



Christ Came to Start a Fire

Luke 12:49-50

January 3, 2021

Luke 12:49. It is a, it is a portion of Scripture that is unique to Luke's Gospel, you're not going to find this section in any of the other Gospels, these two verses anyway. But this portion also provides very unique and privileged insight into the thinking of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. There in Luke 12:49-53, from the Prince of Peace himself, we hear what sounds more like a call to arms. More like a summons to war. This is a preparation for, for judgement and conflict. And in the context of our cultural religion, where the greatest virtue is to be nice. This text really strikes our ears as somewhat disturbing, as unfitting of the gentle Jesus, meek and mild. But for those who are familiar with the whole counsel of God, the full scope of divine truth and revelation. This is the Jesus that God truly does reveal. This is the Christ of God.

If you found your way to Luke 12:49, I'll start reading there. Jesus said, "I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Christ came to bring salvation. He came to win redemption for sinners, but he also came to start a fire. He came to execute judgement on the earth. Christ came to win peace, to reconcile sinful man with holy God. But his work creates a deep, deep division. And that division draws a line, the dividing line, down the middle of humanity, separating those loyal to the family of God. Separating them from those who are loyal to their earthly families. Those who prefer their earthly families to their kingdom families. That's what this text is drawing a line through. This is what Jesus is referring to.

And my aim in this morning's sermon, the aim is to help you see a fuller picture of Christ's mission than maybe you have realized before. And what we're gonna do is we're gonna follow Luke through this portal of revelation, what he has revealed about, giving us insight into Christ and his thinking. And we're gonna get a very privileged perspective. What we're gonna see, what the world and its history looks like from Jesus' point of view. Not only will you come away, hopefully, today with a greater depth of gratitude for your own salvation. But you will find every motivation here to re-double your efforts to present your life to God as a well stewarded life. To present your life to God as an act of daily devotion and worship to him. I hope that you come away from this with a deeper loyalty to Christ. A deeper loyalty to God and his family. A deeper longing to be with him, even if that means separation from dear, dear people in this world who rebel against him.

We're going to cover verses 49-50 for today and before I give you an outline, I need to make an important, kind of a grammatical observation so that you can understand the, the significance of the text before us. When Jesus uses that

language in verse 49, I came, and then he combines that verb, I came, with a verb in an infinitive form, that is, as in here, to cast, that's an infinitive. He's talking about Messianic purpose. He's talking about the purpose of his mission as Christ, as the Messiah.

The verb, I came, it's the verb *erchomai*, let's put it in the aorist tense, but *erchomai*, Jesus uses that grammatically to reveal the purpose of his mission. And I want to show you a few examples of that, just as we're getting started here so you can see how that verb is used, really as a technical expression to refer to Christ's mission.

And I just want you to turn over to Matthew's Gospel, just for a few examples of this. Matthew's Gospel and starting in chapter 5. Jesus says there in Matthew 5:17, "Do not think that I have come" and that's that verb *erchomai* again. "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I've not come to abolish them but," and you carry that verb forward, I have come "to fulfill them." So there's the verb *erchomai* with the infinitive, to abolish and to fulfill. He's talking about

the purpose of his coming and his purpose is not to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but rather to fulfill them. To fulfill everything written in them.

Turn over a few pages to Matthew 9:13, Matthew 9:13, and there Jesus says again, using this verb and using infinitives, he says "I came," *erchomai*, "not to call the righteous," but, carry the verb forward, "but to call sinners." Again the verb *erchomai* with the infinitive, to call, shows the purpose of his coming. It's not to call those who think they're already righteous. Those who think they're already good to go. The purpose of his coming is to call those who know that they're sinners, and are reaching out for a savior.

When Jesus called and commissioned, sent the twelve, you can turn to Matthew 10. A section is parallel here, Matthew 10 is parallel to Luke 9:1-5, a text we've already covered. But in verses 34-35 of Matthew 10, we find Jesus saying the same thing there that he says in our text, almost verbatim. And again, it's the *erchomai* verb with the infinitive, to bring. I don't, I don't want to have you turn there, just for the sake of time,

but in the Gospel of John, namely John 9:39, if you want to look these up later, you can write them down. John 9:39, John 10:10, John 12:46.

Jesus uses that *erchomai* verb, I came, I have come, and then he combines that verb with what's called a *hina* purpose clause. We translate a *hina* purpose clause with the words, so that, or in order that, we're trying to show purpose by its use. So for example, John 9:39, "Jesus said, 'For judgment I came into this world,'" and here it is, "*in order that* those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.'"

Again it's that reversal of those who think they see, but they don't. For them to realize and enter into their blindness. For those who know that they don't see and they know that they're in darkness, they know they need the light of God. He came, *in order that*, that those who don't see may see. John 10:10, "I came," here it is, "*in order that* they may have life and have it abundantly." His coming was with purpose. John 12:46, "I have come into the world as light, so that," for the purpose of, "whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness."

So back in Luke 12:49, this is yet another instance of this pattern, this technical pattern of Jesus speaking about Messianic purpose. He's revealing the purpose for which he came into the world. The verb *erchomai* plus the infinitive, I came, *erchomai*, plus the infinitive, to cast. "I came to cast fire on the earth." This reveals a purpose of Christ's coming. It's very significant.

So with that in mind, we're going to ask and answer several questions in the text and you've heard this before, good observation is done by asking these five W questions and the H: Who, what, when, where, why, and how. Those are, if you want to do some good Bible study and have good observation out of the text, just write down what you can find in the text, who, what, when, where, and why, and how. And that's really what we're going to do here. Not in that order, and we're going to combine some of them. So I'm going to give you, not six, but I'm going to give you four points.

Four questions and four outline points. Let me just name the points for you. Give you the questions, but then we'll cover them as we walk through. First question is, why is Jesus thinking about starting a fire? What, what is it that calls this imagery to mind and makes him think about starting a fire? Second question is what. What kind of fire does Jesus want to start? And this will also answer the where question. What kind of fire does Jesus want to start and where does he want to start it? It's kind of important. Third, when, when will Jesus light this fire? And again, in answering this question, we'll answer the how question. How is this fire going to burn? What is it going to look like? And finally, fourth, very key, very important, who will suffer the fire? Who will suffer the fire?

