



## The Gospel of Luke - Chapter Twelve

- V. [Luke 9:51-19:27 - The Journey to Jerusalem \(continues\)](#)
- V.a [Luke 9:51-13:21 - The first mention of the journey to Jerusalem \(continues\)](#)
- V.a.ix [Luke 11:27-13:9 - Various warnings and teachings \(continues\)](#)

### Summary of Chapter Twelve

As they continue their journey toward Jerusalem, Jesus gives his disciples additional instruction.

Jesus reminds the people that everything will be made known and become public knowledge. All that the Pharisees sought to hide from the people would one day be made available for everyone to see and talk about. The people will not be fooled forever and whatever secret is kept, will one day be shouted from the very rooftops in the community.

Man should not fear another man because the worst he can do is kill the body. We should fear God who can cast us into hell. Speaking out against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but blaspheming the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

Jesus was asked by one brother to settle a father's estate between two brothers. Jesus told them that it doesn't make any difference over how much we own, as it will not make our life secure. He then tells the Parable of the Rich Farmer, who builds bigger stores on the day his life is taken from him, leaving all his earthly wealth to someone else. It is not good for believers to store up wealth on earth for they do not know when their soul will be required of them. God knows and provides what people need on earth. People should work at storing up treasures in heaven and not on earth. As followers of God everyone should be ready to receive God.

Jesus told his disciples that his coming into the world would cause strife within families. Families would be split over the issues of believing in God and doing what was required for the Kingdom. Jesus came into the world to encourage people to make the right choice in this life.

#### V.a.ix.4 Luke 12:1-12 - Warnings and encouragements

Here we have an afternoon sermon following the lunch in Luke Chapter 11. Jesus publically charges and teaches his disciples to guard against hypocrisy and to fear no one except God. He addresses them as 'my friends', something he would repeat on his last evening before the Cross: <<I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you>> (John 15:15).

<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

#### Luke 12:1

A crowd of many thousands indicates that crowds continue to increase and provide proof that Jesus is of God. This was alluded to by Paul's former teacher Gamaliel when the disciples were before the Sanhedrin: <<When they (i.e. the Sanhedrin) heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them (i.e. the disciples) to death. But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honoured by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. Then he addressed them: Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. After him, Judas the Galilæan appeared in the days of the census\* and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God>> (Acts 5:33-39).

\* The census referred to by Gamaliel is not the one of around the time of Jesus' birth but one held about AD6.

Be on your guard against the yeast or leaven of the Pharisees. Leaven is a metaphor for the self-centred, hypocritical approaches of the Pharisees in Luke 11:37-54.

Leaven is not yeast, which was uncommon in the ancient world, but fermented dough, a little of which would be left from the previous week to be added to a new lump of dough. By analogy, when publicly known sin in the church is not subjected to church discipline. it will silently spread its destructive consequences throughout the whole fellowship. Leaven is a figurative description of the self-centred, self-reliance of both the Pharisees and Herod Antipas. Jesus warns his disciples against such an attitude.

**This passage has nothing to do with eating raised bread at Communion but could be associated with guarding against cuckoos in the church nest!**

<sup>2</sup> There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. <sup>3</sup> What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.

## Luke 12:2-3

Everything will be disclosed or be made known by God as confirmed in Luke 8:17 <<For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open>>, a reference to future judgment: <<For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead>> (Acts 17:31). Because v.2 is true, v.3 will take place.

Roofs were commonly flat and were used as living space. For example: <<About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance>> (Acts 10:9-10).

<sup>4</sup> I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more.

## Luke 12:4

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body as the prophets experienced: <<Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them>> (Luke 11:47), and, as Christ's followers would experience as well: <<Because of this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute'>> (Luke 11:49), for physical death cannot affect the believer's ultimate destiny: <<Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord>> (Romans 8:35-39).

<sup>5</sup> But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

## Luke 12:5

The second fear refers to God (him) who at the final judgment has power or authority to throw or cast you into hell.

Repetition (fear him) gives this command additional emphasis.

