

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

† THE BOOK OF LUKE

WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

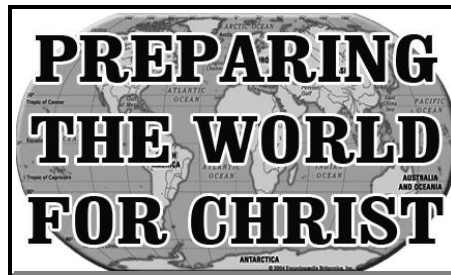
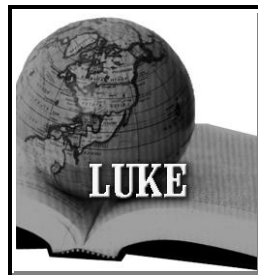
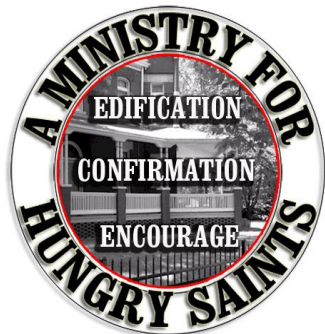
An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely

LESSON NUMBER 44

COMMENTARY ON: Luke 12:41-59

CONCLUSIVE REASONING FOR DISCIPLES

Peter asks Jesus whether the parable He has just spoken was for the disciples, or for everyone. He knew that everything Jesus said was not for everyone, and that disciples received more than the multitudes. If the parable was intended for them, they would no doubt want an extended explanation of its meaning. It ought to be observed that when you spend more time with Jesus, you want to learn more, see more, and be more conversant with the things of the Kingdom. Continuing teaching in the same manner as He did prior to this, the Lord Jesus gives several rather brief sentences that are loaded with food for the soul – like spiritual nails that stabilize the soul. These sayings do not appear to be linked together, but they are. It will require godly thought and understanding to get a firm grip on these Kingdom pronouncements. It is that kind of process that ensures continual access to, and use of, these matchless words.

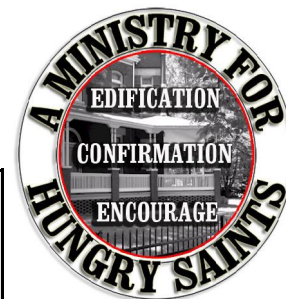


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Luke, 10/28/2016

Lesson Number 44



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

54 VERSIONS OF THE ENGLISH SCRIPTURES

ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB =Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV =English Majority Text (2002); ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ETH = Etheridge Translation (1849); ETRV = Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT =Goodspeed (1923), GWN =God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), NIRV=New Int'l Readers Version (1998); ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LEW = Lewis Translation (1896); LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MGI = Peshitta Translation (2006); MIT =Idiomatic Version; MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NOY = George Noyes Bible (1869); NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), ROT = Rotheram Bible (1999); RPTE = Revised Patriarchal Greek Orthodox New Testament; RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

FRIBERG; LOUW-NIDA; LIDDELL SCOTT; THAYER; VGNT GREEK DICTIONARY; GINGRICH, DANKER,

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

CONCLUSIVE REASONING FOR DISCIPLES

LUKE 12:41 "Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even to all? 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? ⁴³ Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing. ⁴⁴ Of a truth I say unto you, that He will make him ruler over all that He hath. 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; 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. 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. 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. ⁴⁹ I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? ⁵⁰ But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! ⁵¹ Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: ⁵² For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. 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. 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. ⁵⁵ And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. 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? ⁵⁷ Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? 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. ⁵⁹ I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite." Luke 12:41-59

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Peter asks Jesus whether the parable He has just spoken was for the disciples, or for everyone. He knew that all of the words Jesus said were not for everyone, and that disciples received more than the multitudes. If the parable

was intended for them, they would no doubt want an extended explanation of its meaning.

It ought to be observed that when you actually do spend more time with Jesus, you want to learn

more, see more, and be more conversant with the things of the Kingdom. These are the effects of being willingly in the presence of the Son of God. Scriptural expressions that depict our personal involvement with Jesus include the following. It is true

The teaching of Jesus bears directly upon how a person thinks and lives profitably and acceptably to God— Given O. Blakely

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that we are made willing "in the day of" God's "power" (Psa 110:3). Unfortunately, we are living in a time when professed Christian leaders often assume that the people they are leading are not willing, even though many of the people are their own converts. The extensiveness of this circumstance boggles the mind. It is extremely difficult in the average professed "Christian" congregation to find people who fit the inspired description of those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 6:14; 8:9; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 5:24; Eph 2:19; Col 3:3; 1 Pet 2:9-10; 1 John 4:4-5, etc).

However, if the people have really been converted, and are living by faith, this is not true. Here are some of the confirming facts.

⇒ **CALLED INTO FELLOWSHIP.** "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Cor 1:9)

THERE IS A CERTAIN DIVINE COMPANIONSHIP THAT IS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO THE CONTINUED EFFECTIVENESS AND REALIZATION OF SALVATION.

⇒ **PUT INTO CHRIST.** "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness,

and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor 1:30)

IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS CHILDREN, GOD HIMSELF PUTS THEM INTO CHRIST. THAT IS WHERE EVERYTHING REQUIRED FOR SALVATION TO BE BROUGHT TO ITS INTENDED CULMINATION IS REALIZED.