So why, what, where, when, how, and who. I hope I can keep it all clear for you. Alright, so let's go to the first question, why. Why is Jesus thinking about starting a fire? What's this arsonist impulse coming into our Lord's mind right now? Put another way, why is Jesus thinking about and revealing to his disciples this aspect of his purpose? What makes him think about fire here and now? And then why is he telling his disciples about it?

If you look back over the context of Luke chapter 12, go back to the beginning. You see that Jesus has really been teaching his disciples primarily in this chapter. He's been teaching them, as we've been saying, in the context of this unbelieving, primarily unbelieving, hostile crowd of Jews.

He calls them in verses 1-12, his disciples, he calls them to fear God and not fear man. And he's, he calls them to find rest in the fear of the Lord, even in the most difficult of circumstances, like it says there in verses 11-12, when they're called before authorities. Jesus wants his disciples not to be anxious in that context.

He wants them to be confident, knowing that the Holy Spirit is going to be there with them. He's going to be strengthening them in that hour of trial. He's interrupted in verse 13 with this unbelieving man, who is under the persuasion of his own covetousness. He comes in asking a question that completely misses the point, seems to have no sense of understanding, of timing, of when a, when a good question might, might be asked.

But Jesus, you know, he sees the man's heart as completely consumed by temporal things. He's unable, even unwilling to hear, learn what Jesus has to say, but Jesus takes it as an opportunity.

What a wonderful teacher we have, that he takes, even an interruption like this. Provides Jesus with an opportunity to warn the crowds about covetousness, which is verses 13-21. He's also able to turn once again and strengthen his disciples. In verses 22-34 He teaches them why they should never worry. Why they should never, ever be anxious about anything, and especially something as small and insignificant as money, as food, as clothing, as their lifespan. Don't worry, be worried about anything. Why? Because disciples of Jesus Christ should instead trust the father and seek his kingdom. Verse 31, after all, it says in verse 32, "it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." So, sell your possessions, give what you have, be generous to people, Jesus says, you're, you're banking away an eternal treasure that pays eternal dividends. So go for it.

With that assurance fixed firmly in their minds, the assurance that the father loves them and cares for them, sustains them. He's given them absolutely everything in giving them the kingdom. Jesus really wants to free his disciples from anything that would hinder or constrain their free and relentless pursuit of fulfilling their stewardship in this life. It's what he's saying. We've been learning all about this matter of stewardship over the past number of weeks.

Verses 35-48, where Jesus is telling his servants, his disciples, be ready, always be ready. Have yourself ready at all times. Be watchful. Be eagerly waiting, eagerly, joyfully anticipating the return of the Lord. Keep doing what God has called and gifted you and commissioned you to do. Always with a eye to executing your stewardship with faithfulness and wisdom from God.

That servant, who is ready and waiting, who's always anticipating the Lord's return, looking to the skies as it were. Even as he does his work, the steward who is conscious and thoughtful and intentional about pursuing a wise and faithful

stewardship. According to verses 35-44, that servant rejoices in the presence of his master when his master returns. He has nothing to be afraid of. He longs to see him and when he shows up, he is excited. He is rejoicing. He's in fellowship, and that master then is joyful to share himself intimately with them. To sit down and share a table of fellowship with them. He rewards him with an even greater stewardship of kingdom service.

So all this talk of kingdom priority, as Jesus here, he's anticipating his own return. Even as he teaches, he's thinking about coming back. Contemplates his own joy that he'll have in rewarding faithful disciples for faithful stewardship. I'd imagine, he can't wait to bring these guys into the fullness of what he's thinking, of what he sees. He wants to show them the consummation of everything that he sees out in the future.

So in one sense he is rejoicing here, he is eager to reveal things to them. But there's another aspect here of what Jesus is thinking, and it's in the more immediate context. As he looks ahead to rewarding faithful servants, he's also mindful that he will enter into judgement and punish those servants who've been

wicked, unfaithful, those whom he will condemn and remand to a fiery judgement in hell.

The section on stewardship ended on that note of judgement, there in verses 45-47. He's depicted the cruel brutality of the wicked servant, cold indifference of this selfish and passive servant. And then laziness of an ignorant servant. All of them are going to suffer punishment, to varying degrees suffer punishment, but suffer they will. And they will be assigned to a place, as he says there in verse 45 with the unbelieving.

So Jesus here is looking. He's prompted by his own teaching and what he's instructing his disciples about. He's prompted to look beyond the present moment. And he's looking, as it were, down the corridors of time to see all that lies ahead. And he has an eagerness here to see his mission through to the very end. Verse 49, "I came," this is my mission. "I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled."

The word fire, Jesus has that at the front of his sentence, which shows a strong emphasis. Literally it sounds like this,

"fire I came to cast on the earth." It sounds like a gunshot, doesn't it? In Greek it's *pur*, "*pur* I came to cast on the earth." It suggests suddenness. The rest of the sentence shows an eagerness there, "would that it were already kindled." As in, enough already, let's get on with it, let's start the fire burning. It's clearly not kindled yet though. It's clearly not started.

So we need to ask our other questions here. What fire? Who's, who's getting fired and when's it going to happen? Where's it going to happen? So let's start with that second question. What kind of fire does Jesus want to start? What kind of fire? Some commentators think Jesus here is referring to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And that happens at Pentecost, when the tongues of fire are the symbol. And they say that that's the symbol pointing back to this instruction. Other people say that this fire refers to, quote, "a new faith or religion. A burning enthusiasm in believers, creating fierce antagonism in unbelievers, deplorable but inevitable," end of quote. That's the fire, this enthusiasm.

