Luke 11 Commentary

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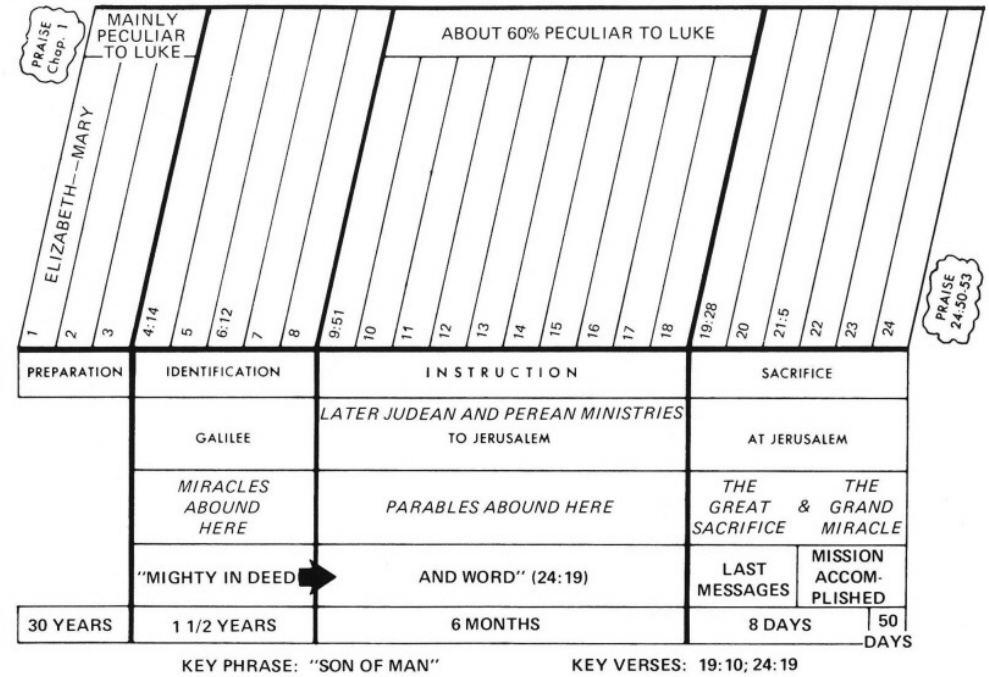
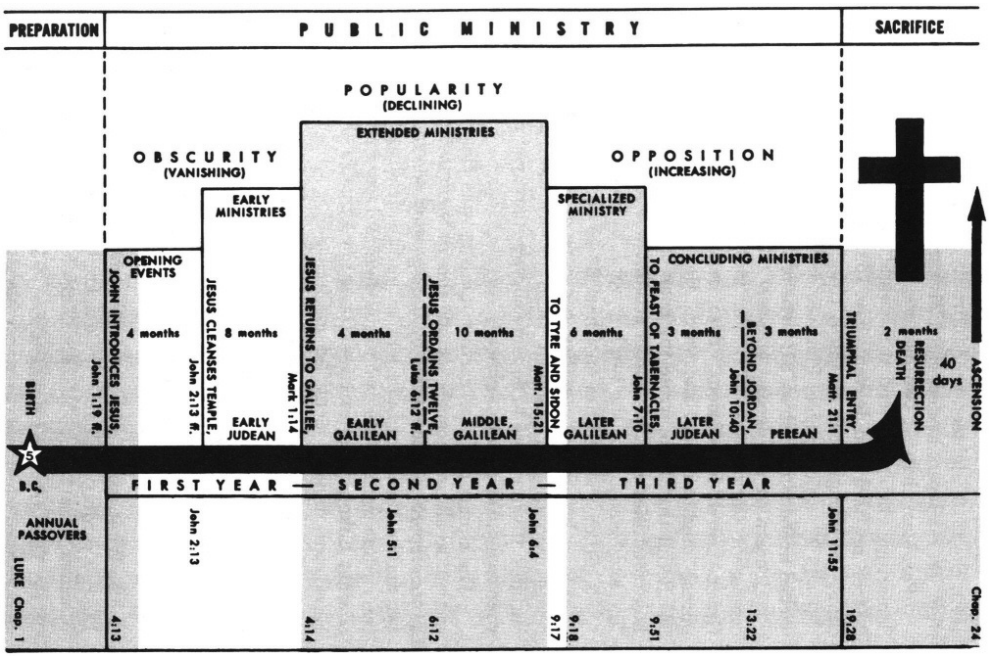


From Jensen's Survey of the NT by permission
John MacArthur's Introduction to the Gospel of Luke
Charles Swindoll's Introduction to Luke
Luke Overview Chart by Charles Swindoll



Click chart to enlarge LIFE OF CHRIST IN GOSPEL OF LUKE (See Shaded Areas)
Chart from recommended resource Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission

Ryrie Study Bible -Borrow

c. 5 B.C.	c. A.D. 28–33	c. A.D. 62
Birth of Jesus	Jesus' ministry, death, resurrection	Luke's Gospel written

Source: ESV Global Study Bible

Luke 11:1 It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." (NAS 1995)

KJV Luke 11:1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

BGT Luke 11:1 Κα γ νετο ν τ ε ναι α τ ν ν τ π τιν προσευχ μενον, ς πα σατο, ε π ν τις τ ν μαθητ ν α το πρ ς α τ ν· κ ριε, δ δαξον μ ς προσε χεσθαι, καθ ς κα ω ννης δ δαξεν το ς μαθητ ς α το .

NET Luke 11:1 Now Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he stopped, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

CSB Luke 11:1 He was praying in a certain place, and when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples."

ESV Luke 11:1 Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."

NIV Luke 11:1 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

NLT Luke 11:1 Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

- **It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place**Luke 6:12; 9:18,28; 22:39-45; Heb 5:7
- **Lord, teach us to pray** Ps 10:17; 19:14; Ro 8:26,27; James 4:2,3; Jude 1:20
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:1 Jesus' Pattern for Every Prayer - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Luke 18:10-14+ (CONTRASTING A PRAYER OF PRIDE WITH A PRAYER OF HUMILITY) **Two men went up into the temple to pray,** one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' 13 "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14 "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Matthew 6:7-8 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. 8 "So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

Luke 5:33+ And they said to Him, "The disciples of John often **fast and offer prayers,** the disciples of the Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink."

James Tissot's "The Lord's Prayer"

THE DISCIPLE'S REQUEST FOR PRAYER PRINCIPLES

Prayer Outline:

- Luke 11:2–4 Lord's instruction on prayer.
- Luke 11:5–8 Lord's eagerness to hear prayer
- Luke 11:9 -10 Lord's certainty to answer prayer

- Luke 11:11–13 Lord's desire to give best to those who pray

Graham Scroggie - Luke's Gospel has more emphasis on prayer than any other Gospel. In fact Luke has been called the "*Gospel of Prayer*" because of his emphasis, not only on our need to pray, but also on Jesus' prayer life. Nine times Luke tells of prayers that Jesus offered in the crises of His life, and seven of these are unique to Luke.

Gene Brooks helps set the context for Luke 11 - From the first chapters of his Gospel, Luke has pointed toward the importance of trusting Christ and warning against unbelief. After revealing Jesus as the "Christ of God" (Luke 9:20+), Luke's Gospel shifts (Luke 9:51+) to calling for a response. Jesus turns his attention from ministry in Galilee to a resolute focus towards Jerusalem and His coming suffering (Luke 9:51-18:14+). Despite opposition (Luke 9:51-56+), Jesus calls for personal sacrifice, even of family responsibilities, in order to concentrate fully on serving the Lord (Luke 9:57-62+). As Jesus moves toward Jerusalem, He sends 70 disciples ahead with a warning that God's Kingdom is near (Luke 10:1-12+). Despite his sadness over those who reject the Kingdom, (Luke 10:13-16+), Jesus rejoices over those who have received salvation (Luke 10:17-24+). Questioned by a Torah expert on eternal life, Jesus defines authentic spiritual life through the story of the Good Samaritan. Authentic spiritual life is defined by love for God and others (Luke 10:25-37+), by the high priorities of God's Presence (Luke 10:38-42+) and of prayer (Luke 11:1-13). (Lk 11:1-13 The Priority of Prayer)

It happened that while Jesus (Iesous) **was praying** (proseuchomai in present tense) **in a certain place** - The Name **Jesus** is not in the Greek, so it literally reads "while He was praying." The introductory phrase (literally "it happened that") is very common in Luke (69x) and Acts (54x). This is the fifth time that Luke referred to Jesus praying (Lk 3:21+; Lk 5:16+; Lk 6:12+; Lk 9:18+, Lk 9:28+; cf. Lk 22:32+, Lk 22:40-44+; Lk 23:46+). The disciples must have seen and heard Him praying and finally their heart is stirred to ask Him to teach them to pray. It is surprising that this is the only time in the Gospels where someone asked Jesus for a specific teaching. It is fascinating that we don't hear the disciples asking the Lord to teach them to Preach, Prophesy, Cast out demons, Worship, Witness, Find their ministry, Start up home fellowships, Grow a church, How to be a user friendly church, but How To Pray! Surely from watching Jesus' practice of prayer, they came to realize that this practice was absolutely vital to the "success" of any and every ministry!

> **THOUGHT** - If the Lord Jesus prayed often, what does that say about our desperate need for prayer! In so doing Jesus modeled for us a life of total dependence on the Father. Prayer is vital for the success of every ministry of every age! Do you believe this? Does your prayer life back up your profession? There is a lesson in Jesus' example of prayer for all us (all of us are to be disciple makers) because when others see us actually doing what we have been talking about, and especially if we do it over and over (like Jesus did), our example is more likely to get through to those we are teaching.

After He had finished (ceased - pauo), **one of His disciples** (mathetes) **said to Him, "Lord** (kurios)**, teach** (didasko aorist imperative-conveys urgency) **us to pray** (proseuchomai in present tense) **just as John also taught** (didasko) **his disciples** (mathetes)**."** - Apparently John the Baptist had taught his disciples how to prayer and Jesus' disciples had heard them pray and noted they sounded like the prayers Jesus prayed. Where had he learned? He had godly parents Zacharias and Elizabeth ("they were both righteous in the sight of God") and in Lk 1:13 the angel Gabriel appeared to him and told him his "petition has been hear and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son." So clearly John's father knew how to pray! And also John had time alone in the wilderness, which surely contributed to his pattern of prayer, for who else could he converse with in the wilderness but God! And you might also be asking why would teaching on prayer be necessary for Jesus' disciples? Surely every Jew knew how to pray. No, that is not necessarily the case (see Mt 6:7,8+)! The religious leaders had so corrupted the truth that the people were not taught how to pray. How could the Pharisees teach them to approach God the Father, for their father was the Devil, not Jehovah. They had no right to enter into the presence of God the Father and so for the most part their prayers were meaningless as in Lk 18 (See passage above). Exceptions are found as in the case of the man praying next to the Pharisee in the temple who cried out 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' (Lk 18:13+)

Notice that the disciple did not ask "teach us ***A*** prayer" (one that we can repeat), or "teach us ***HOW*** to pray", but "teach us to pray". Jesus answers not with a rote ritual to follow but with a persistent pattern to practice! So Jesus does not give them a "how to" pray, but just says to pray, because the best way to learn how to pray is to pray (not attend a seminar on prayer, etc). And remember prayer in its basic form is not religious jargon but simply speaking to our best Friend.

Spurgeon - We must all feel that if we are to pray aright, we must be taught of God, by his Holy Spirit. We are full of infirmities, and **if there is any time when our infirmities are felt most, it is when we engage in prayer,**but "the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as are ought." Let us, then, breathe this prayer to our great Teacher, "***Lord, teach us to pray.***" (Luke 11 - exposition)

A T Robertson - Jesus had taught them by precept (Matthew 6:7-15) and example (Luke 9:29). Somehow the example of Jesus on this occasion stirred them to fresh interest in the subject and to revival of interest in John's teachings (Luke 5:33). So Jesus gave

them the substance of the Model Prayer in Matthew, but in shorter form. Jesus warns us against repetitive prayers. In fact, in the verse immediately proceeding the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6:7, the King James Version says this: "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do."

Brian Bill explains why we are not required to recite it - This prayer is recorded twice in Scripture and the wording is different in each prayer. If Jesus was giving us a prayer to be memorized and recited, He would not have given us different words the two times He gave it. The disciples said, "teach us to pray" NOT "teach us a prayer." It's one thing to read or deliver a prayer; it's something else to know how to pray. This prayer is repeated nowhere else in the New Testament. We have no record of believers using this prayer in any of the other prayer passages in the Bible. Clearly, Jesus was not intending to give the disciples some sort of prayer that they could memorize and then just deliver. It's much deeper than that. Jesus wanted to give His followers a model to follow when addressing God so that we can learn how to pray like Jesus Himself prayed. (Luke 11:1-4 How to Pray the Lord's Way) Here is Brian Bill's Outline

1. The paternity of prayer: "Father"
2. The priority of prayer: "Hallowed be your name"
3. The program of prayer: "Your kingdom come"
4. The provision of prayer: "Give us each day our daily bread"
5. The pardon of prayer: "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us"
6. The protection of prayer: "And lead us not into temptation"

Some other things that Jesus did NOT say about prayer - the **posture** of prayer, the **place** of prayer, the **times** you pray.

Spurgeon said some pray as "a mere exercise of memory, simply using the organs of noise-making; and it is absurd to imagine that such a parrot exercise can be pleasing to the living God!" (Luke 11 - exposition)

Guzik - This prayer is notable for its simplicity and brevity; it is a marvel of powerful prayer put in simple terms. The Rabbis had sayings like: "Whoever is long in prayer is heard" and "Whenever the righteous make their prayer long, their prayer is heard." One famous Jewish prayer began: "Blessed, praised, and glorified, exalted, and honored, magnified and lauded be the name of the Holy One."ii. When we try to impress God with our many words, we deny that God is a loving, yet holy Father. Instead, we should follow the counsel of Ecclesiastes 5:2: God is in heaven, and you are on earth; therefore let your words be few. (Luke 11)

Brian Bill - "The disciples were not known for their praying. I don't know of anywhere in the Gospels where the disciples were characterized as men of prayer. They often watched Jesus pray but they didn't enter into prayer themselves. In fact, in the hour of Jesus' greatest need they dropped their eyelids instead of dropping to their knees. The question voiced by this one disciple shows that prayer is not only needed, but that it was a deficiency in his life and in the life of his friends. We're the same way, aren't we? We know prayer is important, we know Jesus modeled it, but most of us fall far short. If we want to pray like Jesus prayed, let's learn along with his disciples." (Luke 11:1-4 How to Pray the Lord's Way)

Barclay - It was the regular custom for a Rabbi to teach his disciples a simple prayer which they might habitually use. John had done that for his disciples, and now Jesus' disciples came asking him to do the same for them. This is Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer (**Ed**: John 17 is more accurately called the Lord's prayer). It is shorter than Matthew's, but it will teach us all we need to know about how to pray and what to pray for....The prayer covers all life. (a) It covers present need. It tells us to pray for our daily bread; but it is bread for the day for which we pray. This goes back to the old story of the manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16:11-21+). Only enough for the needs of the day might be gathered. We are not to worry about the unknown future, but to live a day at a time. "I do not ask to see/The distant scene--one step enough for me." (b) It covers past sin. When we pray we cannot do other than pray for forgiveness, for the best of us is a sinful man coming before the purity of God. (c) It covers future trials. Temptation means any testing situation. It includes far more than the mere seduction to sin; it covers every situation which is a challenge to and a test of a person's manhood and integrity and fidelity. We cannot escape it, but we can meet it with God. (Daily Study Bible)

Brian Bell entitles his sermon on prayer in Luke 11:1-4 Coming Up for Air explaining - Marine creatures, like whales, seals, dolphins from ocean depths must rise at intervals to breathe, so as to live. Breath holding isn't the key, oxygen conservation & storage is. Seals have so much oxygen in their body, they actually exhale before they dive. It is also necessary for man to mount into a higher region if he is to obtain spiritual life and grace for living it. And this, the Christian does in prayer. "*Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air*." - W. H. Griffith Thomas...Relative to body size, whale lungs are proportionally somewhat smaller than human lungs. But whale lungs are far more efficient: While human lungs exchange about 15-20% of their contents with each breath, whale lungs exchange about 90% with each breath. This means that whales can take up oxygen and dispose of carbon dioxide much faster than humans, enabling them to hold their breath underwater for long periods. Man wasn't designed to "stay down" as long as whales. So we must rise at more frequent intervals to breathe, so as to live. Oh Christian, we must rise at more

frequent intervals to Come Up For Air, so as to live!....Prayer becomes a dance, **a subtle interplay of human and divine** that ultimately accomplishes Gods work on earth. (adapted Philip Yancey) I do not control the action - That's a pagan concept of prayer (Putting the gods to work) I'm not controlled by the action - That's a Hindu concept of prayer (where you slump passively into the impersonal & faded will of the gods) a) I neither do it nor have it done to me. - I will to participate in what is willed. **Illustration** - 5yr. old to friend, "me and my dad built a tree house." (Did the 5 yr old participate? Yes. Did dad need his help? Not really. Would dad agree w/his statement? happily!) If you feel like a beginner at prayer that's okay, we'll be beginners all our life. Jesus exemplified this prayer principle by His… 1. Practice (Lk 11:1); Precept (Lk 11:2-4); Parable (Lk 11:5-8 persistent knock); Promise (Lk 11:9-13 ask/seek/knock). This prayer is only 61 words long and takes about 15 seconds to pray. Some people's prayers need to be cut short on both sides and set on fire in the middle....Little kids have problems when coloring "staying in the lines"! - But what's understandable as a child is unacceptable as an Adult! Let us move more toward Adulthood in our prayer life! "Let's stay in the lines"! (God's guidelines! Lk 11:1-4, Mt 6:9-14) This is the kind of prayer God honors & hears!...I think all of us have one "Routine Prayer" in our system: Once we get rid of it, then we can really start to pray! This week are you willing to break that habit? Q: Are you praying w/your mind on hold, & your mouth on automatic? Make sure your mind is engaged, & your heart sensitized!

Praying (4336) **proseuchomai** from **pros** = toward, facing, before [emphasizing the direct approach of the one who prays in seeking God's face] + **euchomai** = originally to speak out, utter aloud, express a wish, then to pray or to vow. Greek technical term for invoking a deity) in the NT is always used of prayer addressed to God (to Him as the object of faith and the One who will answer one's prayer) and means to speak consciously (with or without vocalization) to Him, with a definite aim (See study of noun **proseuche**) . **Proseuchomai** encompasses all the aspects of prayer -- submission, confession, petition, supplication (may concern one's own need), intercession (concerned with the needs of others), praise, and thanksgiving. **V i n e** says that **proseuchomai** carries with it a notion of **worship** (but see the Greek word for worship = **proskuneo**) which is not present in the other words for prayer (eg, aiteo, deomai, both of which involve spoken supplication)

Lawrence Richards notes that "In classical Greek proseuchomai was the technical term for calling on a deity. The NT transforms the classical stiffness into the warmth of genuine conversation. Such entreaty in the NT is addressed to God or Jesus and typically is both personal and specific. (Borrow Expository Dictionary of Bible Words)

Kenneth Wuest adds that the prefixed preposition **pros** "gives it the idea of definiteness and directness in prayer, with the consciousness on the part of the one praying that he is talking face to face with God...(thus proseuchomai) speaks also of the consciousness on the part of the one who prays, of the fact of God's presence and His listening ear." (Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3 - used by permission)

Wayne Detzler writes that "The basic idea of proseuchomai is to ***bring something***, and in prayer this pertains to bringing up prayer requests. In early Greek culture an offering was brought with a prayer that it be accepted. Later the idea was changed slightly, so that the thing brought to God was a prayer. In later Greek, prayers appealed to God for His presence. (Borrow New Testament Words in Today's Language)

> **Proseuchomai in Luke and Acts** - Lk. 1:10; Lk. 3:21; Lk. 5:16; Lk. 6:12; Lk. 6:28; Lk. 9:18; Lk. 9:28; Lk. 9:29; Lk. 11:1; Lk. 11:2; Lk. 18:1; Lk. 18:10; Lk. 18:11; Lk. 20:47; Lk. 22:40; Lk. 22:41; Lk. 22:44; Lk. 22:46; Acts 1:24; Acts 6:6; Acts 8:15; Acts 9:11; Acts 9:40; Acts 10:9; Acts 10:30; Acts 11:5; Acts 12:12; Acts 13:3; Acts 14:23; Acts 16:25; Acts 20:36; Acts 21:5; Acts 22:17; Acts 28:8

Finished (3973) **pauo** means to cease (middle voice = oneself) from an activity in which one is engaged. **Pauo** in the active sense means to cause something or someone to cease from some activity or state. To make stop. To stop, restrain, refrain, quit, desist. To come to an end.

> **Pauo - 15x/15v -cease(4), ceased(4), finished(2), incessantly*(1), keep(1), kept right*(1), stopped(2).** Lk. 5:4; Lk. 8:24; Lk. 11:1; Acts 5:42; Acts 6:13; Acts 13:10; Acts 20:1; Acts 20:31; Acts 21:32; 1 Co. 13:8; Eph. 1:16; Col. 1:9; Heb. 10:2; 1 Pet. 3:10; 1 Pet. 4:1

Disciples (3101)(**mathetes** from **manthano** = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "*mathematics*") describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf **inductive Bible study**) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher.

> **Mathetes in Luke and Acts** - Lk. 5:30; Lk. 5:33; Lk. 6:1; Lk. 6:13; Lk. 6:17; Lk. 6:20; Lk. 6:40; Lk. 7:11; Lk. 7:18; Lk. 7:19; Lk. 8:9; Lk. 8:22; Lk. 9:14; Lk. 9:16; Lk. 9:18; Lk. 9:40; Lk. 9:43; Lk. 9:54; Lk. 10:23; Lk. 11:1; Lk. 12:1; Lk. 12:22; Lk. 14:26; Lk. 14:27; Lk. 14:33; Lk. 16:1; Lk. 17:1; Lk. 17:22; Lk. 18:15; Lk. 19:29; Lk. 19:37; Lk. 19:39; Lk. 20:45; Lk. 22:11; Lk. 22:39; Lk. 22:45; Acts 6:1; Acts 6:2; Acts 6:7; Acts 9:1; Acts 9:10; Acts 9:19; Acts 9:25; Acts 9:26; Acts 9:38; Acts 11:26; Acts 11:29; Acts 13:52; Acts 14:20; Acts 14:22; Acts

14:28; Acts 15:10; Acts 16:1; Acts 18:23; Acts 18:27; Acts 19:1; Acts 19:9; Acts 19:30; Acts 20:1; Acts 20:30; Acts 21:4; Acts 21:16

Lord (master, owner)(2962) kurios from **kuros** = might or power, related to **kuroo** = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership rights and uncontested power. **Kurios** is used of the one to whom a person or thing belonged, over which he has the power of deciding, the one who is the master or disposer of a thing (Mk 7:28)

Teach (aorist imperative)(1321)(**didasko** from **dáo**= know or teach; English = didactic; see study of related noun **didaskalia** and the adjective **didaktikos**) means to provide instruction or information in a formal or informal setting. Didasko carries with it the idea of systematic teaching or systematic training. In secular Greek didasko was used of a choir director who trained a choir over a long period of rehearsals until they are able to perform. **Didasko** refers to imparting positive truth. It is the responsibility of every believer (Col 3:16), and is part of the Great Commission (Mt 28:20). It is especially the responsibility of church leaders. "An overseer, then, must be… able to teach" (1Ti 3:2). Heresy flourishes where sound Christian teaching lags. The idea is to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them by word of mouth (tutor, direct, advise, put in mind). In the NT almost without exception didasko refers to the teaching of groups. Didasko means to teach a student in such a way that the will of the student becomes conformed to the teaching taught. So the teacher teaches in such a way that as the student is taught, he now changes his mind saying in essence "I won't do it this way, but I will do it this way because I've learned this doctrine or this teaching." Doctrine determines direction of our behavior, conformed to world or to God? Teaching that Scripture finds significant is not that which provides information alone but also the teaching that creates disciples who live in responsive obedience to God's will.

Didasko in Luke and Acts - Lk. 4:15; Lk. 4:31; Lk. 5:3; Lk. 5:17; Lk. 6:6; Lk. 11:1; Lk. 12:12; Lk. 13:10; Lk. 13:22; Lk. 13:26; Lk. 19:47; Lk. 20:1; Lk. 20:21; Lk. 21:37; Lk. 23:5; Jn. 6:59 Acts 1:1; Acts 4:2; Acts 4:18; Acts 5:21; Acts 5:25; Acts 5:28; Acts 5:42; Acts 11:26; Acts 15:1; Acts 15:35; Acts 18:11; Acts 18:25; Acts 20:20; Acts 21:21; Acts 21:28; Acts 28:31;

ILLUSTRATION - Not everyone is familiar with this prayer (Lk 11:1-4 or Mt 6:9-14). Two men were out walking one day. One guy challenged his buddy by saying, "If you're so religious, let me hear you quote the Lord's Prayer. I'll bet you $10 you can't do it." The second guy responded, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. And if I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take." The first guy pulled out his wallet, fished out a $10 bill and muttered, "I didn't think you could do it!"

ILLUSTRATION - Joanne Shetler, a Wycliffe Bible Translator in the Philippines, noticed that the new believers in the tribe she was working with did not pray as they should. So she prayed, "Lord, do whatever it takes to teach these people to pray." About a month later, she was in a helicopter crash there and almost died. That event prompted the people to pray fervently, "Lord, don't let her die because our book isn't done." From then on, the people prayed. Having heard that story, do you dare to join this unnamed disciple in his request, "Lord, teach us to pray"? It could be dangerous! Prayer is the acknowledgement that our need is not partial; it is total. So if we ask the Lord to teach us to pray, He may put us in situations where we are so overwhelmed that we recognize that we have no choice but to pray! So, if you dare, you can with fear and trembling say, "Lord, teach us to pray." (Steven Cole)

Sermon Outline from Gene Brooks -- Sermon Points:

1. Prioritize prayer (Luke 11:1-4)

2. Persist in prayer (Luke 11:5-10)

3. (for the) Promise of prayer (Luke 11:11-13)

Outline of Luke 11 - James Dine

A. Proficiency in prayer yields the Father's provision. Luke 11:1-13

1. The pattern of the prayer of a kingdom servant. Luke 11:1-4
2. Persistence in prayer results in needs being met by the Father. Luke 11:5-13

B. Maintenance of Jesus' victory over the threat of unclean spirits is necessary to the well-being of the kingdom. Luke 11:14-26

C. Care with the word of God promotes the kingdom. Luke 11:27-36

1. Keeping the word brings true blessing. Luke 11:27-28

2. The word neglected brings judgment. Luke 11:29-32
3. The word is the only thing that enlightens. Luke 11:33-36

D. Justice and love promote the kingdom rather than self-serving wickedness and abuse. Luke 11:37-54

ILLUSTRATION - **DO YOU BELIEVE IN PRAYER?** A tale is told about a small town that had historically been "dry," but then a local businessman decided to build a tavern. A group of Christians from a local church were concerned and planned an all-night prayer meeting to ask God to intervene. It just so happened that shortly thereafter lightning struck the bar and it burned to the ground. The owner of the bar sued the church, claiming that the prayers of the congregation were responsible, but the church hired a lawyer to argue in court that they were not responsible. The presiding judge, after his initial review of the case, stated that "no matter how this case comes out, one thing is clear. The tavern owner believes in prayer and the Christians do not."

Oswald Chambers - What's the good of prayer?

Lord, teach us to pray. Luke 11:1.

It is not part of the life of a natural man to pray. We hear it said that a man will suffer in his life if he does not pray; I question it. What will suffer is the life of the Son of God in him, which is nourished, not by food, but by prayer. When a man is born from above, the life of the Son of God is born in him, and he can either starve that life or nourish it. Prayer is the way the life of God is nourished. Our ordinary views of prayer are not found in the New Testament. We look upon prayer as a means of getting things for ourselves; the Bible idea of prayer is that we may get to know God Himself.

"Ask and ye shall receive." We grouse before God, we are apologetic or apathetic, but we ask very few things. Yet what a splendid audacity a childlike child has! Our Lord says—"Except ye become as little children." Ask, and God will do. Give Jesus Christ a chance, give Him elbow room, and no man will ever do this unless he is at his wits' end. When a man is at his wits' end it is not a cowardly thing to pray, it is the only way he can get into touch with Reality. Be yourself before God and present your problems, the things you know you have come to your wits' end over. As long as you are self-sufficient, you do not need to ask God for anything.

It is not so true that "prayer changes things" as that prayer changes me and I change things. God has so constituted things that prayer on the basis of Redemption alters the way in which a man looks at things. Prayer is not a question of altering things externally, but of working wonders in a man's disposition.

Andrew Murray - See **With Christ in the School of Prayer - excerpt...**

"Lord, teach us to pray." Yes, to pray. That is what we need to be taught. Though in its beginnings prayer is so simple that the feeblest child can pray, yet it is at the same time the highest and holiest work to which man can rise. It is fellowship with the Unseen and Most Holy One. The powers of the eternal world have been placed at its disposal. It is the very essence of true religion, the channel of all blessings, the secret of power and life. Not only for ourselves, but for others, for the Church, for the world, it is to prayer that God has given the right to take hold of Him and His strength. It is on prayer that the promises wait for their fulfilment, the kingdom for its coming, the glory of God for its full revelation. And for this blessed work, how slothful and unfit we are. **It is only the Spirit of God can enable us to do it aright.** How speedily we are deceived into a resting in the **form**, while the **power** is wanting. Our early training, the teaching of the Church, the influence of habit, the stirring of the emotions—how easily these lead to prayer which has no spiritual power, and avails but little. True prayer, that takes hold of God's strength, that availeth much, to which the gates of heaven are really opened wide—who would not cry, Oh for some one to teach me thus to pray? Jesus has opened a school, in which He trains His redeemed ones, who specially desire it, to have power in prayer. Shall we not enter it with the petition, Lord! it is just this we need to be taught! O teach us to pray.

Here is a prayer by Andrew Murray for those learning to pray on page 9**With Christ in the School of Prayer**

> Blessed Lord! Who ever lives to pray, You can teach me to pray, me to ever live to pray. In this You love to make me share Your glory in heaven, that I should pray without ceasing, and ever stand as a priest in the presence of my God.
>
> Lord Jesus! I ask You this day to enroll my name among those who confess that they do not know how to pray as they ought, and specially ask You for a course in teaching in prayer. Lord! Teach me to wait with You in the school and give You time to train me. May a deep sense of my ignorance, the wonderful privilege and power of prayer, of the need of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of prayer, lead me to cast away my thoughts of what I think I know, and make me kneel before You in true teachableness and poverty of spirit.
>
> And fill me, Lord, with the confidence that with a teacher like You I shall learn to pray. In the assurance that I

> have as my teacher, Jesus, who is ever praying to the Father, and by His prayer rules the destinies of His Church and the world, I will not be afraid. As much as I need to know of the mysteries of the prayer-world, You will fold for me. And when I may not know, You will teach me to be strong in faith, giving glory to God.
>
> Blessed Lord! You will not put to shame Your student who trusts You, nor, by Your grace, would he put You to shame either. Amen.

Secret Power of Prayer

> One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." [Luke 11:1]

Isn't it interesting that the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray? You might think they would ask, "Lord, we want to know all the tricks. Teach us to walk on water. Teach us to multiply fish and bread." Or, "What we really want is the big one, Jesus: Teach us how to raise the dead."

Or perhaps a more intellectual disciple would bring other sorts of questions to Jesus: "Explain the doctrine of predestination to us."

But these men were perceptive enough to realize that the secret of Jesus' ministry lay in his prayer life, and this was not something that could be learned in three easy lessons. They were familiar with Jesus' habit of withdrawing into a desolate place and spending long periods of time with the Father. They realized that to be powerful in ministry they would have to be earnest in prayer.

And so they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. They reminded him that John the Baptist also had disciples, and John had taken great care to instruct his disciples on the art of praying. Training is indeed needed because no one is born a good "pray-er."Why? Because nothing is more repugnant to a fallen human than to spend time alone with God. No person naturally seeks God. Only when we are redeemed do we have any desire at all to draw near to God … and even then we find it difficult.

There should be a common yearning among Christians to be more accomplished in prayer. Have you not felt the frustration of being inarticulate in your prayers? Have you not felt sometimes that your prayers are bouncing off the ceiling, that you don't know how to do it? Have you ever wished someone would train you in prayer?

Jesus' answer was to give the disciples a model prayer, which we call the Lord's Prayer. We now shall look at it more closely in the following meditations.

Coram Deo - The Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, and the other prayers of the Bible serve as models, and the Holy Spirit has been sent to help us pray. All the same, we can all benefit from being taught how to pray by a human master, as John taught his disciples. Do you want to be a better "pray-er"? Find someone who can model prayer for you and pray with you. (Before the Face of God. Book 2)

F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily - Lord, teach us to pray.

It was a wise and good request, prompted by the Savior's own practice. He did not, in the first instance, command his disciples to pray; but He gave himself to the blessed practice of prayer, and this made them eager to learn and practise the holy art. This is the best way of inculcating new and holy habits on those who surround us. Do not begin by exhorting them; but by living before them a life so holy, so unselfish, so consecrated and devout, that they shall spontaneously approach you, saying, "Give us your secret; tell us how we may do and become as you." It is a holy life which constitutes our best pulpit.