Bishop of Gloucester, John Hooper, who would be burned at the stake for his work in reforming the church, is quoted as saying: 'Life is sweet and death bitter, but eternal life is sweeter still and eternal death even more bitter'. See the image.

<sup>6</sup> Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.

<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the very hairs on your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.



### Luke 12:6-7

The observation about sparrows and the hairs on your head show God's providential care over the smallest details of life.

Worth more signals a 'lesser to greater' argument, i.e. if A, the lesser, is true then how much more B, the greater, must be true. That is, if God even cares about sparrows how much greater is his care for every one of his own children, whose value is so much greater as confirmed in vv.22-31?

Human beings are of more value than animals because only humans out of all God's creation are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), because God gave the human race dominion over all the earth and all its creatures (Genesis 1:28), and because God loved human beings so much: <<that he gave his one and only Son>>, to die for our sins (John 3:16b).

Don't be afraid or fear not. Reverential fear of God (v.5) results in not needing to fear anyone or anything else.

<sup>8</sup> I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. <sup>9</sup> But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.

### Luke 12:8-9

Disowns or denies me before men. This is something that might be very tempting when threatened with persecution and many have done it, including Jesus' key disciple and companion Peter: <<But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said>> (Luke 22:57). Peter was forgiven and reconciled to Jesus after his resurrection. He made up for his error by giving his life to Christ from then on. Whatever dangers disciples may encounter, the rewards to being faithful to Jesus will outweigh them by far.

A Christian can easily avoid persecution by denying that he or she is Jesus' disciple. But the true disciple does not fear death and will publicly acknowledge and confess Jesus. The eternal consequences for those who deny Christ in fact will be far worse than the persecution that they sought to avoid.

<sup>10</sup> And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

### Luke 12:10

Speaks a word against, will be forgiven versus blasphemes against, will not be forgiven. Jesus closes this occasion of teaching his disciples with one of the most enigmatic, debated and misunderstood sayings in his ministry. Key to understanding this passage is the distinction Jesus makes between, on one hand, the extreme case of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit; and on the other hand, the lesser case of speaking in a dishonourable way against the Son of Man. One who asks to be forgiven for disrespectful words hastily spoken against Jesus, the Son of Man, will be forgiven. For example, Peter's rejection of Jesus in Luke 22:54-62, and his subsequent restoration in John 21:15-19.

But blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, that is, the persistent and unrepentant resistance against the work of the Holy Spirit and his message concerning Jesus, will not be forgiven. An example is Stephen's charges against members of the Sanhedrin in Acts 7:51 <<You stiff-necked people,

with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!>>.

The person who persists in hardening his heart against God, against the work of the Holy Spirit and against the provision of Christ as Saviour, is outside the reach of God's provision for forgiveness and salvation. Christians often worry that they have committed this sin but such a concern is itself evidence of openness to the work of the Spirit.

Blasphemy is attributing to Satan what is accomplished by the power of God and doing this through the flagrant, wilful and persistent rejection of God and his commands. This sin is committed today only by unbelievers who deliberately and unchangeably reject the ministry of the Holy Spirit in calling them to salvation.

Mark 3:28b emphasises that: <<all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them>> anticipating the eternally valid substitutionary atonement of Jesus. However, if a person persistently attributes to Satan what is accomplished by the power of God, that is, if one makes a flagrant, wilful and decisive judgment that the Spirit's testimony about Jesus is satanic, then such a person never has forgiveness.

<sup>11</sup> When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, <sup>12</sup> for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.

Luke 12:11-12

Before synagogues means before the Jewish authorities.

The rulers and authorities means before Gentile courts.

Do not worry because the Holy Spirit will guide you at such times (vv.14-15).

Jesus encourages the disciples not to be anxious, for the same Spirit, who has guided and empowered Jesus, will speak through his disciples amid their most difficult challenges. The verb used implies an active, personal involvement by the Holy Spirit in guiding Christians, and the present tense, 'if you are being led', indicates his ongoing activity.