⇒ **COMMUNING WITH HIS BODY AND BLOOD.** "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor 10:16)

THE MEANS THROUGH WHICH REDEMPTION IS REALIZED – THE BODY AND BLOOD OF THE LORD – MUST BE INGESTED INTO THE INNER MAN. THAT IS WHERE THEIR POWER IS REALIZED.

⇒ **ABIDING IN HIM.** "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." (John 15:4-5)

BECAUSE WE ARE IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE THERE ARE POWERFUL INIMICAL FORCES, WE MUST REMAIN WHERE GOD HAS PUT US.

⇒ **MADE ONE.** "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." (John 17:21)

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE PEOPLE OF GOD BE EXPERIENTIALLY JOINED TO BOTH GOD AND CHRIST, ELSE THE WORLD WILL NOT BELIEVE GOD HAS SENT CHRIST.

⇒ **CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.** "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal 2:20)

THE PART OF US THAT CANNOT ENTER INTO GLORY MUST DIE. IN ORDER FOR THAT TO HAPPEN, IT MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE TO EFFECTIVELY INFLUENCE US.

⇒ **THE CORNERSTONE.** "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." (Eph 2:21)

THE BODY OF THE REDEEMED IS INTENDED TO BE A PLACE IN WHICH GOD DWELLS. NOW, WHILE THEY ARE IN THIS WORLD, THEY ARE APPROPRIATELY CALLED "THE TEMPLE OF GOD" (1 COR 3:16-17).

⇒ **PARTAKERS OF HIS PROMISE.** "That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." (Eph 3:6)

THERE IS A CERTAIN DIVINE COMPANIONSHIP THAT IS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO THE CONTINUED EFFECTIVENESS AND REALIZATION OF SALVATION.

⇒ **PARTAKERS OF CHRIST.** "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb 3:14)

THE ONGOING EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST REQUIRES HIS PRESENCE WITHIN THE BELIEVER THAT IS HARMONIOUS WITH THE RENEWED SPIRIT OF THE BELIEVER.

⇒ **FELLOWSHIP.** "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3)

THERE IS A CERTAIN DIVINE COMPANIONSHIP THAT IS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO THE CONTINUED EFFECTIVENESS AND REALIZATION OF SALVATION.

⇒ **DWELLING IN HIM.** "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of his Spirit." (1 John 4:13).

THE HOLY SPIRIT ENABLES US TO BE AWARE OF THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD WITH US, AND OF OUR DWELLING, OR ABIDING, IN HIM.

Continuing teaching in the same manner as He did prior to this, the Lord Jesus gives several rather brief

sentences that are loaded with food for the soul – like fresh bread that nourishes, and spiritual nails that stabilize the soul. Jesus said of His words, *"If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him"* (John 14:23). And again, *"It is*

the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). The words of Jesus must be seen in this way.

The sayings in our text do not appear to be linked together, but they

are. It will require godly thought and understanding to get a firm grip on these Kingdom pronouncements. It is that kind of process that ensures continual access to, and use of, these matchless words. These words are to be KEPT by the hearer. This requires diligence and involvement with Jesus.

IS THIS PARABLE FOR US, OR EVERYONE?

LUKE 12:41 *"Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even to all?"*

PETER SAID

"Then Peter said . . . "

Peter was often the spokesman for *"the twelve"* (Matt 26:35; Mk 14:29; Lk 9:33; 12:41; 18:28; 22:58,60; John 13:36,37). Five times we read that *"Peter answered"* (Matt 14:28; 16:16; 26:33; Mk 9:5; John 6:68).

Peter was the foremost member of a select group of the apostles: *"Peter, James, and John"* (Matt 17:1; Mk 5:37; 14:23). The name *"Peter"* was given to this man by Jesus (Matt 16:18; Mk 3:16; John 1:42), and is the surname of *"Cephas"* (John 1:42).

Peter was noted for his observations and inquiry.

- ⇒ Peter is the one who asked Jesus to bid him to come walking to Jesus on the stormy water (Matt 14:28).
- ⇒ Peter is the one to whom God revealed that Jesus was *"the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Matt 16:16-17).
- ⇒ Peter once vowed he would never be offended because of Christ (Matt 26:33), although when being sifted by Satan, he denied Christ three times.
- ⇒ Peter is the one who wanted to stay on the mount of transfiguration (Mk 9:5-6). He did not know what to say because he, together with James and John, were afraid.

⇒ When Jesus asked the disciples if they were going to go away like a mass of other disciples did, Peter answered *"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."* (John 6:68)

⇒ Peter asked Jesus, *"Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?"* (Matt 18:21)

⇒ Peter is the one who, after Jesus had cursed a fig tree, said the next morning as they passed by it, *"Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away"* (Mark 11:21).

"US"

"Then Peter said unto Him, Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us. . . "

Of the entire race of man, the offspring of Adam, *"the twelve apostles"* (Matt 10:2) stand as a unique group – *"us"* (Matt 13:36; 15:15,23).

Demons are an *"us"* group (Matt 8:29,31). Those united against Christ are also an *"us"* group (Matt 26:63; Lk 20:1-2). Believers are an *"us"* group (Rom 4:16,24; Rom 8:26,31-39; 1 Cor 1:18, etc).