We should daily ask the Master to teach us to pray. Each time we kneel in prayer we may well preface our petitions with the sentence: "We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but by thy Holy Spirit, Lord, teach us to pray." And probably the Lord's answer will fall into suggestions, borrowed from the form and model of prayer which He gave his disciples. It has been called the Lord's Prayer; it should be called the Disciples'.

Address prayer to the Father, through the Son. Do not be selfish in prayer; but look out on the needs of others, incorporating them in every petition — us, we, our. Remember, you are speaking to your Father, and that his honor and glory should have a paramount and foremost place. If you desire first the hallowing of his name, and the coming of his kingdom, all your personal needs and desires will fall easily and naturally into their place, which will be a comparatively subordinate one. You will need forgiveness as often and as regularly as your daily bread. Be, also, direct and definite in prayer.

THE PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER - Lappin's Sermon Outlines

> "Lord, teach us to pray."—Luke 11:1.

INTRODUCTION.—Read Roger Babson's estimate of prayer (p. 86, in "Religion and Business").

I. Sincere—“Not to be seen of men” (Matt. 6:5).

II. Brief—the model prayer has sixty-four words; can be said slowly in less than one minute.

III. Definite—God knows what we need. The prayer shows whether our wish is in accord with His.

IV. Simple—forty-nine of the sixty-four words have but one syllable.

V. Forgiving—“Except ye forgive.”

VI. Practical—must present real needs, bread, forgiveness, guidance.

VII. Reverent—must recognize the divine on which we are dependent.
Thy name, Thy kingdom, Thy will.

Appeal: Prayer is the world’s undeveloped resource. Illustrate: Steam, electricity, X-ray and radium.
Prayer looks to the restoration of the one who prays.

Lord, Teach Us to Pray By Andrew Murray

SCRIPTURE: Luke 11:1

INTRODUCTION: The disciples had learned that Jesus was a Master at the art of prayer, so they asked Him, “Lord, teach us to pray.” Shall we, too, not enroll our names in Christ’s School of Prayer?

1. Lord, Teach Us To Pray.—Though prayer is so simple that the feeblest child can pray, it is also the highest and holiest work to which we can rise. True prayer takes hold of God’s strength and avails much.

2. Lord, Teach Us To Pray.—We have read in His Word with what power the believing people of old used to pray and what mighty wonders were done in answer to their prayers. If this took place under the Old Covenant, how much more will He not now give His people the privilege and power of prayer?

3. Lord, Teach Us To Pray.—At first no work appears so simple; later, none proves more difficult.

4. Lord, Teach Us To Pray.—A pupil needs a teacher who has the gift of teaching, who in patience and love will descend to the pupil’s needs. Jesus is all that and more.

CONCLUSION: Jesus never taught His disciples how to preach, but how to pray. Not power with others, but power with God is the first thing. Jesus loves to Teach Us To Pray.

James Smith - PRAYER: ITS PRIVILEGE AND POWER Luke 11:1–13

“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY” (v. 1).

“The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed,
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray;
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
That of its native self can nothing feed.”—M. ANGELO.

It would appear that while the Lord was praying in a “certain place” His disciples heard Him, and were deeply moved, as never man prayed like this Man. What calmness of spirit, what assurance of faith, what holy familiarity with the unseen Father of Spirits, what an overawing reality and power there was in these simple utterances of their Master! No wonder that when He ceased they came with tear-filled eyes, saying, “Lord, teach us to pray.” The power of prayer lies more in what we are than in what we say. They pray well who have “holiness unto the Lord” written across their lives. Prayer, wrote a deaf and dumb girl, is “the wish of the heart.” If the heart is right with God, then the desires of the heart will be granted (1 John 5:14, 15). Desires are plentiful in human hearts, but how few are confidently breathed into the ear of God. Notice here—

I. Need of Prayer. “Lord, teach us to pray” (v. 1). All men pray in the way of wishing, or earnestly desiring, but not to the living God. “Before I was converted,” said one, “I said my prayers to nobody, now I pray to God.” We have never learned to pray if we have not learned to speak personally to a personal God, and to know that He hears us. Intercourse with God is a crying need of the soul of man. We need more than human sympathy. We need a greater than human help. DIVINE power and compassion are the counterparts of human weakness and need. “Lord, teach us to pray.”

II. Teacher of Prayer. “Lord, teach us.” Surely this “Teacher come from God” is well able to instruct us in the way to God. His whole life was lived in the atmosphere of prayer. He constantly breathed the breath of Heaven. In His every act we hear the voice of His pleading on our behalf. His incarnation, His holy life, His agony in the garden, His atoning death, and His rising again from the dead were all mighty voices of supplication unto God. He who spent whole nights in prayer had too much to do to be in a hurry or to neglect secret communion with His Father. “Lord, teach us.” He teaches us to pray by giving us a deep insight into the poverty of our own natures that we may hunger after righteousness (Rom. 8:26). He teaches us to pray by revealing to us, through His Spirit, of His own unsearchable riches that we may covet earnestly the best gifts (Heb. 4:16).

III. Spirit of Prayer. In answer to their requests the great Prayer Teacher said, “When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in Heaven,” etc. In putting this prayer into their mouths our Lord was not only teaching the order in which our prayers should be formed, but, we think, the very spirit and condition of heart necessary to true prayer. Looked at in its subjective aspect this prayer implies a condition of—

> 1. SONSHIP. “Our Father.” Before we can say “Our Father” in any real sense we must have received the Spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:15). We must be made sons through receiving His Son ere we can honestly say Father (John 1:12).
>
> 2. SANCTIFICATION. “Hallowed be Thy Name.” His Name stands for all that He is in His holiness, righteousness, love, and almightiness. How can an unsanctified soul hallow, set apart as holy, the great Name of God in the daily life? What communion hath light with darkness? If His Name is to be hallowed in us we ourselves must be hallowed to His Name.
>
> 3. SUBJECTION. “Thy kingdom come.” How can we utter this petition if we are not willing that our own hearts and thoughts should be subject to His rule? So, to be able to pray, there must be entire submission to the will of God (Rom. 14:17).
>
> 4. CONSECRATION. “Thy will be done.” To pray “Thy will be done” there must needs be a willingness to do His will.
>
> 5. BROTHERLY LOVE. “And forgive us as we forgive every one,” etc. Our prayers may often be hindered for lack of tender-heartedness toward those who may be indebted to us (Eph. 4:32). Does this reveal the spirit in which we pray?

IV. Manner of Prayer. “Because of his importunity he will give him as many as he needeth” (vv. 5–8). The word importunity here stands for “shamelessness,” and this is the only time it is used in the New Testament and employed by our Lord in connection with prayer; it is exceedingly expressive. It means that in offering our requests to God for things needful we should take no denial; turn not aside through any seeming providential rebuff, being utterly shameless in our persistent, confident waiting (Exod. 17:11).

V. Simplicity of Prayer. “Ask, and it shall be given you,” etc. (vv. 9–12). The child in its own way begins to ask as soon as it is born, and the mother has no difficulty in interpreting its cry. As long as we maintain the child-like spirit prayer will be a simple, delightful, and soul-strengthening exercise. The more we get conformed to the image of Christ the nearer do we come to the very presence of God. And the nearer we approach to Him in our real soul likeness to Him the more simple and childlike will our prayers be. “Ask, and ye shall receive.”

VI. Efficacy of Prayer. “If ye, … how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (v. 13). The Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, and in giving the Spirit He is putting within the reach of each child of His EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING (Eph. 3:14–19). Many of us have yet to learn what our gracious Father is willing to do for us, and through us, by His gift of the Holy Ghost. As workers together with Him we beseech you that ye receive not this grace of God in vain. “If ye ask anything in My Name I will do it” (John 14:12–14).

SEEKING HELP FROM CHRIST Luke 11:1 - John Butler

“It came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1).

The disciples wanted to know how to pray. So they sought help for their prayer life. We note five things about their request here.

FIRST—THE SAGACITY IN THE REQUEST

“Said unto him.” The disciples were wise to go to Christ about the matter of prayer. No one could teach them better about prayer than He. The religious leaders (Jesus called them “hypocrites”) certainly could not, for they used prayer for self-aggrandizement (Matthew 6:5–7). Prayer was a means to them of self-exaltation.

SECOND—THE STIMULATION FOR THE REQUEST

"As he was praying … when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him." It was the praying of Jesus that stimulated the request to be taught about prayer. Christ inspired His disciples to better service by His conduct. This exhorts believers to live in such a way that it will stimulate others to live a godly, dedicated life. Does our service for God inspire others to serve? Too often God's people are examples of deficiency, not devotion.

THIRD—THE SUPERIORITY OF THE REQUEST

"Teach is to pray." We often ask the Lord for many things that we do not need. But one thing we definitely need is to know how to pray better. It is one of the greatest needs of God's people. Inability to pray aright is a real problem among church members. The prayers heard at church are often very defective.

FOURTH—THE SPECIFICS OF THE REQUEST

"Teach us to pray." This request is at least twofold. It is both a request for ability to pray and for an attitude to pray.
• The ability to pray. "Teach us to pray." We need to be taught how to pray. We often lack the ability to pray aright. As an example, we do not know what to pray for and when to pray for it. We are not skilled in praying. We need great skill in our prayer life to make it more effective and honoring to God.
• The attitude to pray. "Teach us to pray." Not only do we need to know how to pray but we need to be taught to simply pray. Our attitude is bad about prayer. We do not pray enough. That is why the Wednesday midweek service or prayer meeting at church is so poorly attended. People do not care to pray. They need to be taught to simply pray. Few spiritual attitudes are as poor as the lack of desire to pray.

FIFTH—THE SUPPORT FOR THE REQUEST

"As John also taught his disciples." John taught his disciples to pray, and Christ's disciples wanted Jesus to teach them to pray, too. We need more men like John the Baptist who will teach their followers about prayer. Pastors are prone to teach their people about everything but prayer.

Related Resources on Prayer: (Onsite)

- Colossians 1:9 Commentary
- Colossians 4:12 Commentary
- Devotional on Prayer
- Guide to Praying for Missionaries
- Hebrews 13:20-21 Commentary
- Philippians 4:6 Commentary
- Pithy Prayer Phrases
- Prayer - Greek Words for Prayer
- Prayer Devotionals and Illustrations
- Prayer Hymns and Poems
- Prayer Quotes
- Prayer Quotes, Devotionals and Illustrations
- Praying for People from Every Tribe, Tongue, People and Nation
- Praying His Word
- Praying in the Spirit
- Spurgeon's Gems on Prayer

Luke 11:2 And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.

KJV Luke 11:2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father**which art in heaven**, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. **Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. (only in KJV)**

- **When you pray, say** Eccl 5:2; Hosea 14:2; Mt 6:6-8
- **Father** Isa 63:16; Mt 6:9-15; Ro 1:7; 8:15; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:4; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; 4:20; Col 1:2; 1 Th 1:1,3; 3:11-13; 2 Th 1:1,2; 2:16

- **which art in heaven** (**only KJV**) 2 Chr 20:6; Ps 11:4; Eccl 5:2; Daniel 2:28; Mt 5:16; 10:32
- **hallowed be Your name** Leviticus 10:3; 22:23; 1 Kings 8:43; 2 Kings 19:19; Ps 57:11; 72:18,19; 108:5; Ezekiel 36:23; Habakkuk 2:14; Rev 15:4
- **Your kingdom come** 10:9-11; Isa 2:2-5; Daniel 2:44; 7:18,27; Rev 11:15; 19:6; 20:4
- **Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth**. (**only in KJV**) Ps 103:20; Isa 6:2,3; Mt 6:10
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:1 Jesus' Pattern for Every Prayer - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:2 When You Pray Say, "Father" - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:2 Hallowed Be Thy Name - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:2 Thy Kingdom Come - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:2 Thy Will Be Done - John MacArthur

Related Passage:

> Matthew 6:6-8 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. 7 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. 8 "So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. 9 "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father **Who is in heaven**, Hallowed be Your name. 10'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. 11'Give us this day our daily bread.

THE DISCIPLE'S PRAYER
TAUGHT BY THE LORD

This prayer is most often referred to as the **Lord's Prayer** but Jesus never actually prayed it Himself (see Mt 6:12 - He had no need for example to pray "forgive us our debts"). Instead this prayer is presented as a model prayer for citizens of the Kingdom of heaven and so is better entitled "**The Disciple's Prayer**" or "The Pattern of Prayer." Jesus never intended for this prayer to be repeated ritualistically with regular, repetitious recital, but rather as a guide or model for our prayers.

And He said to them, "When you pray (proseuchomai in present tense) **say** - Notice that only one disciple ask the question but Jesus uses plural pronouns throughout His description of prayer. Note Jesus says not "if" you pray, but **when** implying this would be their practice (and prayer is in the present tense - continuous) and presumably it would be frequent. And Jesus gives the best way to pray in the two words "**pray say**." Simply speak. Anytime. Anywhere. And keep it up because say is a present imperative (see our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey). And don't be like the Pharisee who "prayed thus with himself" talking only to ourselves, or even worse trying to impress others. It's especially hard when you are praying in a group to keep the focus of your prayer to be addressed to God. Sometimes we are more concerned about getting a message across to someone or trying to impress them with "how spiritual" we are.

> **THOUGHT** - One implication of use of plural pronouns in this section on prayer is that He was speaking not just of personal, private prayer but of corporate prayer (think of the old term "prayer meeting"). How's you church doing? Are you even having a weekly prayer meeting? If so, how well attended is it? Jesus' teaching can be very convicting!

Matthew's longer Version of the "Lord's Prayer"

> "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father **Who is in heaven**, Hallowed be Your name. 10 'Your kingdom come. **Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.** 11 'Give us this day our daily bread. 12 'And forgive us our **debts**, **as we also have forgiven our debtors**. 13 'And do not lead us into temptation, **but deliver us from evil.** [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'] (Mt 6:9-13+)

John MacArthur explains that "Matthew 6 is the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus preached that sermon in Galilee. There He gave the pattern for prayer without being asked. There was no incident like the incident here. No one asked Him to teach us how to pray. It was part of His own instruction against the background of the hypocritical praying that was going on in the nation Israel led by the scribes and Pharisees at the time, a very different occasion in Galilee at a much earlier time. This is many months later, the Galilean ministry is over, He is now in Judea. He is in the last few months of His life headed for the cross and here again a question is asked of Him, the query is made about how to pray. And Jesus goes back to the same instruction which He had given earlier in the Sermon on the Mount and perhaps on number of occasions other than that which are not recorded in the New Testament. So you have two distinct events at two separate times in which the Lord gives essentially the same pattern for prayer." (Jesus' Pattern for Every Prayer)

D A Carson picks up on the **present tense** (proseuchomai in present tense) aspect of prayer Jesus is calling for in His disciples relating that "Someone commented to me that they thought Muslim people were far more devout than Christians. How many Christians in our country, said this friend, would pray with such regularity and fervor as they do with their set hours of prostrated prayer? I replied that Christians are often praying when those around them are wholly unaware of the communication that flows between them and God. The church is always at prayer—but only because of the unfailing grace of the Holy Spirit. (See Teach Us to Pray: Prayer in the Bible and the World)

Rod Mattoon - The Lord's Prayer is a prayer which only a disciple can pray. It is a prayer which only one who is committed to Jesus Christ can take upon his lips with any kind of sincerity and meaning at all. The Lord's Prayer is specifically and definitely stated to be the disciple's prayer, and only on the lips of a true disciple of Jesus Christ does this prayer have its full meaning. To put it in another way, the Lord's Prayer can only really be prayed when the man who prays it knows what he is saying. He cannot know that until he becomes a follower of the Lord by first of all trusting Jesus Christ as his Savior. (Treasures from Luke, Volume 3)

> **ILLUSTRATION** - Lyndon Johnson's press secretary, Bill Moyers, was saying grace at a staff lunch, and the President shouted, "Speak up, Bill! I can't hear a thing!" Moyers quietly replied, "I wasn't addressing you, Mr. President." It is important to speak up but to remember you are not addressing the group but your Father in Heaven.

The Lord Jesus gave many other commands to pray (Matthew 7:7-11; 9:38; 17:20; 18:19,20; 21:21,22; 26:41; Luke 18:1,7; John 14:13,14; 15:7,16; 16:23,24)--all of which give further instruction on the vital subject of how believers should pray.

Spurgeon on praying this prayer repetitively - I THINK there is room for very great doubt, whether our Savior intended the prayer, of which our text forms a part, to be used in the manner in which it is commonly employed among professing Christians. It is the custom of many persons to repeat it as their morning prayer, and they think that when they have repeated these sacred words they have done enough. I believe that this prayer was never intended for universal use....This prayer of Christ is a great chart, as it were: but I cannot cross the sea on a chart. It is a map; but a man is not a traveler because he puts his fingers across the map. And so a man may use this form of prayer, and yet be a total stranger to the great design of Christ in teaching it to His disciples. (The Fatherhood of God)

Ironside writes that "There does not seem to be any valid reason for supposing that He meant it to be repeated frequently, or as part of a service of prayer or worship, as it is commonly used today. No mention is made of its use in the early Christian assemblies of the book of Acts, nor is it even referred to in the Epistles....Now that the Holy Spirit has come to guide us in our supplications, it would seem needlessly formal to be bound to use the exact words we have here when we come to God either in public or in private devotions." (Matthew 6 - Ironside's Notes on Matthew)

Kent Hughes observes that in this great prayer the "initial focus is upward, with its first three requests (Luke 11 only has 2) having to do with God's glory. The remaining three requests are for our well-being. **God first, man second** - that is the ideal order of prayer. **His glory before our wants**. This is parallel to the Ten Commandments, the first four of which have to do with God's glory and the last six with man's well-being. This prayer is the perfect prayer. Of its perfection Bonhoeffer said, "The Lord's Prayer is not merely the pattern prayer, it is the way Christians must pray. . . . The Lord's Prayer is the quintessence of prayer." It is the perfect pattern for the followers of Christ, and its depth cannot be exhausted by exposition. No matter how one advances in the matter of prayer, it remains the model and the challenge. **Sadly, it is more often mindlessly repeated than genuinely prayed.** This is especially ironic because the context that introduces the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:7, 8 warns against meaningless repetition. The obvious problem for all of us is that "**familiarity breeds contempt**," in this case "surface familiarity." Some of us learned the Lord's Prayer at our mother's knees. We cannot count the times we have repeated it. We said it again and again as children. We repeat it today as adults. But there is a danger in our familiarity with its beauty - it can become just beautiful words, so that we "say" the Lord's Prayer without praying it. Some who live in the mountains of Colorado rarely see the incredible scenery that occupies their every glance, while flatlanders like me travel a thousand miles just to see the mountains' beauty for a few days - and we really see them! Those who have been dulled to beauty need to see things in a new way, and in respect to the Lord's Prayer we may need to see it anew - not necessarily discovering new truth, but seeing the old truth for what it is. An in-depth study of the Lord's Prayer can help us pray with greater singleness and greater power, just as it has done for thousands through the centuries. (See The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom)

Martyn Lloyd-Jones - "Prayer is beyond any question the highest activity of the human soul. Man is at his greatest and highest when, upon his knees, he comes face to face with God" "Of all of the blessings of a Christian's salvation, none is greater than this. We have access to God in prayer."(Studies in the Sermon on the Mount)

Phil Newton - Our culture values **doing** over **being**. As long as we give ourselves to religious activities then we consider ourselves spiritual. Yet prayer provides more of a barometer of the soul than the most feverish activity. For in prayer we are encountering the living God, bearing our souls before Him, contemplating Him, and seeing Him alone as our Father and Lord. (THE LORD'S PRAYER:

REVERENCE)

Puritan **Thomas Brooks** - "The Lord's prayer is given us as a directory for prayer, a pattern and an example, by which we are to regulate our petitions, and make other prayers

Luke records a similar, abbreviated version of this **model prayer** in Jesus' answer to His disciple's query '**Lord, teach us to pray**' (and thus the moniker "The Disciple's Prayer").

As discussed previously, so often the "Disciple's Prayer" has been turned into a ritualistic recital that we mouth but do not genuinely pray from our heart. Such **dead formalism** is the very practice Jesus is warning them to **beware** of practicing! That is not to say that one could or should never pray this prayer...the question one must always ask when praying this prayer is "Am I praying it from my heart or am I mouthing it from memory as a mechanical, rote exercise?" Certainly, from the heart, the "Disciple's Prayer" is a valid, efficacious prayer.

PETITION TO THE PATER

Father (pater)**, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. -** Pater is Greek for **Father**. This is an especially precious truth to all of us who have been rejected by our earthly fathers (as I was at birth and then later by my step-father) so that when we meet God as our **Father** for the first time (when we are born again), we know that we are finally "home" at last. And it follows that we should desire dialogue with Him. As an aside, there are only two spiritual families on earth, redeemed and unredeemed, the former in the family of God, the latter in the the family of their father, the devil (Jn 8:44). This may sound harsh, but it is Biblical reality. "The name of a person in the ancient world had to do with the character of that person. We speak in a similar way when we talk about someone who has a good name in the community." (Stevenson)

R C Sproul - The Jews never addressed God as "**Father**" in any prayers we have from the ancient world. We have access to many prescribed prayers from the liturgies of the synagogues and temple. The Jews were very concerned to address God in a proper and pleasing fashion, and there were hundreds of phrases of address to him used in these prayers—but nowhere in any of these prayers was God addressed as Father. The Jews did refer to God as "Father of the nation" and "Father of the community" in their prayers, but never did they draw so close as to say "my Father" or "our Father." Jesus gave his disciples an outline for prayer that begins by assuming an extraordinary familiarity. Jesus himself had been calling God "Father" in every one of his prayers. Now Jesus transfers this privilege to his disciples. As John had taught his disciples to pray, now Jesus teaches his own. The disciple imitates the Master, and for the first time in history, the Master is teaching the disciple to call God "Father."

The first two requests are upward, God-ward, the latter three are man-ward. This is the ideal pattern for prayer, God first, man second. We show by this pattern our main concern is for God. His glory before our needs.

Father - When you pray it is not into thin air but to a divine Being. Yes He is invisible but He is omnipresent and you have unlimited entree to His throne room through Jesus. We are never told by Christ or the Scriptures to pray to Mary, the patriarchs, angels, dead relatives, or any other being. When we pray, we are to pray to God and none other. Pray to the Creator not His creation! Play these old Maranatha songs and worship Him in spirit and truth - **Cry Out** (and don't just sing it, do it!), **My God and Father**, **Abba, Father**, **Everlasting Father**, **He Knows My Name**.

> **THOUGHT** - Does the truth of God as your very own **Father** undergird your life with Father, as well as your prayer life?

Brian Bill - "**Father**" is probably the most common term we use in prayer, and rightly so, because that is how Jesus addressed His prayers, using the phrase more than 70 different times. The only prayer He ever prayed without using it was when He was on the cross and cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Only in sin-bearing was He separated from the Father....God's nature is like a daddy but His name is holy. Our open access to God that leads to a close relationship with Him should not destroy our esteem for Him. He is not the "big guy in the sky" or "our buddy." He is the holy and awesome God of Israel, before whom we should tremble like Isaiah did in Isaiah 6. (Luke 11:1-4 How to Pray the Lord's Way)

Steven Cole - The term "**Father**" implies the intimacy and love of a personal relationship with the Sovereign Creator of the universe! It should encourage us to draw near to God and expect to find mercy and compassion. As John Calvin comments "For [God] is not only a father but by far the best and kindest of all fathers." He always welcomes His children in His presence....The Jews of Jesus' day tended to view God as so awesome and holy that they dared not be too intimate with Him. If someone got a glimpse of God, he thought that he would die. They dared not utter the name of God, because it was too sacred. They kept their proper distance in the temple, because if they touched any of the sacred objects, they would drop dead. They needed to learn that they could approach God as a kind and loving Father.In our day, it seems that the reverse is true. Most American Christians think of God as their Good

Buddy in the Sky. We don't worry about His consuming holiness and His blinding splendor. We don't fear His chastening hand. We're more like the children who call their permissive fathers by their first names. We're too casual about the Holy One. **But the term "Father" should not only encourage us to draw near to a kind and loving God. It should also cause us to respect His authority and to submit to Him in fear.** As the author of Hebrews puts it, "we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?" (Heb. 12:9). Thus while we can draw near to the Father as His beloved children, we must always do so with reverence, respect, and submission to His sovereign authority. (Luke 11:1-4 Lord, Teach Us to Pray!)

Related Resource:

- How should I understand the concept of the Father God?
- What does it mean that God is our Abba Father?

Say "Father" - **Say** is a command in the **present imperative**, which is a call to make prayer to our Father our priority and our lifestyle, something as necessary to our spiritual life as oxygen is to our physical life! The Old Testament saints seldom addressed God as Father (cf Isa 63:16; Dt 32:6) In fact Philip Keller points out (Borrow A layman looks at the Lord's prayer), in all of the Old Testament God is referred to as Father fewer than seven times, except indirectly and rather remotely. In fact consider the Tabernacle with the Holy of Holies separated from the people by the Holy Place and then the walls of the Tabernacle, giving a clear picture to the Jews that God was unapproachable. In fact only once per year would the high priest (alone) enter the presence of God in the Shekinah Glory over the Ark of the Covenant (Day of Atonement - Lev 16+, cf "consuming fire" Ex 24:17, Heb 12:28-29+, cf Moses' request Ex 33:18-23). We in the New Testament too often either forget or become complacent regarding the great privilege we now have to boldly approach the Throne of Grace because Jesus' sacrifice has flung wide open the doors to the Throne Room and the presence of the **Father** (cf Heb 4:14-16+, Heb 10:19-23+). Through Christ's death and High Priesthood, the unapproachable God has now become approachable for all those who are in Christ by grace through faith! **Pause and ponder this great truth for a moment** and then offer up a sacrifice of praise, giving thanks to His Name (Heb 13:15+) for giving us so great a salvation and such an incredible privilege of eternal entree into His Holy Presence (cf Ro 5:1-2+, Jude 1:24-25+).

To say God was unapproachable in the OT needs to be qualified, for clearly even in the OT, saints had access to God in prayer - Ps 50:15, Ps 91:15, Ps 145:18, Ps 18:6, Ps 65:2, Jonah 2:9, etc.

Barclay - The very first word tells us that in prayer we are not coming to someone out of whom gifts have to be unwillingly extracted, but to a Father who delights to supply his children's needs. (Daily Study Bible)

The **fatherhood of God** forms the foundation for this model prayer, and we as children are called to seek His face using the six (or seven) topical sentences Jesus presents in Mt 6:9-13. **Father** as a title for God was rarely used in the Old Testament (only 14 times) and always used with reference to the nation, not to individuals. Thus where "**father**" does occur with respect to God, it is commonly by way of analogy, and not used to directly address Him (Deut 32:6; Ps 103:13; Isa 63:16; Mal 2:10). Thus Jesus' teaching that kingdom citizens were to address God as **Father** must have surprised most of His audience. **D A Carson** says "There is no evidence of anyone before Jesus using this term to address God." **Mattoon** adds "In the entire Old Testament, you will not find one individual speaking of God as Father." (Treasures from the Scriptures) Jesus Himself addressed God only as **Father** (some 60 times in the Gospels), never referring to Him by any other name! Virtually all of Jesus' prayers were addressed to God as **Father** (exception in Mt 27:46)

> **God the Father** - this phrase occurs 15x (and not once in OT): 1 Cor 8:6; Gal 1:1; Eph 6:23; Phil 2:11; Col 1:3; 3:17; 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:2; 1Ti 1:2; 2Ti 1:2; Titus 1:4; 1Pet 1:2; 2Pet 1:17; 2 John 1:3; Jude 1:1.

And thus the New Testament believer knows God as his Father, with even greater clarity than anything his Old Testament counterpart could have enjoyed. Thus it follows that his praying proceeds from a **childlike trust,** as expressed in the addressing of God as "Our Father".

Joachim Jeremias, a respected German NT scholar wrote that the Aramaic word "Abba" was most likely the word Jesus used here when He spoke the words written in Greek in Mt 6:9. And from this premise, Jeremias argues that "in the Lord's Prayer Jesus authorizes His disciples to repeat the word **Abba** after Him. He gives them a share in His sonship and empowers them, as His disciples, to speak with their heavenly Father in just such a familiar, trusting way as a child would with his father. (Borrow Joachim Jeremias, The Lord's Prayer. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1980),

Phillip Keller on **Father** - What an intimate, personal, family-like approach to God. What a reassuring, comfortable way in which to address the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Can it be that He, who is from everlasting to everlasting, the infinite One, really regards me as His child? Does He care enough to consider me His own son? This is a startling concept. It is unique. It stands as a brand new revelation of God, given to us with repeated emphasis and clarity by Christ. Prior to the time of Jesus, God was regarded

as someone remote and august in His demeanor. He sat in the high and holy place, a stern Judge behind the hard, harsh bar of the Law. Only with fear and foreboding did any man dare to address himself to such a powerful potentate. All through the Old Testament account of God's dealing with His people He is referred to as YAHWEH, the name which dared not be spoken for fear of offense. Fewer than seven times is He even referred to as a father, except indirectly and rather remotely. Yet in the first four gospels, Jesus, the Christ, casting aside all restraint, speaks of God as Father more than seventy times. It is a radical, new, and very exciting disclosure that God is our Father. Suddenly it puts man's relationship to Him into an entirely new light. He moves from behind the bar of justice to come knocking on the door of our human hearts. He enters our lives to become a "Father to the fatherless." The whole concept is replete with wonder and incredible love. It hardly seems possible that He who has been from everlasting to everlasting, the eternal, infinite God, should delight to have us call Him, "Our Father." But not all of us can do this either easily or in sincerity. It is a frightening fact that for many people, the word father does not denote a dear one. It does not conjure up the thought of a happy home. Rather, to them it may well be a repulsive and abhorrent title. Many people have known only harsh, hard fathers. Their human father may have been a selfish, self-centered person who cared little for their well-being. He may have been a derelict, a drunkard, a dope addict, or some other distorted person who wrought havoc with their personalities in early childhood. (Borrow A layman looks at the Lord's prayer)

Jesus Himself used **Abba** (Aramaic for "Father") in addressing God, a use without parallel in the whole of Jewish literature. The explanation by some of the early Church fathers (Chrysostom, Theodore, Theodoret) was that Abba was the word used by a young child addressing his or her father. It was an everyday family word, which no one had ventured to use in addressing God. And so Jesus uses it quite naturally to address His heavenly Father in as childlike, trustful, and intimate a way as a little child to its father.

> And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt." (Mark 14:36)

Paul likewise mentions that because of our redemption and adoption into God's family, NT believers can address God as "Abba".

> For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of **adoption** as sons by which we cry out, "**Abba**! **Father**!" (Romans 8:14-15)

> But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might **redeem** those who were under the Law, that we might receive the **adoption** as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "**Abba**! Father!" (Galatians 4:4-6)

R Kent Hughes on **Abba** - When we say Abba today in our prayers, as we sometimes do, we are making the same sound that actually fell from Jesus' lips—and from the lips of his incredulous disciples. Jesus transferred the Fatherhood of God from a theological doctrine into an intense, practical experience, and he taught his disciples to pray with the same intimacy. And that is what he does for us. "Our Father"—"Our Abba"—"Our dearest Father"—this is to be the foundational awareness of all our prayers. Does it undergird your prayer life? Is a sense of God's intimate Fatherhood profound and growing in your life? Addressing God as Abba (Dearest Father) is not only an indication of spiritual health but is a mark of the authenticity of our faith. Paul tells us in Galatians 4:6, "Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father!' " The impulse to call on God in this way is a sign of being God's child. Romans 8:15, 16 says the same thing: "you received the spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father!' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." True believers are impelled to say this....Do you know that God is your Father? Do you think of him and address him as your "Dearest Father"? If you cannot answer in the affirmative, it may be that he is not your spiritual Father and you need to heed the words of Scripture and come into relationship with him through Christ. "Yet to all who received him [Christ], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). (See The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom)

C H Spurgeon - A **Father**! There is music in that word, but not to a fatherless child—to him it is full of sorrowful memories. Those who have never lost a father can scarcely know how precious a relation a father is. A father who is a father indeed, is very dear! Do we not remember how we climbed his knee? Do we not recollect the kisses we imprinted on his cheeks? Do we not recall to-day with gratitude the chidings of his wisdom and the gentle encouragements of his affection? We owe all! Who shall tell how much we owe to our fathers according to the flesh, and when they are taken from us we lament their loss, and feel that a great gap is made in our family circle. Listen, then, to these words, "Our Father, Who is in heaven." Consider the grace contained in the Lord's deigning to take us into the relationship of children, and giving us with the relationship the nature and the spirit of children, so that we say, "Abba, Father." Did you ever lie in bed with your limbs vexed with sore pains, and cry, "Father, pity thy child"? Did you ever look into the face of death, and as you thought you were about to depart, cry, "My Father, help me; uphold me with thy gracious hand, and bear me through the stream of death"? It is at such times that we realize the glory of the Fatherhood of God, and in our feebleness learn to cling to the divine strength, and catch at the divine love. (Flashes of Thought)

J. I. Packer considers one's grasp of God's Fatherhood and adoption as His child as of essential importance in one's spiritual life explaining that "If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being

God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the New Testament new, and better than the Old, everything that is distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. "Father" is the Christian name for God." (Borrow Knowing God)

The **Net Bible** notes explains that "God is addressed in terms of intimacy (Father). The original Semitic term here was probably **Abba**. The term is a little unusual in a personal prayer, especially as it lacks qualification. It is not the exact equivalent of "daddy" (as is sometimes popularly suggested), but it does suggest a close, familial relationship." (The NET Bible; Bible. Biblical Studies Press)

To open this prayer addressing God as **Father**, indicates He is personal (not merely "a higher power") and that He cares for His family (as a father would). Without faith in Christ's blood and union with Him, it is useless to talk of trusting in the "Fatherhood" of God. **Only believers can truly call God "Father"** because we alone are His children, having received Jesus as Savior and believed in His Name (Jesus means "Jehovah saves")

> He (Jesus) came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as **received** Him, to them He gave **the right to become children of God**, even to those who **believe** in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but **of God**. (John 1:12-13+)

> Jesus answered (Nicodemus) and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:3-5+)

It is interesting that the early church actually forbade **non-Christians** from reciting this prayer as vigorously as they forbade them from joining with believers at the Lord's Table!