V.a.ix.5 Luke 12:13-21 - Parable of the rich fool

Although the actions of the man may seem to make sense from a worldly perspective, Jesus is warning all of us to look to God for all our provision, as it is he who gives us everything and also determines the span of our lives. There is nothing wrong with being wealthy. It is our attitude towards the wealth and how we use it that is the issue here.

<sup>13</sup> Someone in the crowd said to him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

<sup>14</sup> Jesus replied, Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?

<sup>15</sup> Then he said to them, Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

Luke 12:13-15

Tell my brother to divide. Because of Jesus' teaching on covetousness, which immediately follows this request, the man is probably speaking from personal greed. It is not made clear

what issues the man had with his brother. It was quite common for the elder brother to claim the whole estate, if he were physically or politically strong. The Jews called such a man Ben-Hameson, or son of violence. This is one who forcibly kept his brother's share of the inheritance from him. Some commentators claim the man was the elder brother but was the son of an unloved wife and the father had left the estate to the son of his loved wife. This was unlawful as it says: <<when he wills his property to his sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the wife he does not love. He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him>> (Deuteronomy 21:16-17). Whatever the reason, Jesus does not become involved in civil disputes; this was not the purpose of his coming: <<No-one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs>> (2 Timothy 2:4).

Who appointed me a judge? Although Jesus was Lord of the entire universe he was careful not to become involved in matters that did not directly pertain to his earthly work and ministry, and he expected people to work out such things on their own: <<So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest>> (Hebrews 5:5a).

Life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. As confirmed in vv.22-34 and in Luke 9:24-25 <<For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?>>.

<sup>16</sup> And he told them this parable: The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. <sup>17</sup> He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops'.

<sup>18</sup> Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.

<sup>19</sup> And I'll say to myself, You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry'.

<sup>20</sup> But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

<sup>21</sup> This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich towards God.

### Luke 12:16-21

<<There was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. For whom am I toiling, he asked, and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment? This too is meaningless – a miserable business!>> (Ecclesiastes 4:8), is perhaps the way that King Solomon would describe such a man. On our attitude to our possessions Solomon writes: <<Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless>> (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

Fool! Ironically the man who took such great care to prepare for his own earthly needs turns out to be a fool. Instead of fulfilling his moral responsibility to care for the needs of others, he is rebuked for laying up goods for himself that he may never get to use or need.

Plenty of good things laid up or treasure for himself and for not being rich towards God. Although this verse does not prohibit wealth, Jesus clearly warns his hearers concerning the dangerous eternal implications of wealth with its seductive tendency toward complacency, self-sufficiency and covetousness. David writes of such a man that: <<He boasts of the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD>> (Psalm 10:3), and the sons of Korah state that: <<Though while he lived he counted himself blessed – and men praise you when you prosper – he will join the generation of his fathers, who will never see the light of life>> (Psalm 49:18-19).

We should always reflect that the abundance we have is not ours to store but God's to distribute through us: 05.11 <<She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold – which they used for Baal. Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens, and my new wine when it is ready. I will take back my wool and my linen, intended to cover her nakedness>> (Hosea 2:8-9).

Who will get speaks of the inheritance. Many families have worked hard to build up large estates or successful companies with the idea of building a future for their children only for it to be wasted as they have no care for what they have received. Had they known this, they may well have uttered: <<I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless>> (Ecclesiastes 2:18-19).

Although the rich fool anticipates years of ease, a time to eat, drink and be merry, instead an eternal destiny apart from God awaits him.

As Jesus' condemning words confirm this very night your life or soul will be demanded of you. As James puts it: <<Now listen, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money. Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that>> (James 4:13-15), or as Isaiah foresees it: <<My heart falters, fear makes me tremble; the twilight I longed for has become a horror to me>> (Isaiah 21:4).

True wealth is to be rich in the things of God:

- **Rich in faith:** <<Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?>> (James 2:5).
- **Rich in good works:** <<Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share>> (1 Timothy 6:18).
- **Rich in the fruits of righteousness.**

V.a.ix.6 Luke 12:22-34 - Do not worry

This section can also be found in Matthew 6:25-34. Despite this clear command from Jesus to be trusting, there still seems to be so many church goers who wish to worry about all sorts of things that may or may not happen, and often things that they cannot even influence.