When it comes what the Lord speaks, or the Scriptures say, there is definitely the *"us"* and *"them"* perspective. The words addressed to each group can sometimes be very different – especially when addressing the saved (Rom 4:16,24; 5:5; 6:3; 8:4, 26,35; 1 Cor 1:18).

"ALL"

". . . or even to all?"

Other versions read, *"all people,"* NKJV *"everyone else as well,"* NASB *"all men,"* BBE and *"all alike."* AMPLIFIED

This was not an either/or matter – i.e., if it was intended for everyone, then the disciples would not have to give heed to it also, or if it was for them, it was not for anyone else.

The difference was in the way the word was handled. In the case of *"everyone else,"* the word was meant to provoke the hearers to seek the Lord. Every person is to understand that they are answerable to the Lord, and that certain things must be found in them when He comes again. In the case of the believer, it was to provoke more alertness and resolution to be ready for the Master when He returned. Furthermore, what believers have received from the Lord is to be used primarily for His glory, and not for self-satisfaction or gratification.

IN THE CASE OF THE GOSPEL

To this very day, there remains the persuasion that the Gospel is primarily for the lost, and that *"every creature"* (Mk 16:15), refers to every lost creature. But this is emphatically not the case. The Gospel is actually primarily for the saved, and also, in an introductory way, the lost. It is, indeed, *"the power of God unto salvation"* (Rom 1:16) – not initial salvation, but salvation in its entirety, commencing with being baptized into Christ, and concluding when death or the coming of the Lord takes place.

THE FAITHFUL AND WISE STEWARD

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? ⁴³ Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing. ⁴⁴ Of a truth I say unto you, that He will make him ruler over all that He hath.*

FAITHFUL AND WISE

"And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward . . ."

Other versions read *"faithful and sensible steward,"* ^{NASB} *"faithful and wise manager,"* ^{NIV} *"faithful and prudent manager,"* ^{NRSV} *"wise and responsible servant,"* ^{BBE} *"faithful, skilled manager,"* ^{GWN} *"wise and trustworthy steward,"* ^{NJB} ^{AND} *"that faithful steward, the wise man."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

A *"steward"* is a ^ömanager, superintendent, ^ö^{THAYER} one put in charge of a household or estate; overseer, ^ö^{FRIBERG} one who takes care of (business) affairs. ^ö^{DANKER} Believers ^ö also are described as stewards of God's gifts and graces, to dispense the benefits of them to the world. ^ö^{McCLINTOCK & STRONG's}

Spiritual gifts are a stewardship – something given to *"stewards,"* or managers. Peter wrote, *"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God"* (1 Pet 4:10). An elder, for example is said to *"take care of the church of God"* (1 Tim 3:5), and will *"give account"* for the souls under his care (Heb 13:17).

A number of different gifts have been distributed to members of Christ's body – everyone has received one, and some have received several. Here are some of them: ¹ *"the word of wisdom,"* ² *"the word of knowledge,"* ³ *"faith,"* ⁴ *"discerning of spirits,"* ⁵ *"interpretation of tongues,"* ⁶ *"prophecy,"* ⁷ *"ministry" or serving,* ⁸ *"teaching,"* ⁹ *"exhorting,"* ¹⁰ *"giving,"* ¹¹ *"ruling,"* ¹² *"showing mercy*

with cheerfulness," ¹³ *"apostles,"* ¹⁴ *"miracles,"* ¹⁵ *"gifts of healings,"* ¹⁶ *"helps" (helping others* ^{NIV} *),* ¹⁷ *"governments" (administrations,* ^{NKJV} *)* ¹⁸ *"varieties of tongues,"* ¹⁹ *"speaking,"* ²⁰ *"ministering" (serving),* ^{NIV} ²¹ *"evangelists,"* ²² *"pastor-teachers" (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:28-29; 1 Pet 4:10-11; Eph 4:11).*

There are twenty-two revealed areas of stewardship, or responsibility. These are gifts that God gives (1 Cor 12:6), through the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 12:4), and under the administration of Jesus (1 Cor 12:5). Those who confer spiritual gifts, of ministries (1 Tim 4:14), do so under heavenly guidance.

These gifts are to be exercised with faithfulness and wisdom. Jesus asks, *"Who is the faithful and wise steward?"* – those who are gifted to do something in God's Kingdom – something that is needed. The more the work of the Lord is actually being done, the more these gifts are made known. If a spiritually gifted person is sitting in a dead church, he is still going to held responsible for the gift he has been given. It ought to be abundantly evident that there is jeopardy associated with being identified with a dead congregation (Rev 3:1) – one that may very well boast *"I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,"* yet, there actual status may be *"wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"* (Rev 3:17). Those members, all of them, will be held responsible for what they could have done.

It is tragic that the average *"church"* is not even set up for a functioning membership. Such a group is actually culturing *"wicked and slothful servants,"* for which the future does not look good. Jesus said of those kind of servants – stewards to whom certain gifts have been given, *"Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strowed. . . For unto every one that hath shall be*

given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. . . And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 25:26-30).

SHALL MAKE RULER

" . . . whom his Lord shall make ruler over His household . . ."

