

# Luke

Carefully Investigating the Gospel ... Together

## SSBC Luke Bible Study #48

*Take this Bible Study home and use it to guide your exploration of the next scripture passage in our ongoing sermon series in the book of Luke.*

Passage: Luke 12:49-59

Sermon Date: Aug 20, 2006 \*\*

\*\* Our guest preacher on Aug 20 will be our missionary Darren Prince, who'll be preaching about the theme of social justice in Luke's gospel. We encourage you to still complete this study so you'll have a chance to explore this portion of Scripture. Then our sermon series will resume on Aug 27 with the next passage, Luke 13:1-9.

### “Prince of Peace” or “Consuming Fire”?

In this passage, the Lord Jesus shows us a startlingly different side to His personality. So often we picture Jesus as a benign, gentle Savior, and rightly so. Indeed, John the Baptist called Jesus the “Lamb of God”. In this passage, however, Jesus challenges us to see Him as passionate – both fiercely and sorrowfully. While Jesus often had harsh words for the religious leaders, in this passage He has challenging words even for those who would be His followers – and that includes us!

As you study this text, consider what it tells you about Jesus, what demands He places on your heart, and what your response to Him should be. Pray that the Holy Spirit will be with you and will help you develop a deeper understanding of God, and thereby draw you into a deeper relationship with Him. For “this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.” (John 17:3)

*These studies are produced by South Shore Baptist Church in conjunction with our weekly sermon series. Studies are distributed one week prior to the sermon as inserts in the church bulletin and posting at [www.southshorebaptist.com/sermons/](http://www.southshorebaptist.com/sermons/). Sermons are also recorded and can be listened to later by visiting that same website. Have feedback or questions? Contact [studieditor@southshorebaptist.com](mailto:studieditor@southshorebaptist.com)*

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**Explore the Passage:**

1. Read this week's Bible passage and use the chart below to note your observations and any questions you have.

Scripture	Your Observations & Questions
<p><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."</p> <p><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?"</p> <p><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."</p>	

**Consider the Context:**

2. In studying a passage it's important to take into consideration the literary context in which it is found. The following table organizes the principle themes and applications of the surrounding passages, which appear to all be part of a single event of Jesus' teaching ministry.

Luke Text	Theme	Application
11:37-12:3	Jesus rebukes the Pharisees and Lawyers for their legalistic hypocrisy	Beware of substituting legalism for the gospel
12:4-12	God will protect the followers of Jesus	Don't be afraid of persecution for Jesus' sake
12:13-21	A man's life does not consist of his possessions	Beware of living for possessions
12:22-34	God will provide for all our needs	Don't worry about money; use it for the Kingdom!
12:35-48	Jesus is returning at an unexpected/unknown time	Be ready at all times for the coming of Jesus
<b>12:49-59</b>	<b>What goes here? Record your ideas below. (2.a)</b>	<b>What goes here? Record your ideas below. (2.b)</b>
13:1-8	We are all guilty of sin and in danger of perishing	Repent now!

- 2.a. Based on the flow of Jesus' teaching shown above, as well as the Luke 12:49-59 passage itself, what is its theme or main point?

- 2.b. What main application does Luke 12:49-59 suggest? Does your answer fit the flow of the applications that precede and follow it?

[your answers above may change as you study the passage further]

3. Next, use this chart to **interpret some key observations**.

a. Select a few of your observations & questions from pages 2-3 that you find most interesting or important. Rewrite these below, and interpret and apply them using the columns to the right.

b. For each observation, begin to interpret by asking yourself these kinds of questions:

- What does it mean?
- Why is this important?
- What does this tell me about the Father? Jesus? The Holy Spirit?
- Are there other scriptures that could help me understand this?

<b>Observation</b> What does it say?	<b>Interpretation</b> What does it mean?

4. Now consider how you can **apply** the Word to your life. Look for:

- **S**ins to avoid
- **P**romises to believe
- **E**xamples to follow (remember "SPECK")
- **C**ommands to obey
- **K**nowledge to share

Don't just write things to write them – listen carefully to God's Word and what he seems to be teaching you, and look for relevant things that you're truly stirred to do. Then as you do them, God will help you learn, grow, and help others grow.