<sup>22</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples: Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. <sup>23</sup> Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. <sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: They

do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! <sup>25</sup> Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

#### Luke 12:22-25

Therefore, highlights the truths taught in vv.13-21.

Do not worry. The first reason why believers should not be anxious is given in v.23 life is more than. Since it was God who gave us life, we can surely trust in him for all the things that are needed in order to sustain it.

The second in v.24 how much more valuable you are is as previously discussed, that we are more valuable to God as he made us in his very image.

The third in v.25 is because no one has enough control over his own life, even to add a single hour to his life.

Life, i.e. soul and body refers to the whole person.

Regarding add a single hour to his life is literally 'cubit' and most commentators take it to be a metaphor for adding a standard unit of measure to the length of one's life.

<sup>26</sup> Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

<sup>27</sup> Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these.

#### Luke 12:26-27

Jesus employs two 'lesser to greater' arguments in vv.25-26, and in v.27, to affirm God's care for his children.

To confirm Solomon in all his splendour, we have this record: <<When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the LORD, she was overwhelmed>> (1 Kings 10:4-5), and: <<She said to the king, The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true>> (2 Chronicles 9:5).

<sup>28</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!

#### Luke 12:28

That God clothes his people was literally demonstrated for the Israelites in their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land: <<Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years>> (Deuteronomy 8:4). He also provides spiritual clothing.

The grass is thrown into the fire. Due to the scarcity of wood in ancient Palestine, dry grass was used as fuel. It was seen as a consumable product, whereas people are of far greater value, especially to God.

O you of little faith implies a deficiency rather than an absence of faith. For example: <<If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?>> (Matthew 6:30), and: <<Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread?>> (Matthew 16:8).

<sup>29</sup> And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it.

#### Luke 12:29

Do not set your heart does not mean that people should neglect to work and support themselves, which is confirmed in 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 <<Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody>>, but it is a warning against worrying and continually seeking after what you will eat or drink. It is stated in v.31 what should be sought after.

<sup>30</sup> For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup> But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

<sup>32</sup> Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. <sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

#### Luke 12:30-34

Let all that have souls to save seek his kingdom, only in which they can be truly safe. Seek admission to it; seek advancement in it; seek the kingdom of grace, to be subjects in that; the kingdom of glory, to be princes in that; and then all these things will be given.

Sell your possessions and give to the poor is a strong emphasis in Luke.

Purses that will not wear out is a metaphor for the place where one stores one's treasures. Because the believer's treasures are stored in heaven, the believer's purse: the heavenly storehouse of his treasure, will never wear out, will not fail and is safe from being stolen by thieves or destroyed by moths: <<Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also>> (Matthew 6:19-21). In contrast to the world's preoccupation with possessions, the disciples are to be characterised by exceedingly great generosity especially in giving to those in need, literally 'to give alms'.

This even has eternal implications for, as Jesus solemnly warns: where your treasure is, i.e. whether on earth or in heaven, there will your heart be also. This concluding proverb (v.34) emphasises the importance of the disposition of one's heart, which throughout scripture represents the centre of one's being and one's deepest desires including one's reason, convictions, emotions and will. The nature of one's heart is reflected in the things that one values most.

In his message 'Living Engaged', Scunthorpe Baptist Church Lead Pastor Rich Webb speaks in-depth on this issue to show that our heart is not a leader, but a follower; our heart is not a teacher, our heart is a pupil. Therefore, if we wait until our heart tells us what to do, we do not live engaged, we are not getting stuck in, not going for it! We end up going nowhere. Thus what Jesus is saying is that treasure and not the heart is the leader; treasure being anything that we value and which is important to us, including our money, possessions, energy and time. Once you invest one of these in something, even though your heart may not be in it to start with, you will become engaged with it, if it is of God, and your heart will follow.

#### V.a.ix.7 Luke 12:35-48 - Watchfulness

Being a disciple of Christ means that people have to be alert for the signs of his return, in order to be ready to meet him.