Other versions read, *"put in charge of His servants,"* ^{NASB} *"set over His household,"* ^{RSV} *"put in control of his family,"* ^{BBE} *"puts him in charge of the household staff."* ^{CJB}

The specifics and extent of this have not been revealed. Some of what has been revealed is the destiny of the faithful is shown below. Because this is a parable, and we cannot know all of the specifics, we must take care how we handle it.

⇨ *"But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."* (Dan 7:18)

⇨ *"Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."* (Dan 7:22)

⇨ *"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."* (Dan 7:27)

⇨ *"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?"* (1 Cor 6:2)

⇨ *"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us."* (2 Tim 2:12)

⇒ *"And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities."* (Luke 19:17)

To Say least, the extent of the inheritance of the saints has not been fully revealed. However, enough has been made known to confirm that is it large enough to challenge the thoughts of the most prodigious and exceptional thinkers of all time.

MEAT IN DUE SEASON

" . . . to give them their portion of meat in due season? . . . "

Other versions read, *"to give them their rations at the proper time,"*^{NASB} *"to give them their food allowance at the proper time,"*^{NIV} *"to give them their allotted food at the proper time,"*^{CSB} *"to distribute [the] food allowance at the proper time,"*^{NAB} and *"to supply them their allowance of food at the appointed time."*^{AMPLIFIED}

It seems to me that the point our Lord is making, is that there will be an exalted ministry to the people of God,

headed up by the Lord Jesus, with those who have been duly prepared working with Him. We know there are angels that are higher than others – like Michael and Gabriel. Jesus promised the apostles, *"Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"* (Matt 19:28). It appears that the things distributed to the stewards are things they themselves are also to distribute. There is not enough of this revealed to make any extensive comment about it, but there is plenty to think about.

Everyone in glory will not be on the same level – anymore than they were in the body of Christ – or anymore than the twelve tribes of Israel. The saints will *"reign"* in the glory (1 Tim 2:12; Rev 20:4,6; 22:5). Jesus indicated that rewards would be proportionate to assignments and the faithfulness to them in the world (Lk 17:16-19; 19:16-19).

FOUND SO DOING

" . . . Blessed is that servant,

whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing . . . "

None of the faithful servants ever "retire." The institutional church entertains such a notion, but the Head of the church does not. However God has placed the members in the body (1 Cor 12:18), they are expected to be found active in that area of the Kingdom when Jesus comes.

RULER OVER ALL THAT HE HATH

" . . . Of a truth I say unto you, that He will make him ruler over all that He hath."

The rulership will not be separate from Jesus, but shall be *"with Him"* (Rom 8:17; Col 3:4; 1 Thess 5:10; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 20:6).

Thus life in this world is very much a preparation for eternal life in the world to come (Mk 10:30), and of our involvement in the reign of Jesus (2 Tim 2:12). I am persuaded that much more needs to be said about this blessed reality. The modern church is occupied too much with this world.

THE UNFAITHFUL STEWARD

"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;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."

IF THE SERVANT SHALL SAY IN HIS HEART

"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 . . . "

Without confronting the Lord face

to face, this servant soon forgot that he was responsible for handling the goods of Another. He reasoned that if his Lord was delaying His coming, it gave him an opportunity to treat fellow servants in an inconsiderate manner. He abused his authority, and began to be indulgent, thinking only of himself.

This confirms that when professing Christians do not live with their minds set on the coming of the Lord, they will become inconsiderate and loose in their manner of life. If all those who say they are "Christians" were living in anticipation of the coming of the Lord, as the grace of God teaches us (Tit 2:11-13), it would transform the professing church.

THE LORD WILL COME IN A DAY

WHEN HE IS NOT LOOKING

" . . . 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 . . . "

When a soul begins to live without a focus upon the coming of the Lord, that person will not live acceptably and properly. God has made no provision for living righteously and godly without a due regard for the Lord Jesus appearing *"the second time"* (Heb 9:38). Men attempt to promote proper living by rules and methodologies. In so doing, they bring reproach on the One who has revealed, *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."*

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:2-3). There is not the slightest chance that this is not true! It needs to be proclaimed with insight and power.

HE WILL CUT HIM ASUNDER

" . . . and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

Other versions read *"will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers,"* ^{NKJV} *"will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers,"* ^{NASB} *"will punish him, and put him with the unfaithful,"* ^{RSV} *"will have him cut in two and will give him his part in the fate of those who have no faith,"* ^{BBE} *"will cut him off,"* ^{GENEVA} *"punish*

him severely and assign him a place with unfaithful people," ^{GWN} and *"will punish him and cut him off and assign his lot with the unfaithful."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Our Lord underscores the seriousness of not doing what we have been assigned by Him to do. Every child of God can be admonished as Paul did Timothy, *"make full proof of thy ministry"* (2 Tim 4:5), and to Archippius, *"Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it"* (Col 4:17). This is not speaking of institutional ministries that have been invented by men, and imposed upon the church. Rather, this is speaking of how each person has been placed in the body (1 Cor 12:18).

HE WILL APPOINT HIM HIS

PORTION WITH THE UNBELIEVERS

" . . . and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

Unfaithful people, or *"unbelievers,"* are all classed together. The fact that some of them are called *"Christians,"* or are active members in a professing church has nothing whatsoever to do with the matter. All those who are not found watching when Jesus comes, and busy about their Father's business, will spend eternity with the damned. Further, God has made full provision in Jesus Christ to be excluded from the category of the unfaithful and those who are not working out their own salvation, or looking for the coming of the Lord.

