

**I. Read Luke 12:49-54**

- A. In verse 49, Jesus is speaking of the coming judgment. Why do you suppose He used a metaphor like fire to speak of judgment?

**Consider the consequences of forest fires. They are devastating, but when occurring naturally, they actually make healthy growth of new trees possible. His ministry would act as fire — destroying, yet bringing new and healthy growth.**

How does Jesus' willingness to speak of a coming judgment differ from many folks' perception of Him?

**Many think of Jesus as a very nice and loving figure, separating Him from God the Father's holiness. It is typical that people see *the God of the Old Testament* as harsh and wrathful, while *Jesus, the Son of God in the New Testament*, is perceived as *Mr. Nice Guy*.**

- B. In verse 50, Jesus refers to a baptism which He must undergo. To what does He refer?  
**He refers to the cross and His crucifixion. Here, the term baptism is used figuratively.**

- C. In verses 51-53, Jesus further contrasts popular misconceptions with the truth. What is the misconception that most have of Christ?

**Many folks have difficulty with the idea that Jesus might actually bring division. This is an especially unpopular notion in our day. The common misconception is that Jesus accepts everyone unconditionally and promotes the idea of the universal brotherhood of man.**

What are some common ideas in our day that make the words of Jesus in vs. 51-53 so difficult to some?

**Relativism always denigrates the value of truth. One who believes that all truth is relative will have great difficulty understanding how anyone would risk separation from others for the sake of principle. Universalism, or the belief that all men will ultimately be saved, is also contrary to Jesus' teaching that truth separates — at least in spirit, if not of necessity. Biblical illiteracy and theological ignorance are almost always at the core of many of the misconceptions about God. We live in a day in which even bible believing churches denigrate doctrine.**

- D. Why is the description of families being divided by Jesus difficult for us to understand?

**In a nominally Christian culture, even those who are obviously lost will accept, to some degree, the conversion of members of their family. That does not mean, however, that they will be tolerant of significant changes experienced by a Christian, especially if it threatens their lifestyle in some way.**

- E. In vs. 54-57, Jesus uses an example that His contemporaries would understand to help them see the folly of their failure to repent. What example does He use?

**A west wind from the Mediterranean usually meant rain, while a south wind coming from the desert meant hot weather.**

What point is Jesus making in using this example?

**He is making it clear that the people of Israel had sufficient information to warrant repentance. Those who acted as though nothing was wrong were being hypocritical.**

How did the people of Jesus' day resemble folks in our day?

**On the level of the individual person, all men have sufficient inherent knowledge of God and right and wrong to be held responsible. (See Romans 1:18-22; 2:14-16.) Collectively, men in our day have even more information because of the residual effect of a post-Christian culture and the obvious negative effects of the culture turning from God and His truth. Anyone honest enough to look objectively at what is happening around them should come up with the right answers.**

- F. In verse 58, Jesus uses a *real world* illustration to help His listeners understand the folly of failing to come to terms with God. What is the illustration and why is it appropriate?  
**He uses the example of one about to go to court with a poor case to present and who will probably incur a judgment. To protect his assets he will attempt to settle the case before judgment is rendered. If this is the way we protect our earthly possessions, how much more should we want to protect ourselves from eternal judgment.**

If men fail to be reconciled to God, what should they expect? (Hebrews 9:27)  
**They should expect judgment. Then the time for mercy will be past.**

What is the only way of escape from the coming judgment? (Acts 3:17-20)  
**repentance unto life and faith in Jesus Christ**

What should those who reject Christ and are expecting to escape the coming judgment be aware of? (John 3:18)  
**They are already judged by virtue of the fact that they have rejected Christ.**

What did Christ do for sinners? (Romans 5:8; 2 Corinth. 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18)  
**He died for sinners before they could do anything to merit salvation — in other words, while they were absolutely helpless in their sinful state. He lived up to the requirements of the law on their behalf. He took the penalty and consequences for their sin upon Himself.**

What is the gospel? (1 Corinth. 15:1-4)  
**Jesus Christ died according to the Scriptures, was buried, and rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures, for our justification.**