Kent Hughes - the idea that God is our Father, our Abba, is not only a sign of our spiritual health and of the authenticity of our faith, it is one of the most healing doctrines in all of Scripture. Some grew up only with a mother and no father. Others grew up in conventional homes where the relationship with the father was negative at best. But whatever our background, we need the touch of a father, and our God wants to provide that. Some of us need to bow before God and simply say, "Dearest Father, Abba" and so find the wholeness and healing that he wants to give us... The problem among some evangelical Christians today is the opposite - they have sentimentalized God's fatherhood so much that they have little concept of his holiness. Many Christians are flippantly sentimental about God, as if he is a celestial teddy bear. Such flip familiarity outwardly suggests super-intimacy with God but actually hides a defective knowledge of God. (See The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom)

Phil Newton adds a practical note to those who have had "suboptimal" relationships with their earthly fathers writing that...

> Some of you may have bad memories of your earthly father. I have observed through the years that some people have unfounded fears of God, and grave apprehensions of depending upon Him because they bear deep wounds of their own earthly fathers that disappointed them time and time again. The image of father brings pain to them and not delight. They could never measure up to their father's expectations or demands. They never felt an intimacy with him because of his self-centered ways. That is why our Lord distinguishes the Heavenly Father from all sinful, earthly fathers. He is not like those bad memories that haunt your understanding of God. He is "Our Father who is in heaven."...Gardiner Spring gives us a picture of what it means to call upon God as Father. "Secrets may be committed to God that cannot be committed to another. The world knows not of this relief, to spread before Him the secret wants of the soul; to tell them one by one; to tell them all. The conscience, wounded by a sense of sin, finds healing there. Want there finds supply; distrust finds confidence and depression finds praise. Ignorance is enlightened there; poverty is enriched, and weakness becomes strong. Darkness is there dissipated and trembling hopes encouraged. The bruised reed is not broken there, nor is the smoking flax quenched. Grace there cherishes what it bestows, and completes what it begins…There are no broken cisterns at the mercy seat; it is all a fountain of living water, where streams flow from it, without which this earth were a desert."...It is in the sphere of relationship to God as Father that kingdom citizens find the significance of prayer. It is not a psychological exercise that helps us to cope with the troubles of life, but the heart of children gathering into the bosom of their Father to find peace, comfort, security, and provision for every need. Do you see the Father like that? Are you in relationship to Him through faith in Jesus Christ alone? Then pray, and pray often and boldly, to the Father in heaven. (THE LORD'S PRAYER: REVERENCE)

One often hears someone begin a prayer with "*Dear Jesus...*" Although that is certainly not heretical, in fairness and in a desire to pray as Jesus teaches, it should be emphasized that **Scripture does not instruct believers to pray to the Lord Jesus Christ or to the Holy Spirit.** The Bible is our only guidebook for Scripturally sound praying and supersedes the experience or traditional practices of men, whether pastors or laymen. What we do observe is that the entire Godhead is integrally involved in the prayers of the saints. The Holy Spirit leads and initiates our prayers (see Praying in the Spirit). The Father is the One to Whom all of our

prayers are directed or addressed. And finally, all of our prayers ascend to the Father's throne only through the Great High Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Ti 2:5) a truth which explains why we always end our prayer with a phrase like "*in the Name of Jesus*". In fairness one might argue that petitions to Jesus made while He was on earth set the precedent for prayers to Jesus. For example, Peter cried out "Lord, save me!" as he began to sink into the water (Mt 14:30). In Acts 7:59-60 Stephen directly addressed the Lord Jesus, so clearly prayers to Jesus have Scriptural precedent. Such prayers simply do not appear to be the norm if one follows Jesus' instructions on prayer.

MacArthur gives us some practical thoughts on how to use the Disciple's Prayer as a pattern - You can say "Our Father" and then stop and pray your way through everything you can think about, about what it means to be a child of God. That's all inherent in "Our Father." And then you could say, "Hallowed be Your name," and you can pray your way through everything you know about the sacredness of God, the holiness of God, and how you as a worshiper are privileged to come before Him and worship Him. (Jesus' Pattern for Every Prayer)

MacArthur also adds how this prayer stimulates right attitudes - You find here as well a family spirit, "Father" talks about intimacy, personal life given to you by Him. You find here a reverent spirit, "Hallowed be Thy name," a loyal spirit, "Thy kingdom come," a submissive spirit, "Thy will be done," a dependent spirit, "Give us our daily bread," a penitent spirit, "Forgive us our trespasses," a humble spirit, "Lead us not into temptation," a confident spirit, "Yours is the kingdom," a triumphant spirit, "And the power," a joyful spirit, "And the glory," and so it goes with all the attitudes and all the relationships summed up in this incredible, amazing economy of words. We learn how to pray. (Sermon)

A PETITION TO
REVERENCE GOD'S NAME

Hallowed (hagiazo) **be Your Name** (onoma) - **Hallowed** is in the aorist imperative. "Let your name be hallowed" "May Thy name be held in reverence." Constable adds that "This petition is as much an expression of worship as it is a petition. It asks God to act so people will regard Him as holy, to cause situations in which they will reverence and obey Him rather than blaspheming and sinning against Him."

Phillip Keller on **hallowed** - Putting it into plain language, what Jesus is saying in this prayer is, "Father, may Your person, Your identity, Your character, Your reputation, Your very being always be honored." (Borrow A layman looks at the Lord's prayer)

Brian Bill on **hallowed** - To make something "hallow" carries two basic ideas in the Greek. The first means to make an ordinary thing extraordinary by bringing it into contact with something extraordinary. That's how it's used in 1 Peter 1:16 where God says, "Be holy because I am holy." We're unholy, but by coming into contact with One who is holy, we can be made holy. The second meaning for "hallow" means to treat something or someone as set apart or separated. To "hallow" God's name therefore is to hold His matchless being in awe and veneration so that we will believe what He says and obey Him. Friends, we have to guard against becoming flippant and shallow in our view of God. God is holy, holy, holy. The holiness of God is the only one of His attributes repeated three times. One way that we can "hallow" His name is by living a life of obedience before Him. God want His name "hallowed" in us so that we can become a vehicle of His holiness to others. Martin Luther said that God's name is made holy among us "when both our doctrines and our living are truly Christian." That's where prayer begins. Before we start asking for what we want, we need to ask for what we should be in light of His penetrating holiness. Two questions come to mind related to this part of the prayer: Are we approaching God with holy reverence, awe, and respect when we pray? Are we "hallowing" God by the way we are living? (Luke 11:1-4 How to Pray the Lord's Way)

Rich Cathers on **Hallowed** - We need to treat God's name as holy, as different. The Jews had a concept of this. As they copied the Old Testament manuscripts, instead of writing out the actual name, Yahweh, they felt they were too unclean to be able to even mention let alone write God's name, and so they would write the consonants of "Yahweh", but they would pronounce "Adonai", or, "Lord". Though I don't think we ought to be afraid of saying God's name, I think we could use a little more awe and reverence towards God's name. (Notes)

> **THOUGHT**- As an aside many (most) movies and television shows today (even so-called PG!) glibly blaspheme God and Christ, the Name above all names. What hypocrisy for believers to take in this profane language and then go before the Father and say "**hallowed be Your Name**!" **Hallowed** has a bit of a hollow ring if one is not guarding his ear-gate with a "Phil 4:8 grid." **Steven Cole** adds "People often use God's holy name as a swear word, putting God on the same level as human excrement! As Paul cites the psalmist, "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. 3:18; Ps. 36:1). Setting God's name apart as sacred or hallowed begins in our hearts. We must submit every thought to Him as the Holy Lord. Everything we say and do must take the Holy God into account. So as we draw near to God in prayer, we must first make sure that *we* reverence Him as holy."

Kent Hughes mentions four ways we **hallow** God's Name...

> First, negatively, we are careful not to profane God's name with our mouths. We avoid swearing or taking his name in vain. We speak of him with great reverence. This is perhaps the least requiring aspect of hallowing his name.
>
> Second, we begin with the positives: We reverence him as Father with acts of public and private worship. I personally consider the morning worship at the church I pastor to be the most important aspect of my life and ministry (apart from my personal devotion). I do not consider my sermon to be the most important part of the service but the worship. Is God's name truly being lifted up? Do the hymns, Scriptures, and prayers lift up his name? We hallow his name when we worship.
>
> There is a third way: We reverence God or hallow his name when our beliefs concerning him are worthy of him. We cannot hallow his name if we do not understand it. Specifically, in the Lord's Prayer we must understand his Abba-Fatherhood. The deeper our understanding, the more depth there will be to our reverence. It is all the work of the Holy Spirit, of course, but we must yield to that work. We understand the depth and wonder of saying, "Abba Father" only through the Holy Spirit. Is God your Dearest Father?
>
> And fourth, we hallow his name by living a life that displays that he is our Father... Luther was right. We best hallow God's name when our life and our doctrine are truly Christian. When we pray, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name," we are dedicating ourselves to lead lives that reverence all that he is. (See The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom)

How important is it that we "hallow" God's Name? Jesus teaches that kingdom citizens are to recognize the greatness of God's Name and ascribe to Him the glory due His Name. When Ezekiel prophesied against Israel, the word of the Lord explained the foundational problem as Israel's failure to recognize the LORD's name.

> "Therefore, say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for **My holy name**, which you have profaned (defiled, polluted, desecrated, treated with abuse, irreverence, or contempt) among the nations where you went. And I will vindicate the holiness of **My great name** which has been **profaned** among the nations, which you have **profaned** in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. (Ezekiel 36:22-23+)

Martin Luther (Greater Catechism) asked "How is it [God's name] hallowed amongst us?" Answer "When our life and doctrine are truly Christian"

The **Bible Knowledge Key Word Study** comments that "The first and most encompassing petition in the prayer Jesus gives his disciples as a model concerns God's glory. They are to ask God to make His Name something people will treat as holy, and not common or profane. This will ultimately be done after the judgment when the righteous remain (Mt 13:41-43). But this petition probably has a present relevance, too, as people become disciples and begin to relate to God as **Father**. This petition thus becomes a missionary prayer that God would enable Jesus' followers to accomplish their mission of making disciples of all nations, honoring God in the process (Mt 28:19-20). (Bock, Darrell L, Editor: The Bible Knowledge Key Word Study)

J C Ryle explains that "By the "**name** of God we mean all those attributes through which He is revealed to us—His power, wisdom, holiness, justice, mercy and truth. By asking that they may be "hallowed," we mean that they may be made known and glorified. The glory of God is the first thing that God's children should desire. It is the object of one of our Lord's own prayers: "Father, **glorify** (aorist imperative) Your Name!" (John 12:28). It is the purpose for which the world was created; it is the end for which the saints are called and convened (Related resource: John Piper's sermon God Created Us For His Glory on Isaiah 43:1-7): it is the chief thing we should seek—"that in all things God may be praised" (see note 1 Peter 4:11)

Have you ever begun your prayer addressing God as "I Am", His memorial name to all generations?

Why should we study and be familiar with God's many Names? God commands us in the Old Testament to honor His Name, Moses recording...

> "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain." (Exodus 20:7)

Now this commandment means more than avoiding using God's name in a profane (means common) manner. This is important because it speaks to the root sin of disbelieving, denying or distorting the truth about His glorious Being as manifest in part through His Name. The opposite of profaning God's Name is hallowing His Name! It means that those' who are in relationship with Him must honor or hallow His name in the way they live. For citizens of the Kingdom of heaven, we are called to be lights in the way we live and in so doing we give the unbelieving world a proper opinion of our Father Who art in heaven (see note by Ray Stedman below with expounds on this point)..

There is protection in God's **Name**, Solomon writing that...

> The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe. (Pr 18:10+)

> God's **Name** is like a well fortified structure that provides protection for citizens of the Kingdom of heaven who still reside on earth. The more we understand God's various Names, the more they become a spiritual fortress for us in our times of need. As we grow to understand the very nature and character of God through a study of His magnificent Names, we will find yourselves running to His name to find safety and strength. His name truly is like a strong tower! God's Name stands for the manifestation of His presence in His revelation and His relation to His people. It is essential to know God's Name because we bear His Name ("Christian") and we are commanded to live in such a way that will bring glorify His Name. As we come to know the significance of each name, we will enhance the breadth of our ability to praise God and to live in His protection.

> He has sent redemption to His people; He has ordained His covenant forever;**Holy and awesome is His name** (Psalm 111:9)

Nathan Stone in a classic work (Names of God) elaborates on this idea explaining that...

> a name in the Old Testament was often an indication of a person's character or of some peculiar quality. But what one name could be adequate to God's greatness? After all, as one writer declares, a name imposes some limitation. It means that an object or person is this and not that, is here and not there. And if the Heaven of heavens cannot contain God, how can a name describe Him? What a request of Moses, then, that was —that the infinite God should reveal Himself to finite man by any one name! We can hardly understand or appreciate Moses himself unless we see him in his many-sided character of learned man and shepherd, leader and legislator, soldier and statesman, impulsive, yet meekest of men. We can know David, too, not only as shepherd, warrior, and king, but also as a prophet, a poet, and musician. Even so, the Old Testament contains a number of names and compound names for God which reveal Him in some aspect of His character and dealings with mankind...As one would expect, the opening statement of the Scriptures contains the name God. "In the beginning God!" The Hebrew word from which this word God is translated is Elohim. While not the most frequently occurring word for the Deity, it occurs 2,570 times. The one which occurs most frequently is the word in the King James Version translated Lord, and in the American Standard Version, Jehovah...There is a spiritual significance in the use of these different names. It is much more "rational" to believe that the great and infinite and eternal God has given us these different names to express different aspects of His being and the different relationships He sustains to His creature**s. (Borrow** Names of God in the Old Testament by Stone, Nathan J)

It follows that one would be well rewarded with a greater understanding of the many names of God in the Old Testament, for then one could approach the throne of grace addressing Him by a specific name which speaks of an aspect of His character. For example, if one were in need of help, it might be quite reasonable to approach Him as Jehovah Jireh: The LORD Will Provide. For a study of the **Names of God** see the following links for a more detailed and practical analysis of a number of God's specific Names. And then go to our Father Who art in heaven and speak with Him based on what you learn about Him from His many Names. Go into His presence acknowledging His worth (worship ~ "worth-ship") giving Him honor and reverence due only to Him. Worship in prayer in Scripture is not repetition or frenzy but includes a review of His character and His ways.

NAMES OF GOD

- Name of the LORD is a Strong Tower: Summary
- Name of the LORD is a Strong Tower: Why Should You Study It?
- Elohim: My Creator - Genesis 1:1
- El Elyon: Most High God - Sovereign Over All - Genesis 1:18
- El Roi: God Who Sees - Genesis 16:13
- Jehovah - Exodus 3:14
- Jehovah Sabaoth, LORD of hosts (of armies) - Isaiah 6:3
- Jehovah Sabaoth , LORD of hosts (of armies) - Isaiah 6:3
- Jehovah Mekeddeshem (M'Kaddesh) LORD Who Sanctifies - Exodus 31:13
- Jehovah Nissi: The LORD Our Banner - Exodus 17:8-16
- Jehovah Nissi: Exposition of Exodus 17:8-16
- Jehovah Shalom - Pt 1: The LORD our Peace - Judges 6:24
- Jehovah Shalom - Pt 2: The LORD our Peace - Judges 6:24
- Jehovah Jireh: The LORD Will Provide - Genesis 22:14
- Jehovah Rapha: The LORD our Healer - Exodus 15:26

- Jehovah Roi: The Lord is My Shepherd 1 - Psalm 23
- Jehovah Roi: The Lord is My Shepherd 2 - Psalm 23
- Jehovah Ezer: The LORD our Helper: - Psalm 121
- Jehovah Ezer: Commentary on Psalm 121
- Our Stronghold sermon by C H Spurgeon on Proverbs 18:10

Jesus' focus in this model prayer on God's Name emphasizes the importance of worship ("worth-ship") as we begin to commune with our Father Who art in heaven.

How does worship affect us? Well, for example, if you are going through a difficult time, experiencing assaults from the world, the flesh and/or the devil, all these enemy forces crying out to you to abandon your faith and hope in God, then take a moment and read the encouraging example of King Hezekiah of Judah in Isaiah 36-37. Remember that the nation of Israel had been divided into two kingdoms, Israel to the north with the ten tribes, and Judah in the South with two tribes, Judah and Benjamin. Assyria had defeated the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 712BC and taken the 10 tribes into captivity. In Isaiah 36, we find the formidable foe threatening to bring about the same fate for Judah.

Another way to **hallow His Name**, is to study what His Name stands for, as manifest in His character and His **attributes**. Consider taking the a month to do an overview of His attributes. What might that do to our faith and our desire to come into His presence in prayer? For assistance in your study you could use the links below as guidelines, but remember not to just read the description or definition of His attribute. Always take time to read the Scriptures (in context) that relate to the specific attribute.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

- Summary Chart - The Attributes of God
- Eternal
- Faithfulness
- Foreknows
- Good
- Holy
- Immutable
- Impartial
- Incomprehensible
- Infinite
- Jealous
- Justice
- Longsuffering
- Love
- Mercy
- Omnipotent
- Omnipresent
- Omniscient
- Righteous
- Self-existent
- Self-sufficient
- Sovereign
- Transcendent
- Truth
- Wise
- Wrath
- Spurgeon on the Attributes of God

Now **memorize** His Names so that you will be able to **meditate** (see Primer on Biblical Meditation) on them and the Spirit can call them to your remembrance in your hour of need. This is part of what it means to "hallow" His Name.

As alluded to earlier acknowledging God by His various names, although highly commendable, does not encompass the fullness of what is called for in hallowing His name. In other words, we don't just speak His Name with our lips, but we are called to live in the light of the truth of His Name. Believers as a royal priesthood are to represent His Name by walking "in a manner worthy of the calling with which we have been called." (Ephesians 4:1).

Ray Stedman elaborates on hallowing God's Name noting that this part of the prayer reflects a personal surrender explaining that...

> "this is the petition that makes hypocrites out of most of us. For we can say "Father" with grateful sincerity, but when we pray "Hallowed be thy name," we say this with the guilty knowledge that, as we pray, there are areas of our life in which His Name is not hallowed and in which, furthermore, we don't want it to be hallowed. When we say "Hallowed by thy name," we are praying,
>
> > "May the whole of my life be a source of delight to you and may it be an honor to the name which I bear, which is your name. Hallowed be your name."
>
> It is the same thing we find in that prayer of David's at the close of one of his great psalms:
>
> > "May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my

redeemer," (Psalms 19:14).

That is praying "Hallowed be thy name."

The trouble is that we so frequently know there are great areas of our life that are not hallowed. There are certain monopolies which we have reserved to ourselves, privileged areas which we do not wish to surrender, where the name of our boss or the name of our girl friend or some other dear one means more to us than the name of God. But when we pray this, if we pray it in any degree whatsoever of sincerity or openness or honesty, we are praying,

"Lord, I open to you every closet, I am taking every skeleton out for you to examine. Hallowed be thy name."

There cannot be any contact with God, any real touching of his power, any genuine experiencing of the glorious fragrance and wonder of God at work in human life until we truly pray, and the second requisite of true prayer is that we say "Hallowed be thy name."

But we are not only aware that in each of us there are areas where God's name is not hallowed, where he cannot write his name, but furthermore we are aware deep in our being that none of us can make our lives like this, that no matter how we may try to arrange every area of our lives to please him, there is a fatal weakness, a flaw that somehow makes us miss the mark. Even when we try hard we find ourselves unable to do this. But you will notice that this prayer is not phrased as simply a confession or an expression of repentance to the Father. We are not to pray as so frequently we do pray, "Father, help me to be good," or "Help me to be better." Is it not rather remarkable that throughout this whole pattern prayer, not once do you ever find an expression of a desire for help in the sanctification of life? That which is so much our concern, and so much the concern of Scripture, is never once reflected in this prayer. No, Jesus turns our attention entirely away from ourselves to the Father. This phrase, "Hallowed be thy name" is really a cry of helpless trust, in which we are simply standing and saying,

"Father, not only do I know that there are areas in my life where Thy Name is not hallowed, but I know also that only You can hallow them, and I am quite willing to simply stand still and let You be the Holy One Who will actually be first in my life."

When we pray that way, then we discover that the rest comes by itself, so to speak.

The man who lets God be his Lord and surrenders to Him is drawn quite spontaneously into a great learning process and becomes a different person. Martin Luther once said,

"You do not command a stone which is lying in the sun to be warm. It will be warm all by itself."

When we say,

"Father, there is no area of my life that I'm not willing to let you talk to me about, there is no area that I will hide from you, my sexual life, my business life, my social life, my school life, my recreation times, my vacation periods,"

that is saying, "Hallowed be thy name." When we pray that way we discover that God will walk into the dark closets of our life where the odor is sometimes too much even for us to stand and clean them out and straighten them up and make them fit for his dwelling.

"If we walk in the light," John says, (and that is not sinlessness, that means where God sees everything), "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin," (1 John 1:7 RSV). (The Pattern Prayer)

PETITION FOR GOD'S KINGDOM TO COME

Your Kingdom (basileia) **come** - Notice that plea to **come** is in the **aorist imperative** which is a command which normally calls for urgent action. Keep in mind that a Kingdom has to have a King and so when we pray this prayer, we are essentially pleading with the Lord Jesus Christ to come into hearts now as their Savior and King and also to return and begin His reign in His earthly kingdom. And so when we pray **your Kingdom come**, we are praying for the glorious day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16+, compare Da 2:34, 35+ with Da 2:44, 45+) to set up His **Millennial** kingdom on earth in which righteousness will be the rule of the day. To reiterate, the Kingdom is inseparable from the King and to pray for His Kingdom to come is to pray for its consummation. This is the **kingdom** to which we are citizens and its fulfillment should be the longing of our hearts and our prayers. As an aside, it is ironic that many amillennialists pray this prayer for the millennial kingdom to come! As another writer quips "If the messianic kingdom had already begun, as some scholars affirm, this prayer would hardly be necessary."

THOUGHT - Compare the exclamation of the early church "Maranatha" which means "Our Lord, come", "O

Lord come!" or "Our Lord has come." (1 Co 16:22+). Would it be that we heard this same cry more often from the modern church!

Spurgeon - When we come to God in prayer, we are apt to think first of our own necessities, but if we came aright, in the spirit of sonship, truly saying, "**Our Father who art in heaven**," we should begin our prayer like this, "**Hallowed be thy name**.' May all men honour, reverence, and adore thy holy name. '**Thy kingdom come**.' We are not satisfied that thou shouldst be anything less than king; our heart's desire is, 'Reign, gracious God over us and over all men.' (Luke 11 - exposition)

Phillip Keller on **Your kingdom come** - When all is said and done, most of us from our earliest childhood believe we are the king of our own castle. We determine our own destinies; we arrange our own affairs; we govern our own lives. We become supreme specialists in selfish, self-centered living where all of life revolves around the epicenter of me, I, mine. So, if I sincerely, earnestly, and genuinely implore God to come into my life and experiences, there to establish His Kingdom, I can only expect that there is bound to be a most tremendous confrontation. It is inevitable that there will follow a formidable conflict between His divine sovereignty and my self-willed ego. When I pray, "Thy kingdom come," I am willing to relinquish the rule of my own life, to give up governing my own affairs, to abstain from making my own decisions in order to allow God, by His indwelling Spirit, to decide for me what I shall do. Paul emphasized this concept in 1 Corinthians 3:16: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Also, "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Co 6:16-18). So when Christ uttered the simple yet profound petition, "**Thy kingdom come,**" He envisaged His own future kingdom on earth and also the very Spirit of the living God coming into a human heart at regeneration to make it His holy habitation. He pictured the King of kings so permeating and invading a life that His authority would be established in that person's mind and will. He saw a human being as a temple, an abode, a residence of the Most High. But He knew that only when such an occupied heart is held and controlled by the indwelling Spirit could it be truly said that here indeed is a part of the spiritual Kingdom of God where His will was done on earth. (Borrow A layman looks at the Lord's prayer)

Bishop Taylor Smith of the Church of England applied "Thy Kingdom Come" this way - "As soon as I awake each morning I rise from bed at once. I dress promptly. I wash myself, shave and comb my hair. Then fully attired, wide awake and properly groomed I go quietly to my study. There, before God Almighty, and Christ my King, I humbly present myself as a loyal subject to my Sovereign, ready and eager to be of service to Him for the day." (**ED**: I LIKE THIS DESCRIPTION WHICH SOUNDS SIMILAR TO PAUL'S EXHORTATION IN Romans 12:1+ to present ourselves as a living and holy sacrifice to God).

Steven Cole - The second petition is a logical extension of the first. It points to that future day when Jesus Christ will return in power and glory to set up His kingdom on this earth and rule the nations with a rod of iron. Every child of God longs for that day when God will put down every enemy, when righteousness shall reign on this earth. But it can also be applied to God's ruling in my own and in every other human heart in the interim before that coming day of His outward reign. This request acknowledges God's right to reign over my sinful heart. (Lord Teach Us to Pray)

Before we can pray, 'Thy kingdom come', we must be willing to pray, 'My kingdom go'.
-- Alan Redpath

Although the **kingdom** (basileia) had already come in Jesus' ministry (Lk 17:21 - KJV "*within you*" is not accurate for He was addressing unbelieving Pharisees! cf Mt 12:28), its final consummation will be in the future. Wherever the King is, that's where His kingdom is.

Brian Bill on **kingdom** (basileia) - The word "**kingdom**" in the Greek means "rule" or "reign." I think this is a better translation than the word "kingdom" because this word makes us think of castles and knights. To pray, "Your kingdom come" is to pray that God may take up reigning residence in the hearts and lives of those who are in rebellion. It is a prayer for salvation, for kingdom citizenship. There are at least three aspects of praying for God's kingdom to come that should permeate our prayers: 1. **Conversion**. We should pray that people would bow before Christ and get saved. One of the ways we want to do this as a church is to establish Lighthouses of Prayer this fall as a precursor to the mass distribution of the Jesus Video in December. It's my prayer that scores of people will be converted in Livingston County! 2. **Commitment**. As believers, we need to daily respond to the royalty residing in us and bow before His lordship in our lives. We need to check to make sure Jesus is at the center of our lives, not anyone, or anything else. The bottom line in prayer is this: "God, because you are King, do what you want in my life and in the lives of others." 3. **Consummation**. One day the heavens will split open, and Jesus Christ will descend and plant His feet on the Mount of Olives, and He will establish His kingdom that will last forever and ever. How is one qualified to pray, "Your kingdom come"? By changing citizenship through conversion. How does one live out that citizenship? By commitment. And how is that citizenship fully realized? By consummation. (How To Pray The Lord's Way)

Rod Mattoon - Praying, "**Thy kingdom come...**" also demands commitment from the person doing the praying. Once you have

trusted Christ as your Savior, then yielding the throne of the kingdom of your life day by day is vital if you are going to have a passion for His coming, power for Satanic conflict, purity of character, perfection or maturity in consecration, persistence in consistency, plenty of compassion, and patience in your calamities. "Thy kingdom come" can apply to the kingdom of our heart and our commitment to serving Him until He returns. Over and again we are challenged in Scripture to give our heart to the Lord and be committed to living for Him. Proverbs 23:26—My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. Romans 12:1—I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.. 2 Corinthian 8:5—And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. Praying "Thy kingdom come" does demand a depth of commitment from us, and such a commitment produces a life that makes a difference in our society and world. Kingdom power impacts our most intimate relationships with people. Lives are influenced for Christ, and some are changed. We can make a difference in our schools and neighborhoods when we are sold out to the Lord. God help us, God help us, God help us to make a difference until He returns. (Treasures from the Scriptures)

J C Ryle - By his **kingdom** (basileia) we mean, first, the kingdom of grace which God sets up and maintains in the hearts of all living members of Christ by his Spirit and Word. But we mean chiefly the kingdom of glory which one day will be set up when Jesus comes the second time (**NOTE**: RYLE LIVED FROM 1816-1900 AND BELIEVED IN A MILLENIUM WELL BEFORE THE "DISPENSATIONALISTS"! He was a strong believer in the return of the Jews to their own land as being prophesied in the Bible and thus was part of the movement that led to the Balfour Declaration.), and “they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest” (He 8:11+). This is the time when sin, sorrow and Satan will be driven out of the world. It is the time when the Jews will be converted, and the full number of the Gentiles will come in (Romans 11:25+), and a time that is to be desired more than anything. It therefore fills a foremost place in the Lord’s Prayer.

Ray Stedman writes (in his sermon The Pattern Prayer) that "The third cry of true prayer, again concerned with God, is a cry of hope, "Thy kingdom come." Now this can be a sigh for heaven. Who of us does not get homesick for heaven once in awhile, longing to be free from the desultory humdrumness of life and to experience the glory we read of in the Bible. Or this can be, as it ought to be, a cry heaven to come to earth. That is, "Thy kingdom come," meaning, may the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. This is which we sing in the hymn, **Jesus Shall Reign**,

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Matthew 6:9-13	**Luke 11:2-4**
Our Father who art in heaven	Father
Hallowed be Thy name	Hallowed be Thy name
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven	Thy kingdom come
Give us this day our daily bread	Give us each day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors	And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us
And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil	And lead us not into temptation
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen	

Father (3962) (**pater**) is the genitor (a begetter), by whom another is begotten. Stated more simply this is a man who has begotten a child. Father is the progenitor, the ancestor in the direct line (a forefather -- thus Adam was the "progenitor" of the Human Race). "Father; one who imparts life and is committed to it; a progenitor, bringing into being to pass on the potential for likeness. (HelpsBible.com) **Vine** writes that **pater** is "from a root signifying “a nourisher, protector, upholder” (Lat., pater, Eng., “father,” are akin)." (**Note**: Not all lexicons agree with this origin)....Whereas the everlasting power and divinity of God are manifest in creation, His “Fatherhood” in spiritual relationship through faith is the subject of NT revelation, and waited for the presence on earth of the

Son, Matt. 11:27; John 17:25. The spiritual relationship is not universal, John 8:42, 44 (cf. John 8:12 and Gal. 3:26). **Vine** writes that **pater** is "from a root signifying "a nourisher, protector, upholder" (Lat., pater, Eng., "father," are akin)." (**Note**: Not all lexicons agree with this origin)....Whereas the everlasting power and divinity of God are manifest in creation, His "Fatherhood" in spiritual relationship through faith is the subject of NT revelation, and waited for the presence on earth of the Son, Matt. 11:27; John 17:25. The spiritual relationship is not universal, John 8:42, 44 (cf. John 8:12 and Gal. 3:26).

> **Pater in Luke** - Lk. 1:17; Lk. 1:32; Lk. 1:55; Lk. 1:59; Lk. 1:62; Lk. 1:67; Lk. 1:72; Lk. 1:73; Lk. 2:33; Lk. 2:48; Lk. 2:49; Lk. 3:8; Lk. 6:23; Lk. 6:26; Lk. 6:36; Lk. 8:51; Lk. 9:26; Lk. 9:42; Lk. 9:59; Lk. 10:21; Lk. 10:22; Lk. 11:2; Lk. 11:11; Lk. 11:13; Lk. 11:47; Lk. 11:48; Lk. 12:30; Lk. 12:32; Lk. 12:53; Lk. 14:26; Lk. 15:12; Lk. 15:17; Lk. 15:18; Lk. 15:20; Lk. 15:21; Lk. 15:22; Lk. 15:27; Lk. 15:28; Lk. 15:29; Lk. 16:24; Lk. 16:27; Lk. 16:30; Lk. 18:20; Lk. 22:29; Lk. 22:42; Lk. 23:34; Lk. 23:46; Lk. 24:49

Hallowed (37) (**hagiazo** from **hagios** = set apart, holy, sanctified) means treated as holy, dedicated, consecrated, set apart, sanctified. It means to set apart for God, to sanctify, to make a person or thing (in the OT altars, days, priests, etc were set apart) the opposite of koinos, which means profane or common.

> **Hagiazo - 25v -hallowed(2), keep himself holy(1), sanctified(16), sanctifies(2), sanctify(7).** Matt. 6:9; Matt. 23:17; Matt. 23:19; Lk. 11:2; Jn. 10:36; Jn. 17:17; Jn. 17:19; Acts 20:32; Acts 26:18; Rom. 15:16; 1 Co. 1:2; 1 Co. 6:11; 1 Co. 7:14; Eph. 5:26; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Tim. 4:5; 2 Tim. 2:21; Heb. 2:11; Heb. 9:13; Heb. 10:10; Heb. 10:14; Heb. 10:29; Heb. 13:12; 1 Pet. 3:15; Rev. 22:11

Mattoon on **hagiazo** - A thing which is **hagios** is different from other things. A person who is hagios is separate from other people. So, then, this petition, "hallowed be thy name," means, "Let God's name be treated differently from all other names. Let God's name be given a special position which is absolutely unique. Christians are also commanded to ***be*** holy, but our Lord is acknowledged as ***being*** holy. When we pray "hallowed be they name," we attribute to God the holiness that already is, and always has been His. To hallow God's name is to revere, honor, glorify, and obey Him as perfect. We do not need to pray that the Lord will become more holy, for He is already holy. It is the essence of His being. The name of the Lord is holy. (Treasures from the Scriptures)

Hiebert - The primary meaning of sanctify is "to set apart, to consecrate," but it also carries the thought of the resultant holiness of character in the consecrated. The note of holiness was already sounded in 1Th 3:13-note and 1Th 4:3--note, 1Th 4:4, 5-note, 1Th 4:6, 7, 8-note.

