

A Division Promised
Introduction

A Division Promised-vv. 49-50

A Division Planned-v.51

A Division Produced-vv.52-53

What an interesting statement.

In the context, Jesus is teaching against the crowds, specifically against hypocrisy.

Review chapter 12:

Luke 12:1–12

1 Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first *of all*, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

2 “But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

3 “Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops¹.

Here, Jesus is telling His disciples that there will be no room, or tolerance, for hypocrisy in the ministry.

The disciples have watched hypocrisy since they were babies in the example of the Pharisees.

Jesus, here, tells them that this ministry will not allow for that.

Notice that Luke wrote, “He began saying to His disciples first (of all).” V. 1.

Therefore, Jesus is teaching His disciples what to expect from preaching His words.

¹ Here, Jesus is telling the disciples that in following Him there is no possibility of hypocrisy.

- 4 "I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do.
- 5 "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!
- 6 "Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God.
- 7 "Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.
- 8 "And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God;
- 9 but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.
- 10 "And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.
- 11 "When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say;
- 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

Now, Jesus tells these men to expect fear from men.
The Pharisees operated from fear.

John 9:20–22

- 20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind;
- 21 but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself."
- 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.

John 7:13; 9:22; 12:42; 19:38; 20:19

The condition of ministry is that of operating against the hypocrisy and fear-mongering of the Jews.

The disciples needed to stop being afraid of them and fear God alone.

Now, in the context of "so many thousands" the disciples needed to be faithful to ministry, one that is described here.

These men must confess Jesus Christ to the crowds despite their antagonistic reaction to them.

In the end, they will be brought before rulers and religious leaders.

Now, this entire chapter is a back-and-forth discussions between the crowds and the disciples.

This is why Peter asks in v. 41, “Are you addressing this parable to us or the others also?”

The fact is, the entire message and ministry of Jesus Christ is filled with controversy and conflict against the hypocrisy of the world and false disciples.

True disciples, the “little flock,” must minister as exemplified by the teaching of the Lord to the twelve.

The essence of Jesus’ ministry is what is identified in vv. 49-53: separation.

Therefore, Jesus tells these men, “Be ready. I have come to cast *fire upon the earth.*”

The teaching of Christ sets the world ablaze.

Are they ready?

Am I ready?

And, this ministry of fire which John spoke of:

Luke 3:15–17²

15 Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ,

16 John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

² *Matthew 3:12*

- 17 “His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.³”

John told the people that Jesus, the Messiah, would come to the earth and He would then burn people up.

How?

This discriminating work of Messiah is the work of God.

Jesus will separate the wheat from the chaff⁴.

³ Isaiah 30:25–30

25 On every lofty mountain and on every high hill there will be streams running with water on the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.

26 The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven times *brighter*, like the light of seven days, on the day the Lord binds up the fracture of His people and heals the bruise He has inflicted.

27 Behold, the name of the Lord comes from a remote place;
Burning is His anger and dense is *His* smoke;
His lips are filled with indignation

28 And His tongue is like a consuming fire;
His breath is like an overflowing torrent,
Which reaches to the neck,

To shake the nations back and forth in a sieve,
And to *put* in the jaws of the peoples the bridle which leads to ruin.

29 You will have songs as in the night when you keep the festival,
And gladness of heart as when one marches to *the sound of the flute*,
To go to the mountain of the Lord, to the Rock of Israel.

30 And the Lord will cause His voice of authority to be heard,
And the descending of His arm to be seen in fierce anger,
And *in* the flame of a consuming fire
In cloudburst, downpour and hailstones.

⁴ Isaiah 33:11–12

11 “You have conceived chaff, you will give birth to stubble;
My breath will consume you like a fire.

12 “The peoples will be burned to lime,
Like cut thorns which are burned in the fire.

Exodus 15:7

7 “And in the greatness of Your excellence You overthrow those who rise up against You;
You send forth Your burning anger, *and* it consumes them as chaff.

CHAFF Husk and other materials separated from the kernel of grain during the threshing or winnowing process. It blew away in the wind (Hos. 13:3) or was burned up as worthless (Isa. 5:24; Luke 3:17⁵).