Another person says the very passion in Christ's heart would set his friends on fire and his foes in opposition. So is the fire the Holy Spirit? Is the fire the enthusiasm of a new religion? Is the fire passion in Christ's heart that gets put into our hearts and we go set everything else on fire? The first problem with all of those views is that they depart from the language that Jesus actually used here. In verse 49, He said, "I came to cast fire on the earth." To throw fire down. The word cast is *ballo*, it's the same word Jesus used, or was used of Jesus when he was performing exorcisms, to cast out demons. So there's this immediacy to the word. There's a, there's a violence even. He didn't cast the Holy Spirit on the earth. That's not the language that's fitting for Jesus sending the third person of the Trinity to be the comforter, helper, and advocate for the believer.

The verb Jesus uses about the coming of the Spirit is *pempo* which is, to send. So when the Helper comes, John 15:26, "whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who," no is not cast from the Father, but "proceeds from the Father." He sends the Holy Spirit. He doesn't cast him. Same thing could be said for the other views. They don't fit the violent language,

the immediate sudden language of casting something down. Jesus didn't come to cast the enthusiasm of a new faith upon the earth. Or he didn't come to cast a passion of his own that would set his own friends on fire and set his foes in opposition to him.

There's a second problem with all those views I just named. They ignore this prepositional phrase here, that he came to cast fire, where? "On, upon the earth." So this answers not just the what question, it answers the where question. This fire is going to be happening, it says, on earth, on the earth. The way that any speaker at that time would understand that is it's on terra firma. Where they walk around. Where they live and move and have their being. So this is global comprehensive, a fiery inferno that sets the whole world on fire. So this is truly Biblical proof of global warming, right here. In the extreme.

The only credible view, the only way to see this fire that Jesus is going to cast on the earth. The one that he wishes is already kindled. It is the fire of divine judgement. The fire here, is the fire of divine judgement. It is the final judgement

of God's burning wrath, that is going to come and fall upon the entire earth. It's prophesied clearly in the Old Testament. But it's also taken up and prophesied again in the new, the new connecting to the old. The Old fulfilled in the New. And in thinking about his mission as the Messiah, Jesus is looking at his mission, not just specifically to the cross ahead of him. He's looking at it comprehensively. In its full scope, in all of its fullness. He's thinking about its end. He's thinking about its culmination here.

In fact end of verse 50, the verb translated in the ESV, it is accomplished. Other translations, it's translated, something familiar to you and me, it is finished. The end of the world is on his mind. The culmination of all prophetic texts of Scripture is on his mind. And in light of his own stewardship. In light of the wickedness of those servants who were gifted and entrusted with, with gifts from God. In light of the retribution coming to, for those who spurn their gifts and their stewardship. The image that comes to the mind of Jesus is the image of fire.

A vivid, terrible, painful picture of divine judgement. To show you this theme, that fire is judgement here, I want to trace this concept of fire and burning wrath of, of God. Just starting, really in Luke's Gospel, during the ministry of, you can go back Luke chapter 3, and you can see there, Luke chapter 3 and the ministry of John the Baptist. John the Baptist in Luke 3:9, he warned the people there as the forerunner to the Messiah, before the Messiah's mission and ministry started. He warned the people, Luke 3:9, "Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." That's judgement language. He doesn't cut off the bad branches and make them enthusiastic. He throws them in the fire to burn them up. Judgement language.

If you return to that same imagery a couple verses later, verses 16-17, he even expanded the thought there. Luke 3:16, John said that Jesus, when he comes, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit," that's one baptism, "and fire," that's another baptism. He makes a sharp distinction between the two. The Holy Spirit and fire.

And then he elaborates that in the next verse, verse 17. Jesus has a "winnowing fork in his hand. He comes to clear his threshing floor, to gather wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Look ahead to Luke 17, other side of Luke. Luke 17, in verse 28, Luke 17:28. He's responding here to a question the Pharisees asked him in verse 20 about the coming of the kingdom.

And Jesus warned them there that the coming of the Son of Man would be like, a, a day like any other day. It would seem like any other day. Verse 28, everybody's going to be preoccupied with "eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting, building," until suddenly in verse 29, "fire and sulfur rain from heaven and destroyed them all. So it will be," like it was for Sodom and Gomorrah, "so it will be", he says in verse 30, "on the day that the Son of Man is revealed."

No one listening to Jesus teach on these occasions would have any confusion, whatsoever, of what he was talking about. Fire, burning, we've read our Bibles, that's judgement language. They're vivid expressions here of the impending doom of divine

wrath coming to earth on the Day of the Lord. He's speaking to a people who were steeped in Old Testament language. All of them grown up going to synagogue, very religious society, going to synagogue, taught in the home out of the law and the prophets.

You can actually turn, I'd like to show you some of that. Starting in the prophet Zephaniah. The prophet Zephaniah. If you have trouble finding it, well it's going to reveal that you haven't been doing your daily Bible reading. But Jesus, what Jesus is saying about fire and burning and judgement. Vivid expressions that come right from the Old Testament, just a few texts and starting in Zephaniah. Zephaniah chapter, chapter 1, short prophecy of Zephaniah.

If you read it, just three chapters, it doesn't take you long, it punches way, way above its weight. Just three short chapters, but man they will skewer you. Incredibly strong because the theme of Zephaniah's prophecy is the coming Day of the Lord judgement. "Day of the Lord," put quotes around that. That's an actual thing. That's a, that's a concept of end time's doom and judgement. Day of the Lord. It's near fulfillment for

those who listen to Zephaniah prophecy was the Babylonian invasion. But that was just a prelude, that's just a preview of what's coming in its far fulfillment, and that's what Jesus had in mind when he said, "I came to cast fire on the earth."

Starting in Zephaniah 1:2, God says, "I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth." In case you're wondering what everything means, verse three, it's man and beast, it's birds and fish. So he even gets into the water. Rubble, he'll sweep away the rubble with the wicked. "I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth," declares the Lord. And then look at verse 14, Zephaniah 1:14, "The great Day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the Day of the Lord is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there."

"A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements. I will bring distress on mankind, so they shall walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the Lord;

their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of the Lord. In the fire of his jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full and sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth."