Barclay on **hallowed** - The word which is translated **hallowed** is a part of the Greek verb **hagiazo**. The Greek verb **hagiazo** is connected with the adjective **hagios**, and means to treat a person or a thing as hagios. Hagios is the word which is usually translated holy; but the basic meaning of hagios is different or separate. A thing which is **hagios** is different from other things. A person who is **hagios** is separate from other people. So a temple is hagion (Greek #39) because it is different from other buildings. An altar is **hagios** because it exists for a purpose different from the purpose of ordinary things. God's day is**hagios** because it is different from other days. A priest is **hagios** because he is separate from other men. So, then, this petition means, "Let God's name **be treated differently** from all other names; let God's name be given a position which is absolutely unique." But there is something to add to this. In Hebrew the name does not mean simply the name by which a person is called-- John or James, or whatever the name may be. In Hebrew the name means the nature, the character, the personality of the person in so far as it is known or revealed to us. That becomes clear when we see how the Bible writers use the expression. The Psalmist says, "Those who know thy name put their trust in thee" (Ps 9:10). Quite clearly that does not mean that those who know that God is called Jehovah will trust in him. It means that those who know what God is like, those who know the nature and the character of God will put their trust in him. The Psalmist says, "Some boast of chariots and some of horses, but we boast of the name of the Lord our God" (Ps 20:7). Quite clearly that does not mean that in a time of difficulty the Psalmist will remember that God is called Jehovah. It means that at such a time some will put their trust in human and material aids and defenses, but the Psalmist will remember the nature and the character of God; he will remember what God is like, and that memory will give him confidence. So, then, let us take these two things and put them together. **Hagiazo**, which is translated to hallow, means to regard as different, to give a unique and special place to. The name is the nature, the character, the personality of the person in so far as it is known and revealed to us. Therefore, when we pray "Hallowed be Thy name," it means, "Enable us to give to thee the unique place which thy nature and character deserve and demand." (Matthew 6 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible)

Name (3686) (onoma) is the proper name of a person or object. In our modern world, a name does not have the same significance as it did in antiquity. In both the Old and New Testament times "the name" concisely summed up all that a person is. One's whole character was implied by their name. And so it follows that the Names of God denote not just His title, but also include all that by which He makes Himself known and all that He shows Himself to be.

In Biblical times a Name was a means of self-revelation. In the ancient world it was especially important to know the name of the

deities in order to invoke their presence and obtain help from them. One of the most famous encounters is found in Exodus when Moses was confronted by God at the burning bush, and given a commission to deliver Israel from bondage. Moses argued with God, saying that no one would believe him.

> Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" And God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations. (Exodus 3:13-15)

Kingdom (932) (**basileia** from **basileus** = a sovereign, king, monarch) denotes sovereignty, royal power and dominion. Most of the NT uses of basileia do not refer primarily to a geographical territory, the territory or people over whom a king rules. The Kingdom of God is the sphere in which God is acknowledged as King in the hearts of those giving Him loving obedience. This is the Kingdom in its present form (But see in depth discussion at **basileia**). In Luke 11:2 the petition is asking for the future Kingdom (and King) to come where "THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear." (Mt 13:43+) **Swindoll** says **basileia** means ""kingdom," "government," "royal power" This term denotes the dominion of a lawful king, which the Greeks saw as something derived from Zeus. In the Old Testament, Israel was originally a **theocracy**, a nation whose king was God. Therefore, Israel was the kingdom of God. Even when a human sat on the throne of Israel, he derived his power from God. The Gospels depict the earth as the dominion of Satan or evil, a usurper to the rightful throne of God. Jesus came to reestablish divine rule (i.e., the kingdom of God). (Insights on Luke)

> **Basileia in Luke and Acts -** Lk. 1:33; Lk. 4:5; Lk. 4:43; Lk. 6:20; Lk. 7:28; Lk. 8:1; Lk. 8:10; Lk. 9:2; Lk. 9:11; Lk. 9:27; Lk. 9:60; Lk. 9:62; Lk. 10:9; Lk. 10:11; Lk. 11:2; Lk. 11:17; Lk. 11:18; Lk. 11:20; Lk. 12:31; Lk. 12:32; Lk. 13:18; Lk. 13:20; Lk. 13:28; Lk. 13:29; Lk. 14:15; Lk. 16:16; Lk. 17:20; Lk. 17:21; Lk. 18:16; Lk. 18:17; Lk. 18:24; Lk. 18:25; Lk. 18:29; Lk. 19:11; Lk. 19:12; Lk. 19:15; Lk. 21:10; Lk. 21:31; Lk. 22:16; Lk. 22:18; Lk. 22:29; Lk. 22:30; Lk. 23:42; Lk. 23:51; Acts 1:3; Acts 1:6; Acts 8:12; Acts 14:22; Acts 19:8; Acts 20:25; Acts 28:23; Acts 28:31

Luke 11:3 'Give us each day our daily bread.

> KJV Luke 11:3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

- **Give us**: Ex 16:15-22 Pr 30:8 Isa 33:16 Mt 6:11,34 Jn 6:27-33
- **each day our daily bread**: or, for the day
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:3 Our Daily Bread - John MacArthur

PETITION FOR PROVISION

The prayer now shifts from God-ward to the man-ward focus. Once God is given His rightful place, then we have a proper perspective toward ourselves. Some people feel that it's too selfish to ask God for their own needs, and yet this is exactly what Jesus is teaching us to do.

The writer of Proverbs 30:8 says "Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion."

Give us each day - **Give** is in the present imperative reflecting our continuing need for His spiritual and physical sustenance. Matthew 6:11+ has "**Give us this day.**" One clear implication of this petition is that our Father wants to hear our voice**each day**! Have you spoken with Him today? Praying this prayer is a reflection of our dependence on Him and our faith that He will supply our need. "Jesus teaches us to ask our heavenly Father for a day's rations at a time. It is the natural corrective to Martha's anxiety about many things (Lk 10:40-41+)." (Brooks) Another implication of this request acknowledges our daily dependence on God not self, trusting in His sufficiency to supply our needs (not our greeds).

> **ILLUSTRATION - George Muller** of Bristol, England built orphanages which cared and educated 1000's of children in the 1800's without ever asking any human to supply his need, instead committing to ask only his Father in heaven. And the children never once went without a meal, food sometimes arriving by a knock at the door with the children seated at their tables with empty plates. Over his lifetime, Muller received donations that would be the equivalent of $180 million dollars today, all without an appeal letter, a phone call, a personal visit,

> etc. Watch this one hour docudrama of Muller's incredible life of faith and prayer to His Father. His legacy has remained alive now for well over 100 years. O to live a life of faith like George Muller should be the heart cry of every hungry disciple of Christ. Amen

Brian Bell has a convicting thought - I believe when we won't seek Him, He will teach us to pray. Example: Absalom and Joab story in 2 Sa 14:28-33. When we are lifeless in prayer, backwards in our exercise of it, and we disregard His invitation to "seek His face" don't be surprised if He lovingly sets your Barley on fire! (Coming Up for Air)

Jesus explained that He was the true Bread of Life, the Bread that alone meets man's greatest need...

> Jesus said to them, '**I am the bread of life**; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. 36 "But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe....48 "**I am the bread of life.** 49"Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50"This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 "**I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.**" (John 6:35, 48-51)

Our daily bread - Not "my daily bread" but "our daily bread and is a prayer for all of God's people. It is interesting that there are no singular personal pronouns in this prayer. Note repetition of the time phrases (**each day**...**daily**), again emphasizing God's desire for us to seek Him **daily** for our needs (not our "greeds"). Practically in Jesus' day, **bread** had to be made daily for they had no freezers to store surplus loaves. Ancient flour mills didn't grind a week's worth of flour, but only a days' worth. Each day you baked bread for the family. These facts remind us of the children of Israel's need to daily rely on the manna that God sent once a day. To hoard the manna was in essence saying "I don't trust You to provide enough for the next day" and God caused the excess manna to rot to make the point that they were to dependent totally on Him and His faithfulness, and had to trust Him each (every) day! (Read Ex 16:18, 19, 20, 21+).

Bread in this petition is a figure of speech called a synecdoche in which the part (**bread**) represents the whole. In other words bread speaks of the totality of the basic necessities of life. One wag quipped "Oh that we'd be content with our daily bread and quit looking at our neighbors slice!"

D A Carson - "The prayer is for our needs, not our greeds. It is for one day at a time, reflecting the precarious lifestyle of many first-century workers who were paid one day at a time and for whom a few day's illness could spell tragedy."

David Guzik - When Jesus spoke of bread, He meant real bread, as in the sense of daily provisions. Early theologians allegorized this, because they couldn't imagine Jesus speaking about an everyday thing like bread in such a majestic prayer like this. So they thought bread referred to communion, the Lord's Supper. Some have thought it referred to Jesus Himself as the bread of life. Others have thought it speaks of the word of God as our daily bread. Calvin rightly said of such interpretations, which fail to see God's interest in everyday things: "This is exceedingly absurd." God does care about everyday things, and we should pray about them.

D L Moody - IF God could set a table for His people in the wilderness, and feed three millions of Israelites for forty years, can He not give us our daily bread? I do not mean only the bread that perisheth, but also the Bread that cometh from above. If He feeds the birds of the air, surely He will feed His children made in His own image! If He numbers the very hairs of our head, He will take care to supply all our temporal wants.

Spurgeon - "**Give us**, O Lord, what we really need; not that which would be a luxury, but that which is a necessity. **Give us,**' according as we shall need it day by day, what we shall then actually need, '**our daily bread**.'" We are not warranted in asking much more than this in temporal matters. They are all comprehended in this petition as far as they are necessary, but God has not given us carte blanche to ask for wealth, or honor, or any such dangerous things. There is no harm in asking for bread, and he will give us that. (Luke 11 - exposition)

Brian Bill asks "Do we pray for our daily needs? Do we take time to ask God to meet our physical needs or do we at least give thanks for them? Sure, we might say grace before every meal but these prayers can easily become just a sanctimonious way of saying, "Let's eat."Friends, if we don't ask God to give us what we need every day we will gradually succumb to the delusion that we actually can provide for these needs ourselves. We can think that we handle this part and God only handles stuff that is serious. Here's the danger in thinking like this: pride can swell up within us and we can subtly pull away from trust in God." (Luke 11:1-4 How to Pray the Lord's Way)

Luke 11:4 'And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

KJV Luke 11:4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; **but deliver us from evil**.

- **And forgive us our sins** 1 Kings 8:34,36; Ps 25:11,18; 32:1-5; 51:1-3; 130:3,4; Isa 43:25,26; Daniel 9:19; Hosea 14:2; Mt 6:12; 1 John 1:8-10
- **For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us** Mt 6:14-15; 11:25,26; 18:35; Eph 4:31,32; Col 3:13; James 2:13
- **And lead us not into temptation** 8:13; 22:46; Mt 6:13; 26:41; 1 Cor 10:13; 2 Cor 12:7,8; Rev 2:10; 3:10
- **but deliver us from evil**. (**Only in KJV**) - Genesis 48:16; Ps 121:7; John 17:15; 2 Th 3:3; 2 Ti 4:18
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:4 Forgive Us Our Sins, Part 1 - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:4 Forgive Us Our Sins, Part 2 - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:4 Forgive Us Our Sins, Part 3 - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:4 Forgive Us Our Sins, Part 4 - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:4 Lead Us Not into Temptation - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Matthew 6:12-15+ - 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'] 14 "For if you **forgive** others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also **forgive** you. 15 "But if you do not **forgive** others, then your Father will not **forgive** your transgressions.

PETITION FOR PARDON

And forgive (aphiemi) **us our sins** - The clear implication is that we sin daily with sins of commission and omission. **Forgive** is in the aorist imperative and speaks of a request to dismiss a debt we owe to God, Who "dismisses" the charge against us. The verb **forgive** is aphiemi which from God's perspective "refers to the act of putting something away. God did that at the Cross when He **put sin away** by incarnating Himself in humanity in the Person of His Son, stepping down from His judgment throne, assuming the guilt of man's sin, and paying the penalty, thus, satisfying His justice, and making possible an offer of mercy on the basis of justice satisfied. When a sinner avails himself of the merits of that atoning sacrifice, **he thus puts himself within the provision God made**. **His sins were put away** at the Cross, and he comes into the benefit of that when he believes." (Wuest)

Matthew's version substitutes **debts** for **sins**, Adam Clarke explaining - "Sin is represented here under the notion of a debt, and as our sins are many, they are called here debts. God made man that he might live to his glory, and gave him a law to walk by; and if, when he does anything that tends not to glorify God, he contracts a debt with Divine Justice."

For (**gar**) is a term of explanation which explains how God is able to forgive us.

We ourselves also forgive (aphiemi) **everyone who is indebted** (opheilo) **to us** - **Forgive** here is present tense indicating this is to be our lifestyle. And in the active voice it speaks of us making a volitional choice, a choice of our will to forgive (a Christ-like attitude/action that is enabled by His Spirit indwelling believers). "An unforgiving Christian is a contradiction in terms." (MacArthur)

Matthew's version says "**And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors**." Note the small word "**as**" (JUST LIKE) which clearly shows that God's forgiveness flows to those who forgive. Unforgiveness effectively shuts off the flow of forgiveness from our Father. It is easy to read over the "**AS**" but that little word is critical to understanding the **paternal/familial forgiveness** from our Father to us as His sons and daughters. Clearly this forgiveness does not refer to **judicial forgiveness** because all of our sins were laid on our Savior on the Cross and the debt we owed God was paid in full by the Son (Jn 19:30+). So clearly forgiveness is a critical issue for believers. In fact it is so important that in Matthew's longer version of the prayer, the only petition which has additional explanation is the petition dealing with forgiveness. Jesus adds this explanation...

"For if you **forgive** (aphiemi)others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also **forgive** (aphiemi) you. 15 "But if you do not **forgive** (aphiemi) others, then your Father will not **forgive** (aphiemi)your transgressions. (Mt 6:14-15+)

You may be asking "Well I thought Jesus paid for all my sins on the Cross didn't He?" And the answer is of course He did. He became a curse in our place and God's righteous wrath judged our sin which was laid on Christ. So yes our position now is perfectly righteous before the Father because we are forever in Christ, the Righteous One. That is "judicial forgiveness (see MacArthur's

sermon - Forgive Us Our Sins - Part 2)." But unforgiveness is a sin that creates a break in fellowship with the Father. So the issue is "paternal (or familial) forgiveness" and it is that forgiveness which is conditioned upon our willingness to forgive others their sin against us. Stated another way it is not a matter of my **eternal standing** before God but a matter of my **present relationship** with Him (cf 1 John 1:6-7+)

David Guzik - Just as real as the need for daily bread is the need for daily forgiveness. We often feel the need for food more; but the need for forgiveness is real whether it is felt or not. "As bread is the first need of the body, so forgiveness for the soul." (Murray)

Rod Mattoon - This second clause in the sentence does not mean that we must earn God's forgiveness with our own forgiveness of others. Our forgiveness of others demonstrates our felt need of being forgiven by the Lord. It shows what the Lord has done in us and for us. The attitude of forgiveness of others demonstrates genuine repentance. No repentant person truly seeks forgiveness who does not have a forgiving spirit himself. We must not expect our prayers for forgiveness to be heard, if we pray with malice and spite in our hearts towards others. We are wasting our time. To pray in such a frame of mind is mere formality and hypocrisy. So let me ask some probing questions here. Do you need to forgive your wife or husband? Make up your mind to do so right now. Have you been unwilling to forgive your parents for things that have happened in the past, perhaps many years ago? Promise God that you will do it. In fact, do it today! Forgiveness is not a psychological trick. It is a miracle and God can help you do it. If He commands us to forgive, He will give us the ability to do it (**Ed**: The Holy Spirit will give us the desire and the power to forgive! Php 2:13NLT). (Treasures from the Scriptures)

John MacArthur - The question naturally arises as to why the Lord commands us, whose sins have already been forgiven, to ask the Father for forgiveness. The answer lies in grasping a second aspect of forgiveness, relational forgiveness. While believers' sins —past, present, and future—were forgiven at the point of salvation, they nevertheless still sin. Those sins do not change the declaration by the "Judge of all the earth" (Gen. 18:25) that Christians are just and righteous because their sins were paid for by the death of Christ. But they do affect their relationship with God, whose "eyes are too pure to approve evil," who "can not look on wickedness with favor" (Hab 1:13). David's penitent prayer in Psalm 51 illustrates this principle. His terrible sin with Bathsheba did not cause him to lose his salvation; in fact, in Ps 51:14 David addressed God as "the God of my salvation." It did, however, disrupt his communion with God, causing him to cry out, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation" (Ps 51:12). He did not ask for his salvation to be restored, but rather for his relationship with God to be restored so his joy would return. (See Luke Commentary)

MacArthur goes on to explain why our forgiveness of others is so important - Those who come to God seeking relational forgiveness will find it only if they forgive those who have wronged them. The Lord gave this prerequisite because bitterness can easily reign supreme in the human heart. People hold grudges—sometimes for a lifetime—and are prone to seeking vengeance. Relationships that fall apart do so ultimately because one or both parties involved are unwilling to forgive. The world is filled with bitter, angry people. Vengeance is considered a virtue, and those who seek it are heroes. The result is shattered marriages, broken relationships, gang warfare, crime, and lawsuits. Some psychologists argue that it is unhealthy to forgive, that it is healthy and normal to lash back at those who hurt us and give them what they deserve. That, they insist, makes the angry person feel better. But the price of unforgiveness is actually extremely high. Rather than make someone feel better, unforgiveness imprisons people in their past and makes those they refuse to forgive their jailers. Those who refuse to forgive continually pick at an open wound, never allowing it to heal. Having chosen to embrace hate, they become tortured prisoners of the offense and the offender. Such behavior is foolish, lacks common sense, and is self-destructive. It consumes unforgiving people's lives, robs them of their well-being, and deprives them of happiness and joy. Forgiveness, on the other hand, is a virtuous, noble, liberating, and loving act. But the more profound and compelling reason to forgive others is that doing so allows one to receive relational forgiveness from God. (See Luke Commentary)

MacArthur writes "While the most important reason to forgive others is to enjoy our relationship with God, there are at least **nine other reasons to do so**." For a discussion of all nine I strongly recommend you read his discussion of each point in his sermon - Forgive Us Our Sins - Part 4

Steven Cole explains it this way - I'm my dad's son because I was born into his family. I'll always be his son, even if I wrong him. But he and I can only enjoy a close relationship if, when I wrong him, I confess it and ask him to forgive me. In the same way, we will drift in our relationship with the heavenly Father if we are not sensitive to our sin by coming to Him for forgiveness as we need it....This means that your relationship with God is inextricably linked with your relationships with your fellow man, especially with those in your family and in the church. You can't just walk away from a strained relationship as if it doesn't matter. If you're bitter, you can't pray rightly until you choose to forgive. And, the rest of us must pray for those in the church who are hurt and bitter, that they would forgive those who have wronged them. (Lord Teach Us to Pray)

Brian Bill - Forgiveness of sin is the greatest need of the human heart. Only God can grant us a pardon from punishment and guilt. It's been my observation that there is one thing that troubles Christians more than anything else. It's guilt. We kick ourselves for our failures and punish ourselves relentlessly. Let's pray this prayer, asking God to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all

unrighteousness. Romans 8:1 declares that there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Let's claim it and live without being paralyzed by guilt and shame. Now, having said that, notice that Jesus immediately gives us a limitation we are to also forgive others. This verse teaches us that it is wrong to ask from God what we are not willing to give to other people. Let me ask you a question. Is there anyone who comes to mind right now who is in need of your forgiveness? Have you been holding someone captive? Is there someone in need of some grace? These are potent words. When we fail to forgive someone, we set ourselves up as a higher judge than God himself. Another way to say it is that our relationship with the Lord cannot be right until our relationship with others is made right. Matthew 5:23-24 tells us what to do if we know of someone who has something against us. Matthew 18:15 urges us to make things right when we have something against someone else. Have you been wronged by someone? Have you sinned against anyone else? Meet with the person face-to-face. Express yourself. Then let it go by giving the gift of forgiveness. Most of us grossly underestimate how committed God is to building and maintaining a loving community. Before we pray together, take some time right now to do a "forgiveness" inventory. Ask God to bring someone to mind that you have been withholding forgiveness from. Ask Him also if you have wronged anyone else. If the Holy Spirit brings a name to mind, determine right now to meet face-to-face this week. Don't short-circuit your own spiritual welfare. (Luke 11:1-4 How to Pray the Lord's Way)

Everyone who is indebted to us - Sin is depicted here as a debt owed. The old saying is that "We owed a debt we could not pay. Jesus paid a debt He did not owe!"

Brian Bell - This is a prayer for believers, so this isn't for salvation, but it assumes a regular need for confessing sin, even as 1 Jn.1:8-9. Could it ever read? "Lord, Forgive me my debts, even if I won't forgive any debtors." or, "Forgive me my debts, but don't you dare think I'm forgiving my debtors." BB.In asking for forgiveness of sins a person expresses his faith that God will forgive him. Such a person then evidences his faith by forgiving others.[see Mt.6:12+ where ***as*** = because]

Related Resources: Forgive/Forgiveness

- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Ephesians 4:32
- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Colossians 3:13
- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Matthew 6:12
- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Matthew 6:14-15.
- Illustrations and quotes on forgiveness

Study the main NT words for forgive/forgiveness:

- Forgiveness (859) aphesis
- Forgive (send away from, cancel the debt, release, let go) (863) aphiemi
- Forgive (grant, freely give, bestow) (5483) charizomai

Excellent 5 Part Sermon Series on Forgiveness by Dr Ray Pritchard: following messages are also in his book - **The Healing Power of Forgiveness** (see reviews by readers)

- 1) Forgiveness Healing the Hurt We Never Deserved
- 2) Forgiveness and the Lord's Prayer
- 3) Judge Not!
- 4) Is Total Forgiveness Realistic
- 5) The Final Step-Blessing Your Enemies

Other Resources on Forgiveness

- Father, Forgive Them by Dr. Ray Pritchard
- Forgiving the Unforgivable by Dr. Ray Pritchard
- How Can I Learn to Forgive? by Dr. Ray Pritchard
- Unless You Forgive by Dr. Ray Pritchard
- Forgiving the Unforgivable article by Dr. Ray Pritchard
- Forgiveness of Injuries (Mt 18:21-22) by John Angell James
- Forgiveness of Sins by Henry Law - 17 Chapter Treatise!

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

This at first glance seems to be a puzzling petition in light of James clear teaching

> Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for **God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.** 14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.(James 1:13-15+)

And lead us not into temptation (peirasmos) - **NLT** has "And don't let us yield to temptation." "Do not allow us to be led into temptation", "Keep me away from the place of temptation" Like the petition for daily bread, this petition expresses our desire to depend on his daily power to fight against the world, the flesh and the devil.

The **NET Note** says "The request **Do not lead us into temptation** is not to suggest that God causes temptation, but is a rhetorical way to ask for his protection from sin."

I like **Spurgeon's** interpretation - "Lord, do not try us and test us more than is absolutely necessary, for we are so apt to fall: 'Lead us not into temptation;' but, if we must be tempted," — Deliver us from evil. "If some good end is to be answered by our being thus tested, then let it be so, but, O Lord, 'deliver us from evil,' and especially from the evil one; suffer us not to fall into his hands in the hour of temptation." (Luke 11 - exposition)

MacArthur adds that "It is an appeal to God not to allow the inevitable **tests and trials of life to become temptations that would prove overpowering**. Peirasmos (**temptation**) is a neutral word with no inherent moral connotation. God does not tempt anyone to do evil, but He does permit tests to come into the lives of believers, as He did to Job (Job 23:10), Abraham (Heb. 11:17-19), Paul (2 Cor. 12:7-10), and Jesus (Heb. 5:8), as part of the process of strengthening and maturing them (Deut. 13:3; 1 Peter 1:6-7; 5:10). How believers respond to those tests determines whether they remain perfecting trials that bring spiritual growth, or become debilitating temptations that overwhelm them and lead them into sin.The basis for this request is God's promise, expressed in 1 Corinthians 10:13+, that He will never allow a temptation that is stronger than believers can bear. Those He permits are common to all people, and He will provide a way to escape being led into sin by them. People fall into sin not because they are overpowered by Satan and the demons, or because they were trapped with no way out. As James explained, "Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death" (James 1:14-15). (See Luke Commentary)

Rod Mattoon explains that the Greek word for **temptation** (peirasmos) "refers not so much to solicitation to do evil or enticement to sin, as to trials that test the character of a person. God does not tempt us to do evil. God did not cause Adam and Eve to sin. He is not the author of sin. If God tempted men to sin, then His nature would not be holy. Why do we need to pray that He will not lead us into testing or temptation? Even though God is not the instrumental cause or author of our testing, He does permit or allow us to experience temptation from the world, from the flesh, and from the devil. The Bible is clear that temptations and testings are going to come into our lives. They are unavoidable. Therefore this petition is a request that the Lord minimize the occasions of our testing that may result in our sinning or yielding to our fleshly desires. It articulates the repentant disciple's felt weakness to stand up under severe trials in view of his sinfulness. Thank God, He promises us that we will not be given more than we can handle. (1 Cor 10:13+). (Treasures from the Scriptures)

Brian Bill - You and I are faced with temptations all around us. The Greek word translated temptation is neutral and can refer to a test or a trial. This phrase should read, "And lead us not into trials or testings that can turn into temptation." The word "into" means "into the power of" or "into the hands of." And so, we are to ask God to keep us from falling into the power of trials and temptations. We are not strong enough to handle these on our own. Will God answer a prayer like this? You bet He will. 1 Corinthians 10:13-note gives us a wonderful promise. Brothers and sisters, ask God to lead you away from temptation. When you're faced with an enticement to sin, look for the way out. God is faithful and will not leave you to face your temptations alone. Pray for His protection and keep your guard up. (Luke 11:1-4 How to Pray the Lord's Way)

ESV Study Bible - The word translated "**temptation**" (peirasmos) can indicate either temptation or testing (**Ed**: see related verb peirazo in Lk 4:2-note; James 1:13). The meaning here most likely carries the sense, *"Allow us to be spared from difficult circumstances that would tempt us to sin*" (cf. Mt. 26:41). Although God never directly tempts believers (James 1:13), He does sometimes lead us into situations that "test" us (cf. Matt. 4:1; also Job 1:1-8; 1 Pet. 1:6; 4:12). In fact, trials and hardships will inevitably come to believers' lives, and believers should "count it all joy" (James 1:2-note) when trials (**Ed**: Trials = peirasmos) come, for they are strengthened by them (James 1:3–4-note). Nonetheless, believers should never pray to be brought into such situations but should pray to be delivered from them, for hardship and temptation make obedience more difficult and will sometimes result in sin. Believers should pray to be delivered from temptation (cf. Mt. 26:41; Lk 22:40, 46; 2 Pe 2:9; Rev. 3:10) and led in "paths of righteousness" (Ps. 23:3). (Borrow ESV Study Bible)

France - "God, while he does not 'tempt' men to do evil (James 1:13), does allow his children to pass through periods of testing. But disciples, aware of their weakness, should not desire such testing, and should pray to be spared exposure to such situations in

which they are vulnerable."

Spurgeon - "The man who prays 'Lead us not into temptation,' and then goes into it is a liar before God…'Lead us not into temptation,' is shameful profanity when it comes from the lips of men who resort to places of amusement whose moral tone is bad."

Zodhiates adds that "When the purpose of testing is for us to acquire experience, then God is the Author. He is testing us to determine if we can handle greater responsibility. God considers testing necessary, not to lead us into an evil act, but to acquire experience and strength. If you have wondered why God has not entrusted you with greater responsibility, is it possible that you have tried to avoid His testing? Whenever Satan tests us, the word should be translated "tempts," because his purpose is to cause us to fail, to fall into sin." (1 Corinthians Commentary)

Thomas Watson - The devil tempts, that he may deceive; but God suffers (allows) us to be tempted, to try us. Temptation is a trial of our sincerity."

Think of yourself as a tube of "spiritual toothpaste". Pressures (**trials**) bring out what's really on the inside! Or as

"Trials are intended to make us think, to wean us from the world, to send us to the Bible, to drive us to our knees."
-- J C Ryle

Spurgeon explains the great value of his personal trials writing "I am afraid that all the grace that I have got out of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours might almost lie **on a penny**. But the good that I have received from my sorrows, and pains, and griefs, is altogether **incalculable**. What do I not owe to the crucible and the furnace, the bellows that have blown up the coals, and the hand which has thrust me into the heat?… I bear my witness that **the worst days I have ever had have turned out to be my best days**… I can bear my personal testimony that the best piece of furniture that I ever had in the house was a cross. I do not mean a material cross; I mean the **cross of affliction and trouble**… In shunning a trial we are seeking to avoid a blessing." (Luke 11 - exposition)

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones sums up these last 3 petitions - Our whole life is found there in those three petitions, and that is what makes this prayer so utterly amazing. In such a small compass our Lord has covered the whole life of the believer in every respect. Our physical needs, our mental needs and, of course, our spiritual needs are included. The body is remembered, the soul is remembered, the spirit is remembered…. We cannot fail to be impressed by the all-inclusiveness of these petitions. That does not mean that we should never enter into details; we must, we are taught to do so. We are taught to bring our life in detail to God in prayer; but here we have only the great headings. Our Lord gives us these and we fill in the details, but it is important for us to be sure that all our petitions should belong under one or other of the headings. (Borrow Sermon on the Mount go to page 87)

Forgive (863)(**aphiemi** [see detailed study] from **apo** = prefix speaks of separation, putting some distance between + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation. Literally **aphiemi** means to send from one's self, to forsake, to hurl away, to put away, let alone, disregard, put off. It conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation and refers to total detachment, total separation, from a previous location or condition. It means "to send away," to remove the sin from the sinner so that he is free of it, and so that the sin can never be found and charged against him before the judgment bar of God.In secular Greek aphiemi initially conveyed the sense of to throw and in one secular writing we read "let the pot drop" (aphiemi). From this early literal use the word came to mean leave or let go.

> "Perhaps the synonym that best reflects its use in this passage is "to hurl." Just as God figuratively hurled believers' sins into the depths of the sea at salvation (Mic. 7:19), so also must believers hurl away the sins of others and not hold on to them. Only then will the Lord forgive the sins that disrupt their relationship with Him." (MacArthur)

Sins (plural)(266)(**hamartia**)literally conveys the idea of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow (in Homer some hundred times of a warrior hurling his spear but missing his foe). Later **hamartia** came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. **Hamartia** in the Bible signifies a departure from God's holy, perfect standard of what is right in word or deed (righteous). It pictures the idea of missing His appointed goal (His will) which results in a deviation from what is pleasing to Him. In short, sin is conceived as a missing the true end and scope of our lives, which is the Triune God Himself. As **Martin Luther** put it "*Sin is essentially a departure from God*."

> **Hamaria in Luke and Acts -** Lk. 1:77; Lk. 3:3; Lk. 5:20; Lk. 5:21; Lk. 5:23; Lk. 5:24; Lk. 7:47; Lk. 7:48; Lk. 7:49; Lk. 11:4; Lk. 24:47; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 5:31; Acts 7:60; Acts 10:43; Acts 13:38; Acts 22:16; Acts 26:18;

Indebted (3784) **opheilo** from **ophéllo** = heap up) means to owe something to someone. Literally it speaks of financial indebtedness and thus means to owe money, to be in debt, or to describe that which is due (Mt 18:28, Lk 7:41, 16:5, 7, Philemon

1:18). The verb **opheilo** was sometimes used to describe "the debt" itself. Figuratively, **opheilo** describes a sense of indebtedness to someone for something. For example, it was used to describe owing good will (1Co 7:3), love (Ro 13:8 = we can never love enough and will always "owe" this debt). **Opheilo** in most of the NT uses conveys the sense of necessity, duty or to be under obligation (obligation = moral requirement which conveys the binding force of civility, kindness or gratitude, when the performance of a duty cannot be enforced by law). The idea is that one is held or bound by duty, moral obligation or necessity to do something.

> **Opheilo - 34v - had(1), have(1), indebted(2), must(1), obligated(3), ought(15), owe(4), owed(4), owes(1), responsible(1), should(2).** Matt. 18:28; Matt. 18:30; Matt. 18:34; Matt. 23:16; Matt. 23:18; Lk. 7:41; Lk. 11:4; Lk. 16:5; Lk. 16:7; Lk. 17:10; Jn. 13:14; Jn. 19:7; Acts 17:29; Rom. 13:8; Rom. 15:1; Rom. 15:27; 1 Co. 5:10; 1 Co. 7:36; 1 Co. 9:10; 1 Co. 11:7; 1 Co. 11:10; 2 Co. 12:11; 2 Co. 12:14; Eph. 5:28; 2 Th. 1:3; 2 Th 2:13; Philemon 1:18; Heb. 2:17; Heb. 5:3; Heb. 5:12; 1 Jn. 2:6; 1 Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:11; 3 Jn. 1:8

Temptation (trial, test) (3986)(**peirasmos** from **peirazo** = to make trial of, try, tempt, prove in either a good or bad sense - classic Greek of a medical test to prove health or disease) describes first the idea of putting to the test and then refers to the tests or pressures that come in order to discover a person's nature or the quality of some thing. The key to accurately interpreting the meaning of peirasmos is to examine the context to see if the effect of the peirasmos is to lead one into sin ("temptation") or for a beneficial effect (usually translated "trial"). Context is the key.