Chaff. Loose hulls separated from the edible grains by threshing and winnowing. In Bible times the common sight of winnowed grain remaining when the wind blew away the lighter husks gave rise to the vivid image of good people or nations surviving judgment while the wicked do not. So, for example, sinners “are like chaff which the wind drives away” (Ps 1:4).

The prophet Isaiah said of the Assyrians, “You conceive chaff, you bring forth stubble; your breath is a fire that will consume you” (Is 33:11). Likewise, in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, the nations of the world collapse and are “like the chaff of the summer threshing floors” before the victory of the coming kingdom of God (Dn 2:35).

In the NT it is said that the coming Messiah will “gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire” (Mt 3:12⁶).

The unquenchable fire is hell.

Mark 9:43–49

- 43 “If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life
crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire,
44 [where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.]
45 “If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame,
than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell,
46 [where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.]
47 “If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the
kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell,
48 where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.
49 “For everyone will be salted with fire.

It is a place of burning forever that is reserved for the chaff.

Again, this goes back to Matthew 13:24ff.

This is the parable of the wheat and the tares.

Jesus says that the effect of the kingdom of God is that the wheat and chaff will be identified in the future.

Now, however, they are identified by the preaching of the Word of Christ.

⁵ Brand, C., Draper, C., England, A., Bond, S., Clendenen, E. R., & Butler, T. C. (Eds.). (2003). [Chaff](#). In *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 276). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

⁶ Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). [Chaff](#). In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (Vol. 1, p. 422). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

1 John 4:4–6

- 4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.
- 5 They are from the world; therefore they speak *as* from the world, and the world listens to them.
- 6 We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

So, the very nature of the hearer is what is being referenced to.

The ones whose nature is wheat will hear the Word of Christ and listen.

See 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

There is coming a day when Jesus will set the world ablaze⁷!
When?

That is in the end of the age.

Dan 10:6; Rev 1:14; 19:12, 20.

“How I will that it was already set ablaze”

What does this mean?

Could it mean that Jesus wishes that the blaze of the fire of judgment is already in action?

If the fire is that which will be upon the earth and that fire is from Jesus Christ and that fire is that of judgment and not simply....well, something else.

Then, it would seem that Jesus is wishing that that very blaze was already kindled and started.

The problem is that we can't conceive of a Jesus that wishes that judgment has already begun.

But, that is not His fault.

⁷ Isaiah 30:33

- 33 For Topheth has long been ready,
Indeed, it has been prepared for the king.
He has made it deep and large,
A pyre of fire with plenty of wood;
The breath of the Lord, like a torrent of brimstone, sets it afire.

We are the ones who conceive of Jesus as soft, sweet, and compassionate and who will never punish the wicked.

Take a look:

Isaiah 30:18-26 = the kindness of the Lord.
Isaiah 30:27-33

Isaiah 10:12–20

- 12** So it will be that when the Lord has completed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, *He will say*, “I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the pomp of his haughtiness.”
- 13** For he has said,
“By the power of my hand and by my wisdom I did *this*,
For I have understanding;
And I removed the boundaries of the peoples
And plundered their treasures,
And like a mighty man I brought down *their* inhabitants,
- 14** And my hand reached to the riches of the peoples like a nest,
And as one gathers abandoned eggs, I gathered all the earth;
And there was not one that flapped its wing or opened *its* beak or chirped.”
- 15** Is the axe to boast itself over the one who chops with it?
Is the saw to exalt itself over the one who wields it?
That would be like a club wielding those who lift it,
Or like a rod lifting *him who* is not wood.
- 16** Therefore the Lord, the God of hosts, will send a wasting disease among his stout warriors;
And under his glory a fire will be kindled like a burning flame.
- 17** And the light of Israel will become a fire and his Holy One a flame,
And it will burn and devour his thorns and his briars in a single day.
- 18** And He will destroy the glory of his forest and of his fruitful garden, both soul and body,
And it will be as when a sick man wastes away.
- 19** And the rest of the trees of his forest will be so small in number
That a child could write them down.
- 20** Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel.