Clear enough yet? Yes. "Gather together, yes, gather." Chapter 2 verse 1. "Gather, O shameless nation, before the decree takes effect-before the day passes away like chaff-before there comes upon you the burning anger of the Lord, before there comes upon you the day of the anger of the Lord." Isn't that powerful? Powerful imagery; gripping and terrifying. Look down at chapter 3 in verse 8, it says, "'Therefore wait for me,' declares the Lord, 'for the day when I rise up to seize the prey.'"

He's talking here about a time far in the future when God acts on his decision. And what's his decision? It's "to gather the nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger, for in the fire of my

jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed." Folks, that's gonna happen by the hand of Christ, the anointed king.

Go two books to your right, to Zechariah's prophecy. Find your way to the end of it, Zechariah 13:7, God has entered into judgement with Israel here. Judah, it's an eschatological judgement. One that's still future to us, and certainly one that's future to Luke chapter 12, when Jesus was speaking. Notice that God will use this judgement upon Israel to execute judgement upon the rest of the nations of the earth as well.

Look what it says, Zechariah 13:7, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me," who is that? That's Jesus Christ. Standing next to Yahweh, against the Lord. That's someone who's on his level. Interesting indication of the triune nature of God and the full deity of Jesus, the Son.

Anyway, "'Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me,' declares the Lord of hosts. Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my

hand against the little ones. In the whole land, declares the Lord, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, one third shall be left alive. I will put this third into the fire, refine them as one refines silver, test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. They will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The Lord is my God.'"

So God has struck the good shepherd, and he struck him for the salvation of his people there in verse 7. And although Israel has rejected its Messiah, verses 8 and 9 speak of a future time when God will enter into judgement with Israel. Regenerate, he will regenerate by the Holy Spirit a remnant for himself. They will believe. They will be tested through fire. This is talking about a future remnant of Israel, which is going to be saved and when that happens, God will act to protect them from the invading nations.

Look now at Zechariah 14:1, "Behold, a day is coming for the Lord, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and

the women raped. Half the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west be a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, the other half southward.

"You shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him. On that day there should be no light, cold, or frost. There shall be a unique day, which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light."

Without going into all the detail that's there, but you can see this is an end of times future judgement. And these are the texts, the kinds of texts Jesus has on his mind. There's a future time when he's going to enter into judgement with Israel.

He protects the redeemed of Israel. He judges Israel and cuts off all of their unbelieving. But he protects the redeemed of Israel, those who come to faith in him. He enters into judgement with the nations. This is how Jesus understood the times at the end of the age. And so he said, "I came to cast a fire on the earth, and would that it already were kindled!"

I want to show you one more Old Testament text, a couple pages to your right. Malachi, the final book of the Minor Prophets, Malachi, look at Malachi 3:1. Malachi has prophesied about the forerunner of the Messiah. Malachi 3:1, who is, we understand to be John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah.

It says there, "Behold," Malachi 3:1, "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come into his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap."

He's coming to refine the land. He's coming to cleanse the land with fullers' soap. Lye that burns everything away. And then this in verse 5, "I will draw near to you for judgement. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts."

Skip ahead now to chapter 4 verse 1. "Behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the son of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts."

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God is coming, in Christ, entering into judgment, first with Israel and then through Israel with the rest of the nations of the world. He comes to execute punishment, a retribution on the ungodly and he will rescue "you who fear my name." He will enlist them into his ranks. Bring them with him. Christ at the head of the hosts and they will, as it says there, "tread down the wicked." The wicked burned up, charred completely, will be as ash under the soles of their feet.

That's quite a vivid picture and this is what our Lord has in mind as he tells his disciples, "I came to cast fire on the earth and would that" or "I wish that" is another way to translate it. But it's not a hopeless wish. It's not aiming into the, or not, not aiming into the dark. He's saying, "I wish that it were already kindled." It's not that, it's not that he doesn't believe it's going to happen. He just wants it to happen now.

And we need to be careful too, to not see Jesus as some kind of war-monger. He's not a lover of violence and bloodshed. Not at all. He truly is the Prince of Peace. But before peace

comes to a rebellious, God-rejecting world, there must be war. For those who refuse to repent and believe, for those who refuse to fear the Lord, refuse to bow the knee to Christ, listen, there is no peace, only war.

Peace does not come through compromise. It doesn't come through setting aside righteous principle. Ignoring sin, entering into a truce with those who sin. God does not simply agree to disagree. He sends his Christ to enforce the peace, to rule with a rod of iron and to execute judgement. He looks ahead to that day, Jesus does, with, with eager anticipation. He longs to see God's justice prevail. He longs to see God's righteousness wash over the entire land.

Folks, can you sympathize with that? I sure can. I long for this, as we see a spirit of wickedness and rebellion; open defiance against the Lord God and his law growing in our own land. And it's not that we rejoice in seeing people suffer and burn. But we do rejoice in the righteousness of God, don't we? And we sympathize more with God and his interests than we do with man and his.

Especially sinful man, we, we hate this continuing prevalence of sin, as there is wave after wave after wave of sin, degrading sin, horrendous immorality that just saturates and deluges our world. I saw a post a few days ago which noted, that whatever the true numbers of COVID deaths are in 2020, abortion was still the number one cause of death globally. A record number, 42.7 million babies were murdered in the womb in 2020.

Does that make you sick to your stomach? Our sin is more deadly than any plague or sickness or pandemic. We long for Christ's return, and that's why we gather here, Sunday after Sunday. In full knowledge that there is a pandemic going on out there. There's a true sickness. It hurts people, sometimes kills people. But we gather anyway because we believe that people need to hear messages like this one preached to them every Sunday. People need their consciences informed. They need to be taught to protest against sin. They need to resist the culture. They need to proclaim repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ because he is the only salvation. He is the only way out of this fire.

So we long for Christ's return. We long for God's righteousness to reign in Jesus Christ. To see the earth filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as waters cover the sea. Isaiah 11:9. Habakkuk 2:14. And if we, as mere children of the father, yet so small, as redeemed of the Lord and yet still sinful, as enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and yet so weak and so inconsistent, if we can see the need for God's righteousness to reign and cover the land, how much more Christ? I mean, what do you think his view is? That's why Jesus longed for the kindling of this great fire of divine judgement.