In the mean time, they need to be alert to all the opportunities for sharing the Gospel that may occur on a day to day basis.

<sup>35</sup> Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, <sup>36</sup> like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him.

#### Luke 12:35-36

Be dressed ready for service or for action literally 'let your loins stay girded' depicts a man prepared to run with his long robe tucked under his belt.

<sup>37</sup> It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. <sup>38</sup> It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night.

#### Luke 12:37-38

Those servants are the faithful followers who live by the Gospel: <<Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me>> (John 12:26).

Watching or awake indicates that believers should be continually expecting and ready for Christ's return, because the time of his coming is unknown.

Christ's return at an unexpected night-time hour can be literal for approximately half the world. If it is intended as literal, it probably refers to a night-time hour in the Middle East. If it is symbolic then it will probably come when the world is at relative peace, un-expectant and unprepared. Those who watch and wait, and are awake, ready at his coming, will share eternity with him. Those unprepared will be cast out. For some of us, his coming will be after our death, so his coming will be a glorious sunrise for us.

During his incarnate life, Jesus learned things as other human beings learn them. On the other hand Jesus was also fully God and, as such, he had infinite knowledge. Here he is apparently speaking in terms of his human nature. This is similar to other statements about Jesus, which could be true of his human nature only and not of his divine nature, e.g.

<<And the child grew and became strong>> (Luke 2:40a), <<grew in wisdom and stature>> (Luke 2:52a), <<was about thirty years old>> (Luke 3:23a), <<tired as he was>> (John 4:6b), <<I am thirsty>> (John 19:28b), <<he was hungry>> (Matthew 4:2b), and: <<crucified>> (1 Corinthians 2:8).

Taking account of these verses together with many other verses that affirm Christ's deity, the Council of Chalcedon, in AD451, affirmed that Christ was 'perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man'. Yet it also affirmed that Jesus was 'one Person and of one Subsistence'.

With regard to the properties of his human nature and his divine nature, the Chalcedonian Creed affirmed that Christ was to be 'acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union but rather the property of each nature being preserved'. That meant the properties of deity and the properties of humanity were both preserved.

How Jesus could have limited knowledge and yet know all things is difficult for us to comprehend, and much remains a mystery for nobody else has ever been both God and man. One possibility is that Jesus regularly lived on the basis of his human knowledge but could at any time call to mind anything from his infinite knowledge.

Recline at the table has in view the end-time messianic banquet: <<People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God>> (Luke 13:29), <<And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel>> (Luke 22:29-30), and: <<Then the angel said to me, Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' And he added, These are the true words of God>> (Revelation 19:9), with similar accounts through the parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14:15-24).

To recline at table indicates personal acceptance and cordiality. As noted previously, when dining formally in a home, guests reclined on a couch that stretched around three sides of a room. The host took the central place surrounded by a U-shaped series of tables. The most honoured guests reclined on either side of the host with the guests' heads toward the tables and their feet toward the wall.

Second or third watch. Most interpreters think Jesus is using a Jewish understanding of 'three watches of the night' (18:00-22:00, 22:00-02:00 and 02:00-06:00). However, others think he is using a Roman understanding of four watches (18:00-21:00, 21:00-midnight, midnight-03:00 and 03:00-06:00). In either case, the point that Jesus is making is that 'the master' could come at any time especially when one is not normally prepared.

<sup>39</sup> But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>40</sup> You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

#### Luke 12:39-40

This parable, similar to but separate from vv.37-38, uses the imagery of a thief to indicate the unexpected nature of Christ's Second Coming.

<sup>41</sup> Peter asked, Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?

<sup>42</sup> The Lord answered, Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? <sup>43</sup> It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. <sup>44</sup> I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. <sup>45</sup> But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming', and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. <sup>46</sup> The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

<sup>47</sup> That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. <sup>48</sup> But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

### [Luke 12:41-48](#)

[Peter](#) is again the spokesman for the apostles, showing that he is first among equals.