THE SERVANT WHO KNEW BUT DID NOT PREPARE

"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."

Jesus is doing more here than merely passing along information. He is speaking so as to alert sensitive souls to the necessity of due preparation for His coming, and giving account for what they have been given to do. He is not looking for a reason to reject people, but for a reason to save and reward them.

THE SERVANT WHICH KNEW HIS LORD'S WILL

"And that servant, which knew his Lord's will . . ."

Other versions read, *"knows His Master's will,"* ^{NIV} *"knew what His Master wanted,"* ^{NRSV} *"had knowledge of his Lord's desires,"* ^{BBE} *"knew his own Lord's will,"* ^{DARBY} *"knew his Lord's pleasure,"* ^{MRD} *"had come to know the will of his Lord."* ^{ROT}

The assumption is that the servant knew what His Master desired of him.

As far as the Kingdom of God is concerned, the Lord has made full provision for His servants to know His will. He has arranged for them to be effectively convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-10). He sends minister by whom men believe (1 Cor 3:5). He accomplishes a new birth in them so that they become willingly teachable. He has ordained apostles, who have made known who Jesus is, what He has done, what He is doing, what He will do, and what is required of His people. A believer who does not know His Lord's will is either unwilling, or has not been taught properly – and either condition is inexcusable.

This person was a real servant, yet failed to do what was required of him. His disobedience will not be overlooked. The Lord reveals the traits that required him to be beaten.

PREPARED NOT HIMSELF

" . . . and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will . . ."

Other versions read, *"did not get ready,"* ^{NASB} and *"did not make ready."* ^{RSV}

Observe that the manner in which the servant got ready was by doing what he was assigned to do. The *"servant,"* in this case, is a *"steward"* (Lk 12:42). This is harmonious with the parables of the talents and the pounds (Matt 25:15-28; Lk 19:13-25). Some of the goods of the master's steward, or servant, had been left in his charge, and he would have to give an account of how he handled them. Being *"ready,"* therefore, was preparing to give an account of what he had done with his master's goods.

NEITHER DID ACCORDING TO HIS WILL

It is clear that specific directions were given to the servant – what he was to do with his master's goods. However, this servant pushed his own will to the forefront, and straightway forgot his master's will.

SHALL BE BEATEN WITH MANY STRIPES

" . . . shall be beaten with many stripes."

Other versions read, *"shall receive many lashes,"* ^{NASB} *"will be beaten with*

many blows, ^{NIV} *"will receive a severe beating."* ^{NRSV}

This kind of treatment would not be allowed in our country for a murderer or robber, much less for someone who simply did not carry out his duty. The purpose of the Lord is not to establish methods of punishment, but to accent how serious it is to ignore your

placement and responsibility toward God. This does not have to do with your family responsibilities, although that is dealt with elsewhere. Here we are dealing with our responsibility to the Lord Himself. Believe me when I say you should do everything possible to avoid this kind of judgment.

There are those rare souls that have been given keen minds, and

extraordinary abilities. First, they should consciously and deliberately give these abilities to God, determined to, in some productive way, serve Him. I take it that Luke was such a man, a "physician" – yea, a "beloved physician" (Col 4:14). He traveled with Paul for several years, apparently ministering regularly to him. He was an example of a faithful steward.

THE SERVANT WHO DID NOT KNOW YET COMMITTED THINGS WORTHY OF STRIPES

^{48A} *But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes."*

KNEW NOT

"But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes . . ."

Some people have a very juvenile understanding of the purpose and will of God. Perhaps it is because they are novices. Or, it could be they have not been subjected to proper and thorough teaching. Slothfulness could also be the reason, as they did not take seriously

the solemn admonition, *"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"* (2 Pet 3:18). The revealed purpose of God for very member of the body of Christ is to *"grow up into Him in all things. Which is the Head, even Christ"* (Eph 4:15), *"being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God"* (Col 1:10). No believer is exempt!

SHALL BE BEATEN WITH FEW STRIPES

" . . . shall be beaten with few stripes."

Whatever the reason for committing *"things worthy of stripes,"* if sheer neglect is not involved, God will be merciful toward them – but they will be punished *"with few stripes."* God is righteous, so He cannot simply overlook unfaithfulness.

Here Jesus is speaking of the day of judgment, when the final assessment will be made of the servants. At this time, God will be found to be faithful in every respect – whether it is toward servants or those who have not taken their stewardship seriously.

TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN MUCH IS REQUIRED

^{48B} *"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."*

The Lord Jesus is up front with all men. He does not ignore the implications of responsibility, and the accountability of men to their God. With the advent of formal religious education, there has been a decided reduction of this kind of teaching. Men are actually held accountable to religious institutions and movements rather than to the Living God, and Jesus Christ, the Head of the church.

WHOSOEVER MUCH IS GIVEN

"For unto whomsoever much is given . . ."