Amos 1:1–7

- 1 The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he envisioned in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.
- 2 He said,
“The Lord roars from Zion
And from Jerusalem He utters His voice;
And the shepherds’ pasture grounds mourn,
And the summit of Carmel dries up.”
- 3 Thus says the Lord,
“For three transgressions of Damascus and for four
I will not revoke its *punishment*,
Because they threshed Gilead with *implements* of sharp iron.
- 4 “So I will send fire upon the house of Hazael
And it will consume the citadels of Ben-hadad.
- 5 “I will also break the *gate* bar of Damascus,
And cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven,
And him who holds the scepter, from Beth-eden;
So the people of Aram will go exiled to Kir,”
Says the Lord.
- 6 Thus says the Lord,
“For three transgressions of Gaza and for four
I will not revoke its *punishment*,
Because they deported an entire population
To deliver *it* up to Edom.
- 7 “So I will send fire upon the wall of Gaza
And it will consume her citadels.

Read Joel 2!

The point is, Jesus Christ is the Judge and His Word judges even now⁸.

⁸ John 5:21–23

- 21 “For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.
- 22 “For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,
- 23 so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

However, in the end times, When He returns for His Second Coming, he will judge all nations and that judgment will be final.

Matthew 13:49–50

- 49 “So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous,
50 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

So, what would it mean that Jesus says that He wish it were already kindled? It would mean that Jesus is eager to consume the wicked, and bring in the righteous and to enjoy the consummation of the Father’s plan.

V.50 But I have an immersion in order to be immersed (by which to be immersed) and how I am seized until it has been completed/matured.”

A Division Planned

This verse indicates that the above interpretation is accurate. Jesus wishes that the kindling of the judgment of the world was already starting...in order to bypass the suffering to come.

This is similar to the prayer in Gethsemane that Jesus prays asking the Father to find it in His will to bypass the cup of wrath He is about to endure for His people.

This is the immersion: from start to finish, it is the cup of wrath that Jesus is about to endure.

Jesus spoke to James and John about this very immersion one day when they wanted to bypass the pain and simply walk into the reward as well.

Mark 10:35-40

The entire event from the betrayal to His death is the immersion.
He will be immersed into a level of suffering that cannot be equalled.

And, He appears to not be looking forward to it, but rather looking past it to the reward:

Hebrews 12:1–2

- 1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,
- 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

However, this immersion must take place just like the immersion in the future must take place.

I am not speaking of the immersion that Jesus will undergo, but the immersion the world will undergo.

Zephaniah 1:14–18

- 14 Near is the great day of the Lord,
Near and coming very quickly;
Listen, the day of the Lord!
In it the warrior cries out bitterly.
- 15 A day of wrath is that day,
A day of trouble and distress,
A day of destruction and desolation,
A day of darkness and gloom,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
- 16 A day of trumpet and battle cry
Against the fortified cities
And the high corner towers.
- 17 I will bring distress on men
So that they will walk like the blind,
Because they have sinned against the Lord;
And their blood will be poured out like dust
And their flesh like dung.
- 18 Neither their silver nor their gold
Will be able to deliver them
On the day of the Lord's wrath;
And all the earth will be devoured
In the fire of His jealousy,
For He will make a complete end,

Indeed a terrifying one,
Of all the inhabitants of the earth.

The world will be immersed in its own blood⁹.

V. 51 “Do not think/seem/appear (to you) that I came/arrived to give peace in/among the earth. I say to you, rather, a division.”

Here, Jesus is correcting the hearts and minds of the disciples.

They must not think that Jesus, the Messiah, came to the earth and everything would simply merge into the Abrahamic peace spoken of in the OT.

Rather, as also spoken of in the OT, as we have seen, the Messiah would also shatter the nations like earthenware and break them like chains.

Psalm 2:9

9 ‘You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.’ ”

The disciples would need to know, and prepare for, that the Messiah they are following will leave a wake of destruction behind Him in His ministry.

That is, His very presence, especially His Word, will divide and separate and the result will reach even to the most intimate of relationships.

Are they ready for that?

⁹ *Revelation 19; cf. Isaiah 65:1-6*

Matthew 10:24–25

- 24** “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master.
25 “It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more *will they malign* the members of his household!

Using an infinitive of purpose, Jesus tells the disciples that His very purpose for coming to the earth is to divide the earth.

How?

Why?

Well, first of all, this refers to His present ministry and is not referring to His coming judgment in which all the nations are divided before Him (Matthew 25).

That is coming, but there is a division that must happen first.

Notice v. 52 “From now one...”

Jesus tells these men that they must remain faithful to Him in spite of the melee that will occur from their ministries.