[Are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?](#) Jesus does not actually answer Peter's question, which would seem to indicate that the application is for everyone to whom much has been given (see v.48).

[The faithful and wise manager](#) is the person who faithfully and fairly cares for those for whom he is responsible, giving them [their allowance](#) or portion [at the proper time](#).

When [the master returns](#), the statement that the faithful manager will be rewarded portrays a metaphorical picture of the rewards that will be given to faithful believers at the return of Christ. The faithful manager is then contrasted with the unfaithful [servant](#), who beats the household [servants](#) and gets [drunk](#).

To the surprise of the unfaithful servant, however, the master will return [at an hour he is not aware of](#) (v.46), resulting in swift and harsh judgment.

He will [cut him in to pieces](#) is confirmed in Jeremiah 34:18 <<The men who have violated my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and then walked between its pieces>>, [and assign him a place with the unbelievers](#), a metaphorical reference to the punishment that awaits the unbeliever at the return of Christ. The latter description is confirmed in Luke 13:27-28 <<But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!' There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out>>, [and especially the parallel in Matthew 24:51](#) <<He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth>>, [indicate eternal judgment and separation from God](#). This was also noted in Luke 8:13 <<Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away>>.

Those of us [deserving punishment](#) will receive it depending upon the circumstances of our sin. There are sins committed through ignorance and there are presumptuous sins. The Law states:

<<When a person commits a violation and sins unintentionally in regard to any of the LORD's holy things, he is to bring to the LORD as a penalty a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value in silver, according to the sanctuary shekel. It is a guilt offering. He must make restitution for what he has failed to do in regard to the holy things, add a fifth of the value to that and give it all to the priest, who will make atonement for him with the ram as a guilt offering, and he will be forgiven. If a person sins and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands, even though he does not know it, he is guilty and will be held responsible. He is to bring to the priest as a guilt offering a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. In this way the priest will make atonement for him for the wrong he has committed unintentionally, and he will be forgiven. It is a guilt offering; he has been guilty of wrongdoing against the LORD>> (Leviticus 5:15-19), and: <<One and the same law applies to everyone who sins unintentionally, whether he is a native-born Israelite or an alien. 'But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or alien, blasphemes the LORD, and that person must be cut off from his people>> (Numbers 15:29-30). Presumptuous sins are those primarily committed by those of us who claim to live according to the Gospel but are actually choosing our own way. Under the law, our punishment would be: <<If the guilty man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall make him lie down and have him flogged in his presence with the number of lashes his crime deserves, but he must not give him more than forty lashes. If he is flogged more than that, your brother will be degraded in your eyes>> (Deuteronomy 25:2-3). Under the new covenant, knowing what we now know, the punishment we deserve for presumptuous sin would be far worse but thanks to the grace and mercy of Christ, we are set free as if we had never sinned at all! As David writes: <<Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered>> (Psalm 32:1). This is confirmed by Paul in Romans 4:7.

The Jews put Christ to death in their ignorance, as Peter acknowledges: <<Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders>> (Acts 3:17), as does Paul: <<None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory>> (1 Corinthians 2:8), and Jesus pleaded that ignorance as their excuse: <<Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing>> (Luke 23:34b). Grace, hope, love and mercy abound from the Cross and continues to abound today!

Much will be demanded. People who have been entrusted by God with many abilities and responsibilities will be held to a higher standard on the last day.

Using one's God-given abilities wisely and productively is a vital aspect of discipleship and will be rewarded with additional opportunities to serve God faithfully and fruitfully.

If the hearer embraces Jesus' message of the kingdom in a rich and profound way then still more will be added; that is, God will take up residence in that heart and give increased understanding and blessing, both in this age and in the age to come.

The person who welcomes God's rule and presence will be given more of God's intended fruit, and the one who depends on his own resources without receiving the word, that is, the one who has not, will lose even that, i.e. what he has will be taken away.

#### V.a.ix.8 Luke 12:49-53 - Not peace but division

This is a startling revelation. It was anticipated that the Messiah would unite the nation into one whole. The reality of division comes when some believe in and some reject Jesus and the Gospel. This led to strife within families, communities and, in many cases, widened the antipathy between Jew and Gentile.