> **Peirasmos - temptation(12), testing(2), trial(3), trials(4).** Matt. 6:13; Matt. 26:41; Mk. 14:38; Lk. 4:13; Lk. 8:13; Lk. 11:4; Lk. 22:28; Lk. 22:40; Lk. 22:46; Acts 20:19; 1 Co. 10:13; Gal. 4:14; 1 Tim. 6:9; Heb. 3:8; Jas. 1:2; Jas. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:6; 1 Pet. 4:12; 2 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 3:10

Steven Cole - The final petition is, "**Lead us not into temptation**." This is difficult to interpret because James 1:13-14 tells us that God does not tempt anyone to sin, but that we are tempted by our own lusts. And James 1:2 instructs us to count it all joy when we encounter various trials ("trials" and "temptations" translate same word in Greek). Why would Jesus tell us to pray that God would not do what He cannot do? And, if the sense is "trials," why should we pray that God would spare us from that which is for our good? Jesus seems to be using the word in the sense of avoidance of temptation to sin. "**Lead us not into temptation**" is probably a figure of speech that expresses something by negating the contrary (D. A. Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount* [Baker], p. 70). For example, "not a few" means "many." Jesus means that we should cultivate the attitude of fleeing from every situation where we might fall into sin. The idea is that, far from leading us into temptation (which He cannot do), God would lead us into His ways of righteousness where we will be kept from sin. So the prayer, "**Lead us not into temptation,**" is an acknowledgement of the weakness and sinfulness of our hearts. It is an admission that if God were to withdraw His gracious hand, we would fall into sin immediately. It is an attitude that flees temptation rather than sees how close to the brink we can come. It has been paraphrased as, "Lord, if the occasion of sinning presents itself, grant that the desire may not be found in me; if the desire is there, grant that the occasion may not present itself" (cited by Godet, *Luke* [I. K. Funk & Co., 1881], p. 317, footnote).

During the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979, Greg Livingstone was asked to give a "missions minute" at a large evangelical church. Since he had only one minute to speak, he decided to ask them only two questions. The first one was, "How many of you are praying for the 52 American hostages being held in Iran?" Four thousand hands went up. "Praise the Lord," he said. "Now, put your hands down and let me ask another question: How many of you are praying for the 42 million Iranians being held hostage to Islam?" Four hands went up. Livingstone said, "What are you guys—Americans first and Christians second? I thought this was a Bible-believing church!" (*Missions Frontiers* [May/June, 1994]).

If we learn to pray as Jesus instructs us, we will focus on the Father's purpose, that His name be hallowed and that His kingdom come in all the earth. And, we will focus on His family's needs for provision, for pardon, and for protection from sin, not so that the family will be cozy and happy, but so that the family will have what they need to carry out the Father's purpose. "Lord, so teach us to pray!"

ILLUSTRATION -There's a story about a fellow who was having trouble with his diet. He prayed, "Oh Lord, if it be your will for me to not have donuts, please don't let there be any parking spaces in front of Krispy Kreme." But alas he did eat a dozen donuts that day because there was a parking space in front, on the twelfth time around the block.

Spurgeon - Morning and Evening -

> "Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil [or, the evil one]." —Luke 11:4

What we are taught to seek or shun in prayer, we should equally pursue or avoid in action. Very earnestly, therefore, should we avoid temptation, seeking to walk so guardedly in the path of obedience, that we may never tempt the devil to tempt us. We are not to enter the thicket in search of the lion. Dearly might we pay for such presumption. This lion may cross our path or leap upon us from

the thicket, but we have nothing to do with hunting him. He that meeteth with him, even though he winneth the day, will find it a stern struggle. Let the Christian pray that he may be spared the encounter. Our Saviour, who had experience of what temptation meant, thus earnestly admonished his disciples—"Pray that ye enter not into temptation."

But let us do as we will, we shall be tempted; hence the prayer "deliver us from evil." God had one Son without sin; but he has no son without temptation. The natural man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards, and the Christian man is born to temptation just as certainly. We must be always on our watch against Satan, because, like a thief, he gives no intimation of his approach. Believers who have had experience of the ways of Satan, know that there are certain seasons when he will most probably make an attack, just as at certain seasons bleak winds may be expected; thus the Christian is put on a double guard by fear of danger, and the danger is averted by preparing to meet it. Prevention is better than cure: it is better to be so well armed that the devil will not attack you, than to endure the perils of the fight, even though you come off a conqueror. Pray this evening first that you may not be tempted, and next that if temptation be permitted, you may be delivered from the evil one.

ILLUSTRATION - an unknown author put together an interesting (convicting) summary of how we ***cannot*** pray the Disciples' Prayer

- I cannot say "**our**" if I live only for myself.
- I cannot say, "**Father**" if I do not endeavor each day to act like His child.
- I cannot say, "**hallowed be your name**" if I am playing around with sin.
- I cannot say "**your kingdom come**" if I am not allowing God to reign in my life.
- I cannot say "**give us this day our daily bread**" if I am trusting in myself instead of in God's provision.
- I cannot say, "**Forgive us our sins**" if I am nursing a grudge or withholding forgiveness from someone else.
- I cannot say, "**lead us not into temptation**" if I deliberately place myself in its path.

Luke 11:5 Then He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves;

KJV Luke 11:5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

NET Luke 11:5 Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,

CSB Luke 11:5 He also said to them: "Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,

ESV Luke 11:5 And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves,

NIV Luke 11:5 Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,

NLT Luke 11:5 Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this story: "Suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him,

NRS Luke 11:5 And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread;

YLT Luke 11:5 And he said unto them, 'Who of you shall have a friend, and shall go on unto him at midnight, and may say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves,

GWN Luke 11:5 Jesus said to his disciples, "Suppose one of you has a friend. Suppose you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, let me borrow three loaves of bread.

NKJ Luke 11:5 And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him,`Friend, lend me three loaves;

NAB Luke 11:5 And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend to whom he goes at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,

MIT Luke 11:5 He said to them: Who among you would respond as follows? A man had a friend who came over at midnight with this request, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread

NJB Luke 11:5 He also said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the night to say, "My friend, lend me three loaves,

ASV Luke 11:5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

DBY Luke 11:5 And he said to them, Who among you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight and say to him, Friend, let me have three loaves,

BBE Luke 11:5 And he said to them, Which of you, having a friend, would go to him in the middle of the night and say to him, Friend, let me have three cakes of bread;

NAS Luke 11:5 And He said to them, "Suppose one of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves;

NIRV Luke 11:5 Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose someone has a friend. He goes to him at midnight. He says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread.

RSV Luke 11:5 And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, `Friend, lend me three loaves;

- Luke 18:1-8
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:5-10 Pray Boldly - John MacArthur

A BREAD REQUEST
FROM A FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT

Then He said to them - Jesus is begins this story by asking a simple practical question, in the form of a hypothetical story, which most writers consider to be a parable, one which is unique to the Gospel of Luke.

Suppose one of you (disciples) **has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend** (philos) **lend** (aorist imperative = conveys a sense of urgency) **three loaves** - **One of you** would refer to the disciples listening to His teaching. Jesus begins with **Suppose** introducing a "suppositional" parabolic tale to teach the disciples a particular point about prayer. **Friend** (philos) refers to one generally kindly disposed. Why **midnight**? Because the guest has just arrived (Lk 11:6). In ancient Israel journeys were often undertaken by night in order to avoid the stifling heat of the day. But more importantly in context of a parable about prayer, **midnight** is not normally when you would knock on a neighbor's door. The neighbor is naturally going to be much less accommodating than if the same request were made before the neighbor had gone to bed. Jesus thus paints a scene where the likelihood of getting a positive response is low. **Three loaves** gives us no justification for seeing the number **three** as having some allegorical meaning as you will read in some commentaries. **Three loaves** serves to heighten the tension in the story, for how many neighbors have three loaves at immediate disposal. It is interesting that in Lk 11:3 the petition was for bread and here the story is a request for bread. The friend who had just arrived must have been famished!

Utley notes that "**suppose one of you,**" is "literally "who of you." Luke uses this often to introduce Jesus' teachings (cf. Luke 11:5,11; Lk 12:25; Lk 14:5,28; Lk 15:4; Lk 17:7). This literary introduction can be seen in the OT in Isa 42:23 and Isa 50:10. This is a story not to illustrate God's reluctance to answer our prayers, but **His willingness**. This is called a contrasting parable. It is a fictitious account to highlight mankind's reluctance but God's willingness.

Life Application Study Bible "Persistence, or boldness, in prayer overcomes ***our*** insensitivity, not God's. To practice persistence does more to change our heart and mind than His, and it helps us understand and express the intensity of our need. Persistence in prayer helps us recognize God's work."

Marshall - The point of the parable is clearly not: Go on praying because God will eventually respond to importunity; rather it is: Go on praying because God responds graciously to the needs of His children.

J C Ryle writes that Lk 11:5-11 teach "the importance of perseverance in prayer. This lesson is conveyed to us in the simple parable, commonly called the "**Friend at Midnight**." We are there reminded what man can obtain from man by dint of importunity. Selfish and indolent as we naturally are, we are capable of being roused to exertion by continual asking. The man who would not give three loaves at midnight for friendship's sake, at length gave them to save himself the trouble of being further entreated. The application of the parable is clear and plain. **If importunity succeeds so well between man and man, how much more may we expect it to obtain mercies when used in prayer to God**.

Rod Mattoon - When we look at this portion of Luke, we find a man that is responding to the tyranny of the urgent. Jesus shares this story to teach us important principles about persistence and prayer and how to get your prayers answered. If you have been begging God for something, pay close attention to this section. If you have a tendency to quit and give up easily, stay focused on what the Lord is teaching here. (Treasures from the Scriptures)

QUESTION - What is the meaning of the Parable of the Friend in Need (Persistent Neighbor)?

ANSWER - Immediately after teaching the disciples to pray the Lord's Prayer, Jesus told the story of the neighbor who was in need of bread for a visitor (Luke 11:5–10). The disciples had just asked Him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1), and the lesson He is teaching through this parable is to be persistent in prayer. This is the first of two parables Jesus uses to drive this concept home—the second is the parable of the persistent widow and the unjust judge in Luke 18:1–8. Paul reiterates this same concept in 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

The characters in the story are a villager who is in bed with his family at midnight and a neighbor with a need. Hospitality was a strictly observed custom in the Middle East, and a man caught without bread for a visitor would be in a shameful and desperately needy position. Only such a need would drive a man to his neighbor's house at midnight. And only such a need would drive the man to this level of persistence. The Greek word translated "boldness" in the NIV and "persistence" in the NASB implies impudence and audacity. This is what Jesus is saying should be our attitude as we approach the throne of grace—a confident boldness that persists in pursuing God until He grants us mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:16).

A word of caution is appropriate here. Never are we to approach God with impertinence or a demanding or disrespectful attitude. James tells us that we don't have because we don't ask, or we ask with the wrong motives (James 4:3). That God allows us to approach Him at all is an indication of His mercy and graciousness toward sinners. But He is our Abba Father (Romans 8:15), and we are His children. We come before Him as a child comes before his earthly father, in confidence that his father loves him and wants the best for him. And if this man would give his neighbor what he wanted not out of friendship, but just because of his shameless boldness, how much more will God, who loves us perfectly, give us when we come into His presence?

Jesus tells us to ask and keep on asking (Matthew 7:7), and whatever we ask in God's will is assured to us. He had just taught the disciples to pray the Lord's Prayer, which includes the phrase "Your will be done" (Luke 11:2). So, putting it all together, we see that we are to be persistent in asking for God to work in our lives and answer our prayers according to His perfect will and timing, having confidence that He will do so.

When we pray without ceasing and have confidence in God, the benefits are many. We experience the goodness of God as we commune with Him. We become eager participants in the purposes of God, yielding our lives and wills to Him. And we enter His presence with boldness and security, knowing that He will bless us with His fellowship and love. GotQuestions.org

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Friend (5384) (**philos** means loved (loved one), dear, befriended, friendly, kind. **Philos** can mean kindly disposed or devoted (Acts 19:31). **Philos** describes one having special interest in someone else. One who is on intimate terms or in close association with someone else **Philos** can describe a love which is emotional and conditional. Philos refers to one who has a liking for, is fond of something or someone.

ILLUSTRATION - A messenger at a photo lab was leaving a building one day when his beeper went off. The message instructed him to pick up a package at an unfamiliar company with a 12-syllable, tongue-twisting name. The messenger looked skyward and sighed, "God, where am I supposed to go?" Just then the pager came on again, this time with the client's address. A man nearby witnessed this scene. Raising his arms to the heavens, he cried, "Why don't you ever answer me?" (From Reader's Digest [4/91], p. 127.) All of us who are Christians have struggled with the problem of unanswered prayer. In fact, that problem can discourage us so much that we start thinking, "What's the use?" and we even quit praying. We hear stories of how God answered prayer for others, but for us it just doesn't seem to work. Sometimes we may try again, but we're like boys who ring the doorbell and run away. We don't stick around long enough to find out if God is home and if He is going to open the door and answer our request. (Steven Cole)

Someone has wisely observed concerning the subject of prayer:

1) The church has many organizers, but few agonizers.

2) The church has many who pay, but few who pray.

3) The church has many resters, but few wrestlers.

4) The church has many who are enterprising, but few who are interceding.

5) Those who are not praying are those who are playing.

6) One key secret of praying is to pray in secret.

7) The worldly Christian stops praying and the praying Christian stops worldliness.

8) Financial offerings may build a church, but prayer offerings give power to the church.

One critical difference between most modern churches and the early church is its focus on prayer. When it comes to the matter of effective praying, never have so many in the church left so much to so few. (David Thompson)

Luke 11:6 for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him';

KJV Luke 11:6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:5-10 Pray Boldly - John MacArthur

For - Explains why he is asking at such a late hour.

I have nothing to set before him - it would be unthinkable not to provide him with hospitality.

NET Note - The background to the statement *I have nothing to set before him* is that in ancient Middle Eastern culture it was a matter of cultural honor to be a good host to visitors.

Luke 11:7 and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.'

KJV Luke 11:7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

- **Do not bother me** Luke 7:6; Gal 6:17
- **the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed** Luke 13:25; Mt 25:10
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:5-10 Pray Boldly - John MacArthur

DO NOT DISTURB SIGN ON THE DOOR

And from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything - Literally "Do not give me bother" which is a present imperative with a negative which means to stop an action in process. The neighbor gives two reasons he should not be bothered and cannot get up (door...shut, in bed). And the fact that he does not address him as **friend** suggests his aggravation for being awoken at midnight. **My children and I are in bed** is better in the ESV which has "my children are with me in bed" because in Jewish homes the beds were often all together in one room. Keener adds that "The children would sleep on mats on the floor of the one-room dwelling; unbolting the heavy bar that was laid through rings attached to the door was a bother and would make noise that would awaken them."

Guzik - It took a lot of boldness for the man in the story to so shamelessly ask his friend in the middle of the night; he really wanted and needed the bread.. God often waits for our passionate persistence in prayer. It isn't that God is reluctant and needs to be persuaded. Our persistence doesn't change God; it changes us, developing in us a heart and passion for what God wants.

David Thompson feels "The literal point that Christ is making about prayer here is that it is perfectly legitimate when we find ourselves in unexpected situations and we cannot meet the need, to take that need to God in prayer. **Whenever we find ourselves facing a legitimate need we cannot possibly meet, it is time for us to pray and take our requests to God.** This was a legitimate, honest request and the request was not only for self, but also included someone else. There will be times in our lives when situations and circumstances occur and we do not have the means in and of ourselves to meet them. Unexpected visitors,

medical needs, bills that we were not expecting can put a strain on our emotional and spiritual stability. Jesus says these are the moments you need to pray. These are the moments in which you need to be talking to God. This is a key lesson He is teaching His own disciples. When they have legitimate needs and find themselves totally helpless to meet those needs, they need to go to God in prayer and ask for His provisions and help. If they do that, they may expect His answers.

Bother (2873)(**kopos** from **kopto** = chop, hew, cut down, strike; figuratively to lament which apparently came from the idea of striking one's breast) (See also study of related verb **kopiao**) is strictly a smiting as a sign of sorrow, then sorrow itself.**Kopos** thus describes a state of discomfort or distress, trouble, difficulty, transferring the sense of the primary meaning which is beating.

Luke 11:8 "I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

KJV I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

NET I tell you, even though the man inside will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of the first man's sheer persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

CSB I tell you, even though he won't get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his friend's persistence, he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

ESV I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence (QUALITY OF BEING OFFENSIVELY BOLD) he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

NIV I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

NLT But I tell you this-- though he won't do it for friendship's sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence.

- **yet because of his persistence he will get up** Luke 18:1-8; Ge 32:26; Mt 15:22-28; Ro 15:30; 2 Cor 12:8; Col 2:1; 4:12
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:5-10 Pray Boldly - John MacArthur

Yet because of his persistence (anaideia) **he will get up and give him as much as he needs** - He had ask for 3 but here he says he will give him as much as he needs. Note that desperate need drove the man to be shamelessly persistent.

Utley - This verse explains the point of the parable. Persistence is an important aspect of prayer (cf. Luke 11:9-10). This is not because God is reluctant, but because prayer develops intimacy with God. Our greatest need is God, not the answer to all our prayers (cf. Luke 18:1-6). God invites His children to come to Him even in times and circumstances that may seem inappropriate. God is more available than any ancient host (cf. Ps. 23:5-6).

Brian Bell gives us some helpful insight on Lk 11:5-8, both what it does not mean and then what it does mean --

> **WHAT IT DOESN'T MEAN!** = It really isn't teaching to be persistence in prayer (we'll talk later about if ch.18 means that) The issue really is the word "persistence" here. (Lk 11:8) **Persistence** = Impudence, shamelessness, boldness. [only here in NT] The neighbor was ashamed not to help his friend, for he knew that, if he violated the social code, he would be the target of abuse throughout the whole village. **God is not being compared to the sleeping neighbor! --** He is a God who never sleeps! He is a God whose door is never shut! He is a God who is never put out to help, in time of need! Instead, **God is being contrasted to this neighbor.** He is saying, "If a sleeping neighbor, on the basis of friendship & social etiquette, will meet the needs of a friend, **how much more** will your Father in heaven meet the needs of His own children!"
>
> **WHAT IT DOES MEAN!** Jesus clearly applies the Jewish rule of contrasts. (This rule, called**Kal Wa-homer** [from less important to more important], was 1 of the 7 hermeneutical rules compiled by Rabbi Hillel) This is called a **parabolic contrast** – All that the friend was, God is not; and the friend's answer stands in sharp contrast to the answer of God. God is a loving Father not a grouchy neighbor. He gives us what we need. He neither sleeps nor slumbers. He doesn't become irritated when we ask for help. James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him". 2.11.

After the parabolic contrast He then gives a parabolic comparison! (Luke:11:5-13 Someone's Knocking at the Door)

Stevenson - You need to know that the householder (NEIGHBOR) is NOT being likened to God. God is not sleepy or too busy or uninterested in answering our prayers. To place God in the role of the householder is to try to make the parable stand on all fours. This is even more obvious when we look at the parable of the unjust judge (Luke 18:1-5). There the story is of a widow who continues to make appeals to an unrighteous judge who only dispenses justice because it is convenient to him. Neither the householder or the judge are being LIKENED to God. Rather, they are being CONTRASTED to God. If continual prayer causes even such as these to respond, how much more will our loving Father provide for our needs if we continue to ask Him?

Wiersbe - We have already seen that prayer is based on *sonship* ("Our Father"), not on friendship; but Jesus used friendship to illustrate persistence in prayer. God the Father is not like this neighbor, for He never sleeps, never gets impatient or irritable, is always generous, and delights in meeting the needs of His children. The friend at the door had to keep on knocking in order to get what he needed, but God is quick to respond to His children's cries (Luke 18:1-8)....Why does our Father in heaven answer prayer? Not just to meet the needs of His children, but to meet them in such a way that it brings glory to His name. "Hallowed be Thy name." *When God's people pray, God's reputation is at stake.* The way He takes care of His children is a witness to the world that He can be trusted. **Phillips Brooks** said that prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is laying hold of His highest willingness. Persistence in prayer is not an attempt to change God's mind ("Thy will be done") but to get ourselves to the place where He can trust us with the answer (Borrow Be compassionate)

NLT Study Bible - **because of your shameless persistence** (or *in order to avoid shame,* or so *his reputation won't be damaged):* Shame would also lie on the man who didn't want to get up, since hospitality was a community requirement. God protects his good name by providing for his people. (Borrow NLT Study Bible)

Life Application Study Bible - Persistence, or boldness, in prayer overcomes *our* insensitivity, not God's. To practice persistence does more to change our heart and mind than his, and it helps us understand and express the intensity of our need. Persistence in prayer helps us recognize God's work. (Luke Application Study Notes PDF)

King James Bible Commentary - The parable of the friend who came at midnight was told to reinforce an aspect about prayer. Although importunity is important in prayer, this parable is probably trying to show a contrast between God and the friend who eventually opened the door. God is more than a friend, and will certainly grant our needs much more readily than the man who had gone to bed. (See KJV Bible Commentary.)

Alliston Trites – The parable offers great encouragement for boldness and persistence in prayer. It rests upon an argument that moves from the lesser to the greater, and this type of approach often appears in the New Testament (e.g., Luke 11:13; 12:28; Matt 7:11; Rom 11:12; 1 Cor 6:3; Heb 10:28-29). The point here is straightforward: if a reluctant friend will rise to give three loaves of bread to a needy neighbor to avoid shame, how much more will a loving, gracious, all-powerful God act to help his needy children when they expectantly seek his aid! "The problem is not that man has to overcome the reluctance of God to hear and answer his prayers. To the contrary, the problem is located in the one who prays. If God does not respond immediately and on his terms, then the individual is apt to lose faith, either in God's existence or in his character as a loving Father. Persistence in prayer is an act of faith, a testimony to our belief in a loving personal God" (Tolbert 1970:98). (Luke, Acts - Cornerstone Biblical Commentary)

Spurgeon - See the power of importunate prayer; and you, beloved, can have all that you really **need** (NOT GREED) for yourselves or others if you will only ask for it in the right way. If, summoning every faculty of your being, you resolve to plead, and plead, and plead yet again and again, and never take "No" for an answer, your heart's desire shall be granted. (Luke 11 - exposition)

Wiersbe - In this parable, Jesus did not say that God is like this grouchy neighbor. In fact, He said just the opposite. If a tired and selfish neighbor finally meets the needs of a bothersome friend, how much more will a loving Heavenly Father meet the needs of His own dear children! He is arguing from the lesser to the greater.

J Vernon McGee - My friend, do you think that God is asleep? Do you feel that He has gone to bed when you pray, and you cannot get Him up? Do you believe that He does not want to answer your prayers? God does want to answer your prayers and He will. That is what this parable is saying. It is a parable by contrast and not by comparison. You do not have to storm the gates of heaven or knock down the door of heaven in order to attract God's attention. God is not reluctant to hear and answer you. God tells us in Isaiah 65:24, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." God wants to hear and answer. (Luke - can be borrowed or listen to Mp3 -Luke 11)

Persistence (335)(**anaideia** from **a** = without + **aidos** = shame) means shamelessness in the sense that one is insensitive to what is proper, "carelessness about the good opinion of others," (BDAG), but in this context is may also convey a positive sense of "persistence, tenacious insistence without regard to time, place, or person." (Friberg) The meaning of anaideia depends to a large

degree on whether on interprets this as noun as a description of the friend asking or the friend being asked (See Rosscup below).

Gilbrant on **anaideia** - In classical Greek the predominant sense of **anaideia** points to "shamelessness." There are a few examples where this word or one from the same root means "impudence," but in classical literature no form of anaideia has the sense of "persistence."...(The man in Lk 11:5) had no shame in making an unreasonable request in the middle of the night. It was impudent of him to expect help at such a time.

NET Note on **anaideia** - The term anaideia is hard to translate. It refers to a combination of ideas, a boldness that persists over time, or "audacity," which comes close. It most likely describes the one making the request, since the unit's teaching is an exhortation about persistence in prayer. Some translate the term "**shamelessness**" which is the term's normal meaning, and apply it to the neighbor as an illustration of God responding for the sake of his honor. But the original question was posed in terms of the first man who makes the request, not of the neighbor, so the teaching underscores the action of the one making the request.

ESV Study Bible on **anaideia** - In all of its other known uses in ancient literature, the term means "lack of sensitivity to what is proper," "impertinence," "impudence"; it describes being without aidōs ("respect," "modesty"). "Impudence," then, would indicate that the friend is shamelessly and boldly awakening his neighbor, and of course the neighbor will give him whatever he needs. On this interpretation, Jesus' point is that if even a human being will respond to his neighbor in that way, then Christians should go boldly before God with any need they face, for God is more gracious and caring than any human neighbor. Some other interpreters believe that anaideia means "persistence" here, even though there are no other known occurrences of that meaning. Such a reading does fit the context, however, for the very next verses emphasize that believers must keep seeking, asking, and knocking (Lk 11:9–10). This would make the parable similar to Lk 18:1–8. Both ideas—a kind of shameless persistence—are possibly intended by this unusual term. (**Ed**: But see Rosscup's analysis below) (Borrow ESV Study Bible)

Rosscup favors the noun **anaideia** as referring to the sleeping friend, not the asking friend - A story about prayer (Lk 11:5–8). Luke is the only gospel writer to incorporate this parable. Jesus relates practically with His disciples. He asks which of them shall have a friend he asks at midnight for three loaves to feed a visitor, a friend who first refuses because he and his family are in bed. The friend does get up and give as much as the one asking needs on another basis than just friendship, however. He gives due to the prompting of "his anaideia" [the Gr. term, Lk 11:8].

Some believe that the "**his**" refers to the disciple outside the door, asking for loaves. The word anaideia, used only here in the N. T., is taken to mean the caller's "persistency" in keeping up the asking until he rousts the hesitant friend. A large part of this is the assumption that the word does mean "persistency," and the fact that in both Matt. 6 and here in vv. 9–10 the three words "ask … seek … knock" are all in the present tense, "keep on asking," etc. The point is that those praying gain encouragement from the idea that if they just can persist to pray through, they are sure finally to get God's provision. He honors tenacious prayer.

Another way of thinking, which fits the details even better, is this. The "**his**" refers back to the friend in bed. In Lk 11:7–8, he is the subject of all the other clauses ("he … me … my children … I … I … I …" (Lk 11:7), then "he … he … friend.…"). After all of this flow, it seems natural that in the last part of Lk 11:8, also, the meaning is "yet because of his [the same friend in bed] anaideia, he [the friend in bed] will get up and give him.…" A **second reason** for the latter explanation is that the word anaideia itself is based on aidos, "blame," and the prefix letter "a" called an alpha privative; the prefix causes the meaning to be the opposite of "blame" as an "atheist" (a + theist) is a person who is not a theist, does not believe there is a God. Here, the idea then is "shamelessness" [reaction against shame] or "sense of honor" that the friend in bed has. He thinks of his reputation in his community, which one in a small town must live with the rest of his life. He has an honor toward a neighbor and must keep this as a shining thing, or his dishonor will quickly be all over the village; if he fails he will be known for not helping a friend in need. So he gets up and gives due to his image that is worth protecting. Still **another reason** for this view is that Luke 11:2 emphasizes God's shining honor at the outset, "hallowed be Thy name." His character is also the great emphasis at the close of the prayer verses (Lk 11:13). He, "**much more than**" human fathers, knows how to give what is good. Fourth, it is a far greater encouragement for prayer to think of the Father's blameless character answering prayer than to dwell on our faithfulness to persist. Aroused by his image of being shameless, the friend rises to answer with "as much as he [the one requesting] needs." The "three loaves" is a normal meal in the culture at the time, and "three" also a number of completeness, a supply that is full, adequate. The provision includes a loaf to set before the guest, a loaf to put at his own place, and an extra loaf to put the guest at ease because there is plenty. While the man is selfish in some ways and God is not like these, his basic honor to respond with good illustrates God very well (cf. vv. 8–13). (An Exposition on Prayer in the Bible)

Steven Cole on Luke 11:5-8 - Jesus is responding to the request of an unnamed disciple, "Lord, teach us to pray" (11:1). In 11:2-4, He gives us the pattern for prayer, that we are to pray to the Father about His concerns and we are to pray about the family's needs. In 11:5-13, Jesus continues His instruction by showing us how we should approach God in prayer. If you live in a country with a sovereign monarch, you don't just pop in on the king and say, "Hey, how's it going?" If you have an interview with the king, you need

some coaching on what to say and do and what not to say and do. You need to know what social courtesies are expected in the presence of the king. When you come before the King of kings, you need some coaching about how to do it. Some may think that because God is sovereign and holy, perhaps we shouldn't bother Him with our petty needs. Or, perhaps we should come apologetically and timidly, afraid to let Him know what is really on our minds. Maybe once we've let our needs be known, we should back off and not bother God again. Jesus shows us here how to approach God to receive the things we need as we seek to do His will:

Approach God with bold persistence, knowing that as a loving Father, He will provide for our spiritual good.

The instruction of Luke 11:5-13 assumes the foundational instruction of Luke 11:2-4. We must be children of God through the new birth before we can address God as Father and approach Him with our needs. We must be committed to seeking first His kingdom and glory, so that our prayers are properly motivated and directed. Our prayers for our needs are not just for the purpose of making us happy, but for the overall aim of seeing the Father's name hallowed and His kingdom brought about on the earth. In this context, Jesus tells a humorous parable (Luke 11:5-8) to teach that we should approach God with boldness as His friend, persisting until we obtain what we need in order to minister to our friends. Then (Luke 11:9-10) He applies the parable by telling us to keep on asking, seeking, and knocking in prayer until we obtain the answer we need. Next (Luke 11:11-12) Jesus shifts the picture with a ludicrous, but memorable, illustration of a boy asking his father for a fish or an egg. The father would not give his son a snake or a scorpion! Then (Luke 11:13) Jesus applies this illustration by saying that if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more shall the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

The strong emphasis in this whole section is on receiving answers to our prayers.

The friend at midnight did not go away empty-handed. He got the bread that he came for. The application emphasizes that one who keeps asking, seeking, and knocking will receive what he is after. The story of the father and his son makes the same point: the boy will get what he asks from his father. The final application drives it home again with force: How much more will the heavenly Father respond favorably to those who ask Him? John Calvin observes, "Nothing is better adapted to excite us to prayer than a full conviction that we shall be heard". Our Lord wants us to come to the Father and keep on coming until He gives us what we need to see His kingdom come.

Approach God with boldness as His friend, persisting until you obtain what you need to minister to your friends (Luke 11:5-10). The story (Luke 11:5-8): The story gives us a humorous incident from the culture of Jesus' day. A guy has a traveler drop in on him late at night and he has no fresh bread to set before him. You couldn't run to the all-night supermarket and buy a loaf of bread. They didn't have freezers or refrigerators full of food. Cultural hospitality demanded that you give him something to eat. So the guy goes over to his friend's house at midnight. It's dark inside and the door is bolted shut. But, after all, this is his friend, and what are friends for? So he starts banging on the door. Inside, the family would all be sleeping together in one place. There were probably some domestic animals inside for the night, and the banging on the door would arouse them, too. The guy groggily calls out, "Who is it? What do you want at this hour?" The "friend" cheerily explains his need. The guy inside says, "Stop bothering me! The door is bolted shut, we finally got the kids to go to sleep (every parent knows what that is like!), and I don't want to get up and give you anything!" But the "friend" keeps on knocking and asking! Finally the guy in bed realizes that the quickest route to getting back to sleep is to get up and give him what he's after.

Then Jesus gives an initial application (Luke 11:8) before expanding on it (Luke 11:9-10): Apart from the friendship issue (which may be a bit strained at this midnight hour!), the host will obtain what he went for because of his persistent boldness. The word translated "persistence" (KJV = importunity) has the idea of shameless boldness. The idea of persistence comes out in the present tense verbs of Luke 11:9-10. Before we look at the direct application, let's consider some things about the story.

First, it shows us that necessity drives bold prayer. The host had a need to provide for his friend, and he did not have the resources to meet that need. It is an awareness of great needs and our own lack of resources to meet those needs that will drive us to prayer. All too often we fail to pray because we assume our own sufficiency or competence. We wrongly think that we can get by with just a little boost from God here and there. But the fact is, we are destitute of physical, mental, and spiritual resources unless God graciously provides them. In every situation, we must recognize our desperate need and call on God for help.

Second, the need in this case was not directly personal, but the need of someone else. If the man himself had been hungry, no doubt he would have waited until morning to go to his friend's house. But the need was not his; it was the midnight guest's need that drove this man to his friend's house at this unseemly hour. While we should go boldly to God to find help for our own needs, we should keep in mind that the main thrust of prayer is not just to meet our needs, but to further the Father's kingdom. Thus we are to ask for what we need to meet the needs of others in the name of the Father's business.