Which Isaiah spoke of in Isaiah 66:15, "For behold, the Lord will come in fire, and his chariots like the whirlwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire." So bring it. Amen? Bring it. As to the timing of all these, Day of the Lord prophecies, we've asked the why question, the what question, where.

Let's ask a third, a when question. When will Jesus light this fire and how will it look? You should still be in Malachi.

Take a look at the end of that book and the end of the prophecy of Malachi. Malachi 4:5, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome Day of the Lord comes." Very important prophecy there. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome Day of the Lord comes." Not really talking about forerunner language there, the forerunner to the Messiah, this is talking about forerunner to the Day of the Lord. A little different.

So let me ask you something. When did Elijah come? Was it in the ministry of John the Baptist, who was the forerunner to the Messiah? Is that what Malachi was pointing to? Or is it something else? For some, the prophecy about Elijah coming was fulfilled in John's ministry. No need for a further coming of Elijah for them. For others though, the coming of Elijah is still future.

Turn to Matthew 11, let me just show you this in Matthew 11:7, "Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John," and he said about John that John was more than a prophet. I mean he's, he's the culmination of all Old Testament prophecies, the

last Old Testament prophet. But, "He's more than a prophet, verse 9. "And he of whom it is written," Matthew 11:10, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you." That comes directly from Malachi 3:1. Which we read earlier.

But look down at verse 14. This is where Jesus says something very interesting, he says, "if you're willing to accept it, he" that is John the Baptist, "he is Elijah who is to come." And then this, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Jesus continues, he condemns his own generation because they rejected John's ministry, verse 18. They slandered him. They dismissed him as a demon-possessed man. Had nothing to do with him.

Malachi's prophecy again, Malachi 4:5-6, "I'll send you Elijah the prophet before that great and awesome Day of the Lord comes." And then this very important word, "he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction." So again, we gotta ask, did that happen?

Did the hearts of fathers turn their children, children their fathers? Did John's ministry have a widespread impact in Israel, turning families to one another? No it did not.

In fact, if you remember what Jesus said in our text, Luke 12:52, houses are divided. Hostile to one another. They're not together, united in the fear of the Lord, in the worship of Christ the Messiah. "They're divided father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother," and so on. So for most of Israel, for most of those who live on the earth when Jesus came, Elijah's coming did not happen with John's ministry.

For that unbelieving generation, they forfeited the privilege of his ministry. Which was intended to prepare their hearts to receive their Messiah from God. For a few though, for a small remnant of Israel, followed by this massive influx of us Gentiles. John's ministry, his message of repentance, you know what? It did its work. It did prepare hearts for the Messiah's ministry. It did turn hearts of fathers to children, children to fathers. It did bring family unity in the Lord. There's a coming

generation of Israel though, for whom the coming of Elijah will mean the visitation of divine judgement. It will also be the prelude to Israel's repentance.

Turn over to Matthew 17, now Matthew 17 . To set the scene, this is following the transfiguration. Matthew 17 , Jesus is coming down the mountain with Peter, James, and John. In Matthew 17:10, "And they ask him a question, they say, 'Why do the scribes say that Elijah, first Elijah, must come?'" Why are they asking that? Well they just saw Elijah standing with Moses and the two of them talking with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration.

So they watched that, they asked Jesus, "Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" And Jesus answered in verse 11, "Elijah does come, and he will," notice the future language there, "'He will restore all things. But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.'" Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist."

So, Elijah did come in the ministry of John the Baptist. He came in the spirit and power of Elijah, Luke 1:17. For most of Israel though, Elijah was unrecognized. But Jesus says, promises right here, Elijah will come, in the future and he will restore all things. Which is when Malachi 4:5 says, this will happen "before the great and awesome Day of the Lord comes."

Does the Bible give us any indication of maybe when that might happen? Any clues? Any evidence of the time of Elijah's coming? Well obviously I wouldn't ask all those questions if I wasn't prepared to give an answer. So, yes, it does, and it's called the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation. You can turn there. In answering the questions in our outline about when all this will come to pass. What it's all going to look like.

I want to take you on a bit of a jet tour, ah maybe a helicopter tour. You know, we're getting up there but then we're going to come and swoop down and maybe do a, a map of the earth kind of course and see if you can follow some of this through Revelation. It'll be short. But hopefully it'll be helpful in

answering some of these questions. The same Jesus who told his disciples that he came to cast fire on the earth. That he's eager to see it kindled, this is the same one, by the way, who has given this revelation to John.

So don't miss the point that what he thought about in Luke chapter 12 is what he's expanding on in the Book of Revelation. About sixty years after he ascended bodily into heaven. Jesus told John in Revelation 1:19, He said, "Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this." Jot that verse down, Revelation 1:19. Because that is the outline for the entire Book of Revelation.

The things that you've seen, that's chapter 1. Those that are, that's chapters 2 and 3, the letters to Christ's churches. The things that are to take place after this, that's recorded in chapters 4 through 22. Things that you've seen, the things that are, the things that will take place after this. Chapters 4 through 22, that's the last point in the outline of Revelation. It's a long point.

Those are things written in those chapters that pertain to Israel, not primarily to the church. But to Israel. We know that Revelation, as a book, as a work, is written for the instruction, the edification, the hope of the church. Revelation 22:16 says, "I, Jesus have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches." So it's for the church. But much of it is not about the church, it's about Israel.

After Revelation 1 through 3, the Lord has come for his bride. Just as he promised in John 14:1-3 saying, "I go to prepare a place for you, if I go I will come again and take you to be with myself, that where I am there you may be with me also." He's coming for his bride. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 talks about the rapture of the church. 1 Corinthians 15 as well, talks about this, this event known as the rapture. This happens evidently after Revelation 2 and 3 but before Revelation 4 and 5.

