

THE THREE GROSS MISCONCEPTIONS OF MAN

LUKE 12:49–59

Introduction

Forcibly, Jesus covered three gross misconceptions of man.

- I. Misconception 1: the Messiah was to bring peace on earth (vv. 49-53).
- II. Misconception 2: the Messiah has not yet come (vv. 54-57).
- III. Misconception 3: men have no need to make “peace with God” (vv. 58-59).

I. *Luke 12:49–53 Jesus Christ Brought Judgment*

The first misconception is that the Messiah came to bring peace on earth. Men usually think of Christ as having brought the message of peace to earth, and He did. He brought *peace with God* to a man’s heart and the *peace of God* to a man’s life (See *Peace*, Jn. 14:27). But note three significant truths about what Christ says in this point.

1. Christ brought not only peace but fire on the earth, that is, judgment. Fire is usually the symbol of judgment the term *fire of hell* (see Mt. 5:22; 18:9). This is the clearest meaning here, for Christ was talking about His death (v. 50).
 - a. The Greek word “ti” can be and probably should be translated how, “how I wish the [fire] were already kindled.” Christ was wishing that the cross was already over with. The judgment as the *sin-bearer* of the world was almost too much for Him to bear (see Lk. 22:39-46, Gethsemane).
 - b. It was Christ’s death that brought the fire of judgment to the world.

=> His death judged (condemned) sin in the flesh or body.

Rom 8:3 *For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man.*

1 Pet 3:18 *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

=> His death judged (condemned) the prince of this world.

John 12:31-32 *“Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”*

John 16:11 *“And in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”*

=> His death caused men to judge themselves to be sinners, sinners who were spiritually dead to God.

2 Cor 5:14-15 *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

1 Pet 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

=> His death caused men to judge themselves in the flesh or body, that is, to judge their flesh as being weak and subject to sin. The flesh of men needs to be controlled and denied and brought into subjection to Christ.

Rom 7:18-20 *I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do — this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*

1 Cor 11:31 *But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.*

Rom 6:6, 10-13 *For we know that our old self was [Greek] crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*

Luke 9:23 *Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*

2. Christ came to suffer and die, that is, to be baptised with the judgment of death and to be separated from God. The term "a baptism to undergo" refers to Christ's death. He was to be immersed, placed into a state of death, of separation from God *for man*. His suffering in bearing the judgment of God was to be beyond imagination. Note that He used the metaphor of both *fire and baptism* to describe His death. Note also that He was *distressed*, pressured to get the ordeal of the judgment over, to have the judgment accomplished and man's salvation completed.

Mark 10:32-34, 38 *They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise." "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with?"*

3. Christ came to bring division to the earth (See Mt. 10:34-37.) Note three things.
 - a. It is Christ who sets a family member against his family. It is important to see this. Christ calls a person out of the world: to be separate from the world and to go about correcting the sin and evil of the world. If a family continues to live in sin and to walk ever onward toward the grave without turning to God and a life of righteousness, two things usually happen.
 - 1) The believer struggles to witness to his loved ones, no matter the cost and opposition he may face.
 - 2) The family members often rebel against the righteousness and efforts of the believer.
 - b. The believer is called to a life of righteousness and to a warfare against sin and evil. If a member of his family is engaged on the side of evil, there is a *natural conflict* between the believer and the family member.
 - 1) The family member is still of the earth and living primarily to satisfy his earthly desires. The thought of God is repressed and subdued so that he can pursue his physical and material desires.
 - 2) The believer is of the earth, but he is also of heaven. He is physical and spiritual, and more importantly, he is living primarily for God and His righteousness, to reach men with the glorious gospel of Christ.

The two natures differ drastically. They are diametrically opposed to one another. The person of the world primarily talks about the world and lives for the pursuit of the world. The person of the spirit makes God the primary force of his life: he talks about God and the things of righteousness, and he pursues God and His righteousness.

- c. A believer is to love his family, but he is to love God first and foremost. Our first loyalty is to God. Two terrible things happen when we put our family before God.
 - 1) Our families cannot be what they should be without God. No family can reach its full potential without God. There will be a lack of spiritual growth and strength, of conviction and commitment, of confidence and assurance, of purpose and meaning, of life and God — a lack of all — it will be for eternity. There will be no sense, no assurance of anything beyond this life.
 - 2) Our families cannot be looked after by God unless God is given His rightful place in the family. If the family takes control over its own life, ignoring God and His control, then what happens to the family is in its hands. God is put off to the side, excluded and shut out. He has no say so over the welfare of the family. The family is left all to itself, and all kinds of trouble usually follows. There is certainly a lack of spiritual strength to face the trials and crises that confront every family during life.