Third, the man already had an established friendship before he went to his neighbor's house at midnight. He wasn't just introducing himself for the first time that night! They had a personal relationship that he was acting upon. While God is often

gracious to introduce Himself for the first time in response to a midnight knock on His door, the time to meet Him is before the midnight need! If you know Him as a familiar friend, you will feel more comfortable banging on His door at midnight when you have to!

Fourth, we should recognize the stark contrast between the man in bed and God. The man in bed was asleep, whereas God never sleeps. The man in bed did not want to be disturbed, whereas our requests do not disturb God. The midnight request probably put a strain on the relationship between these two friends, whereas our midnight requests do not strain our relationship with God. Jesus' point is that we should be boldly persistent in bringing our requests to God at any hour and in any situation. **If a cranky friend responds to this kind of bold persistence, how much more will your Friend in heaven respond!** (Luke 11:5-13 How to Approach God)

Luke 11:9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, krouo and it will be opened to you.

> KJV Luke 11:9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
> I say Luke 13:24; Mt 6:29; 21:31; Mark 13:37; Rev 2:24

- **Ask** Ps 50:15; 118:5; Jeremiah 33:3; Mt 7:7,8; 21:22; Mark 11:24; John 4:10; 14:13; John 15:7,16; 16:23,24; 2 Cor 12:8,9; Heb 4:16; James 1:5; 5:15; 1 John 3:22; 1 John 5:14,15
- **seek** 13:24; Ps 27:4,8; 34:4,10; 105:3,4; Song 3:1-4; 5:6; Isa 45:19; 55:6,7; Jer 29:12; Daniel 9:3; Amos 5:4-6; John 1:45-49; Acts 10:4-6; Ro 2:7; Heb 11:6
- **knock** Luke 13:25; 2 Cor 6:2
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:5-10 Pray Boldly - John MacArthur

THE PRAYER ACROSTIC
"A.S.K."

A for asking, **S** for seeking and **K** for knocking. **Guzik** subtitles Luke 11:9-13 Pray with a childlike confidence. And remember that while this is a promise from God, it is not a "blank check" to allow us to pray for anything we might want and expect God to grant the request.

So I say to you, ask (aiteo), **and it will be given to you; seek** (zeteo), **and you will find; knock** (krouo) **and it will be opened to you** - The pronoun "**I**" is in the Greek text which serves to place emphasis on this statement. Note the ascending degree of intensity from **asking** then to **seeking** and finally to overtly **knocking**! **Each of these verbs** is in the **present imperative**, which is a command to do each of these activities continually. These three present imperatives show the priority that prayer is to have in our lives. Jesus is calling for **persistence in prayer**. Prayer is as necessary to our spiritual life as oxygen to our physical life. Prayer is our supernatural "walkie-talkie," our lifeline as citizens of the Kingdom of heaven who are still on earth. Prayer expresses our continued dependence on God as we beseech Him for the grace and power to live the supernatural life that Jesus lived providing our Perfect Example (See Walking Like Jesus Walked!).

David Thompson writes "Now let's face it, most people do not pray with this kind of persistent intensity. Those who do will see answers. Babe Ruth is known for his incredible ability to hit home runs. What is often overlooked is that he struck out 1,330 times. That almost totals four complete seasons of striking out. But he consistently got into the batter's box and he swung the bat. God wants His people consistently and persistently praying."

Luke 11:9-10 speaks of the Lord's certainty to answer prayer. However some take this passage out of context and use it as if God has given them a "blank check!" A similar misuse can occur with John 15:7 where Jesus gives a similar promise "**If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you**." (cf similar promise in Jn 14:13-14) I have seen otherwise sound Christians take this verse as a veritable "**carte blanche**" taking it to mean that God will give us whatever we ask for. John gives us the proper balance in his first epistle writing

> This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, **if we ask** (present tense - continually) **anything according to His will,** He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask (present tense - continually), we know that we have the requests which we have asked (perfect tense) from Him. (1 John 5:14-15+, cf 1 Jn 3:22+)

So John's qualification is that we ask according to God's will, which is best discerned from God's Word, which is why**praying Scripture back to God** is one of the best disciplines we can develop in our prayer life. But even if we pray in His will, there may be delay.

> **THOUGHT** - My parents prayed for me to become a believer in Christ for 20 years and finally at age 39, God's Spirit granted me the grace to believe and be born again (see My Personal Testimony). I prayed for my son for almost 20 years and he was recently born again. On the other hand I am still praying for a daughter who is not born again (and I have prayed for her for over 25 years). And yet, from passages such as Luke 11:5-13, I receive encouragement to continue to pray and will do so until the day I die.

We see similar qualifying phrases regarding answered prayer in the Psalms

> For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. (Ps 84:11) (A GOD-CENTERED HEART)
>
> If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear; (Ps 66:18) (A SIN-CENTERED HEART)
>
> Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart. (Ps 37:4) - If we focus on God, His desires will tend to become our desires and they when we ask Him, we are more likely to be asking for the desires of His heart.

Bob Utley on **ask** (aiteo)**, seek** (zeteo)**, and knock** (krouo) - These are all present active imperatives which speak of habitual, lifestyle commands (cf. Deut. 4:29; Jer. 29:13). It is important that one balance human persistence with God's responsive character. Believers cannot force God to do that which is not good for them. However, at the same time, they can bring any perceived need to their heavenly Father at any time and as often as desired. Jesus prayed the same prayer in Gethsemane three times (cf. Mark 15:36,39,41; Matt. 26:39,42,44). Paul also prayed three times about his thorn in the flesh (cf. 2 Cor. 12:8). But the great thing about prayer is not that one receives a specific answer to his request, but that he has spent time with the Father! Persistence (literally "shamelessness") is important (cf. Luke 18:2-8). However, it does not coerce a reluctant God, but reveals the level of interest and concern of the person praying. Neither one's many words nor his repeated prayers will motivate the Father to give that which is not in one's best interest. The best thing believers get in prayer is a growing relationship and dependence on God.

MacArthur - As God incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ speaks with the voice of absolute divine authority. Using three present tense imperative verbs, the Lord commands believers to boldly, aggressively storm the gates of heaven. The three verbs, **ask, seek**, and **knock** are progressively more intense, and each one repeats the promise

Lloyd-Jones said “This holy boldness, this argumentation, this reasoning, this putting the case before God, this pleading His own promises, this is the whole secret of prayer.”

Brian Bell on what Luke 11:9-13 does not and does mean -

> **WHAT IT DOESN’T MEAN!** It doesn’t teach us to keep beating & hammering on God’s door until he answers. It doesn’t teach us to keep trying until you overcome God’s unwillingness to act. It doesn’t teach us God plays hard to get. It doesn’t teach us our goal is to coerce an unwilling God to answer.
>
> **WHAT IT DOES MEAN!** Here now is the story of the Father & the child to illustrate what God is!!! The 1st man/neighbor would not give; did not want to be troubled; but finally did give to avoid trouble. The 2nd man/father said to his son, “just ask & you’ll obtain; seek & you’ll locate; knock & I’ll open the access for you.” This is a story about friendship (Lk 11:5) that shifts to sonship (Lk 11:11)! True prayer is not based on our friendship with God, but on the fact that we are the children of God. A father meets the needs of his children not to avoid shame, but to express love!
>
> Doesn’t “ask, seek, & knock” speak of continual action in the Greek? Yes! We should always be asking, seeking, & knocking. Our faith needs to be active, not passive. **Asking** = Implies humility & an awareness of need! **Seeking** = Is Asking + Acting! **Knocking** = Is Asking + Acting + Persevering!
>
> Example: [Asking] “*Honey, have you seen my keys?*” [Seeking] “*Honey are you sure you haven’t seen them?*” as you search diligently for them.” [Knocking] You now go door to door throughout your house knocking on the kid’s doors, “*kids have you see my keys*?”
>
> To remember the order: **A.S.K**. (acrostic)
>
> **Ok, so what does it mean by “ask, seek, knock” then?** Is He not encouraging persistence in prayer? Yes! But it’s tied to sonship (Lk 11:11 “if a son…”). See, it’s not trying to twist God’s arm to get what we want. It

> means keeping in close communion with the Father, knowing His will, and asking Him to perform His will. Note: It's command/promise; command/promise; command/promise! (Luke:11:5-13 Someone's Knocking at the Door)

Ask, **seek** and **knock** as noted are all commands to continuously ask, seek and knock and speak of an earnestness and intensity. Sadly, all too often, our prayers are merely wishes cast up to heaven, and this is not real prayer that Jesus describes in this section. These are the times we need to keep asking. A non-Jewish, Canaanite woman did this. Her daughter was being tormented by a demon. She needed Jesus' help (Read Mt 15:22–28) Don't be too quick to quit praying for something.

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
Uttered or unexpressed
The motion of a hidden fire
That kindles in the breast
-James Montgomery

R Kent Hughes on **ask, seek, knock** - **Ask** implies asking for a **conscious need**. The word also suggests **humility** in asking, for it is commonly used of one asking a superior. The next step, **seek**, involves **asking but adds action**. The idea is not merely to express one's need, but to get up and look around for help. It involves effort. **Knock** includes asking plus acting plus persevering - like someone who keeps pounding on a closed door! The stacking of these words is extremely forceful, but the fact that they are present imperatives gives them even more punch... Jesus is driving his point home, and the point is this:**We are to passionately persist in prayer.** We naturally persevere in our prayers when someone close to us is sick. If one of our children becomes ill, we pray without ceasing. Likewise, if we are in financial trouble or if we are hoping for a promotion or if we have a frightening or dangerous task ahead of us, we generally find it easy to pray. But do we persist in our prayers for spiritual growth for ourselves and others? Do we "**ask . . . seek . . . knock**" for a pure mind? Do we keep on knocking for a forgiving spirit or for the removal of an angry or critical spirit? ...**Does Jesus' call to persistence in prayer make prayer a meritorious work?** The answer is clearly no, because what Jesus is calling for here has to do with heart attitude, not mere religious routine....Persistence is an indication of our soul's confidence. Jesus says, "it *will* be given...you *will* find...and the door *will* be opened." **Those who "ask," "seek," and "knock" are people who believe God will answer. Their prayers are not works, but acts of faith—not ritual but reliance**...This is the way the Son of God prayed, as for example when he spent the whole night on the mountain in prayer before choosing his disciples (Luke 6:12-16+) and in the Garden of Gethsemane, where during his asking, seeking, and knocking "his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground" (Luke 22:44+).(See Luke: That You May Know the Truth)(Bolding added)

Do we persist in our prayers for spiritual growth for ourselves and others?

Persistence is an indication of our soul's confidence

Ask is **present imperative** = Keep on asking. Make this the pattern of your life, a continual act of devotion. Jesus calls us to be "**Coram Deo**" before the face of God. In His presence in His throne room continually.**Asking** is what beggars do and that is exactly what those who are "poor in spirit" are (Mt 5:3+)! In poor countries beggars unashamedly stand by the road with their hands held out, asking alms for the poor. Sometimes they can be quite bold about it, even irritating passers by. In those moments it helps to remember that you would be bold too if you were in their position. And in a spiritual sense we are in their position for we have brought nothing into the world and can take nothing out. We are totally dependent on God the Father of lights from Whom every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift comes (James 1:17). But unlike beggars on the streets, citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven have access through Jesus to our Father Who art in heaven! By **asking** we nurture our relationship with our Father. He delights to hear and to answer His children.

Mattoon writes that **seek** "involves asking but adds action. The idea is not merely to express one's need, but to get up and look around for help. It involves an effort on our part. It is not a casual search. This type of search involves effort and energy. The message here is the fact that prayer is not a casual exercise. It is more than simply going through the motions, being concerned more about form than substance. You cannot expect God to get serious about answering your prayer if you are not serious and sincere in praying your prayer. It is the effectual, fervent prayer that is effective. (Ed comment: James 5:16 where "effectual" = energeo giving us English "energetic" - Does that describe your prayer life? Or is "anemic" a better description? I am asking this of myself as I write!) (Treasures from the Scriptures)

Seeking implies a desire for something of great value. A good illustration of this is Jesus' analogy that...

> the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant **seeking** fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it. (Mt 13:45-46+)

Or think about Jesus' story of the woman searching for a lost coin...

> "Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and **search** carefully until she finds it?' (Luke 15:8+)

Puritan Thomas Manton wrote that "If we don't receive by asking, then let us seek; if we don't receive by seeking, then let us knock."

Spurgeon - This is the simplest form of prayer. Follow up your prayer by the effort. "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Add force to your petitions and to your prayers. If the door blocks the way, knock until it is opened...Prayer knocks till the door opens. Open it will, for so runs the promise of our faithful God, "To him that knocketh it shall be opened." "If the angel opened the door of the prison to let Peter out, it was prayer that opened the door of heaven to let the angel out." (Luke 11 - exposition)

Mattoon - The word "**knock**" includes asking, acting, and persevering, like someone who keeps knocking on a closed door or one who keeps calling your house when they don't get an answer on the phone! Again, the fact that this word is in the present imperative tense gives it a more intense and stronger meaning. We are to keep on knocking and the door will be opened to us. This word "knock" will reveal a number of insights. This word reveals insights about our faith. We are to pray with faith and trust in the Lord. That may sound so simple, yet many do not put this simple truth into practice because they are consumed or overwhelmed with fretting, frustration, and failure. One knocks on a door that is closed. Sometimes when we pray to the Lord, the door appears closed. We may feel we are not getting anywhere and get discouraged. The Lord, however, wants us to keep knocking on His door. We are to demonstrate our faith in Him by continuing to bring our petitions before Him. We are to live by faith even when our situation challenges our faith. The difficulties of our lives reveal the strength of our faith and also strengthen it if we respond properly to those difficulties. Our Lord has the ability to unlock closed doors. The word "knock" also reveals the fact that when we pray, we are not to come before the Lord with pride and cockiness, but with a reverent attitude. There are two words for 'knock' in the Greek, one which refers to an unceremonious pounding and the other refers to a polite knock. The word "knock" used here comes from the Greek word krouo which means "to rap or knock reverently." This word does not mean to bang discourteously, or to kick in the door, but to knock courteously. Our praying to the Lord is to be done with respect for Him. We are not to demand, insist, or pray with an attitude that says God owes us the answer. (Treasures from the Scriptures)

Knock ("keep on knocking") means to keep rapping on the door and implies a greater and more repetitive intensity than either asking or seeking. The English word "knock" comes from German word meaning to press! You knock and wait, then you knock again, then you say, "I know you're in there," then you knock again and say, "I can hear your voice. Come on, open the door." Then you knock again. If you're on the other side, you know how annoying it can be to listen as someone knocks and knocks and keeps on knocking. But that's precisely the picture behind Jesus' command to keep on knocking! The idea might imply praying in the face of difficulty and even resistance. If you knock like this, your desire for entrance must be very great indeed.

Mattoon commenting on the three present imperatives says that Jesus "is telling us to persist in our prayer life and never be discouraged in prayer and to never give up until the Lord removes the burden to stop praying about a matter. This will test our sincerity and steadfastness in the area of our praying. Do we really want a certain thing? Is a matter of such nature that we can bring it repeatedly into the presence of God? The biggest test of any desire that we have is, "Can I pray about it?" (Treasures from the Scriptures)

> **CAVEAT** regarding the present imperatives **ask, seek, knock** - As with all the over 1500 commands in the NT, there is simply no way you can obey this command in your natural strength. You need supernatural strength found ONLY in the enabling power (Eph 3:16, Acts 1:8, even Jesus was dependent on His power! He gave us the example of a Perfect Man which we are called to imitate - Acts 10:38, 1 Cor 11:1, 1 John 2:6, 1 Peter 2:21) of the indwelling Spirit (1 Cor 3:16, 6:19). See another explanation of our need to daily be dependent on the Spirit's empowerment. If you TRY to keep the commands in your natural strength, you will fall into the subtle snare of legalism. Beware. Cry out like Peter did when he was sinking "Lord, Help!" See also article on Praying in the Spirit.

Spurgeon wrote that "There was a nailhead for the knocker to drop on, and people used to smite it so heavily that some remarked that such blows on the head were killing. Hence arose the mirthful proverb, "as dead as a doornail." It betokens a hearty kind of knocking, which I would have you imitate in prayer. Knock at heaven's gate as earnestly as people knocked at doors in the olden time." (Luke 11 - exposition)

Ask ("keep on asking")(154) (**aiteo**) means to ask for with urgency, even to the point of demanding.**Aiteo** more frequently suggests attitude of a suppliant (one who supplicates [supplicate is from Latin supplex = bowed] means to makes a humble, earnest plea or entreaty), the petitioning of one who is lesser in position than he to whom the petition is made. To ask means to to call on for an answer, which indicates that we believe there is someone (our Father) listening. It also implies that we expect Him to answer or otherwise why ask? The self-righteous person does not ask but tells God how good he is (see parable Luke 18:10, 11, 12,

13). **Mattoon** adds that **aiteo** "suggests humility in asking and recognizing our needs and limitations. When we approach the Lord in prayer, we are not to have a cocky, proud, demanding spirit."

> **Aiteo in Luke and Acts** - Lk. 1:63; Lk. 6:30; Lk. 11:9; Lk. 11:10; Lk. 11:11; Lk. 11:12; Lk. 11:13; Lk. 12:48; Lk. 23:23; Lk. 23:25; Lk. 23:52; Acts 3:2; Acts 3:14; Acts 7:46; Acts 9:2; Acts 12:20; Acts 13:21; Acts 13:28; Acts 16:29; Acts 25:3; Acts 25:15

Seek ("keep on seeking")(2212) (**zeteo**) means to attempt to learn something by careful investigation or searching, to look for something earnestly and intently. Seeking is asking plus acting, implying earnest petitioning coupled with an active endeavoring to fulfill needs. When you seek something, you rearrange your priorities so that you can search for what you desire until you find it. Do you prioritize prayer?

> **Zeteo in Luke and Acts -** Lk. 2:48; Lk. 2:49; Lk. 5:18; Lk. 6:19; Lk. 9:9; Lk. 11:9; Lk. 11:10; Lk. 11:16; Lk. 11:24; Lk. 11:29; Lk. 12:29; Lk. 12:31; Lk. 13:6; Lk. 13:7; Lk. 13:24; Lk. 15:8; Lk. 17:33; Lk. 19:3; Lk. 19:10; Lk. 19:47; Lk. 20:19; Lk. 22:2; Lk. 22:6; Lk. 24:5; Acts 9:11; Acts 10:19; Acts 10:21; Acts 13:8; Acts 13:11; Acts 16:10; Acts 17:5; Acts 17:27; Acts 21:31; Acts 27:30

Knock (keep on knocking)(2925) **krouo** means seeking entrance by knock (at a door or gate. Figuratively, krouo speaks of seeking spiritual access and so to ask to be accepted (Rev 3.20+) **BDAG** - "to deliver a blow against something, strike, knock."

> **Krouo** - 9x in 9v - Matt 7:7-8; Luke 11:9-10; 12:36; 13:25; Acts 12:13, 16; Rev 3:20.

Will be opened (455) (**anoigo** from **ana** = again + **oigo** = to open) means to open, to open up, to open again, to give access to. To open one's eyes causing them to see (Acts 26:18). To open one's mouth that they might begin to speak (Mt 5:2). Figuratively, to open a "door" meaning to make possible (Col 4:3).

> **Anoigo - 76v - break(1), broke(7), open(22), opened(41), opening(2), opens(4), spoken freely(1).** Matt. 2:11; Matt. 3:16; Matt. 5:2; Matt. 7:7; Matt. 7:8; Matt. 9:30; Matt. 13:35; Matt. 17:27; Matt. 20:33; Matt. 25:11; Matt. 27:52; Mk. 7:35; Lk. 1:64; Lk. 3:21; Lk. 4:17; Lk. 11:9; Lk. 11:10; Lk. 12:36; Lk. 13:25; Jn. 1:51; Jn. 9:10; Jn. 9:14; Jn. 9:17; Jn. 9:21; Jn. 9:26; Jn. 9:30; Jn. 9:32; Jn. 10:3; Jn. 10:21; Jn. 11:37; Acts 5:19; Acts 5:23; Acts 8:32; Acts 8:35; Acts 9:8; Acts 9:40; Acts 10:11; Acts 10:34; Acts 12:10; Acts 12:14; Acts 12:16; Acts 14:27; Acts 16:26; Acts 16:27; Acts 18:14; Acts 26:18; Rom. 3:13; 1 Co. 16:9; 2 Co. 2:12; 2 Co. 6:11; Col. 4:3; Rev. 3:7; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 3:20; Rev. 4:1; Rev. 5:2; Rev. 5:3; Rev. 5:4; Rev. 5:5; Rev. 5:9; Rev. 6:1; Rev. 6:3; Rev. 6:5; Rev. 6:7; Rev. 6:9; Rev. 6:12; Rev. 8:1; Rev. 9:2; Rev. 10:2; Rev. 10:8; Rev. 11:19; Rev. 12:16; Rev. 13:6; Rev. 15:5; Rev. 19:11; Rev. 20:12

QUESTION - What did Jesus mean when He told us to ask, seek, and knock?

ANSWER - Matthew 7 is part of what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. It's a description of the truly righteous life, an outlining of "the law of Christ" (1 Corinthians 9:21, ESV). When Jesus says, "Ask and it will be given to you," continual prayer is in view (Matthew 7:7a). Prayer is how we communicate our needs and desires to God. Of course, God, being omniscient, knows what Christians need whether they ask or not, but prayer is the means God has chosen to bring about those answers (James 4:2b).

Jesus is *not* saying that believers always get what they ask for—wrong motives, for example, will hinder answers to prayer (James 4:3). However, the more time a Christian spends in communion with God, the more he or she will know what to ask for in accordance with God's will. Prayer, in and of itself, does not produce sanctification (an increasing holiness in a believer's life), but it does show a dependence on God for needs that can be met no other way. God is always pleased with such displays of faith. It is only faith in what God can do, and what Christ has done, that brings about true sanctification, not an artificial self-righteousness (Hebrews 11:6).

Jesus went on to say, "Seek, and you will find" (Matthew 7:7b). What is it believers ought to be seeking? It is God Himself! "You have said, 'Seek my face.' My heart says to you, 'Your face, Lord, do I seek'" (Psalm 27:8). "The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing" (Psalm 34:10). "Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!" (Psalm 105:4). "Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart" (Psalm 119:2). God is not hiding from His children. His heart's desire is for us to persistently and passionately look for Him all around us, and when we do, He promises He will be found (Proverbs 8:17). Seeking is a matter of paying attention with an engaged mind and acute awareness.

Earlier in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said to "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). Seeking God's kingdom means putting God's plan before our own; seeking God's righteousness means setting a priority on personal holiness and desiring to be sanctified.

Jesus then said, "Knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7c). Here, the Lord uses a metaphor for the action a desire

produces. If a person needs something from someone behind a door, the most natural thing to do is knock—and keep knocking until the door is opened and the desire is met. In the same way, a believer should pray in faith for God's provision and be persistent in prayer (see Luke 18:1).

Ask, seek, knock. Notice the three different senses being considered here. Asking is verbal; Christians are to use their mouths and petition God for their needs and desires. And believers are to seek with their minds—this is more than asking; it is a setting of priorities and a focusing of the heart. To knock involves physical movement, one in which the Christian takes action. Although asking and seeking are of great importance, they would be incomplete without knocking. The apostle John said Christians ought not to love in word alone but with actions also (1 John 3:18). In the same way, it's good to pray and seek God, but if one does not also act in ways that are pleasing to God, all is for naught. It's no accident that Jesus said believers should love God with all their heart, soul, strength, and mind (Luke 10:27).

The commands are followed by promises: "Everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened" (Matthew 7:8). God delights in the prayer of faith, and He promises to give us what we need.GotQuestions.org

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QUESTION - What did Jesus mean when He said, "Ask and you shall receive"? Watch Video

ANSWER - Jesus said, "Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete" in John 16:24. Similar statements are found in Matthew 7:7; 21:22; Mark 11:24; Luke 11:9; and John 15:7. Is this a blanket promise with no conditions? If we ask for three hundred pounds of chocolate delivered to our door, is God obligated to give it to us? Or are Jesus' words to be understood in light of other revelation?

If we assume that "ask and you will receive" means "ask for anything you want and I'll give it to you," then we have turned the Lord into a cosmic genie who serves our every whim. This is the problem of prosperity gospel and word of faith teachings.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says that whoever asks receives, whoever seeks finds, and whoever knocks will find an open door (Matthew 7:7–8). But with this and all other verses we must examine the context. Jesus goes on to say that God will not fail to give His children good things (verse 11). So, this is one condition to the promise of "ask and receive": what we ask for must be good in God's estimation. God will give *advantageous* gifts to His children; He will not give us bad or injurious things, no matter how much we clamor for them. The best example of a good gift is the Holy Spirit, according to Luke 11:13. We begin to see a two-fold purpose of prayer—to increase our understanding of what God calls "good" and to cultivate a desire in us for what is good.

Our prayers to God are not unlike our requests of men. Our prayers are based in a relationship, as Jesus points out in Matthew 7:8. If a child asks his father for something the father knows to be hurtful, the request is denied. The child may be frustrated and unhappy when he doesn't get what he asked for, but he should trust his father. Conversely, when the child asks for something that the father knows is beneficial, the father will provide it eagerly because he loves his child.

We have another condition to the promise of "ask and receive" in John 14:14, "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." Here, Jesus does not promise His disciples anything and everything they want; rather, He instructs them to ask "in my name." To pray in Jesus' name is to pray on the basis of Jesus' authority, but it also involves praying according to the will of God, for the will of God is what Jesus always did (John 6:38). This truth is stated explicitly in 1 John 5:14, "If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." Our requests must be congruent with the will of God.

The promise of "ask and receive," even with its conditions, can never disappoint. There is no chance of things we need not being in God's will. He promises to supply what we need when we "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). Of course, what we *want* is not always what we *need*. If what we want is not in God's will, then we really don't want to receive it. God knows what is good for us and is faithful and loving to say "no" to selfish and foolish prayers, no matter how much we want what we're asking for.

God will always give us good things. Our job is to understand what is good, so that we know what to ask for. The natural mind cannot understand this. But, when we offer ourselves as "a living sacrifice" and are transformed by the renewing of our minds, then we "will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:1–2). Then, asking for what we need in faith, we will have all we need for life, godliness, and fullness of joy (John 16:24).

The biblical instruction concerning prayer is that we pray for the good things that we truly need, according to the will of God, in the authority of Jesus Christ, persistently (see Luke 18:1), unselfishly (see James 4:3), and in faith (see James 1:6). In Matthew 21:22 Jesus again emphasizes faith: "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Those who truly believe God will witness the amazing, infinite power of God. However, comparing Scripture with Scripture, we know that the asking must be done within the will of God. Part of having faith is acceding to God's plan as best. If we ask for healing, and that is the best thing for us, we should not doubt that God will heal us. If He does not heal, then not being healed is a necessary part of a larger plan—one that

is ultimately for our good.

Consider Psalm 37:4: “Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.” This verse does not give us a way to manipulate God; nor does it mean that, if we obey, He will reward us with whatever treat we crave. Rather, it means that, when we delight ourselves in God, then we will find everything we want and need in Him. The key here is that the heart of the seeker is changed—when we delight in the Lord, God’s desires begin to become our own. When our desires match God’s, then our prayers are automatically aligned with His will.

Among the most important prayers in the life of a Christian are “Teach me to love you above all else” and “Cause me to want what you want.” When we truly desire God, when we are passionate to see His will accomplished in this world, and when we ask for what brings Him glory, He is eager to give us anything we ask. Sometimes the things that glorify God are pleasant—a marriage or a child. Sometimes they are difficult for us—a failure that humbles us or a physical weakness that makes us more dependent upon God (see 2 Corinthians 12:7). But, when we pray within His will, in the authority of Jesus, persistently, unselfishly, and in faith, we will receive what we need.GotQuestions.org

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Related Resources:

- Six Keys to Answered Prayer by Adrian Rogers (youtube audio)
- Questions about Prayer (All) | GotQuestions.org
- What is the meaning of “you have not because you ask not” in James 4:2? | GotQuestions.org
- Are there any conditions to answered prayer? | GotQuestions.org
- What is the key to effective prayer?| GotQuestions.org
- Why doesn’t God respond when I cry out, “God, please help me!”? | GotQuestions.org?
- Does God answer prayers? | GotQuestions.org
- What is the Lord's prayer and should we pray it? | GotQuestions.org
- What are some hindrances to a potent prayer life? | GotQuestions.org
- What did Jesus mean when He said "Ask and you shall receive"?
- Is there evidence that God answers prayer? | GotQuestions.org
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- Does God hear my prayers? | GotQuestions.org
- How can I have my prayers answered by God? | GotQuestions.org
- How should a Christian respond to unanswered prayer? | GotQuestions.org
- How can I become a prayer warrior? | GotQuestions.org
- Is it allowable to use candles in connection with prayer? | GotQuestions.org

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ILLUSTRATION - Hughes points out OT illustrations of persistent prayers - When Hannah pled with God concerning her barrenness, so great was her passion that the priest Eli "said to her, 'How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine.' 'Not so, my lord,' Hannah replied, 'I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the Lord'" (1 Samuel 1:14, 15). And God responded to Hannah's passionate prayer by giving her a godly son. Ezra, the restorer of Israel, says, "Then, at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my self-abasement, with my tunic and cloak torn, and fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the Lord my God and prayed" (Ezra 9:5, 6a). So it was also with his cohort Nehemiah, who prayed and wept over Israel's fallen walls (Nehemiah 1:4ff.). (Ibid)

ILLUSTRATION - In 1935, Blasio Kugosi, a schoolteacher in Rwanda, Central Africa, was deeply discouraged by the lack of life in the church and the powerlessness of his own life. He followed the example of the first Christians by seeking the Lord's power in his life. He closed himself in for a week of prayer and fasting in his little cottage. Revival gripped his life and he emerged a changed man. He confessed his sins to those he had wronged, including his wife and children. He proclaimed the Gospel in the school where he taught, and revival broke out there, resulting in students and teachers being saved. They were called abaka, meaning "people on fire." Shortly after that, Blasio was invited to Uganda to share with other Christians what God had been doing. As he called the leaders to repentance, the fire of the Holy Spirit descended again on the place, with similar results as in Rwanda. Several days later, Blasio died of fever. His ministry lasted only a few weeks, but the revival fires sparked through his ministry swept throughout East Africa and continue to the present. Hundreds of thousands of lives have been transformed over the decades through this mighty East African revival. **It all began with a discouraged Christian**, setting himself apart to seek the fullness of God's Spirit. The tyranny of his discouragement demanded the urgency of prayer and getting deliverance from the Lord. He sought God and found Him. Jeremiah said we would find the Lord if we would truly seek Him. (Read Jer 29:12-13) (Rod Mattoon Treasures from the Scriptures)

ILLUSTRATION - J. Vernon McGee - As a young preacher I prayed for God to open up the door to a certain church where I wanted to serve as pastor. I was asked to candidate, which I did. The machinery of the church and the political bigwigs met behind closed doors to decide if I would be pastor. They decided not to accept me because I was not a church politician, and theirs was a strategic church in that day. I went to the Lord and cried about it and told Him how He had let me down. Today I am ashamed of myself, and I have asked Him to forgive me for my attitude. He did not let me down. He knew what was best for me. He had something much better in store for me. Many times since then I have thanked Him for that "**NO**."

Rod Mattoon - God is not a celestial slot machine where you pull the handle enough times in prayer and you will get what you want! There is more to prayer than this. This passage tells us how to pray for Christlike character in our lives. It instructs us how to pray the Lord's Prayer. It teaches us to pray that our morals and ethics will be like the Lord Jesus Christ. In a word, Jesus teaches us how to pray for our spiritual lives as well as for other needs. (**ILLUSTRATION**) The story of Frances Havergal is an example of this truth. As a young woman, Frances Havergal, author of the hymns, Take My Life and Let It Be and Like a River Glorious, had a very quick temper. It was the kind that would easily explode. After she would blow up, she would be mortified and confess her failure to the Lord only to lose her temper, again and again. One day after a particularly bad explosion, she threw herself down by her bed and wept. She prayed, "Lord, must it always be so? Will I always have this temper to keep me humble before you?" While she was on her knees, the Lord injected a verse of Scripture in her mind: "The Egyptians whom you have seen today you will see no more forever." God spoke these words to Moses when the Egyptians pursued the Israelites to take them back into bondage. Havergal related the verse to her temper and the way in which Satan wanted to use it to pull her into failure, bondage, and defeat. She saw that God could take her temper away. She asked, "Lord, could it be forever?" It seemed to her that the words came back from the Lord, "Yes. No more, forever." Her sister said that from that day Frances Havergal never again lost her temper. She believed God, and the Lord gave her total victory in her life. (Treasures from the Scriptures)

ILLUSTRATION - When Howard Carter, the British archaeologist, peered wide-eyed into an ancient Egyptian tomb in 1922, at first he saw nothing. For more than twenty centuries archaeologists, tourists, and tomb robbers had searched for the burial places of Egypt's pharaohs. It was believed that nothing remained undisturbed, especially in the Royal Valley where the ancient monarchs had been buried for over half a millennium. With only a few scraps of evidence, Carter carried on his pursuit, privately financed, because nobody felt there was anything left to be discovered. He was convinced, however, that there was one remaining tomb. Twice during his six-year search he came within two yards of the first stone step leading to the burial chamber, and finally he found it. "Can you see anything?" his assistants asked, as Carter's eyes adjusted. He was seeing, but he had difficulty speaking because he saw what no modern man had ever seen. Wooden animals, statues, chests, chariots, carved cobras, vases, daggers, jewels, a throne and a hand-carved coffin of a teenage king were in the tomb. Mr. Carter found the priceless tomb and treasure of King Tutankhamen, the world's most exciting archaeological discovery. Howard Carter's persistence and steadfastness brought him King Tut's treasure. How much greater our rewards will be when we pray with persistence for God's spiritual treasures! King Tut left his treasures behind after he died, but the treasures that Christ gives to us are ours for eternity. (Mattoon Treasures from the Scriptures)

Morning and Evening Spurgeon - We know of a place in England still existing, where a dole of bread is served to every passerby who chooses to ask for it. Whoever the traveller may be, he has but to knock at the door of St. Cross Hospital, and there is the dole of bread for him. Jesus Christ so loveth sinners that he has built a St. Cross Hospital, so that whenever a sinner is hungry, he has but to knock and have his wants supplied. Nay, he has done better; he has attached to this Hospital of the Cross a bath; and whenever a soul is black and filthy, it has but to go there and be washed. The fountain is always full, always efficacious. No sinner ever went into it and found that it could not wash away his stains. Sins which were scarlet and crimson have all disappeared, and the sinner has been whiter than snow. As if this were not enough, there is attached to this Hospital of the Cross a wardrobe, and a sinner making application simply as a sinner, may be clothed from head to foot; and if he wishes to be a soldier, he may not merely have a garment for ordinary wear, but armour which shall cover him from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. If he asks for a sword, he shall have that given to him, and a shield too. Nothing that is good for him shall be denied him. He shall have spending-money so long as he lives, and he shall have an eternal heritage of glorious treasure when he enters into the joy of his Lord. If all these things are to be had by merely knocking at mercy's door, O my soul, knock hard this morning, and ask large things of thy generous Lord. Leave not the throne of grace till all thy wants have been spread before the Lord, and until by faith thou hast a comfortable prospect that they shall be all supplied. No bashfulness need retard when Jesus invites. No unbelief should hinder when Jesus promises. No cold-heartedness should restrain when such blessings are to be obtained.

