of endearment meant to

instill a sense of confidence concerning provision and security such as a shepherd would provide his sheep. Jesus declares that it is the Father's delight to "give you the kingdom." I believe the context declares "the kingdom" to reference all the blessings that are part and parcel of choosing to accept Him as Lord and Savior.

Our goal in this life should be to use whatever He gives us to show forth His love through us toward others. By doing this you earn spiritual treasure that will benefit you for eternity; it is safe from decay, theft or destruction. In contrast, the things we treasure in this world have no spiritual benefit and are subject to decay, theft and destruction. As the old saying goes, "You can't take it with you."

"Sell that ye have" – Immediately, I thought of the record of the rich ruler that came to Jesus asking what he must do to inherit eternal life (chapter 18). In both these sections of scripture, I think Jesus is addressing the issue of whether or not one is willing to make God Lord of your life. Possessing riches is not a bad thing; the bad thing is having your riches possess you. I believe there are very few people who are "rich" who would be willing to give it all up for the Lord, but that is exactly what salvation is all about—accepting God's gift of grace by faith and yielding oneself to God as Lord.

Romans 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

I think Jesus affirms this conclusion in His commentary on the man's decision to walk away from Him.

Luke 18:24–25 "And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

Verse 34 declares an important truth—What you treasure determines your focus in life. If your focus is on attaining worldly wealth and accolades, that is where you will invest your time and energy. In the end, you will have nothing. If, however, you choose to focus your time and energy on attaining spiritual wealth and reward, you will enjoy the reward of your investment for eternity.

Luke 12:35 Let your loins be girded about, and *your* lights burning;

Luke 12:36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

Luke 12:37 Blessed *are* those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

In these verses the Lord Jesus is basically telling the disciples to live their lives with an attitude of preparation and readiness to serve the Lord at any time according to His will. He makes the comparison of a servant anticipating the return of his master from the wedding ready to partake of the feast. The

interesting point He makes is that such an attitude will result in personal blessing—the master will then serve you at the wedding feast.

These verses immediately took my thoughts to the return of Jesus to take His bride home to the Father and the subsequent wedding feast.

It is also significant to note that the servant waiting in anticipation for his lord is eager to open the door and let him in. The point—he has nothing to hide or clean up, nothing that would embarrass him or keep him from eagerly opening the door to let the master in.

It seems like I am often making a “fresh start” in trying to become more like Jesus and asking Him to help me stay focused on being ready for His return at any moment. It is so easy to lapse into lethargy and make excuses for putting off what I know I should be doing at a given point in time.

It is also significant to note that not only did Jesus not hesitate to take the form of a servant while here on earth (e.g., washing the disciples feet), but will also once again position Himself as servant when He returns to take us home. In other words, to be a servant is an honorable position. By His example we see that a servant is not to be focused on self, he is to be focused on the welfare of those he serves. A servant is to serve in love.

Galatians 5:13 “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”

John 13:14–15 “If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.”

John 15:12–13 “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Luke 12:38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

Luke 12:39 And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

Luke 12:40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

Jesus continues the parable to make the point that “the lord” could return in the night watches and that the servants who maintain preparedness in spite of the long wait would be blessed.

I think verse 39 is an emphasis on the importance of always being prepared for the master’s return. Obviously, watchfulness and preparation will guard against losing one’s possessions. So also will watchfulness and preparation protect one

from losing the blessing awaiting those anticipating the return of the “Son of man,” the Lord Jesus.

As I skimmed through the previous chapters, I could not find a direct teaching regarding the fact that He would depart for a while and then return. He alluded to it in chapter 5, but Luke is just now revealing that He is beginning to teach more specifically as to that fact.

The main point of verse 40—Christ will return at a time when you least expect it. In hindsight, we know that this has to be a reference to the time when Christ comes to take His bride home to the Father—not when He returns to earth to establish His kingdom. Scripture reveals that He will return to defeat the Antichrist and set up His kingdom exactly 7 years from the date of the signing of the covenant that marks the beginning of the 70th week of Daniel that we more commonly refer to as the tribulation. Scripture also declares that the true “church,” the bride of Christ, will be kept from that hour of tribulation. Though the signs around us are intensifying, we have no way of knowing when the Father will send the Son to get His bride—but we do know it will happen before the 70th week is allowed to begin.

I decided to look for a bit more enlightenment on this section and came across an interesting teaching by Bob Deffinbaugh that gave me a new perspective and from which I would like to share the following excerpt:

In the first image, Jesus is portrayed as the master who is welcomed and comes with a reward. In the second, Jesus comes as a thief, who is not welcomed and whose arrival spells disaster (he is “ripped off”). In the first story the master owns the house, but in the second the man owns the house (and Jesus is viewed as the unwanted, unauthorized taker). The owner of the house loses his possessions. In the first image, the master is welcomed and let in the door. In the second, the thief is not welcome, and he enters by digging through the wall.

What is it that makes the difference? What determines whether Jesus is a “welcome Master” or a “dreaded thief”? I think the answer is suggested by the two stories, but is made clear by the gospel. The difference is a relationship. There is a loving bond between the Master and His servants. They know and love each other. The servants await His return because of who He is. The home owner does not know the thief, nor does he wish to. He hopes the Lord never comes, for His coming is viewed as bringing a loss.

The gospel fills in the blanks. Those who have trusted in Jesus as the promised Messiah love Him and see Him as the source of “every good and perfect gift” (cf. James 1:17). They await His return and know that it will bring them blessedness. Those who have rejected God and His Messiah do not wish to see Him, for His coming only spells the loss of

those things which they value most, but which will be taken away, just as the “rich fool” lost his possessions.

Source: <http://bible.org/seriespage/way-wait-luke-1235-48>

Luke 12:41 ¶ Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

Luke 12:42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* lord shall make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of meat in due season?