After the Lord removes the church from the earth, a period of chaos will ensue. You can imagine that. How many ever believers there are on the earth, I mean maybe we're not here,

maybe we're all driving in our cars, flying in planes, some pilots, some bus drivers, some train operators, all kinds of industries around the world and what happens when he takes us to be with himself? A lot of wrecked stuff. A lot of collateral damage to that event.

So the earth's inhabitants are going to have to adjust to this new normal. They're going to have to find a way to explain this strange phenomena of all these people disappearing. The Antichrist will be alive at that time, maybe not revealed fully, but he'll be working his way into power.

The nation of Israel, at that time, is going to dwell in relative security in the land. So much so that it constructs a new temple, reinstitutes sacrifice; even the city of Babylon will be rebuilt. It'll grow into wealth and prominence as the economic center of the world. It'll be greater than London, Tokyo, New York, all these other wealthy cities combined.

And during this period, near the start of the great tribulation, the prophecy of Ezekiel 38-39 will come to pass.

Gog and Magog, which is modern day Turkey and Iran, perhaps even Russia. This Gog, Magog alliance will invade the nation of Israel. And Ezekiel 38:11 says that they will “fall upon a quiet people who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, having no bars and no gates.”

From one perspective, this invasion, it is used of God to, to wake Israel up from its spiritual deadness and lethargy, to provoke Israel to repentance and faith, to stop relying on other nations and deals and money like it always has. From another perspective though, this invasion from Gog and Magog offends God deeply. It arouses his justice to protect the weak and the vulnerable.

Listen to this in Ezekiel 38:19 and following, “For in my jealousy,” God says. When this happens, this invasion happens, they come upon this unsuspecting people. And God says this, “In my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, on that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. The fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field and all creeping things that creep on the ground, all the people who

are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence.
And the mountains shall be thrown down, the cliffs shall fall,
and every wall shall tumble to the ground.

"I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains,
declares the Lord God. Every man's sword will be against his
brother. With pestilence and bloodshed, I will enter into
judgment with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes the
many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones,"
here it is, "fire and sulfur. And so I will show my greatness
and my holiness and make myself known to the eyes of many
nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

That's the result of the Gog, Magog invasion. They get all
dressed up. They get there and boom. They're dead. It's going to
take seven years, according to Ezekiel 39. Seven years for their
explosive ordinance disposal teams to go through and sweep
through the land and get rid of all that dangerous unused
ordinance to destroy weapons, to cleanse and purify the land.
And it's during this time between the rapture, this invasion,
the cleanup. Israel starts rebuilding its temple.

If the Gog, Magog invasion were to take place today, it would be Turkey, Iran, which are predominantly Muslim nations. With this religiously driven force removed, this leaves the power vacuum, a religious power vacuum that shifts the balance of world power over to Europe, over to revived Roman empire that's lead by the antichrist and fed by the apostate religion of the false prophet who calls everybody to worship the beast in his image.

Now, Revelation 4 and 5. There's a throne, throne room scene in Revelation 4 and 5 and we find there that the Lamb of God, he is the only one, he recognizes the only one worthy to take the scroll. Nobody else can take the scroll, only he can. The breaking of the seals, he's, he's the only one worthy to break the seals, to open the scroll, to read what's written. The breaking of those seals, the opening of that scroll, that is the commencement, preparation and commencement of this final judgement, the Day of the Lord.

You can actually see the Day of the Lord in Revelation. It's actually a series of judgements. You got seven seals in Revelation 6 through 8. Followed by seven trumpets in Revelation 8 through 11. Then there's this brief historical interlude in Revelation 12-14 and that spans the entire, entirety of Israel's history, Revelation 12-14. And then it takes up again the judgements, seven bowls filled with the plagues of God's wrath in Revelation 15 and 16. There's more to cover in the final chapters but I'll hold off on that.

Let's now take that helicopter down from high levels and swoop down to see a closer look and see this fire that Jesus wants to start. So keep in mind as we go through this, cause we're going to take a look at those judgements beginning in Revelation 6, so you can turn there. As we look at these judgements, these are physical, temporal judgements, and all these judgements are a prelude to the full final judgement, which is the second death in the lake of fire. An eternal judgement of pain and suffering.

But what you need to see as we walk through these judgements, and I'm just gonna briefly hit them, okay? But as we walk through these, you need to see that this is what God thinks about sin. I'm telling you, if we see sin and we're, we're disturbed, and we're saddened, and we feel sorrow, and we feel indignation and anger, I mean we're so , we're so weak and so small, and we're so even mixed with sin ourselves that we don't see it purely.

We don't see it from the purity of God's holiness and so you need to understand when you see this horrendous judgement falling on the earth. This is just. This is righteous. This is God and his view of sin. He hates it. Starting in Revelation 6-8, the seven seals, and the first four of these seals, by the way, these are the four horsemen of the apocalypse. But they're portrayed by horses and riders in the first four seals.

First seal, Revelation 6:1-2, it's a white horse. And that white horse portrays the power that's granted to the Antichrist. He comes in peace and conquers. But without war. So there's an administrative takeover. Second seal, Revelation 6:3-4, a red

horse. There's a massive increase on the earth in violent crime. People killing each other, slaying each other. Third seal, Revelation 6:5-6, is a black horse. That represents a massive, worldwide famine. Price hikes on basic, staple foods. Fourth seal, Revelation 6:7-8, it's a pale horse. What's that? That's a pandemic. We thought COVID was bad, this one actually kills twenty five percent of the earth's population. At today's count, you know, nearly eight billion people? We're talking about two billion people dead from this plague. It's a lot of people. That's a lot of overrun of hospitals.

Fifth seal, Revelation 6:9-11, the prayers of the martyrs killed after the rapture but before the tribulation. The sixth seal, Revelation 6:12-17. Just read it there, "When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was an earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale."

Look, you got the rich and the powerful of the earth, I mean, if they're still rich and powerful when the Antichrist is

alive. It means that they've lined up under him. They've submitted to his rule. They've secured his favor, because they're trying to hold onto their stuff. They're trying to hold onto their privilege, their access, their travel permissions. They're, they're trying to hold onto everything, and so they, they go with it.