<sup>49</sup> I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! <sup>50</sup> But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! <sup>51</sup> Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. <sup>52</sup> From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. <sup>53</sup> 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.

### [Luke 12:49-53](#)

Jesus came not only to bring salvation but also to become the Great Divider of humanity as people decide whether or not to follow him.

Bring fire on the earth probably refers not to final judgment but to the refining fire of division between believers and unbelievers (vv.51-53). John the Baptist said that Jesus would: <<baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire>> (Matthew 3:11b), and we see that the Spirit came like: <<tongues of fire>> (Acts 2:3b). The fire is kindled and now burns brightly; thus the Gospel is preached.

I have a baptism to undergo. Whereas the fire affects the world, this baptism is Christ's own suffering and death, which would pour over him like a flood. For example: <<Your wrath lies heavily upon me; you have overwhelmed me with all your waves>> (Psalm 88:7), and: <<You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me>> (Jonah 2:3).

This is a refining fire that was kindled by Jesus first coming. He has his own baptism of fire to endure first before final judgement can be passed. In the meantime, we share in his suffering as it is written: <<You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance>> (Psalm 66:12). In times of trouble we might cry out as David did: <<Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me>> (Psalm 69:1-2).

There would indeed be a future time of glory but the path there would be through severe divine judgment for Jesus. The cup that he was to drink was the cup of God's wrath that would be poured out on him bearing God's wrath in the place of sinful mankind. His baptism would be suffering and death, which would pour over him like a flood. As a woman undergoes pain in childbirth, Christ suffers far greater pain, which is of his soul as well as physical. He undertakes this willingly in the hope that he should, by his suffering, see his seed: <<Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the sufferings of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities>> (Isaiah 53:10-11), and: <<I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds>> (John 12:24) confirms this. Jesus uses the analogy to childbirth during his final evening before the Cross: <<A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world>> (John 16:21). This is how he would see his own joy in completing his Father's will. His suffering and death demonstrates so clearly how much his heart was set on the redemption and salvation of mankind.

A comparison can be drawn between salvation in the ark and baptism. In both instances believers are saved through the waters of judgment since baptism portrays salvation through judgment. The mere mechanical act of baptism does not save, for Peter explicitly says: <<not the removal of dirt from the body>> (1 Peter 3:21b), meaning that the passing of water over the body does not cleanse anyone. Baptism saves you because it represents inward faith as evidenced by one's appeal to God for the forgiveness of one's sins, i.e. for good conscience. Furthermore, baptism saves only insofar as it is grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism is a visual representation of the fact that, as believers in Christ, you have: <<clothed yourselves with Christ>> (Galatians 3:27b), and in union with him they share his victory over sin. Although followers of Jesus have disagreed about the proper mode of water baptism, beginning in the early history of the church they have generally agreed, irrespective of denominational differences, that water baptism is an outward sign of the inward reality of regeneration, which is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit and is confirmed by: <<Jesus answered, I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit>> (John 3:5), <<The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit>> (John 3:8), and: <<He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit>> Titus 3:5b, which may be received only by grace through faith: <<For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God>> (Ephesians 2:8).

How distressed I am until it is completed. Even though it would mean suffering and death <<He replied, Go tell that fox (i.e. Herod Antipas who wanted to kill Jesus) 'I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal'. In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day – for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!>> (Luke 13:32-33). Jesus earnestly sought to fulfil the divine plan.

Although in many ways, Jesus did bring peace to the world, the richness of peace meant by the word shalom, it could also be said that he brought not peace, but division involving even father against son, as one chose to follow Jesus and the other chose to reject him. This passage is also recorded in Matthew 10:35. Father against son typifies the disunity of the human race when compared with the steadfast unity that exists between the heavenly and divine pairing.