Speak boldly-Matthew 10:26-33

Speak accurately-Matthew 10:34-39

Speak to the sheep-Matthew 10:40-42

For the disciples, they must continue to minister even while being called the prince of demons, like their Master was called.

Even while their words produce a division deep into the heart of the family, they must not pull any punches.

They must speak on and speak openly.

Paul knew this, and every faithful minister of Christ knows this as well.

Preach regardless of results:

Ephesians 6:19–20

- 19 and *pray* on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,
20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in *proclaiming* it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

2 Corinthians 3:12

- 12 Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in *our* speech,

Acts 4:13

- 13 Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and *began* to recognize them as having been with Jesus.
- 27 “For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,
28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.
29 “And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence,
30 while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.”

1 Thessalonians 2:1–4

- 1 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain,
2 but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition.
3 For our exhortation does not *come* from error or impurity or by way of deceit;
4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.

Jesus, therefore, warns these men, instructing them, to keep speaking regardless of the results.

What an encouragement to us all that we speak the Word of Christ and let the Word make the results plain.

A Division Produced-vv.52-53

V.52 “For, it will be from now on/from the now (that) five, having been divided, (will be) in one household: three upon two, and two upon three.”

Jesus says here that there will be antagonism in the home as a result of Jesus’ ministry.

“διαμερίζω¹⁰” = divide up/disseminate into divisions.

It will become increasingly clear, even in the household, who is committed to Jesus Christ and who is not.

This indicates that the very natures of the people in the home will be affected.

Why is this?

Micah 7:1ff.

Because, the division that is culminated in the end times is the division that happens all the time “from now on.”

That is, Jesus’ words attract His people, and repel Satan’s people.

They are life for those who love Jesus Christ, and they are death to those who don’t.

Even in the most intimate relationships, nothing is sacred to God.

¹⁰ **διαμερίζω** impf. διεμέριζον; 1aor. διεμέρισα, mid. διεμερισάμην; pf. pass. ptc. διαμεμερισμένος; 1aor. pass. διεμερίσθην; (1) *divide, separate*; passive *be separated off, be dispersed* (AC 2.3); (2) *distribute, divide up, share* (LU 22.17); middle *divide up among* (MT 27.35); (3) figuratively and passive *be divided against, be opposed to* (LU 11.17)

Friberg, T., Friberg, B., & Miller, N. F. (2000). [*Analytical lexicon of the Greek New Testament*](#) (Vol. 4, p. 111). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

He designed marriage and the family.

However, God is holy and expects holiness on every level.

Illustration:

Acts 5:1-14

Here, in the early church, a man named Ananias sold a piece of land and said he would give it to the church, but once the money came in, he withheld some of it and gave the rest.

He died, having lied to the church.

But, what about his wife?

She died too.
Why?

Because, she agreed to his plan.

Peter discerned this in vv. 8-9 saying that she “agreed to” the plan of her husband. It would appear that Ananias initiated this plan, but Sapphire agreed to it and she suffered the fate as if she also conceived of the plan.

See Ezekiel 18

Vv. 1-3 = the standard

Vv. 4-9 = a righteous man

Vv. 10-13 = an unrighteous son

Vv. 14-17 = a righteous son.

Vv. 18 = an unrighteous father

Vv. 19-32 = each individual who sins will die for their own sins, not the sins of others in the family.

The conclusion is that in the pursuit of Christ there is no partiality.

The disciples must minister under this standard.

V.53 “A father will be divided son a son, and a son upon a father; a mother upon a daughter. And a daughter upon the mother; a mother-in-law upon her daughter-in-law, and a daughter-in-law upon her mother-in-law.”

The illustration is that in the kingdom, allegiance to Jesus Christ is primary.

Love for him before love for any other relationship demonstrates true regeneration.

Luke 14:25–27

- 25** Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them,
26 “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.
27 “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

True discipleship is evidenced by the Lord establishing a love for Him above love for anyone else, especially if that other person is in sin.

Paul had to deal with this a bit in Corinth.

If you are married to an unbeliever, don't try to divorce him/her (vv. 10-13).

However, if they leave because of your love for Christ, you are free from that marriage (v. 15).

But, the point for Paul is complete undistracted devotion to Jesus Christ, even from the best things in life (vv. 28-34).