Thomas Kelley described how we can continually be asking, seeking, knocking - There is a way of ordering our mental life on more than one level at once. On one level we can be thinking, discussing, seeing, calculating, meeting all the demands of external affairs. But deep within, behind the scenes, at a profounder level, we may also be in prayer and adoration, song and worship, and a gentle

receptiveness to divine breathings. (Thomas Kelly, Testament of Devotion New York: Harper, 1941)

A Praying Father - A minister concluded his sermon one Sunday by saying, "If there's someone here who wants help in getting to know God, and you would like me to pray for you, please raise your hand." A young man stood up and said, "Please pray for me, sir. The burden of my sin is too heavy to bear." After the service, the minister talked with the man and led him to faith in Jesus. The young man had been wandering around the country for 8 years without contacting his parents, so he decided to write to them and tell them about the change in his life. Several days later, a reply came from his mother: "My dear son, you must have accepted Jesus Christ at the same hour your father went home to heaven. He had been sick for a long time, and that day he was very restless. He tossed from side to side on his bed, crying out, 'Lord, please save my poor, wandering boy.' I'm sure that one of the reasons you became a Christian was Dad's unceasing intercession." A praying father will "ask," "seek," and "knock" in behalf of his children, persistently trusting his wise heavenly Father to do what is best. Let's thank God today for faithful fathers who never stop praying for their children. —Henry G. Bosch (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

We thank You, Lord, for fathers true
Who always spoke to us of You;
Their great concern and tender care
Assured us of their constant prayer. —Bosch

A praying father reflects the love of our heavenly Father.

Luke 11:10 "For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

KJV Luke 11:10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

- **For everyone who asks, receives** Luke 18:1; Ps 31:22; Lam 3:8,18,54-58; Jonah 2:2-8; Jas 4:3; 5:11
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:5-10 Pray Boldly - John MacArthur

PROMISES FOR PRAYER

For (gar) is a term of explanation and here Jesus is explaining why we should obey the 3 commands regarding prayer in Lk 11:9.

MacArthur - This promise is not a blank check granting people whatever they wish, since it has already been qualified by the Lord's teaching in Luke 11:2-4 that God is the focus of all true prayer. James struck this same balance between boldness in prayer and selfish greed. In James 4:2 he rebuked his readers for failing to pray boldly: "You do not have because you do not ask." But then he went on to warn, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:3). Those who pray with a proper, God-centered focus will receive what they desire, but the selfish requests of the greedy will not be granted. (See Luke Commentary)

Wiersbe on **asks...seeks...knocks** all being in the present tense (continually) - In other words, *don't come to God only in the midnight emergencies, but keep in constant communion with your Father.* Jesus called this "abiding" (Jn 15:1ff), and Paul exhorted, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Th 5:17). As we pray, God will either answer or show us why He cannot answer. Then it is up to us to do whatever is necessary in our lives so that the Father can trust us with the answer. (Borrow Be compassionate)

Everyone who asks receives - This teaching is open to every believer (**everyone**). This statement does not mean that we will always receive what we ask because, as a popular old television show put it ,"Father Knows Best." In other words, He knows what is best for us and knows that what we are asking for may not be in our best interest. It is important to reiterate that all three **"prayer verbs"** are in the present tense which pictures our prayer life as just that -- a lifestyle of prayer (1Th 5:17).

THOUGHT - Lord, teach us and enable us by Thy Spirit to pray as our lifestyle, a lifestyle that exhibits continual dependence on and communication with the Living God of the universe. Amen.

Kent Hughes gives an important **caveat** regarding **asking, seeking and knocking** warning (this comment is specifically on Mt 7:7-11 but clearly applies to Luke's passage) that "The instruction in this text should not be lifted from its **context** (Ed note" see importance of **context** in accurate interpretation and valid application) in the Sermon and abused. All of us have heard this done.

"The Bible says, '**Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you**'. Therefore, all we have to do is ask for it with faith and persistence, and we will get it. 'You do not have because you do not ask' (James 4:2). So go for it! **Name it and claim it!**" This view sees God as a celestial slot machine. Pull the handle enough times in prayer, be persistent, and you will get what you want! Such thinking is entirely wrong! A text without a **context** is a **pretext**. Isolating this text from its setting in the Sermon on the Mount is deadly. The **broad context** of the Sermon sets down the surpassing righteousness, humility, sincerity, purity, and love expected of those who are members of the kingdom of God. These virtues are beyond human attainment apart from God's grace. The **broad context** underscores our need. In the **immediately preceding context** (Mt 7:1-6) Jesus has shown us the danger of condemning other people as if we were judges. He also has told us to get the plank out of our own eye before we attempt to remove a speck from someone else's. His warning is, "For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Mt 7:2). This standard is terrifying. Who is adequate for such things? How can we live up to such a high standard? We need to be cleansed. We need help and grace, but from where? Jesus answers, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Mt 7:7). **This famous text is not carte blanche for our material desires.** Rather, it tells us how to pray for the character of the kingdom in our lives." (See The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom) (Bolding added)

Spurgeon comments that "There are different methods of praying, and each one has its special adaptation to the state in which you may be; so use that method to which the Holy Spirit guides you, so use all methods until you prevail." (Luke 11 - exposition)

Asks...seeks...knocks - Regarding this section **Spurgeon** draws an interesting conclusion in his book **Power in Prayer (borrow book)**...

> Until God had said that word or a word to that effect (**Asks...seeks...knocks...receives...finds...opened**), it was at His own option to hear prayer or not, but it is not so now. For now, if it is true prayer offered through Jesus Christ, His truth binds Him to hear it. A man may be perfectly free, but the moment he makes a promise, he is not free to break it; and the everlasting God does not want to break His promise. He delights to fulfill it. He has declared that all His promises are "yea" and "amen" (2 Cor. 1:20) in Christ Jesus. For our consolation, when we survey God under the high and awesome aspect of His sovereignty, we have this to reflect on: He is under covenant bonds of promise to be faithful to the souls that seek Him. His throne must be a throne of grace to His people.
>
> Once more, and the sweetest thought of all, every covenant promise has been endorsed and sealed with blood, and far be it from the everlasting God to pour scorn upon the blood of His dear Son. When a king has given a charter to a city, he may have been absolute before, and there may have been nothing to check his prerogatives; however, when the city has its charter, then it pleads its rights before the king.
>
> Even thus, God has given to His people a charter of untold blessings, bestowing upon them the sure mercies of David. Very much of the validity of a charter depends on the signature and the seal, and, my friends, how sure is the charter of covenant grace! The signature is the handwriting of God Himself, and the seal is the blood of the Only Begotten. The covenant is ratified with blood, the blood of His own dear Son. It is not possible that we can plead in vain with God when we plead the blood-sealed covenant, ordered in all things and sure. "Heaven and earth shall pass away" (Matt. 24:35), but the power of the blood of Jesus can never fail with God. It speaks when we are silent, and it prevails when we are defeated. "Better things than that of Abel" (see note Hebrews 12:24) does it ask for, and its cry is heard. Let us come boldly, for we bear the promise in our hearts. When we feel alarmed because of the sovereignty of God, let us cheerfully sing:
>
> The gospel bears my spirit up,
> A faithful and unchanging God
> Lays the foundation for my hope
> In oaths, and promises, and blood.
>
> **May God the Holy Spirit help us to use rightly from this time forward "the throne of grace." Amen.** (from **Power in Prayer borrow book)**

Spurgeon writes regarding **receives...finds...opened**...

> This is the rule of God's kingdom invariably, whenever the request is a right one, and is presented in a right manner.
>
> Ask the people of God whether it is not so. Go among them, and question them upon this matter. They know the power of prayer, so let them tell you whether they have been deceived or not. Well, then, as it has been so

> with them, let this encourage you to expect that it shall be the same with you also.
>
> One way or another you will get the blessing if you are but persevering, and blessed is the man who is a master of the art of asking, but does not forget the labor of seeking an entrance through the importunity of knocking.

In **John Piper's** book **Desiring God** he explains why more Christians are not asking, seeking, knocking writing that…

> Unless I'm badly mistaken, one of the main reasons so many of God's children don't have a significant life of prayer is not so much that we don't want to, but that we don't plan to. If you want to take a four-week vacation, you don't just get up one summer morning and say, "Hey, let's go today!" You won't have anything ready. You won't know where to go. Nothing has been planned.
>
> But that is how many of us treat prayer. We get up day after day and realize that significant times of prayer should be part of our life, but nothing's ever ready. We don't know where to go. Nothing has been planned. No time. No place. No procedure. And we all know that the opposite of planning is not a wonderful flow of deep, spontaneous experiences in prayer. The opposite of planning is the rut. If you don't plan a vacation you will probably stay home and watch TV!
>
> **The natural unplanned flow of spiritual life sinks to the lowest ebb of vitality.**
>
> There is a race to be run and a fight to be fought. If you want renewal in your life of prayer you must plan to see it.
>
> Therefore, my simple exhortation is this: Let us take time this very day to rethink our priorities and how prayer fits in. Make some new resolve. Try some new venture with God. Set a time. Set a place. Choose a portion of Scripture to guide you. Don't be tyrannized by the press of busy days. We all need mid-course corrections. Make this a day of turning to prayer — for the glory of God and for the fullness of your joy. (Available online - Desiring God - Meditations of A Christian Hedonist) (Bolding added)

Steven Cole - The application (Luke 11:9-10): Jesus applies the parable by telling the disciples to keep on asking, seeking, and knocking, with the promise that if they do, they will obtain their requests. The present imperative mood in Greek has the nuance of continuous action, and so I do not understand or agree with some well-known commentators who say that the idea is not persistence and that if you have to keep on asking, you are not asking rightly (G. Campbell Morgan, The Parables and Metaphors of Our Lord). I agree that God is not like the neighbor in bed, where you have to keep bugging Him because He is reluctant to give you what you need. But the fact is, God doesn't always answer according to our timetable. He knows when our faith has been sufficiently tried and our submission to His will is sufficiently complete so that the time is right for Him to grant our requests. Andrew Murray (With Christ in the School of Prayer [Spire Books], p. 49) explains,"Intercession is part of faith's training-school. There our friendship with men and with God is tested. There it is seen whether my friendship with the needy is so real, that I will take time and sacrifice my rest, will go even at midnight and not cease until I have obtained for them what I need. There it is seen whether my friendship with God is so clear, that I can depend on Him not to turn me away and therefore pray on until He gives."

Also, the idea of persistence is reinforced by the increasing intensity of the words "**ask**," "**seek**," and "**knock**." Seeking is stronger than asking; knocking is stronger than seeking. Although the word isn't used there, the word knocking relates back to the story of the friend at midnight, banging on his neighbor's door until the guy gets out of bed and gives him what he needs. I agree with Martyn Lloyd-Jones who writes (The Sermon on the Mount [Eerdmans], 2:201), "The importance of this element of persistence cannot be exaggerated. You find it not only in biblical teaching, but also in the lives of all the saints. The most fatal thing in the Christian life is to be content with passing desires. If we really want to be men of God, if we really want to know Him, and walk with Him, and experience those boundless blessings which He has to offer us, we must persist in asking Him for them day by day. We have to feel this hunger and thirst for righteousness, and then we shall be filled. And that does not mean that we are filled once and for ever. We go on hungering and thirsting."

If we come to realize that our request is not in accord with God's will or if we get a distinct sense from God that we should cease praying, then we should not continue to pray for that need. But otherwise, we should keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking until God answers. I have one request I have been asking for almost 28 years, another that I've been asking for 25 years, and another that I've been asking for over 10 years without adequate answers. To answer these requests would be for God's glory and the furtherance of His kingdom. They are not selfish requests. So I keep knocking, even though at times I grow weary. For reasons I do not fully understand, God has not seen fit to grant these requests. But, I believe that like the friend at midnight, my job is to keep knocking on behalf of my needy friends until I obtain from God what they need. (Luke 11:5-13 How to Approach God)

Luke 11:11 "Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he?

> KJV Luke 11:11 If a son **shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone**? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? (**Dark blue** not in most modern manuscripts, but in the Textus Receptus used for translating the KJV).

- **one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish** Isa 49:15; Mt 7:9
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:11-13 God's Generous Response to Boldness in Prayer - John MacArthur

Matthew's version

> "Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? "Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? (Mt 7:9-10)

Luke 11:11-13 invokes a lesser (giving by earthly fathers to their sons when they ask) to a greater (giving by our heavenly Father when we ask) argument. Since Lk 11:11-12 are true for earthly fathers, how much more true for our heavenly Father.

Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish - Children naturally ask their fathers for what they need (and in America too often more than they need). And why do they ask? They know their fathers love them, having experienced their care in many ways. And so they have confidence to petition their papa's!

MacArthur - The parable illustrates the promise and that promise in turn rests on a principle. That principle is couched in the common Jewish pattern of reasoning from the lesser to the greater. It raises the level of the discussion from friendship to fatherhood; if a person would respond to a bold request from a friend, how much more so would a father respond to his children? Jesus introduced the principle by posing two hypothetical questions to His audience.(See Luke Commentary)

He will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he?- Clearly the answer is "No!" No father would give his son something that would at best mock his request or at worst would even harm him.

MacArthur - The obvious answer to Christ's questions is no, because of the principle that fathers take care of their children and meet their needs. Knowing their heavenly Father's care for them and commitment to meet their needs, believers can confidently ask Him for all that they need. Unlike the false gods of pagan religions, God is loving, approachable, and generous. (See Luke Commentary)

If your child asks for a stone or a snake, will you give it to him? No, no matter how much he begs. Children often ask for foolish things, which are withheld. The same is true with our heavenly Father. As ignorant, willful children we often ask for things that to us seem like fish or bread but which God knows will have the effect (figuratively of course) of a stone or a snake in our lives. Our Heavenly Father says no, not because He hates us but because he loves us. God's "No" is a sure sign of His wisdom and His love for us. If a five-year-old asks to play with a sharp knife, most reasonable fathers would respond with a definitive "No" and even let him cry and pout. His tears only show his immaturity. And frankly, if the father does give him the knife, it shows he doesn't really love him at all. In the same way, as God's children, believers often ask for things that might bring us harm, including even things we think are good, like a new job, a better salary, a new house, etc. But God Who Alone knows the beginning from the end, sees through to the end and knows that what we have asked for would harm us more than help us. So in His omniscient, loving wisdom He says "No".

Brian Bell on what Luke 11:11-12 - **Stone…serpent…scorpion** – (often found inside the house, so not random thoughts here) Now, I do have one friend who put his glass eye in his son's cereal bowl! No father is going to give a small child a sharp knife or a loaded gun, no matter how much the child begs. No mother is going to give her pre-teen the keys to the car for a joyride, or her toddler freedom to pay in the medicine cabinet. Thus, God will not put some things in our hands, until he 1st prepares our hearts. Thus, God will not put some things in our hands, until he 1st prepares our hearts. What also is special is when we ask for stones, He doesn't give us one, when He knows we need bread! **Our heavenly Father knows how to give far better than we know how to ask!** We might think, "I asked God for something, and He did not give it to me." We should rather say, "I wanted something I did not need, so my Father knew best not to give it to me." (Luke:11:5-13 Someone's Knocking at the Door)

Spurgeon - The point is, not only that God gives, but that He knows how to give. If He were always to give according to our prayers, it might be very injurious to us. He might give us that with which we could do hurt, as when a father should put a stone into a boy's hand; or he might give us that which might do us hurt, as if a father were to give his child a serpent. He will do neither of

these things; but He will answer us in discretion, and with prudence will He fulfill our desires. You know how to give to your children; How much more shall your infinitely-wise Father, Who from heaven sees all the surroundings of men, give good things to them that ask Him?

J R Miller - Good Things from God - No father will answer his hungry child's cry for bread with a stone, or give the child a serpent if he asks for a fish. Even sinful parents have in their hearts something of the image of God's own fatherhood. The argument is from the less to the greater. If a true earthly father, with all his imperfection, will not mock a child's cry, but will respond lovingly, how much more will our Father in heaven do for us? "**How much more**?" is a question none can answer. We can only say as **much more** as the heavenly Father is more loving, and wiser, and more able to give, than is the earthly father. Yet we must explain this promise also by other scriptures. The gate of prayer is set very wide open in this verse, yet those who would enter must come in the right way and seek "**good**" things. **While no one who asks for bread will receive a stone, neither will one who asks for a stone receive a stone. And many times do we come to God pleading with Him to let us have a stone**. Of course we imagine it is bread, and that it will be food to us. It is some earthly thing, some gift of honor or pleasure, some achievement of ambition, some object of heart desire. It looks like bread to our deluded vision. But God knows it is only a cold stone, that it would leave us starving if we were to receive it; and He loves us too well to listen to our piteous cries for it, or to be moved by our earnestness or our tears to give it to us. When we ask for a stone He will give us bread. **Thus it is that many requests for earthly things are not granted.** Yet the prayers are not unanswered. Instead of the stone we wish, God gives us the bread we need. We do not always know what is bread and what is a stone, and we must leave to God the final decision in all our prayers.

Luke 11:12 "Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he?

KJV Luke 11:12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

- **will not give him a scorpion, will he** Luke 10:19; Ezekiel 2:6; Rev 9:10
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:11-13 God's Generous Response to Boldness in Prayer - John MacArthur

Or if he is asked for an egg He will not give him a scorpion, will he?- Clearly the answer is "No!" To give something potentially harmful, in place of something useful would be unheard of. In the Middle East the effect of a scorpion sting on human beings is at the least severe pain, but occasionally led to collapse and death, especially in younger children.

ESV Study Bible - **Fish** and **eggs** were common foods in Palestine, while **serpents** and **scorpions** were regular hazards. A far more important gift than material blessings is the powerful anointing and guidance of the **Holy Spirit** in a believer's life (see Mt. 12:28; Lk 4:1, 14; Acts 1:8; Ro 8:13–14, 26; 1 Cor. 12:11; Gal 5:18). (Borrow ESV Study Bible)

Mattoon has an interesting comment on **scorpion** - When the scorpion is at rest, its claws and tail are folded inward. There is a pale kind of scorpion, which, when folded up, would look exactly like an egg. If a son asks for an egg, will his father mock him by handing him a biting scorpion? No! God is not deceptive in His giving. He does not trick the person asking for certain things by giving that person things which look like that which was requested, but in fact, are not. The character of the normal earthly father is not so mean as to give these deceptive things to his son. If an earthly father would not deceive his son in giving needed supplies for the son, neither will the heavenly Father. God has better character than to be deceitful and play mean tricks on people who come to Him in honest prayer for the basic needs of life. If He promises to answer your request, He will answer it. Keep in mind, however, that "No" is an answer. God will never refuse to answer our prayers in one way or another and He will never mock our prayers. Our Lord will always answer our prayers, but He will answer them in His own time and way, and His way will be the way of perfect wisdom and of perfect love. The bread and fish are good gifts. The stone and serpent, are bad, harmful gifts....There are some things that we pray for that are not good for us and would ruin us. The Lord in His love and wisdom says "No" to these requests. God's gifts are good and He will not give us something bad even though we have asked for that which could hurt us unless He wants to discipline or judge us by granting our selfish requests. Sometimes we pray for things that would harm us, but God will not answer those prayers as we have prayed them if it is His will. For example, the prophet Elijah prayed to die but God did not grant the request (1 Kings 19:4). It was not good for Elijah to die at that time. All of us can be grateful to God that His goodness has kept us from having some of our requests answered as we prayed them. There may be some exception to this when God grants something which we persisted in prayer for that which was not good for us. God may answer a bad prayer to discipline us and turn our life around in the right direction. He will chasten us to bring us close to Him. (Ps 119:67) (Treasures from the Scriptures)

See below for example of God answering Israel's prayer for "meat" in Numbers 11). Remember that 1 Cor 10:6 makes it clear that "these things (1 Cor 10:5+) happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved." God gave

sinful Israel what they wanted and then He disciplined them severely.

> Nu 11:13+ (Moses says to God) "Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me, saying, '**Give us meat that we may eat!**'

God answered Moses in Nu 11:18+ -

> "Say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and **you shall eat meat;** for (EXPLAINS WHY THEY SHALL EAT MEAT) **you have wept in the ears of the LORD**, saying, "Oh that someone would give us meat to eat! For we were well-off in Egypt." Therefore the LORD will give you meat and you shall eat. 19 'You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, 20 but a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you; because you have rejected the LORD who is among you and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever leave Egypt?"'

Psalm 78:29 says

> So they ate and were well filled; And their desire He gave to them. Before they had satisfied their desire, While their food was in their mouths, The anger of God rose against them, And killed some of their stoutest ones, And subdued the choice men of Israel. (Ps 78:29-31)

Why did God punish them even after answering their cry for meat? Ps 78:32 says

> In spite of all this they still sinned, And did not believe in His wonderful works.

The simple answer is that Israel did not trust Him despite the wonderful works He had already accomplished in their midst (Passover salvation, Red Sea redemption, provision of daily manna, etc).

> **THOUGHT**- O that we might heed 1 Cor 10:5, and that our prayers never be from a heart of distrust of the good gifts of our gracious Father in heaven. Amen Psalm 78:29 is an especially frightening verse to me as it shows that if we persist in our willful rebellion, at the same time despising His good gifts, God will sometimes give us what our sinful rebellious hearts desire! Beware! Instead of the nourishing manna which they despised (Nu 21:5) God sent them a "blue plate special" of bird-meat which became "loathsome" (Nu 11:20) when it caused a great plague ("wasting disease") that took many lives (Nu 11:33,34, Ps 106:15) Here is another potential application: If our prayers focus primarily on physical rather than spiritual desires, God's answer may be one of physical satiation but spiritual poverty.

Let me encourage you to take three and one half minutes to read (and sing or read along as **Matt Foreman** sings) John Newton's words, especially "Thou art coming to a King, Large petitions with thee bring."

Come, My Soul, Thy Suit Prepare
(Listen to a beautiful vocal by Matt Foreman - it will move you deeply!)
by John Newton

Come, my soul, thy suit prepare:
Jesus loves to answer prayer;
He Himself has bid thee pray,
Therefore will not say thee nay;
Therefore will not say thee nay.

Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much;
None can ever ask too much.

With my burden I begin:
Lord, remove this load of sin;
Let Thy blood, for sinners spilt,
Set my conscience free from guilt;
Set my conscience free from guilt.

Lord, I come to Thee for rest,

Take possession of my breast;
There Thy blood bought right maintain,
And without a rival reign;
And without a rival reign.

As the image in the glass
Answers the beholder's face;
Thus unto my heart appear,
Print Thine own resemblance there;
Print Thine own resemblance there.

While I am a pilgrim here,
Let Thy love my spirit cheer;
As my Guide, my Guard, my Friend,
Lead me to my journey's end;
Lead me to my journey's end.

Show me what I have to do,
Every hour my strength renew:
Let me live a life of faith,
Let me die Thy people's death;
Let me die Thy people's death.

ILLUSTRATION OF "THOU ART COMING TO A KING, LARGE PETITIONS WITH THEE BRING."

God wants to give us good things and has the ability to do so. We are to ask, seek, and knock on His door with humility, faith, reverence, and persistence and be prepared to receive His answer. The tyranny of the urgent should drive us to our knees. In his book Beyond Jabez, Bruce Wilkinson shares the story of an old African woman who demonstrated faith in God's power to provide. Although she lived in a tiny mud hut, she had taken on the responsibility of caring for 56 orphans. A small group of Wilkinson's "Dream for Africa" volunteers had arrived in this grandmother's native Swaziland to plant gardens. On the final day of their visit, they came upon her tiny home, surrounded by the many children in her care. A number of little gardens had been dug up all around the hut, but oddly, no plants were growing in any of them. The volunteers learned that, earlier on the same day, the woman had told the children to dig lots of gardens. When the children asked her why, since they had neither seeds nor money, she responded, "Last night I asked God to send someone to plant gardens for us. We must be ready for them when they come." Wilkinson's volunteers had come with hundreds of ready-to-plant seedlings. God sent them to the very place where one of his servants had begged for His intervening hand. The faithful grandmother and her children were ready when the answer came. Are you ready for your answer? Are you asking for an answer? May the tyranny of the urgent keep your face before the throne of God! (Rod Mattoon Treasures from the Scriptures)

Luke 11:13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

KJV Luke 11:13 If ye then, being vil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

- **If you then, being evil,** Genesis 6:5,6; 8:21; Job 15:14-16; Ps 51:5; John 3:5,6; Ro 7:18; Titus 3:3
- **know how to give good gifts to your children** Isa 49:15; Mt 7:11; Heb 12:9,10
- **how much more** Mt 6:30; Ro 5:9,10,17; 8:32; 2 Cor 3:9-11
- **will your heavenly Father** Luke 11:2; 15:30-32; Mt 5:16,45; 6:14,32
- **give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him** Pr 1:23; Isa 44:3,4; Ezekiel 36:27; Joel 2:28; Mt 7:11; John 4:10; 7:37-39
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:11-13 God's Generous Response to Boldness in Prayer - John MacArthur

THE BEST GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

Matthew's version has “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father Who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! (Mt 7:11)

If you then, being (huparcho) **evil** (poneros) **know** (eido) **how to give good** (agathos) **gifts** (doma) **to your children** - This statement is true. Even "**evil**" (sinful) fathers generally give good gifts to their children, despite their sinful nature.

Remember that Jesus is addressing His disciples and He reminds them of their own intrinsic depravity! And notice that Jesus does not say they DO evil but that they **ARE** evil (so they "do" evil because they "are" evil). His Own disciples are "**evil**!" In short, Jesus' brief description of mankind is that we are inherently **evil**, which is a reference to the fact that we have all inherited the sinful nature of Adam (total depravity Ro 5:12+, cf Ro 7:18+) and sin is evil (see Ge 39:9b, Dt 9:18, 1 Ki 15:26, 34)! Even the "best" of us still have evil dwelling within us! Sometimes the truth hurts!

MacArthur explains "Whenever you see what we call “the milk of human kindness,” whenever you see people who don’t know God parent well, love their children, show kindness, give their children what they need, be philanthropic; you’re seeing the residual of the image of God, so warped and scarred in the fall, but still there. And so He says, “You, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children." (Sermon)

Brian Bell on Luke 11:13 - **PRAY FOR THE BEST BLESSING!** Give the Holy Spirit – Matthew’s account “how much more will your Father who is in heaven give **good things** to those who ask Him!” Mt.7:11 The Holy Spirit is the best & highest gift for humanity, for regeneration & for all its life. In receiving Him, receiving the filling/refilling/overflowing of the Spirit; the gifts of the Spirit, the fruit of the spirit. Oh how we need the Spirit to help us: build character, guide our conduct, & empower us for service! Of course you should pray for material things, health, finances, but this isn’t the highest form of praying. We must not stay on that level! **Graduate to the highest level of praying, asking for the blessings of the Spirit of God that result in Christian Character & conduct that glorify the Lord**. Examples from Paul: (Phil.1:9-11; Eph.1:15-23; 3:14-21; Col.1:9-12) He prays about love, discernment, maturity, obedience, faith, power…these are all blessings that only the Holy Spirit can enable. **How much more**…he doesn’t tell us *how much more*, He just lets our imagination run loose for awhile. When we ask for bread, maybe we’re thinking about a little dinner roll. When actually he’s baking up some fresh cinnamon pull apart bread. [like Schotz Bakery] Believe me, we are not wringing gifts from an unwilling God, but going to One who knows our needs better than we know them ourselves, & whose heart towards us is the heart of generous love. Greatest Giver, gives highest gift, and shows largest generosity! The greatest blessing of prayer is not in receiving the answer, but in being the kind of person God can trust with the answer! 3 The most important part of our lives is the part that only God sees. The hidden life of prayer is the secret of an open life of victory! (Luke:11:5-13 Someone’s Knocking at the Door)

Brian Bell - When You Pray, Remember…

- The Love of God that wants the best for us.
- The Wisdom of God that knows what is best for us.
- The Power of God that can accomplish it.

How much more will your heavenly Father - **How much more** is the key phrase and in effect introduces a contrast. If it is true of the lesser, **how much more** of the greater. God is our Father (pater), our Abba, our Dear Father! Think of sinful earthly fathers at their very best and multiply that by infinity, and you have it (Dads, are you as convicted as I am?) As fathers, few of us are perfect, but even the most imperfect of us are usually able to love our children. But there is a perfect Father in heaven Who is perfect love and so is a much greater Father than we are. His heart is pure and good and His love knows no bounds. It follows that His answers to His children's prayers are supremely good.

Give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? - What does this mean? There is some disagreement. In a sense one could see this prayer as asking for fulfillment of the prophecy in Ezekiel “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. “**I will put My Spirit within you** and cause you to walk in My statutes (God's Provision), and you will be careful to observe My ordinances (Man's Responsibility).(Ezekiel 36:26, 27+, cf Joel 2:29, 29, 32).**John Martin** would seem to favor this idea writing **"**Believers today are not to pray for the Holy Spirit because this prayer of the disciples (for the Holy Spirit) was answered at Pentecost (cf. Ro 8:9). (See Bible Knowledge Commentary) The **NET Note** says "The provision of the Holy Spirit is probably a reference to the wisdom and guidance supplied in response to repeated requests. Some apply it to the general provision of the Spirit, but this would seem to look only at one request in a context that speaks of repeated asking (INTERESTING OBSERVATION). The teaching as a whole stresses not that God gives everything His children want, but that God gives the good that they need."

Note that parallel passage in the Sermon on the Mount reads “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven **give what is good** to those who ask Him! (Matthew 7:11+) So in Mt 7:11 "**good**" is used in the same context as the **Holy Spirit**. Comparing these two passages would support the thought that the greatest **good**

God could give us is His precious Spirit. (Click for MacArthur's interpretation)

How much more - This is an old rabbinical way to argue. This lesser to greater argument is a variant of ana fortiori argument which is an line of reasoning which draws upon existing confidence in a proposition to argue in favor of a second proposition that is held to be implicit in the first and in this case even greater than the first.

> **How much more** - This exact phrase in the NAS 20x in 20v - Deut. 31:27; 1 Sam. 14:30; 1 Sam. 23:3; 2 Sam. 4:11; 2 Sam. 16:11; Job 15:16; Prov. 15:11; Prov. 19:7; Prov. 21:27; Ezek. 14:21; Matt. 7:11; Matt. 10:25; Lk. 11:13; Lk. 12:24; Lk. 12:28; Rom. 11:12; Rom. 11:24; 1 Co. 6:3; Phlm. 1:16; Heb. 9:14

MacArthur - If you who (**Ed**: are sinners) can only love imperfectly give good gifts to your children,**how much more** will your heavenly Father who loves perfectly give to His children? If you who are limited in your wisdom give to your children what you think is best, **how much more** will your Father who is perfectly wise give the best to His children?...You can go to God because He's a loving Father. But He's a loving Father far beyond the most loving father in this world who is by nature evil and who does his best to give good gifts out of a corrupt and fallen heart. How much more will your heavenly Father love you with a perfect love? How much more with perfect wisdom, and perfect compassion, and perfect mercy and grace, and perfect understanding of your situation, and perfect goodness give to you? So when you go to God, and you go with boldness, and you go with persistence, and you rush in and you unload what's on your heart, and first you ask, and then you start pleading (Ed: seeking), and then you start banging (Ed: knocking), know this, that God is delighted with that because He, with His perfect love, and perfect wisdom, and perfect power, and perfect provision is able to give the best to His children. (Sermon)

The **psalmist** testifies to God's ability to give of good gifts "No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Ps. 84:11, cf. Ps 34:9-10; Mt 6:33; Php 4:19).