The inevitable separation between those who believe in Christ and those who do not, even within a family, i.e. faith in Christ, may set a son against his father. Even Jesus' own family opposed him before they came to recognise his true identity. Jesus asks for unqualified allegiance, something even the most esteemed rabbi could not demand, that our love of God and his kingdom must take precedence over every other human relationship. Thus those that speak out will always meet with opposition as we see where, speaking of Saul (later to be called Paul), Luke writes: <<He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him>> (Acts 9:29), so fierce can the opposition to the Gospel be.

This is a theme that Luke records throughout the Book of Acts as we see the Gospel stirring up opposition and this continues into modern times. We are still being sent forth like sheep in the midst of wolves.

#### V.a.ix.9 Luke 12:54-59 - Interpreting the times

Jesus uses a meteorological analogy to charge the crowd with failing to recognise that their long awaited and predicted Messiah was among them and they were rejecting him as the prophets had declared they would in the OT.

<sup>54</sup> He said to the crowd: When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'It's going to rain', and it does. <sup>55</sup> And when the south wind blows, you

say, 'It's going to be hot', and it is.<sup>56</sup> Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time?

#### Luke 12:54-56

A cloud rising in the west over the Mediterranean Sea would have brought moist air that condensed to form showers as it climbed the cooler hills of Palestine as recorded in 1 Kings 18:44 <<The seventh time the servant reported, A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea. So Elijah said, Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you'>>.

The south wind blows involved a sirocco or hot, dry wind blowing in from the desert bringing scorching heat.

The crowd could interpret these signs but the spiritual emptiness of their hypocrisy blinded them from understanding the signs announcing the arrival of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' teaching and ministry. For, as Jesus said in Luke 11:20 <<But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you>>.

<sup>57</sup> Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right? <sup>58</sup> As you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, try hard to be reconciled to him on the way, or he may drag you off to the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. <sup>59</sup> I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

#### Luke 12:57-59

This parable, recorded also in Matthew 5:25-26, offers practical advice: it is better to settle with one's adversary before the dispute is brought before a judge. But within its broader context, the parable seems also to have in view the arrival of the kingdom; that is, the need to be in right standing with God, the Judge of the universe, before it is too late.

The importance of reconciliation is illustrated by the example of the person who is about to be judged in court. Not to be reconciled will have disastrous consequences on a human level but much more so if one is not reconciled to God.

Paul's view on going to court is: <<If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints?>> (1 Corinthians 6:1). Although some have argued that Paul is prohibiting Christians from ever going to court against another Christian, Paul seems, in these verses, only to be addressing disputes related to property or money, as confirmed in 1 Corinthians 6:7 <<Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?>>, rather than criminal cases, which fall under the jurisdiction of the state. See Romans 13:1-5, where Paul shows that God has established civil government for the protection and good of all people.

It is doubtful, therefore, that Paul's intention is that any specific example should be applied in every situation since not every situation today matches the circumstances of the specific case in Corinth, where the two parties are in the same local church: <<among you>> (1 Corinthians 6:5), and where the dispute is specifically related to property or money. Whatever the circumstances, it is clear from scripture that disputes between believers need to be handled with the utmost care, in a wise and godly manner before the watching world, wherever possible under the disciplinary authority of the church, and with the counsel of

spiritually mature Christians, who have no stake in the matter and who can give objective biblical advice.

The Jews knew not the time of their visitation: <<They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognise the time of God's coming to you">> (Luke 19:44), and we know the consequences for them of that. A wise man's heart discerns time and judgement, such was the wisdom of the men of Issachar, who had an understanding of their times: <<men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do – 200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command>> (1 Chronicles 12:32).

By judging the truth of the Gospel by divine revelation, we should all realise the wisdom of submitting to and being ruled by Christ. Wise men and women will not let their differences go to extremity but will accommodate them in time.

Through sin we have made God our adversary. He has might and right on his side. Why take it to court when there is only going to be one outcome; one that will have adverse consequences for us?

But because of Christ, God says: <<I am not angry. If only there were briers and thorns confronting me! I would march against them in battle; I would set them all on fire. Or else let them come to me for refuge; let them make peace with me, yes, let them make peace with me>> (Isaiah 27:4-5).