<b>Application</b> How do I apply what it means?

**Look Closer:**

5. Jesus says that He has come “to bring fire on the earth.”
- a. What does fire typically represent in the Bible? Explore these passages: Lev 10:1-2, Num 11:1-3, Isa 29:5-6, 30:27-33, 66:14-16, Jer. 4:3-4, 21:11-14, Lam. 2:3-4, Amos 7:4, 1 Cor. 3:10-15.
- b. More specifically – elsewhere in the gospels, what is fire used to represent, such as in Matthew 3:11-12, 5:22, 7:16-23, 13:36-43, 18:8-9, 25:41, Luke 3:9, Luke 3:16-17, and John 15:6?
- c. Considering both the immediate context of Luke 12:49 (see question 2), and the broader biblical meanings of “fire,” what did Jesus mean when He said “I have come to bring fire on the earth”?
- d. Jesus goes on to say in 12:49, “How I wish it were already kindled!” From what you know of his life, death, and resurrection, what is He referring to here? When was this fire kindled? (Or is it still a future event?) Why might He have longed for the fire to be kindled soon?

- e. Jesus was already baptized by John the Baptist (Luke 3:21). What baptism is He referring to in Luke 12:50? (You may find Rom 6:1-10, Col 2:9-15, and 1 Peter 3:18-22 helpful.) Note also in Luke 12:50 how Jesus is distressed as he awaits completion of his baptism. Review the accounts of Jesus’ experiences and emotions before his death, such as in Luke 22:39-44. What connection do you see?

6. God (both the Father and the Son) is frequently associated with peace in the Bible. Consider Deut 4:24, Isa 9:6, Php 4:4-7, Col 1:20. Perhaps you have felt that peace as you have drawn into a closer relationship with God. In Luke 12:49-59, however, Jesus says that He has not come to bring peace, but fire and division. So our “Prince of Peace” in Isa 9:6 is one and the same as our “consuming fire” in Deut 4:24? How do these two seemingly paradoxical aspects of God’s personality fit together? How can we reconcile them?

7. The division Jesus is bringing will run deep – not just between nations or denominations, but even within families. What will divide people? How have you experienced this in your own life and family?

Even Jesus experienced conflict in His own family during the course of His ministry. Along the way, He redefined the concept of family as it exists within His Kingdom (see Mk 3:20-21, 31-34). Does it comfort you to know that Jesus had similar experiences? By the end of His ministry, however, several of Jesus’ siblings had reconciled with Him and become His followers. (Acts 1:12-14). How can we imitate Jesus? Love and pray, as Jesus did, for any family (biological and spiritual) that may be estranged from you and/or from the Lord. Know and heed your Father’s will. Do your part, yet fully entrust them to His care.

## Weather Forecast: Time to Reconcile!

8. How's your "spiritual radar"? Jesus challenges His hearers in Luke 12:54-56 that while they are good at reading the meteorological signs to know what weather is coming, they don't even know what time it is from an eternal perspective. Then he gives them a big hint in verses 57-59 about what response is called for on their part given the "weather" that is headed their way.

- a. Based on its context in this broader text, is Luke 12:57-59 referring to reconciliation with other men or with God?

### Side Bar – Context Matters!

The importance of considering the context of a given passage can be seen by noting in Mt 5:21-26 how Matthew uses many of the same words found in Lk 12:57-59 (apparently as used by Jesus at two different times) to make a different point in a different context.

- b. Is your relationship with God perhaps hindered these days by your not being reconciled to others in your Christian family? Re-read Matthew 5:23-24. Who do you need to reconcile with? What do you think God wants you to do to love them?
- c. How can one be reconciled to God? (Consider Rom 5:6-11, 2 Cor 5:16-21, Eph 2:11-22) What next step do you need to take in this direction? A savior to finally accept? An area of sin to confess and repent from? A daily time with God to make room for? What can you do this week to take the next step toward He that died for you?