Luke 12:43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Luke 12:44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

I so relate to Peter; he is always the most ready to speak his heart—sometimes to his own shame. He asks the Lord if this parable is meant just for the inner circle of disciples or for all that profess to be His disciple. Remember—He is addressing His “little flock” (vs. 32). The Lord words the answer so as to be applicable to all of His disciples who are listening with a desire to serve. I think He is saying that everyone who serves in faithfulness and wisdom in the place that God has positioned Him can qualify for the reward. It does, however, seem to imply that there is greater accountability for those with greater responsibility. In other words, pastors and fathers have a greater accountability; and I think the following verses affirm that supposition.

What is the reward? To be given authority over all that belongs to the Lord.

Luke 12:45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

Luke 12:46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

Now to the other side of the coin so to speak. The servant who has no expectation of the return of his master and takes advantage of his position by mistreating those who are under his authority and abusing his privileges will be surprised by the return of the master. He will immediately be dismissed and appointed his portion with the unbelievers.

This is a very stark statement. It would seem to be describing one who is a servant in name only—in spite of the position he holds. He has not yielded himself to the authority of the lord, but has used his position to take advantage of others and promote his own worldly desires.

I am afraid as I look at the testimonies of many who claim to be servants of Jesus today, that there are many who fall into that category.

Luke 12:47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

Luke 12:48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Jesus goes on to say that "that servant" (the same one in the previous verse) who knew his lord's will and purposely disregarded it will be beaten with many stripes. Those, however, who did not know the lord's will and whose actions deserved many stripes would only be beaten with few.

Scripture is clear that all have sinned; but it is also clear that sin falls into two categories—deliberate and through ignorance.

Numbers 15:29–30 "Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them. But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people."

This teaching also seems to support degrees of punishment based on response to the light one is given—and all have been given light.

*Romans 1:18–20 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because **that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.** For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so **that they are without excuse:**"*

*Matthew 23:14 "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the **greater damnation.**"*

*Luke 20:46–47 "Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive **greater damnation.**"*

*Matthew 11:21–24 "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, **It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.** And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, **That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.**"*

The summary point: To whom much is given, much is required.

Luke 12:49 I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?

Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

I like the NIV translation of these two verses: *“I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!”*

This is a very interesting two verses. My mind immediately goes back to the prophecy that part of which Jesus read from in Isaiah in the synagogue in Nazareth.

Isaiah 61:1–3 “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.”

In that prophecy Isaiah foretold of both comings of Jesus—one to provide salvation and the other to wreak vengeance and set up His kingdom. Jesus seems to be referencing both. He is wishing that the fire of vengeance were already in progress so that He could set up His kingdom and bless His people. He knows, however, that He has a baptism to endure—the suffering that will culminate in His death on the cross; and He does not look forward to it. In fact, we know from His prayer in Gethsemane that He dreaded it.

Matthew 26:39 “And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

Luke 12:51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

Luke 12:52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

Luke 12:53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

These verses state a very sad truth. You would think that the world would embrace the Savior; instead, He will cause division even in families. I can personally witness to that truth even among my own relatives. It's hard to

imagine that some parents and children, normally the closest relationships, will find themselves in opposition to one another over the Savior. In the times after the resurrection of Jesus that division would prove to be especially sad in the case of Jewish families because the believer was often completely ostracized from his/her family. That type of response still happens sometimes among the Jews, but is quite common in the Muslim world.

Luke 12:54 ¶ And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is.

Luke 12:55 And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

Luke 12:56 Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

At this point, Jesus boldly declares that in spite of all the prophecies from scripture that point to Him as the Messiah, they don't recognize Him. He chided them for understanding the signs in the sky that declared either rain or heat was on the way, but they could not recognize the signs that He demonstrated that proved Him to be the Messiah.

Just as surely as the scripture declared the signs by which the Jewish people should have recognized the Messiah, it declares the signs that should tell the child of God that His second coming is near.

The most important sign—Israel has been reconstituted as a nation again as so boldly predicted by the prophet Ezekiel (chapter 37).

Jerusalem is certainly recognized as a burdensome stone throughout the world as prophesied by Zechariah.

Zechariah 12:2–3 “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.”

The political alignment of the nations as foretold by Ezekiel in preparation for the battle widely known as Gog/Magog is continuing to form and strengthen at this very time (chapter 38).

The birth pains of war, famine, disease and earthquakes are on the rise in number and intensity.

Matthew 24:6–8 “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.”

The economic condition of the world is swiftly leading toward a one-world economic system, and technology now provides for the implementation of the “mark of the beast” that will be used by the Antichrist to control buying and selling as prophesied in Revelation.

Revelation 13:16–17 “And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

Technology also makes possible for the whole world to “witness” the dead bodies of the two witnesses that God will send to declare His truth from Jerusalem in the first half of the tribulation period as recorded in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 11:7–9 “And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.”

Today the technology and weaponry exists that support the following declaration of the Lord Jesus: “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” (Matthew 24:22)

The culture foretold by Paul in his letter to Timothy is a description of our culture today and getting even more so by the day.

2 Timothy 3:1–5 “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof....”

There is so much more in my opinion, but this is sufficient to make the point. I just don’t understand how so many, even in the professing church today, don’t recognize these signs. It’s laid out so plainly in scripture for all to see.

Luke 12:57 Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

Luke 12:58 When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

Luke 12:59 I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite.

Jesus is declaring that it is always best to settle matters out of court before appearing before the judge. Judgment is certain once decreed.

The application seems obvious. I liked David Guzik's summary of these verses: "If you know what time it is, you know that *now* is the time to get right with God, before you come before the Judge. If you wait until you stand before His throne, then it's too late."

John 3:16–18 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

John 5:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."