Other versions read, *"And from everyone who has been given much,"* ^{NASB} *"From everyone to whom much has been given,"* ^{NRSV} *"For everyone to whom much is given . . ."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

By Divine discretion, some members of the body of Christ are *"given much."* This can include the following: 1–more aptitude; 2–more revelation; 3–more comprehension; 4–a greater sphere of influence, etc. Some people have great minds, exceptional stamina, and extraordinary insight. Everyone is not "average!"

Being *"given much"* is not measured by the amount of formal education a person has. It is what God has given, not what men have provided.

Good spiritual leaders can recognize such people – in fact, they have a responsibility to do so. Paul admonished Timothy, *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"* (2 Tim 2:2).

Churches and Christian educational institutions are loaded with teachers and professors who have not been given much. Too many times, those who have been *"given much"* are not being held responsible for distributing what they have been taught by godly men to those who are faithful, and able to teach others. That kind of duty has now been passed to educational institutions, and is being done entirely apart from established

The teaching of Jesus bears directly upon how a person thinks and lives profitably and acceptably to God– Given O. Blakely

congregations. Such men have not done well with what they have been given. Their manners have aided man-made institutions, but has also generated all manner of spiritual poverty, smallness, error, and indifference.

When such men stand before the Head of the Church, who is the Lord of the harvest, their failure to do what God intended for them to do will not be overlooked.

MUCH SHALL BE REQUIRED

" . . . of him shall be much required . . . "

Other versions read, *"shall much be required"* ^{NASB} *"much will be required"* ^{NRSV} *"of him shall much be required . . ."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Paul will be expected to produce more than his peers, because he received more (2 Cor 12:1-4). Timothy was given much (Phil 2:18-22), and so *"much"* will, be required of him. Titus also excelled, having received much, and therefore much was also required of him (2 Cor 8:16-18).

THEY WILL ASK THE MORE

" . . . and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

Other versions read, *" . . . and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more,"* ^{NASB} *" . . . and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded . . ."* ^{NRSV} *" . . . and of him to whom men entrust much, they will require and demand all the more."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The purpose of this clause is to show that even men, created in the image of God, expect more from those who have been given more. This is not a strange concept, and ought to be evident to everyone. Men, especially believers must divest themselves of the notion they are autonomous.

I AM COME TO SEND FIRE ON THE EARTH

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

Jesus frequently referred to WHY He came.

⇒ TO FULFILL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS. *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil"* (Matt 5:17)

⇒ TO SEND A SWORD. *"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."* (Matt 10:34)

⇒ TO CAUSE VARIANCE. *"For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law."* (Matt 10:35)

⇒ FOR JUDGMENT. *"And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind."* (John 9:39)

⇒ THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE. *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life,*

and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)

⇒ A LIGHT. *"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."* (John 12:46)

When Jesus came, there were distinctions in the earth that were not known. Yet, they needed to be exposed – and Jesus came to do that.

SEND FIRE ON THE EARTH

"I am come to send fire on the earth . . ."

Other versions read, *"cast fire on the earth,"* ^{NASB} *"bring fire,"* ^{NIV} *"set fire,"* ^{CJB} *"put fire on the earth,"* ^{GENEVA} *"set the world on fire."* ^{NLT}

In the earth, as Jesus indicated in the parable of the wheat and the tares, there exist *"the children of the kingdom,"* and *"the children of the wicked one"* (Matt 13:38).

Through His ministry, Jesus would clarify the real status and condition of people. He would cause the distinction between the wheat and the tares to surface, so that it could be clearly seen. The effects of Christ's physical presence would linger on after

He left the world. He started the kindling, as it were.

Commentators have not done well in handling this passage. One notable exception is the Pulpit Commentary. It has this to say:

"I am come to send fire on the earth." "My stern, sad work is to inaugurate a mighty struggle, to cast a firebrand on the earth. Lo, my presence will stir up men – you will see this in a way none now dream of; a vast convulsion will rend this people asunder. In the coming days of war and tumult, what have you, my disciples, who will be in the forefront of this movement, – what have you to do with earthly goods? Toss them away from you as useless baggage. The pioneers of the army of the future, surely they must be unencumbered in the war, which is about to break out; for remember, 'I am come to send fire on the earth.'" ^{PULPIT COMMENTARY}

WHAT WILL I

" . . . and what will I, if it be already kindled?"

Other versions read, *"I wish it were already kindled,"* ^{NKJV} *"and would that it were already kindled,"* ^{RSV} *"and what do I desire, if it is already kindled?"* ^{ASV} *"and it may even now have been lighted,"* ^{BBE} *"and what is my desire, if it be already kindled?"* ^{GENEVA} *"and what is my desire but that it were all ready kindled?"* ^{TNT}

THERE IS A REASON FOR THIS DESIRE

When the church must continually be correcting its members, and thinking of ways to promote holiness, the power of the Gospel is hidden, and the greatness of the exalted Christ is obscured.

It may appear confusing to the novice why Jesus desired that this distinguishing fire was already set ablaze. However, there is good reason for it. The cause of Christ, the spread of the Gospel, and the growth of the church could not take place until wheat and tares were clearly distinguished. It is, in fact, the distinction between the

two that causes the Gospel to advance, and souls to be wafted into the kingdom.

Under the administration of the Law, these distinctions could not be clearly made. In fact, Israel came to the point where it was as defiled as the heathen, adopting its customs, and even worshiping their gods.