The power that they have because of this compromise protects them against some of the earlier judgements. The rise in violent crime. Imagine them in their fortress with their wall and their armed guards. All these former military guys with a lot of skill and experience but no money. They'll be paid handsomely. Their power protects them from violent crime. Their wealth mitigates against things like famine and plague, because they can stockpile and hoard and if the rest of the world is dying and starving, they're okay in their little fortresses and their compounds.

This earthquake though, these cosmic signs, you know what? God has a way of leveling rich and poor alike. The Lamb opens the seventh seal in Revelation 8:1-5, the result in verse 5 is

"peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, another earthquake." These seal judgements fulfill what Joel prophesied in Joel 2:30-31, "wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. Sun turned to darkness, moon to blood, before the great and awesome Day of the Lord comes." It's why we're calling this, preludes to judgement, to the Day of the Lord. Fire keeps burning in Revelation 8-11 in seven trumpet judgements.

The first trumpet, Revelation 8:7, there's a third of the earth burned up when hail and fire are thrown down on the earth. Again, that's that word *ballo*, cast down on the earth. Second trumpet, Revelation 8:8-9 is blown. A great mountain burning with fire is thrown, again the verb *ballo*. Thrown, cast down into the sea, it turns to blood killing a third of the sea life. Third trumpet, Revelation 8:10-11, the star Wormwood falls, poisons a third of the earth's freshwater supply, killing many people. Fourth trumpet, Revelation 8:12, a third of the light that comes from sun, moon, and stars, goes dark. I mean there's, there's no light. People are walking around at dusk all the time. Can't see. It's really a kind of a picture. It really is a

picture of their hearts. It really is a picture of their condition.

Fifth trumpet, gets even worse here. Revelation 9:1-11, the bottomless pit is opened, and by God's command, he releases demons that come to torment people such that verse 6, "people will seek death and not find it. They'll long to die, but death will flee from them." Imagine a whole bunch of failed suicides. Sixth trumpet, Revelation 9:13-19, four more demons. They're released to kill another third of mankind. I haven't done all the math yet, but I can't figure out how many people are left.

Then this in Revelation 9:20-21, all this has happened. All this has fallen on the earth. And it says, "The rest of the mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands." What? What in the world? They didn't give up worshipping demons, idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk. I mean, folks, can we just agree that we're going to give up worshipping these things just by reading this? "Nor did they repent," verse

21, "of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts."

Listen folks, it's, it's here, at this point, before the seventh angel blows the seventh trumpet, many scholars see that this is where Elijah comes. In Revelation 11:3-13, we read about the two witnesses. The two great prophets who will come in the spirit and power of Moses and Elijah. And this is what fulfills Malachi 4:5, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome Day of the Lord comes."

Now let's read what happens when that seventh angel blows that seventh trumpet. Revelation 11 starting in verse 15, and reading to verse 19, "Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.'

"And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, 'We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you

have taken your great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and the saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.' Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail."

For the sake of time, I'm going to leave you to read the rest of the story in Revelation, the symbolic interlude that covers all of Israel's history in Revelation 12-14, the seven bowls of wrath, Revelation 15-16, pouring out judgements of physical pain and suffering upon the worshippers of the beast. But all these escalating judgements, they enrage the beast.

God uses the hatred of the beast to judge the whore of Babylon, according to Revelation 17:16. That economic system that covers the entire earth, that network, that interlocking, symbiotic network of covetousness and greed is judged. Because of the anger of the Antichrist that's stirred up by God. And

Babylon's destruction is so sudden, so violent, so thorough, Revelation 18, it's as if the beast has set off a nuclear, holocaust device to cause utter and complete devastation and destruction.

Just as a brief overview of Revelation 19-22. Christ, he comes as the beast surrounds the land, he destroys the armies of the beast. He throws the beast and the false prophet, alive, into the lake of fire. Satan himself who has been indwelling and inhabiting the beast. He is bound, cast into the abyss for a thousand years, during which time Christ will reign for a thousand years, literally on the throne of his father David in Jerusalem.

After that, God sets free Satan for a time, sets him free from the abyss. To gather all the unbelieving on the earth to make war against Jerusalem. You think, well wait a minute, if all those people were destroyed before they went in the millennium, how do we get unbelieving people at the end of the millennium? Well it happens because there are believing people entering into the millennium in their physical, natural bodies,

who are not given glorified bodies. They enter into the millennium, protected by God, enter in, start procreating, making, building families.

In fact they populate nations. A thousand year's time, in the productivity of that time is going to result in a wide-spread population boom around the whole entire earth. So some of those children that grow up in those believing homes, entering into the millennium. They're going to be born. They'll start growing up, because they too are born sinners in their natural state. They have to put their faith in Christ. They have to repent of their sin. They are those whom Christ will rule the rod of iron during the millennial reign.

The end of the millennium though, having been suppressed by Christ's rule over the earth, Satan's released. He comes, gathers all those unbelieving, they come, surround Jerusalem again in a Gog, Magog like invasion once again. And Christ destroys the devil's armies, once again, with the word of his mouth. He throws the devil in the lake of fire and he enters into judgement with the earth, at the great white throne.

It's after that final judgement, where all unbelievers, at that judgement, they will be raised from the dead according to Daniel 12:2, "Those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." They'll all be given resurrected bodies, fit for their eternal destiny. It's a horrid thing to think about, when you think about fit for everlasting fire. They'll all be cast in the lake of fire, death and hades will be cast into the lake of fire as well. So, no more death ever. That's the death of death.

This ushers in a new heaven, a new earth, the beautiful city, the new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven. We enter into the eternal state. All that to say, I wanted you to get a broader picture so you could have a glimpse of what Jesus saw so clearly, what he was thinking of in Luke 12:49. Thanks be to God for having the Holy Spirit move Luke to write these verse to give us insight into his mind. All this that he later revealed to John and wrote the book of Revelation. I wanted you to understand some of those things that Christ is thinking about.