What these two facts teach is this: we must love God supremely, putting Him before all — even before our families. When we do, our families are assured of being

everything they should be and of being looked after and cared for by God (Mt. 6:33). Therefore, a man's decision to follow Christ, no matter the sacrifice to his family, is a wise decision; in fact, it is the only reasonable decision.

Mat 10:34-37 *“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law — a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’ Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”*

Rom 12:1-2 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Mat 22:37-38 *Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.”*

Jude 1:21 *Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*

Deu 6:5 *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

Deu 10:12 *And now , O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

JOHN 14:27 THE SOURCE OF PEACE

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 14:27

Peace (eirene) means to bind together, to join, to weave together. It means that a person is bound, woven and joined together with himself and with God and others.

The Hebrew word is *shalom*. It means freedom from trouble and much more. It means experiencing the highest good, enjoying the very best, possessing all the inner good possible. It means wholeness and soundness. It means prosperity in the widest sense, especially prosperity in the spiritual sense of having a soul that blossoms and flourishes.

1. There is the peace of the world. This is a peace of escapism, of avoiding trouble, of refusing to face things, of unreality. It is a peace that is sought through pleasure, satisfaction, contentment, absence of trouble, positive thinking or denial of problems.
2. There is the peace of Christ and of God. This is, first, a *bosom peace*, a peace deep within. It is a tranquillity of mind, a composure, a peace that is calm in the face of bad circumstances and situations. It is more than feelings — even more than attitude and thought.

This is, second, *the peace of conquest* (see Jn. 16:33). It is the peace independent of conditions and environment; the peace which no sorrow, no danger, no suffering, no experience can take away.

John 16:33 *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

This is, third, the *peace of assurance* (see Rom. 8:28). It is the peace of unquestionable confidence; the peace with a sure knowledge that one’s life is in the hands of God and that all things will work out for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

Rom 8:28 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

This is, fourth, *the peace of intimacy with God* (see Phil. 4:6-7). It is the peace of the highest good. It is the peace that settles the mind, strengthens the will, and establishes the heart.

3. There is the source of peace. Peace is always born out of reconciliation. Its source is found only in the reconciliation wrought by Jesus Christ. Peace always has to do with personal relationships: a man’s relationship to himself, to God, and to his fellow men. A man must be bound, woven, and joined together with himself, with God, and with his fellow man.

Eph 2:13-14 *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.*

Col 1:20-21 *And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour!*

Man secures peace in the following manner:

=> by justification

Rom 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

=> by loving God's Word

Psa 119:165 *Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.*

John 16:33 *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

=> by praying about everything

Phil 4:6-7 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

=> by being spiritually minded

Rom 8:6 *The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.*

=> by keeping his mind upon God

Isa 26:3 *You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.*

Phil 4:8 *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.*

=> by obeying God's commands

Isa 48:18 *If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea.*

Phil 4:9 *Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

The subject of peace is often divided into:

- 1) the peace *with* God, which is wrought through salvation (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14-17);
- 2) the peace *of* God, which is the very peace of God Himself and which points to God as the Source of peace (Lk. 7:50; Phil. 4:6-7);
- 3) the peace *from* God, which God gives to dwell in the heart of the believer as he walks day by day in the Lord (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3). □

II. *Luke 12:54–57 The Unbelief of the People*

The second misconception is that the Messiah has not yet come. People in Jesus' day did not believe that He was the Messiah, and people today do not believe that He is the Messiah. Jesus stated two truths to all unbelievers.

1. People discern the weather, that is, physical matters of the world. Man's natural senses can be very discerning and sharp. He is skilful in studying and experimenting and in drawing conclusions from the natural world. Weather is the example Christ used; but the subject could be finances, medicine, society or any other earthly subject. Jesus said people are very capable in interpreting the material and physical matters of their world.
2. People do not discern spiritual matters. When it comes to the spiritual senses, man is dead and unable to interpret. He does not take time to observe nor to experience the spiritual world, not really.
 - a. People had *failed to discern the time*, that is, the coming of the Messiah. The signs that pointed to Jesus' being the Messiah were visible. A thoughtful and genuinely spiritual person could see the signs, and some had seen them such as Simeon and Anna (Lk. 3:25f). Some of the signs were as follows:
 - => The sceptre, that is, the lawgiver had actually come from Judah in the person of Jesus Christ (Mt. 1:2).
 - => The weeks and ages predicted by Daniel were closing out (Mt. 24:15).
 - => The prophet Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah, had come and proclaimed the Messiah to be Jesus (Mt. 3:1-12).
 - => The baby Jesus had been born in Bethlehem (Mt. 2:1).
 - => Many throughout the world were expecting the coming of some great person, some Messiah (Mt. 1:18).
 - => Many godly Jews were looking for the coming of the Messiah, God's great Deliverer of Israel (Lk. 2:25f).
 - => The message and works of Jesus were great evidence, phenomenal miracles given by God to substantiate His claims.