When people have to be governed by Law [which is made *"for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, "For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured*

persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine" (1 Tim 1:9-10)], it becomes exceedingly difficult to distinguish the righteous from the unrighteous.

The biggest blockage to the preaching and success of the Gospel is not the lack of evangelism, but the lack of holiness. That is why evangelism is never promoted by the apostles, but holiness is. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid, but a carnal church will never be set on a hill, and it ought not to be promoting its own version of "Christianity." Such a church is a competitor of Christ. And is by no means not comprised of His disciples. Disciples are defined by Jesus: Luke 14:26,27,33.

I HAVE A BAPTISM TO BE BAPTIZED WITH

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

The word *"baptism"* applies to three different things, all of which are important.

⇒ First, it is *"the form of the doctrine"* that is obeyed when we are *"baptized into Christ"* (Rom 6:17; Gal 3:27). There is a spiritual death, burial, and resurrection in this baptism. We are *"buried with Him by baptism into death,"* and *"raised up to walk in the newness of life"* (Rom 6:4). This has to do with *"water"* (1 Pet 3:21).

⇒ Second, there is being *"baptized with the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 1:5; 11:16). This is something the Lord does, and is not an act of obedience like baptism with water. It is done by a pouring (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:18) that completely envelops the believer.

⇒ There is also the baptism of suffering – an immersion into suffering that causes death. That is

the baptism Jesus is speaking of in our text. Paul referred to it when he spoke of being *"baptized for the dead"* (1 Cor 15:29). In that text Paul speaks of submitting to the kind of suffering that results in death, and doing so in hopes of the resurrection from the dead.

I HAVE A BAPTISM

"But I have a baptism to be baptized with . . ."

This was the baptism of sufferings, which were the gate through which death was entered. In Jesus' case there was a certain distinction. Sufferings did not cause His death, even though they were the gateway to it. He dismissed His Spirit, laying down His life. No man took His life from Him (John 10:17-18).

Now Jesus begins to focus on the time during which He would lay down His life, in order that He might take it up again. To confirm the magnitude of this act of obedience, this at least six months before His death would actually be accomplished.

HOW I AM STRAITENED

". . . and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"

Other versions read, *"how distressed I am till it is accomplished,"* NKJV *"how distressed I am until,"* NIV *"what stress I am under until,"* NRSV *"how I am constrained until,"* RSV *"how am I kept back"* BBE *"how pressured I feel till it's over!"* CJB *"how am I grieved?"* GENEVA *"how I am pressed,"* YLT and *"how greatly and sorely I am urged on (impelled, constrained) until it is accomplished!"* AMPLIFIED

Jesus knew He would be able to do more after He had risen from the dead, and particularly after He had returned to heaven. While He was being manifested in the flesh (1 Tim 3:16), He could only be one place at a time, and was required to rest. For the great heart of Jesus, that was living under restraint compared to who and where He was before coming into the world. Part of Him humbling Himself was living under those conditions – traits of humanity, common to us, but uncommon to Him. Add to the the worst of – drinking the bitter up of the sins of the world.

DO YOU SUPPOSE I AM COME TO GIVE PEACE ON EARTH?

"⁵¹ Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: ⁵² For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. 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."

SUPPOSE YE

"Suppose ye . . ."

Other versions read *"Do you suppose,"* ^{NKJV} *"Do you think,"* ^{NIV} and *"Is it your opinion."* ^{BBE}

The expression *"suppose ye"* is translated from a word meaning *to be of opinion, think, suppose,* ^{THAYER} *of subjective opinion think, presume, suppose,* ^{FRIBERG} *to regard something as presumably true, but without particular certainty - 'to suppose, to presume, to assume, to imagine,* ^{LOUW-NIDA} *and to entertain an idea or form an opinion about something on the basis of what appears to support a specific conclusion.* ^{GINGRICH}

The word translated *"think ye"* is used sixty-three times in Scripture, and always refers to the thoughts of men. Sometimes it is translated *"suppose," "accounts," "seemed," "trow," "think," "reputation,"* and *"own pleasure."* It always has to do with a human assessment, and may not be true at all.

This word is never ascribed to God or Jesus. They never *"suppose"* things.

In this particular text, Jesus is asking the people how they have assessed what He said.

TO GIVE PEACE ON EARTH

"that I am come to give peace on earth? . . ."

Ultimately, there can be no real peace while the wicked and the righteous are mingled in the field of the world.

During the time when the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea, Satan will be bound (Rev 20:2), and the wicked will have no influence.

BRINGING DIVISION

"I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. 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."

Until Jesus came, within the Jewish community, there were some whom He referred to as *"generation of vipers," "hypocrites," "children of hell," "blind guides," "fools," those who*

"omitted the weightier matters of the Law," "whited sepulchers," "full of hypocrisy and iniquity," ones who "killed the prophets" (Matt 23:37); "as graves which appear not," (Lk 11:44); and those who "took away the key of knowledge" (Lk 11:52).

These were not people in the courts of Pilate and Herod. They were not people who had been incarcerated for crimes. These were among the people chosen by God (Deut 7:7), and in the city where God had placed His name (2 Kgs 21:4). These wicked men were noted religious officials and scholars, and therefore they were not detected. And why not? It was the religion of the times that hid these people. It was a cloak under which they successfully hid what they really were.

