

NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Supplemental Texts

Isa. 4:4-6; Jer. 21:12; Mic. 7:4-6; Mal. 4:1-2, 5; Matt. 5:43-48; 10:21-23, 34-36; Mark 9:49; 10:38, 45; 14:35; Lk 1:97; 2:14; 3:16-18; 7:50; 8:48; 10:5-6; 11:23; 14:26-27; 19:41-42; 24:36; John 15:5-8; Acts 10:36; 1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 12:28-29; 1 Pet. 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 3:1-13

Study Summary

Jesus moves from talking about the future to talk about events that are soon to come to pass. As He looks forward to the work He is about to accomplish on the cross, He warns that His work will result in a division between people, which means persecution for His followers.

Historical & Theological Background

**Fire:** The symbolism of fire throughout the Bible generally takes on two different meanings: judgment and refinement/cleansing. In this passage it seems that Jesus is speaking of fire as judgement. "God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29) and in His love for His hurting and broken creation, He burns away all that is not of Him. The good news is that Jesus came to take the punishment we deserve upon Himself so that we might be saved from God's righteous judgement on sin and evil. For those in Christ, fire takes on the imagery of cleanings (Isa. 4:4; Mark 9:49; 1 Pet. 1:6-9) in which God uses the very things meant to weaken our faith (persecution and temptations) to purify and test us, preparing us for the life to come.

**Baptism:** In this passage Jesus is using the term baptism metaphorically to refer to His coming death on the cross. This connection is clearly made in Mark 10:38 where Jesus connects baptism with the cup He must drink, which carries all the OT imagery of the out pouring of God's wrath on the sinful world (Pss. 75:8; Jer. 25:15-16). "Jesus is saying that God's plan is for salvation that involves judgment, but a judgment that" will ultimately fall upon His Son. The term baptism "fits in with the frequent link of 'baptism' and 'baptize' with death."

**Peace and Division:** "There is, of course, a sense in which" Jesus "does bring peace, that deep peace with God which leads to real peace with people. But in another sense His message is divisive. The cross challenges people. Jesus calls on His followers to take up their own cross as they follow Him (9:23ff.; 14:27)." A commitment to Christ means saying no to any and every other allegiance. One can either follow Jesus as Lord or follow after the empty and passing things of this life, ultimately falling under the influence of the forces of darkness (Eph. 2:1-2). Jesus draws a line in the sand. You can either follow Him or work against Him and His Kingdom. There is no middle ground (Lk 11:23).

[Works referenced and cited: Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*; Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*; Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*, GE D.A. Carson]

DISCUSSION PRIMER

Take some time this week to read Luke 12:49-53 slowly and prayerfully. Ask yourself these questions: Do I have any relationships that compete with my affections for Christ? My trust in Him? How am I treating my enemies?

TEXTUAL INVESTIGATION

LUKE 12:49-53

**Big Idea: You Are Either For Jesus or Against Him**  
**Fallen Condition Focus: Rejection and Persecution**

- What is the fire that Jesus is referring to (49)? (See Mal. 4:1-2 & HTB)
- Why does Jesus mention baptism? What work must He finish (50)? (See Mark 10:38, 45, 14:35 & HTB)
- Did Jesus come to bring peace (51)? If yes, why does He seem to refute this now? (See Lk 1:79, 2:14, 3:16-18, & HTB)
- What is the division Jesus is referring to? (See Matt. 10:21, Lk 11:23 & Mal. 4:1-2)
- Jesus quotes from the prophet Micah in verse 53. Read Micah 7:1-7. What warning is Jesus giving to His disciples?
- What are the results of rejecting the peace that Jesus offers? (See Lk 19:41-42 & 2 Pet. 3:1-7)
- **Gospel Connection:** Read 2 Cor. 5:21. How has Jesus taken the judgement that we deserved upon Himself? What does this mean for those who put their faith in Him?

TEXTUAL INTERSECTION: How does the text intersect with our lives?

- What do other religions say about Jesus? What do many in our own culture say about Him? How does Jesus refute these beliefs in this passage? (See HTB)
- Is it difficult for you to see Jesus as Judge? Why or why not? How is Jesus different than any other judge? (See Mark 10:45)
- Read Luke 14:26-27. What do Jesus' words here have to do with 12:49-53? How might you be struggling to step into the difficulties of disciples in a world still broken by sin?
- Do you experience the division that Jesus speaks of in your own life? Among family? Friends? Co-workers? How is this affecting your faith? Your witness?
- How does Jesus call us to treat our enemies? What does this mean for our daily interactions with others? (See Matt. 5:43-48)

REPLICABLE QUESTIONS

Read *Luke 12:49-53* and explore together what the passage reveals about:

- |                                       |                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) The character and purposes of God? | 4) Our identity in Christ?    |
| 2) The fallen human condition?        | 5) Our obedience to Christ?   |
| 3) The gospel of Jesus Christ?        | 6) Our relationship to others |

TEXTUAL APPLICATION: "So, what now?"

Have each participant identify a personal take-away in light of this study. Is there . . .

- |                       |                        |                         |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| • a command to obey?  | • a beauty to behold?  | • a mission to fulfill? |
| • a promise to claim? | • a truth to believe?  | • an example to follow? |
| • a sin to repent of? | • a service to render? | • a person to tell?     |