

THE DIVIDING LINE

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Luke 12:49-53

1. The Jews believed that God would judge them by a different standard than He would the rest of the world because they were His chosen people.
2. In these verses Jesus made three startling statements that must have confused His listeners.
3. Two of them we will look at only briefly.

a. Jesus said, "I have come to cast fire upon the earth."

(1) Luke 3:15-17

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.** 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.**"

(2) During the Church Age Jesus baptizes us with the Holy Spirit and zeal, but the fire of His eternal judgment upon the wicked will come just prior to the commencement of His Eternal Kingdom.

b. Jesus went on to say, "But I have a baptism to undergo (to be baptized with)."

NOTE: Here we see the reality and the weight of the Cross weighing heavily on our Lord and Savior.

4. The third statement Jesus is made is the one we will focus on this morning.
5. He said, "Do you suppose that I came to grant peace upon the earth? I tell you, no, but rather a division."

a. Jesus does bring peace between God and men, when they respond in faith to the Gospel by manifesting repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice.

b. Jesus also makes peace between all those who have embraced Him as Savior and Lord by breaking down the dividing walls between us.

NOTE: It is sad that this form of peace is rarely achieved among those who profess to be the followers of Jesus Christ.

6. However these aspects of peace are not what Jesus is talking about here.
7. Jesus is confronting the Jewish notion that when the Messiah came, He would deal with Israel's enemies and make everything right in the world.
8. Rather than making everything right in the world Jesus said His coming would create a division, and every person would be on one side of the line or the other.
9. Jesus is the Dividing Line, and every human being is either rightly related to Him, or wrongly related to Him.

I. Either you have embraced Jesus Christ as Lord, or you have not.

A. It really upsets this world when we Christians declare that there is no other name under Heaven whereby, we must be saved apart from the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Back in 2009 Southern Baptists published a prayer guide to help Christians pray for the salvation of Hindus during Diwali: the Hindu Feast of Lights.

2. On October 28, 2009, Jim McDermott, a liberal member of the House of Representatives, sent a letter to all the members of the House that was also sent to the International Mission Board.

In the letter He charged Southern Baptists with, "an aggressive, intolerant approach, and intolerant view that has inflamed Hindu communities worldwide." He asked fellow House members to sign his letter, six did, which condemned Southern Baptist efforts and asked the SBC to, "end your conversion campaign directed to members of the Hindu faith." He went on to write, "We cannot understand how men and women, raised and educated in the world's bastion of religious freedom and tolerance, can characterize another religion as spiritually dark and false. The lack of respect that this statement shows for the basic rights of an individual to believe in whatever faith they chose is perhaps the most disturbing."

3. What was really sad was that even some evangelical leaders condemned the prayer guide.

B. This is an example of religious and political leaders doing exactly what the Jewish leaders tried to do in the early days of the Church. Acts 4:13-19

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. 14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply. 15 But when they had ordered them to leave the Council, they began to confer with one another, 16 saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 "But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name." 18 And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

C. Peter and John demonstrated how we should respond to those who want to silence us.

1. Acts 4:8-12

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, 9 if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead — by this name this man stands here before you in good health. 11 "He is the **STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED** by you, **THE BUILDERS**, but **WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER** stone. 12 "**And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.**"

2. Acts 4:19-21

But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; 20 for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

D. Jesus declared, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." John 14:6

II. Either you love Jesus supremely, or you do not.

A. Jesus pointed out in this passage that He would divide homes and families.

B. In Luke 14:26 Jesus stated that He must be the focus of our love and loyalty.

"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate (in comparison of His love for Me) his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."

C. In Matthew 10:34-37 we read these words spoken by Jesus.

"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 "For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; 36 and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD. 37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

III. Either you obey Jesus, or you do not.

A. Jesus taught that those who love Him will demonstrate that they do by obeying Him.

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." John 14:15

B. He went on to say, "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. 24 "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. John 14:21-24

C. Most people view love as an emotion, but the Bible teaches that love is demonstrated by what we do; not just by what we say and feel.

APPLICATION

1. Every human being comes into this world on the wrong side of the line, or barrier, that separates us from God.

2. We can move from the wrong side to the right side because Jesus Christ removed the barrier that is between us and God, and even one another. Ephesians 2:13-14