Jesus came to tear the obscuring canopy of religious tradition away, dividing the bad from the good, and the unrighteous from the righteous.

We have a similar situation in our day. *"Christianity,"* as commonly understood, provides a shelter into which religious opportunists flock. They really do not have anything of eternal value for the people, but pretend they are bringing help to them anyway.

When the real Jesus is seen in the real people of God, it will produce division, just as it did when He walked among men. Then hypocrites will be unveiled.

DISCERNING THIS TIME

"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. ⁵⁵ And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. 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?"⁵⁷ Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

ANALYSIS AT A CERTAIN LEVEL

"And He said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of . . . And when ye see the south wind blow . . ."

God created man with the capacity for rationality and reason – but only concerning the environment he inhabited. The natural man, even at the Adamic level, was not able to reason about unseen realities. He could believe God, but he could not reason properly concerning delusion. Eve was deceived, *"being in the transgression"* (1 Tim

2:14). Adam was *"not deceived,"* yet in an unfallen state, could not reason properly concerning the forbidden tree. When Eve *"took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat"* (Gen 3:6). Adam *"was not deceived,"* but he reasoned in a faulty manner, causing the transgression to be traced to him (1 Cor 15:22; Rom 5:12-19). Remember, this was when Adam was in an unfallen state, being morally innocent. That confirms that God never did intend for man to function on his own.

VALID CONCLUSIONS

"There cometh a shower; and so it is . . . ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass."

Men can assess things related to the earth, and even draw proper conclusions concerning them. However, this analytical skill cannot be employed when assessing the

things of God. When you step into the arena of revelation, and words spoken by the Living God, *"the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God"* (1 Cor 3:19). It is so foolish, indeed, that it causes men to fall and come short of the glory of God.

NOT DISCERNING THE TIME

"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? Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

Jesus does not call them men who lack understanding, but *"hypocrites."* They had represented themselves as men of understanding, but that is not at all what they were. Concerning the most critical area of learning and understanding, they were simply fools and blind guides.

They could not *"discern the time"*

– the time of Divine *"visitation"* (Lk 19:44); the time when the promised forerunner had prepared the way of the Lord (Isa 40:3-4; John 1:19-23); the time when the One promised by Samuel and all of the prophets had entered into the world, and in their own country (Acts 3:24).

There are still those who do not know the time – those who look at sin and transgression, call it addiction, and invent methodologies purposed to solve the situation. Others do not know that this of the time when Jesus Himself is building His church (Matt 16:16-18), and so they go about to build it themselves.

There are professing Christians who are living in defeat, not knowing this is the time when faith *"is the victory that overcomes the world"* (1 John 5:4-5). O, the blight of the spiritual ignorance of the time!

GIVE DILIGENCE TO BE DELIVERED FROM THE JUDGE

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. ⁵⁹ I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite."*

MATTHEW'S ACCOUNT

"Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." (Matt 5:25-26)

No one should be stunned if they have adversaries – those who are aggressively against them. If this was not a common experience Jesus would

not have addressed it. Even though your chief *"adversary"* is the devil (1 Pet 5:8), yet there are many under his administration who are against the saints of God. Jesus Himself had *"adversaries"* (Lk 13:17). Paul once wrote, *"For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries"* (1 Cor 16:9). Paul wrote to the Corinthians about a brother taking a brother to court: *"Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren"* (1 Corinthians 6:6-8).

In our text, a just claim is being made against a person, that probably being a matter of credit.

CONDUCT WITH THE ADVERSARY

"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. . . "

Here, the instruction is to avoid being brought before a legal magistrate. Be a *"peacemaker."* Extend yourself to avoid a public display of variances between brethren, or of injustices found among the people of God. On the way, Jesus says, do your best to settle the variance.

I TELL THEE

" . . . I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite. "

There will be no mercy in the civil court for Jesus' disciples – and they ought not to seek it. Herod killed James and jailed Peter for preaching (Acts 12:1-4). Religious Jews incarcerated and beat Peter and John (Acts 4:17-18), and had the apostles beaten for

preaching (Acts 5:40). In these instances, the men of God made no attempt to be reconciled to their captors – unless it be to preach to them in hopes they would repent and turn to the Lord (Acts 4:10-21).

That our text had to do with indebtedness is obvious from what the Lord said, *"I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite"* (Luke 12:59). This kind of opposition can be greatly reduced by

fulfilling the words of Paul : *"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law"* (Rom 13:8). God's people will be personally blessed in obeying this, and the name of Christ not blasphemed.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 11/25/16 (Preaching Festival on 11/11). In our next lesson, we will continue our series in the Gospel of Luke. The FORTY-FIFTH lesson will cover verses 1 thru 17 of chapter 13: "A REPORT, A PARABLE, AND A WOMAN." The scope of Jesus' influence is unveiled in this text. First He fields a question regarding an atrocious act of Pilate. He Himself speaks of another public incident, giving an appropriate response, just as He did to those who had reported Pilate's act to Him. He then delivers a parable that describes the state of Israel at that time. Following that He goes into the local synagogue, and there finds a woman bound with an infirmity for eighteen years, whom He heals. It appears that men still have great difficulty thinking of Jesus as all-powerful, and all-sufficient.