One more question, for today, a fourth question. Who? Who will suffer the fire? Who will suffer the fire? Who will escape the fire? Who will suffer the fire? Everything that we just saw is what Jesus means by fire. That symbol captures the sum and total of all these end time judgements. The prelude, the buildup, the Day of the Lord itself, and the lake of fire, its excruciatingly painful, it's physical, it's temporal expressions of God's wrath in the Day of the Lord. It's final judgement, eternal imprisonment in the lake of fire.

Listen, if you were to stack all those prophetic judgements on top of each other, I mean, I only just, we just, we just got the tip of the iceberg in what we covered today. But if we take all those judgments and stack them all on top of each other, and we pile them up one by one, we consider the individual nature of the suffering on each individual who goes through it. We add to it the, the sense of loss that every individual and every community feels collectively, together. Groaning in pain, sorrowing over the loss, over the judgement.

You add the sadness, you add the fire, the brimstone, you add the poison, the blood, you had terrifying tortures at the hand of terrifying demons, add the famine, add the plague, pile all of it just on top, one after another, and then individualize it and stack that up; add the eternal suffering for all sins of all mankind over all time, each and every individual sin. Get the picture? I mean you've got like a planet sized mountain, like Jupiter. A planet sized mountain of sin pictured in our mind's eye and judgement accompanying sin and that is what God thinks about sin.

Unbelievers will experience the full weight and force of that suffering, of God's anger due for every one of their sins. He will administrate it justly. He will execute it without mercy in Jesus Christ. What about us? What about those who repent and believe? What about those of us who are trying to pursue a wise and faithful stewardship? What about our sins? Is there justice due for our sins as well? Is there wrath in there for us? Go back to Luke 12:50, let's look at this final verse for today. Blessed, this most blessed verse. Jesus said in Luke 12:50, after talking about the fire, he said, "I have a baptism to be

baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!"

The noun baptism, pictures plunging someone into water, fully covering them in water, immersing them. The, the verb baptize just describes the action of doing that, immersing them. So what's this baptism language about? Here he's looking ahead to a future baptism. So he's not talking about the baptism with John the Baptist, he's not talking about his baptism by the Holy Spirit, the commissioning for Messianic ministry, that's all past, that's all past tense.

Here he's looking ahead. He's looking to the future, and notice, it's putting him in distress, until he sees it accomplished. This baptism that he has to undergo is a baptism of judgement. He is going to be immersed completely under this deluge of the wrath of God. Divine wrath poured out on him for the sins of his people. No wonder, as he's picturing the fire to come and knows the wrath of God for sin, no wonder he is thinking and feeling some distress about it.

I mean, he's eager to get it over with, to see it accomplished, but this is real humanity. Looking ahead, anticipating his own baptism by fire, his own atonement, atoning sacrifice, satisfying God's wrath. I mean, oh the whipping, the scourging, the curses, the spitting, even the nailing of his hands and feet to the cross, being lifted up in public shame and scorn, oh that's one thing; the real pain and suffering in that is the wrath of God that fell upon him. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Until it's accomplished, he's going to feel this way until it's accomplished. The verb *teleo*, to finish, to fulfill, to complete, refers to a prophetic fulfillment, fulfillment. Same word Jesus used on the cross, *tetelestai*, declaring it is finished and he gave up his spirit. So until Jesus Christ *tetelestai*, he's feeling this distress with his disciples here at the end of his ministry.

To help us picture what this must have been like for him, I mean, we can't really at all. But take that massive mountain of divine wrath, all that sin piled on top of each other, all that

wrath for sin piled on top of each other, just payment for our sins, and then just plunge Christ into the middle of it. Immerse him in it. Cover him over completely with the wrath of God. Or better yet, take that mountain of wrath and, and invert it, turn it upside down so that the base of the mountain points upward and the peak point downward and then let that point of wrath of that mountain fall on the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved, that's what Christ endured, for our sakes, for your sins, for my sins. His body was broken and no wonder. His blood was poured out, to take that entire mountain of the wrath of God which we rightly deserve, to suffer in our place. Yeah, obviously this distressed him. He sees the whole scope of future history and while he rejoices in that, he knows what it's going to cost.

That's why some refer to this text as a prelude of Gethsemane. Before he got to the garden of Gethsemane, praying in the garden in the night of his betrayal, he spoke these words. I'm distressed, until it's accomplished. But on that night in John 12:27 says, Jesus prayed in a similar way, he

said, "Now is my soul troubled. But what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? For this purpose I have come into this hour."

Beloved, we've been given a gift by Luke, we've been given a gift by the Holy Spirit, we've been given a gift by the father, we've been given a gift by Christ. We've been given privileged insight into our Lord's innermost feelings here, his recognition of his mission, his mind and his mindset about the future, and he's pleased to share it with us, to bring us into his thinking, to help us to understand him.

"I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it's accomplished!" At the same time, it was for the joy that was set before him. You marvel at that ever? "For the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and he's now seated at the right hand of the throne of God." What's he doing there? Interceding for me and you. What a savior, amen?

GRACE CHURCH



Let's pray. Our Father, what can we, again, what can we say but thank you? What could we do but offer ourselves as a living sacrifice? Lord Jesus please be with us, by your spirit, by your word. Help us be faithful to you. Help us to be good servants, wise and faithful servants who execute a wise and faithful stewardship, entering into your work, understanding just something, a glimpse of your mind, your suffering. Let it spur us along to love and good works. I pray Father for our church that you would keep us faithful, wise, good stewards, loving you, loving one another, and proclaiming this gospel of salvation from your wrath.

We thank you so much that you have covered us in the blood shed on the cross. We thank you that you have passed over us by your grace because we are covered with the blood of the Lamb. We look around us and see the sins of the world that we ourselves have committed, and we recognize that the only difference between them and us is your choice. Your gracious choice. We're so grateful to you and we just ask that you would help us to walk in a holy way. Be humble, submissive to you, loving Christ, loving his word, loving one another. For Christ's sake we pray, amen.