In addition to these what greater signs could God give than the signs which change lives, radically change them? Unbelief is without excuse. The problem is that men want signs of their own choosing, not the signs which God has chosen to give. Men are always wanting God to deal with them through some...

- spectacular sign
- astounding truth
- miraculous experience
- brilliant sight
- irrefutable argument
- unbelievable deliverance

God's great concern is not *signs from heaven*, not signs outside man. God's great concern is meeting people in their lives, within their hearts, where they really need help. People must discern the times if they are to live abundantly while on this earth and live eternally in the next world. God wants to meet people in their sickness and sorrow and lostness. Meeting man in the areas of his need are irrefutable signs given to every generation.

- b. They *failed to discern and judge what was right*. This was one of the most honest, thought-provoking, and revealing questions ever asked of man. It takes a man who is honestly open — a man who is willing to have his heart exposed for what it really is — to answer the question. “Why...don't you judge for yourselves what is right?”

Thought 1. Why do men not discern, not judge what is right?

- 1) Why do men not discern that God *is*, that He exists?

Gen 1:1 *In the beginning God.*

Neh 9:6 *You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.*

Deu 4:35 *You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides him there is no other.*

Deu 6:4-5 *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

Psa 83:18 *Let them know that you, whose name is the Lord — that you alone are the Most High over all the earth.*

Psa 86:10 *For you are great and do marvellous deeds; you alone are God.*

Isa 43:11-12 *“I even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no saviour. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed — I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “that I am God.”*

Isa 44:6 *This is what the Lord says — Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: “I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.”*

Isa 45:18 *For this is what the Lord says — he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited — he says: “I am the Lord, and there is no other.”*

Mark 12:29-30 *“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’”*

1 Cor 8:4 *So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.*

Eph 4:4-6 *There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to one hope when you were called — one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

1 Tim 2:5-6 *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.*

1 John 5:7 *For there are three that testify:*

2) Why do men not discern that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God.

Mat 14:33 *Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”*

Mark 1:1 *The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*

John 1:34 *“I have seen and I [John the Baptist] testify that this is the Son of God.”*

John 3:16-18 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”*

John 9:35-37 *Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.”*

John 10:36 *“What about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’?”*

John 11:25-27 *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”*

Heb 10:29 *How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?*

1 John 4:15 *If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.*

3) Why do men not discern that righteousness is the way for men to live and the way for communities and the world to conduct their affairs.

Mat 5:20 *“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

Rom 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

1 Cor 15:34 *Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God — I say this to your shame.*

1 Tim 6:10-12 *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

Titus 2:12-13 *It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

2 Pet 3:9-14 *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.*

Jesus was saying that the signs of the times — the signs of every generation — the signs of nature itself — are enough to point toward God in all His love and righteousness. “Why...don’t you judge for yourselves what is right?”

III. Luke 12: 58–59 Man’s Need for Peace with God

The third misconception is that men have no need to *make peace with God*. Jesus used an earthly illustration to stress three truths.

1. Men have a bad case before God, the Judge.
2. When a man has a hopeless case with an adversary, the best thing for him to do is to hasten for *settlement out of court*.
3. Otherwise, he is going to be judged in court and have to *pay every penny*.

So it is with God. The hour is urgent. Man needs to make peace with God; he needs to give all diligence to the effort immediately. If he fails to make peace, then he will have to pay the most severe penalty, to the very last mite.

Mat 23:33 *“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?”*

Rom 2:3 *So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment?*

1 Th 5:3 *While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.*

Heb 2:3 *How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.*

Heb 12:25 *See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?*

Prov 11:21 *Be sure of this: The wicked will not go unpunished, but those who are righteous will go free.*

Prov 16:5 *The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.*

Jer 11:11 *Therefore this is what the Lord says: ‘I will bring on them a disaster they cannot escape. Although they cry out to me, I will not listen to them.’*

Amos 5:18-20 *Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord! Why do you long for the day of the Lord? That day will be darkness, not light. It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him. Will not the day of the Lord be darkness, not light — pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?*

Amos 9:2 *Though they dig down to the depths of the grave, from there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to the heavens, from there I will bring them down. ■*