James adds "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. (James 1:17+)

To reiterate, the phrase **how much more** is not just a comparison but a contrast and is the key to the Lord's point. Reasoning from the lesser to the greater, if human fathers who are evil lovingly provide for their children, how much more will the perfect God Who loves perfectly not also give what is best to His children (cf those who are His children in Jn 1:12+) who ask Him.

D A Carson states that in this section "What is fundamentally at stake is man's picture of God. God must not be thought of as a reluctant stranger who can be cajoled or bullied into bestowing his gifts, as a malicious tyrant who takes vicious glee in the tricks he plays, or even as an indulgent grandfather who provides everything requested of him. He is the heavenly Father, the God of the kingdom, Who graciously and willingly bestows the good gifts of the kingdom in answer to prayer." (Reference)

Remember John Newton's great advice regarding prayer (click link for full hymn)...

Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;

Spurgeon on the gift of the **Holy Spirit** - If you have the Holy Spirit, you virtually have all good gifts, for the Spirit is the earnest of God's love, the pledge of joys to come; and he brings with him all things that are necessary and good for you. (Luke 11 - exposition)

Brian Bell says "The **Holy Spirit** is the best and highest gift for humanity, for regeneration and for all its life.In receiving Him, receiving the filling/refilling/overflowing of the Spirit; the gifts of the Spirit, the fruit of the spirit.Oh how we need the Spirit to help us: build character,guide our conduct, and empower us for service! Of course you should pray for material things, health, finances, but this isn't the highest form of praying. We must not stay on that level! Graduate to the highest level of praying, asking for the blessings of the Spirit of God that result in Christian Character & conduct that glorify the Lord. Examples from Paul: (Phil.1:9-11; Eph.1:15-23; 3:14-21; Col.1:9-12) He prays about love, discernment, maturity, obedience, faith, power…these are all blessings that only the Holy Spirit can produce. (Luke:11:5-13 Someone's Knocking at the Door)

A T Robertson calls the Holy Spirit "the great gift (the *summum bonum*)."

The Gospel of Luke has been called the Gospel of the Holy Spirit, because He is named more in this Gospel than in Matthew and Mark combined and even more than in John's Gospel. Luke also shows a marked emphasis on Jesus' dependence on the Spirit. Thus Luke shows us Jesus as the Savior Who was fully human, but Who triumphed as Man through dependence on prayer and the Holy Spirit, leaving us the Perfect Example to follow in His steps (1 Pe 2:21+, 1 Jn 2:6+).

Warren Wiersbe - Note that the lesson closes with an emphasis on God as Father (Luke 11:11-13). Because He knows us and loves us, *we never need to be afraid of the answers that He gives.* Again, Jesus argued from the lesser to the greater: if an earthly father gives what is best to his children, surely the Father in heaven will do even more. This even includes "the good things of the

Holy Spirit" (compare Luke 11:13 with Matt. 7:11), blessings that in the Old Testament were reserved only for a special few. (Borrow Be compassionate)

Steven Cole writes "Whatever our needs, our greatest need is to be filled continually with God's Spirit (Eph 5:18+). So Jesus instructs us to come as needy children and ask the Father to pour out His Spirit upon us. Jesus' specifying the Holy Spirit shows that He is not promising to meet our every whim for material things or for earthly benefits. But He is promising that if something is for our spiritual good and we come as trusting children and ask, the loving Father will give it to us."

In his Sermon **John MacArthur** explains that "The whole idea is come and ask for whatever's on your heart and rush into God's presence whenever you want, of course with a measure of humility and reverence, but still unbare your heart, speak boldly, be persistent, go over the top, if you will, and you can expect that God who is generous will give you whatever's good. But how does the Holy Spirit fit in? Let me just make it simple - It doesn't say you ask for the Holy Spirit necessarily. It says "**Give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him**." When you go to ask God for whatever you ask God for, whatever it is, God gives you the Holy Spirit. Let me show you what I mean. You ask for comfort, He gave you the Comforter, right? You ask for help, He gave you the Helper. You ask for truth, He gave you the Truth teacher. You ask for power, He gave you the Spirit of power. You ask for wisdom, He gave you the Spirit of wisdom. You ask for guidance, He gave you the Guide. You ask for love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control and He gave you the Spirit whose fruit were released in your life.You see, this is the generosity of God. You ask for the gift, He gives the giver. You ask for the effect, He gives the cause. You ask for the product, He gives the source. Is that generosity? He gives you according to His riches, not out of His riches. You ask God, as it were, going to the bank, you ask for some money, He gives you the bank. That's the point. I'll just give you the Holy Spirit, then you've got it all because out of the Holy Spirit comes power. Out of the Holy Spirit comes the anointing which teaches you all things. Out of the Holy Spirit comes the giftedness, out of the Holy Spirit comes the fruit, out of the Holy Spirit comes the direction and the guidance. From the work of the Holy Spirit comes everything. Out of the Holy Spirit comes intercession on your behalf so that all things work together for good. I'll just give you the Spirit....Giving us the Holy Spirit specifically is not something less than good gifts, it is something more than good gifts. The Lord is taking it a step further. He said, "I'll give you that which is good." And now He says, "I'll just give you the good One, the third member of the Trinity, God of very Gods, God the Spirit to come and live in your life...In summary, when the Lord gave you the Holy Spirit, He gave you everything, absolutely everything. By His presence, by His power, by His grace we are permanently the possessors of everything we need and so much more that "He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all we can - " what? " - ask or think." You have more resource in the Holy Spirit than you can even imagine....God is not like that neighbor, is He? Who was bothered and said, "Go away," but finally relented. God is so generous. He gives us more than we could even imagine because since we can't comprehend God, or His power, or His wisdom, or His resources, we can't comprehend the Spirit, even though He lives in us. That's why He's able to do exceeding, "abundantly above all we can ask or think." (Eph. 3:20+) Don't dishonor God by doubting His generosity. Go to Him in the middle of your "night" and know you are not interrupting Him (**Ed**: Ps 121:4 "He who keeps Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep"). He delights that you're there (**Ed**: "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, **But the prayer of the upright is His delight**" [Lxx = dektos = means to be met with approval in someone's company, welcome in His Throne Room! Meditate on that truth today and then pray without ceasing!] - Pr 15:8, cf Ps 37:23, Pr 3:12, 11:20, 12:22). And hold Him to His promises and be persistent and demand that He listen and give you what is best. Does this help you to see prayer in a different way? Good." (Sermon)

MacArthur sums up his thought on the Holy Spirit in his commentary - This is an intriguing statement, which differs from the Lord's teaching of this same truth on a different occasion, as recorded in Matthew 7:11. There He spoke of the Father giving what is **good**; here He expanded that and spoke of God's giving the Spirit, Who is the Source of all goodness and blessing, to live within every believer. To those who ask for a gift, **He gives the Giver;** to those who ask for an effect, He gives the **Cause**; to those who ask for a product He gives the **Source**; to those seeking comfort He gives the **Comforter** (Acts 9:31); to those seeking power He gives the **Source of power** (Acts 1:8); to those seeking help He gives the **Helper** (John 14:26); to those seeking truth He gives the **Spirit of truth** (John 16:13); to those seeking "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23) He gives the **Producer** of all those things. **The indwelling Holy Spirit** (Ro 8:9, 11; 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Ti 1:14) **is the Source of every good thing in the Christian's life** (Eph. 3:20+ **Ed**: "the power which works [energeo - present tense = continually] within us" - Who is the power continually energizing us? The Holy Spirit!). (See Luke Commentary)

In a word, we ask for a gift and our Father graciously gave us the Giver, the Spirit of Jesus Christ! Praise Him, Praise Him...

Praise Him! praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!
Sing, ye saints! His wonderful love proclaim!
Hail Him! hail Him! mightiest angels in glory;
Strength and honor give to His holy name!

Like a shepherd, Jesus will feed His people,
In His arms He carries them all day long;

O ye saints that live in the light of His presence,
Praise Him! praise Him! ever in joyful song!

James Rosscup adds - Jesus climaxes the prayer motivation with God giving "the Holy Spirit," not "good gifts" as in Matt. 7. Jesus could use both in the different situations of ministry. Of all good gifts in prayer, the Holy Spirit is the source, the believer's great benefactor in prayer according to God's will (cf. Rom. 8:26–27). If one has Him, he has in the Spirit all the riches of God, whether power, guidance, gifts of ability for service, fruit He supplies, or any boon. (An Exposition on Prayer in the Bible: Matthew-Acts)

Rosscup goes on to summarize principles on prayer which he gleans from Luke 11:1-13 - The request (Lk 11:1), sample of prayer (Lk 11:2–4), story of prayer (Lk 11:5–8) and summary on prayer (Lk 11:9–13) has its vital principles.

1. First, the one who will be an example in prayer for God's glory must be found faithful in it.
2. Second, the disciple shows us the principle of respecting a person's praying and waiting until it is finished to talk with him.
3. Third, it is wise to seek tutoring in prayer from the One who models it the best. Today we have this help in the things the gospel accounts teach us.
4. Fourth, prayer as Jesus gives a pattern for it puts praise in glorifying God in prominence.
5. Fifth, the friend in bed, although only human and evil (cf. Lk 11:13) and unlike God in that he is unwilling at first, still rebounds to be like God in his zeal to show himself in a good light. If he does this, "how much more" God!
6. Sixth, the friend who answers the request gives all that is needed, as God is adequate or even gives above all we ask or think (Eph. 3:20).
7. Seventh, when a son asks a human father for what is good, the father usually gives it, God even more so with His sons. (An Exposition on Prayer in the Bible: Matthew-Acts)

J C Ryle - There are few promises in the Bible so broad and unqualified as those contained in this wonderful passage. The last in particular deserves special notice. The **Holy Spirit** is beyond doubt the greatest gift which God can bestow upon man. Having this gift, we have all things, life, light, hope and heaven. Having this gift we have God the Father's boundless love, God the Son's atoning blood, and full communion with all three Persons of the blessed Trinity. Having this gift, we have grace and peace in the world that now is, glory and honor in the world to come. And yet this mighty gift is held out by our Lord Jesus Christ as a gift to be obtained by prayer! "Your heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."....If we do pray, let it be a settled rule with us, never to leave off the habit of praying, and never to shorten our prayers. A man's state before God may always be measured by his prayers. Whenever we begin to feel careless about our private prayers, we may depend upon it, there is something very wrong in the condition of our souls. There are breakers ahead. We are in imminent danger of a shipwreck.

Being (present tense = continually)(5225)(**huparcho** from **hupó** = under + **árcho** = begin or **arche** = beginning) means literally to begin under and then to exist, be present or be at hand. It denotes the continuance of a previous state or existence. To live, to behave or to continue to be. To be in existence and in this passage it means to continually exist as an evil (sinful) person! Woe! Jeremiah was right when he said

> The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? (Jer 17:9)

And Paul was right when he said "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; (Ro 3:10, cf Ro 3:12)

Evil (wicked, bad) (4190)(**poneros** from **poneo** = work or toil) means evil (as used here by Jesus referring to men's evil, malignant character), pernicious, that which is morally or socially worthless. **Poneros** describes determined, aggressive, and fervent evil that actively opposes what is good. So it should not surprise you that poneros is used to describe Satan himself as the evil one (e.g., 1 Jn 5:18-19-note). **Poneros** is not just bad in character (like kakos), but bad in effect (injurious)!

Know (1492)(**eido**) means in general to know by perception and is distinguished from **ginosko** because **ginosko** generally refers to knowledge obtained by experience. **Eido/oida** is a perception, a being aware of, an understanding, an intuitive knowledge which in the case of believers can only be given by the Holy Spirit. However in this context Jesus refers to that knowledge is available to all men. And so all men have an "absolute knowledge" (that which is without a doubt) of how to give good gifts to their children.

Good (18)(**agathos**) means intrinsically good, inherently good in quality and also conveying the sense of good which is profitable, useful, beneficial or benevolent (marked by or disposed to doing good). As an aside, as father of 4 children, I wonder how often my gifts to them have truly been **agathos**? I fear too often I **indulged** them, which was not good!

Gifts (1390) **doma** from **didomi**) is a word that means present or gift but which lends greater emphasis to the character of the gift. For example, in secular Greek **doma** was used of a thing given, as in a medical ***dose***.

> **Doma** - 4v - Matt. 7:11; Lk. 11:13; Eph. 4:8; Phil. 4:17

Other Resources Related to Prayer:

- Colossians 1:9 Commentary
- Colossians 4:12 Commentary
- Devotional on Prayer
- Guide to Praying for Missionaries
- Pithy Prayer Phrases
- Prayer - Greek Words for Prayer
- Prayer Devotionals and Illustrations
- Prayer Hymns and Poems
- Prayer Quotes
- Praying in the Spirit
- Spurgeon's Gems on Prayer

Now be sure that your reading of these comments issues in action (pray!) for as someone once said,

> "Any discussion of the doctrine of prayer that does not issue in the practice of prayer is not only not helpful, but harmful."

Steven Cole draws this principle from Luke 11:11-13 - **Approach God with trust as His child, knowing that if it is for your spiritual good, the Father will give it.** (Ed: Cole somewhat speculates) Jesus seems to be answering a silent objection: "If God is like the groggy, unwilling neighbor at midnight, then I'm not sure that I want to bug Him." Jesus changes the picture to a loving father who meets the needs of his children and then concludes how much more the heavenly Father will meet the needs of His children. His aim is to encourage us to come to God as our loving Father, being assured that He cares for us and that He will meet our needs. As in 11:5-10, Jesus gives an illustration followed by direct application.

Luke 11:11-12: Some Greek manuscripts add from Matthew the clause that if a son asks for a loaf of bread, the father won't give him a stone (see Matt. 7:9-note). But probably the original of Luke omitted that illustration and added the other about the **egg** and the **scorpion**. There is no need to harmonize the two accounts since Jesus gave the same teaching in two different settings. He just varied His illustrations. The illustration is effective because it is so ludicrous. No earthly father would be so cruel as to give his hungry child something deceptive and harmful in place of the food the child asked for. A snake with its silvery scales could be mistaken for a fish and a coiled up scorpion could look like a small egg to a child. But when he takes these trustingly from his father, they harm him rather than feed him and meet his need. Even though we are **evil** by nature (Luke 11:13-note how Jesus assumes that men are **evil** even when they are acting with love toward their children), we would never treat our children in this manner. **The argument is from the lesser to the greater**. As Calvin expresses it, "If the little drops produce such an amount of beneficence, what ought we to expect from the inexhaustible ocean?" If sinful men so love their children and provide for their needs, how much more will God?

Luke 11:13 - The application: Then Jesus drives home the application: "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" In the parallel in Matthew 7:11, Jesus is more general in saying that God will give what is **good** to those who ask Him. But here He specifies the **Holy Spirit** Who, being God, is the greatest good we could imagine. While all who truly believe in Christ receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation (Ro 8:9-note), we all need to know more and more of the Spirit's fullness in our daily walk. Whatever our needs, our greatest need is to be filled continually with God's Spirit. So Jesus instructs us to come as needy children and ask the Father to pour out His Spirit upon us. Jesus' specifying the Holy Spirit shows that He is not promising to meet our every whim for material things or for earthly benefits. But He is promising that if something is for our spiritual good and we come as trusting children and ask, the loving Father will give it to us. He may delay the blessing because He knows that I am not ready to receive it yet. He may have purposes of training me in faith and prayer that require His withholding the request for the present time. He may know what I do not know, that my request is not for my ultimate good, and so He will deny my request because He has something better for me. But Jesus is teaching that we should approach God with trust, as a child would come to a loving father, and if my request is for my spiritual good, the Father will give it to me. Andrew Murray (p. 37) puts it, "Fatherlike giving is the Divine response to childlike living."

So verse 13 brings us back full circle to where Jesus' instruction on prayer began (11:2), that we must come to know God as our heavenly Father. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (p. 202) states,

This is one of our main troubles, is it not? If you should ask me to state in one phrase what I regard as the greatest defect in most Christian lives I would say that it is our failure to know God as our Father as we should know Him.... Ah yes, we say; we do know that and believe it. But do we know it in our daily life and living? Is it something of which we are always conscious? If only we got

hold of this, we could smile in the face of every possibility and eventuality that lies ahead of us.

One of Satan's original ploys was to get Eve to doubt that God is good. His commandment was keeping something good from her. He still uses that ploy to cause Christians to fall and to keep unbelievers from God: If your God is good, why does He allow such pain and suffering in the world? Why does a good God allow a little child in a war-torn land to get his legs blown off by a land mine? Why does a good God allow a sweet little toddler to die a slow, painful death from cancer? Why does a good God allow His servants who are dedicated to doing His work to be killed by evil men? The difficult questions could go on forever.

The Bible doesn't gloss over these problems or pretend that they do not exist. The Book of Job shows us that a partial answer centers on our finiteness and sinfulness and God's infinite holiness. We as sinful creatures dare not challenge the Almighty Holy One. He is perfectly just to allow the most righteous man on the earth to suffer terrible things, because not even that man has a claim on God. Furthermore, Scripture shows that the final resolution to the problem of suffering and evil lies in eternity, not in this life, when God will reward the righteous and punish the wicked.

But the existence of pain and evil in this world does not undermine the goodness of God or His fatherly love for His children. Even when we do not understand why God allows the trials we are suffering, we must come to Him in faith and ask for a fuller measure of His Holy Spirit. Keep on asking and seeking and knocking. Jesus promises that we will not be sent away empty-handed. Approach God with bold persistence, knowing that as a loving Father,

He will give you what is for your spiritual good. It is impossible for Him to do anything evil toward us.

Conclusion

A dad with a three-year-old son had just gone through the bedtime routine of reading a story, listening to his prayers, answering a dozen questions, giving him a hug, and saying good-night four or five times before slipping out of the room. Finally, after a long, hard day, he could relax. He sat down in his easy chair and it was quiet for about five minutes before he heard, "Daddy, can I have a drink of water?" He said, "No, son, be quiet and go to sleep." It was quiet for a couple of minutes before, louder than before, he heard, "Daddy, can I have a drink of water?" "Son, I said to be quiet and go to sleep!" There was silence again, but it didn't last long. "Daddy, please can I have a drink of water?" The dad could see that he wasn't getting anywhere, so he said, "Son, if I hear one more sound out of that room, I'm going to spank you!" You could hear a pin drop. The silence was thick for about one minute. Then he heard, "Daddy, when you come in here to spank me, would you bring me a drink of water?" Now the dad knew that his son really was thirsty! Why? Because he was boldly persistent in his request.

We all have friends who drop in on us at midnight. We don't have in ourselves what they need. But we have a Friend and Father in heaven who has plenty to meet their needs. He invites us to disturb Him at any hour and to keep on knocking until we obtain what our friends need.

Discussion Questions

1. How do we know when (if at all) to stop persisting in prayer when God doesn't answer?
2. How would you answer a critic who brought up cases of horrible suffering as evidence that God is not good? Why is it crucial to affirm God's goodness even when we suffer?
3. Why does God delay to answer prayers that seemingly would be for His glory to answer now?
4. Is it a cop-out to pray, "If Your will be done?" Can we know God's will for a specific situation in advance?

Luke 11:14 And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute; when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed.

KJV Luke 11:14 And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

- **And He was casting out a demon** Mt 9:32,33; 12:22,23; Mark 7:32-37
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 1 - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 2 - John MacArthur

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John Hannah's Outline of Luke 11:14-54

B. The conflict causing the rejection of the Son of Man (Lk 11:14-36)

1. The occasion (Lk 11:14)
2. The charge of empowerment by Satan (Lk 11:15-16)
3. The defense against the charge (Lk 11:17-23)
4. The illustration of Israel's plight (Lk 11:24-28)
5. The sign to the nation (Lk 11:29-32)
6. The warning to the nation (Lk 11:33-36)

C. The consequence of the rejection of the Son of Man (Lk 11:37-54)
1. The occasion (Lk 11:37-38)
2. Woes pronounced upon the Pharisees (Lk 11:39-44)
   a. For their externalism (Lk 11:39-41)
   b. For their disregard of true justice (Lk 11:42)
   c. For desire to be regarded by men (Lk 11:43)
   d. For their deceit (Lk 11:44)
3. Woes pronounced upon the lawyers (Lk 11:45-52)
   a. For their lack of care (Lk 11:45-46)
   b. For their attitude toward the prophets (Lk 11:47-51)
   c. For their hindrances (Lk 11:52)
4. The result (Lk 11:53-54)

Related Passages:

> Mt 9:32,33+ As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him. 33 After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.”
>
> > **MacArthur** comments that "They knew of the many miracles God wrought while Moses appealed to Pharaoh to release the Israelites from bondage, and of the deliverance through the Red Sea and the provision of water and manna in the wilderness. They knew of God's giving the law on Mt. Sinai on tablets of stone inscribed with His own finger and of His dramatic crumbling of the walls of Jericho. They knew of the great miracles of Elijah and Elisha. But in less than a year's time, they themselves had witnessed miracles of a greater and absolutely unique magnitude. Here was a display of divine power unequaled not only in **the history of Israel** but in the history of the world. (See Matthew Commentary)

Jesus' Casts Out A "Dumb Demon"

JESUS' EXORCISM AMAZES CROWD

As noted in the Outline above Luke 11:14-54 deals primarily with the mounting rejection of Jesus and His message. The synoptic Gospels have parallel passages in Matthew and Mark (Mt. 12:22-30; Mark 3:20-27). While some feel Luke is recording the same events as Matthew and Mark other commentators feel they are different accounts, the accounts in Matthew and Mark taking place earlier in Galilee and this account in Luke taking place later in Judea.

Steven Cole introduces Lk 11:14-28 - In 1938, Orson Welles terrified millions of Americans with his radio narration ofH. G. Wells' War of the Worlds. (Here is the original 1938 radio broadcast that frightened so many of the listeners) The drama was so realistic that many thought that aliens were actually invading our planet, intent on destroying the human race. It was only fiction; no one should have believed such a far-fetched tale. But they did. The Bible clearly affirms that we are engaged in combat with an unseen enemy that is intent on destroying the human race: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). It is a frightening truth which no one should doubt or ignore. But many do doubt it and live as if it is not true. The apostle John affirms that “the Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). Luke is showing that Jesus' miracles establish His legitimate authority as the Messiah, the Son of God, sent to deliver us from the power of Satan. But Jesus' authority put Him into conflict with the Jewish religious authorities, who did not want to yield to Him. Luke 11:14-54 shows the mounting tension between Jesus and these religious leaders. Rather than approaching Jesus with teachable hearts and open minds, they accused Him of casting out demons by the power of Satan and they challenged Him by demanding some sign from heaven. As such, they were reissuing the third temptation that Satan had put before Jesus, to use His power for show by casting Himself off the Temple pinnacle. Jesus soundly refuted their demands by giving this extensive teaching on spiritual conflict, the

heavenly war. (Luke 11:14-28 The Heavenly War)

Darrell Bock writes that "To understand the significance of Jesus' miraculous work, especially His exorcisms, one must understand Luke 11:14-23." (Luke Commentary).

Guzik has an interesting note - The Jews in Jesus' day had their own exorcists, who sought to cast demons out of people. But they believed that they had to make the demon reveal his name, or they had no authority over the demon to cast it out.

And - Notice that this verse begins with **and** (**kai**, as a marker of connections or a coordinating conjunction in the Greek) which connects it with the previous passage (Lk 11:13) in which Jesus described the gift of the **Holy Spirit**. Some commentators (including this writer) think that Jesus was in a sense now demonstrating the power of the Spirit Who we know from Lk 4:14+ (cf Acts 10:38+) empowered Jesus for ministry. Sadly, in this section the Jews accused Jesus of being empowered by an unclean spirit, Satan himself!

And He was casting out (ekballo) **a demon** (daimonion), **and it was mute** - Not that the demon was itself "mute" but that it caused speechlessness. This act clearly demonstrated Jesus' power over the supernatural world, specifically the kingdom of darkness headed by Satan. This episode of casting out gets two reactions, one of amazement but another of accusation as discussed below. "This miracle is different from others in Luke. The miracle is told entirely in one verse and with minimum detail, while the response covers several verses. The emphasis is on explaining what Jesus' work means." (NET)

When the demon (daimonion) **had gone out, the mute man spoke** - So the effect of the demon on this man was to prevent him from speaking. It is interesting that in Lk 1:22+ Zacharias is unable to speak as a result of his doubting God, but his **mute** condition was not demonically bestowed but divinely bestowed (divine discipline).

The crowds were amazed (thaumazo) - **Amazed** is in the present tense indicating they continued in this state. This is the second time Luke describes the crowd's ("large crowd" Lk 9:37+) marveling as Jesus demonstrated His power and authority over the demonic world. "And they were all amazed (ekplesso) at the greatness of God (for context see Lk 9:42). But while everyone was **marveling** (thaumazo) at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples." (Luke 9:43+)

Steven Cole - Satan and his demonic forces are committed to the ultimate harm and destruction of the human race. To rewrite the Four Spiritual Laws, "Satan hates you and has a terrible plan for your life!" Since God's purpose is to be glorified through the human race, created in His image, Satan's purpose is to defile and degrade people so that their lives do not bring glory to God. Some of Satan's demons are more evil than others (11:26), but they all have the same evil purpose. Since the fall of the human race into sin, every person is born under Satan's domain and power (1 John 5:19; Eph. 2:2). Jesus called him "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) and Paul called him "the god of this world [who] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving" (2 Cor. 4:4). In this case, the demon caused the man to be dumb, or unable to speak (Matt. 12:22 reports that the demon also had blinded the man). We have already encountered Legion, who showed us the hideous harm that demons can inflict on people. While we may not encounter such extreme cases very often, we should not be lulled into thinking that Satan is not alive and well on planet earth in our day. As **J C Ryle** puts it (Expository Thoughts on the Gospels [Baker], 3:17, on Luke 11:14-20) *Do we suppose, because bodily possession by Satan is not so glaringly manifest as it once was, that the great enemy is less active in doing mischief than he used to be? If we think so we have much to learn. Do we suppose that there is no such thing as the influence of a "dumb" devil in the present day? If we do, we had better think again. What shall we say of those who never speak to God, who never use their tongues in prayer and praise, ...? What shall we say, in a word, of those who can speak to every one but God? What can we say but that Satan has despoiled them of the truest use of a tongue*? Sometimes we look at nice, decent, law-abiding people and assume that they are not in Satan's domain, as if there is some large, neutral zone between God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom. But Satan is a deceiver, and he cunningly leaves many in their not-toobad condition so that we look at them and think, "This person couldn't be in Satan's domain!" Do not be deceived! Even though a person may not look like Legion or may not be struck dumb and blind by demons, he or she is still just as much in Satan's evil domain, headed for an eternity in hell, if he is not rescued by Jesus Christ. This means that every time we proclaim the Gospel to a lost soul, a spiritual battle is raging. There are two and only two sides. Either the person ignores or rejects the Gospel and remains in Satan's domain; or, Jesus Christ saves him and he is transferred to the kingdom of God's beloved Son (Col. 1:13). (Luke 11:14-28 The Heavenly War)

Casting out (1544)(**ekballo** from **ek** = out + **bállō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast, throw out often with the idea of force (Mt. 8:12; 15:17; 25:30; Acts 16:37, 27:38; Lxx - Lev. 14:40). **Casting out of demons** was a common occurrence in Jesus' ministry and His associates - Luke 4:33–35, 41; 8:27–37; 9:37–42; 13:32), twelve apostles (Lk 9:1); seventy evangelists (Lk 10:17).

> **Luke's uses of ekballo** - Lk. 4:29; Lk. 6:22; Lk. 6:42; Lk. 9:40; Lk. 9:49; Lk. 10:2; Lk. 10:35; Lk. 11:14; Lk. 11:15; Lk. 11:18; Lk. 11:19; Lk. 11:20; Lk. 13:28; Lk. 13:32; Lk. 19:45; Lk. 20:12; Lk. 20:15; Acts 7:58; Acts

9:40; Acts 13:50; Acts 16:37; Acts 27:38

Demon (1140)(**daimonion** from **daímon** = demon) most often describes demons or evil spirits who have supernatural powers and are neither human nor divine (Mt 7:22). BDAG says **daimonion** is a "transcendent incorporeal being with status between humans and deities."

Luke's uses of daimonion - Luke also uses the word 'unclean spirits" 5 times (Lk 4:36, 6:18, 8:29, 9:42, 11:24) and "unclean demon" once (Lk 4:33) Lk. 4:33; Lk. 4:35; Lk. 4:41; Lk. 7:33; Lk. 8:2; Lk. 8:27; Lk. 8:29; Lk. 8:30; Lk. 8:33; Lk. 8:35; Lk. 8:38; Lk. 9:1; Lk. 9:42; Lk. 9:49; Lk. 10:17; Lk. 11:14; Lk. 11:15; Lk. 11:18; Lk. 11:19; Lk. 11:20; Lk. 13:32; Acts 17:18; Luke also uses the word 'unclean spirits" 5 times (Lk 4:36, 6:18, 8:29, 9:42, 11:24) and "unclean demon" once (Lk 4:33)

Amazed (2296)(**thaumazo** from **thauma** [from **thaomai** = to wonder] = wonder, admiration) means to wonder, marvel, be struck with admiration or astonishment. **Thaumazo** describes the human response when confronted by divine revelation in some form.

Luke's uses of **thaumazo** - Lk. 1:21; Lk. 1:63; Lk. 2:18; Lk. 2:33; Lk. 4:22; Lk. 7:9; Lk. 8:25; Lk. 9:43; Lk. 11:14; Lk. 11:38; Lk. 20:26; Lk. 24:12; Lk. 24:41;Acts 2:7; Acts 3:12; Acts 4:13; Acts 7:31

Matthew uses **thaumazo** in a similar context in two passages

After the demon was cast out (for context see Mt 9:32), the **mute** man spoke; and the crowds were **amazed**, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." (Matthew 9:33+)

So the crowd **marveled** as they saw the **mute** speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel. (Matthew 15:31)

Related Resources: following from gotquestions.org

- What does the Bible say about demons?
- Do demons exist?
- Are demons fallen angels?
- Can a Christian be demon possessed? Can a Christian be demonized?
- How do we distinguish a psychological disorder from demon possession?
- Is there activity of demonic spirits in the world today?
- What does the Bible say about demon possession / demonic possession?
- Can a Christian today perform an exorcism? What does the Bible say about casting out demons?
- What does it mean that the name of the demon was Legion?
- Who were the seven sons of Sceva?
- Can demons attach themselves to non-living/inanimate objects?
- What does the Bible say about demonic oppression?
- What are unclean spirits? Are unclean spirits demons?
- How are idols connected to demons (Deuteronomy 32:16-17)?

Luke 11:15 But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."

KJV Luke 11:15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

NLT Paraphrase but some of them said, "No wonder he can cast out demons. He gets his power from **Satan**, the prince of demons."

- **He casts out demons** Mt 9:34; Mt 12:24-30; Mark 3:22-30; John 7:20; 8:48,52; 10:20
- **by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons** Lk 11:18,19
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 1 - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 2 - John MacArthur

Parallel Passages:

Matthew 10:25+ "It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his

household!

Matthew 12:24+ But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons."

Mark 3:22+ The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "**He is possessed by Beelzebul,**" and "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

JESUS' EXORCISM BRINGS ACCUSATION

But some of them said - **But** is a term of contrast marking a change of direction from the amazed crowd to the blaspheming group! The identity of the **some** cannot be determined definitively from the immediate context, but clearly they are Jewish protagonists and most likely from the party of the Pharisees (or urged on by them), because this party name is mentioned 6 times in the following section - Lk 11:37, 38, 39, 42, 43, 53. The point is that while the majority of Jews ("crowds") were still amazed at Jesus' power over the demons, a smaller group of Jews sought to discredit His miraculous powers and attribute them to Satan. They only had two choices for supernatural power and they were not about to attribute to Jesus it was performed by the power of God!

He casts (ekballo) **out demons** (daimonion) **by Beelzebul** (beelzeboul)**, the ruler** (archon) **of the demons** - Notice that even this group of Jews recognized that Jesus was performing a supernatural work. They could not dispute His clear manifestation of supernatural power. They had to devise a solution and since they were not willing to ascribe His work to God, they resorted to ascribing it to demonic power. In short they were saying that Jesus' power over the demons was the result of Satan empowering Jesus, presumably by indwelling Him! In essence they were accusing Jesus of performing diabolical acts! Mark 3:22+ the Jewish protagonists clearly stated that Jesus was "**possessed by Beelzebul**!" In Matthew 10:25+ the Jews called Jesus **Beelzebul**! They were calling Jesus the Devil! In claiming that Jesus cast out demons by Beelzebul,**BDAG** says they were accusing Him of witchcraft!

J Vernon McGee - The convincing nature of Jesus' miracles forced the Pharisees to offer some explanation for them. They could not deny the existence of miracles when they were happening before their eyes. They resorted to the basest and most blasphemous explanation for the miracles of Jesus. They did not deny that they took place but claimed that they were done by the power of the Devil. (Luke - can be borrowed; Mp3 - Luke 11)

Michael Andrus - Satan's power is delegated but it is also very real. Anyone who denies the existence of Satan or his power is making a very foolish mistake. He has the power to bring spiritual blindness upon millions of people, causing them to believe a false religious system, and believe it so fanatically that they are even willing to commit suicide in its service. Satan also has the power to perform miracles, as evident in Moses' day when the early plagues were imitated by Pharaoh's magicians. But Satan's miracle-working power is not unlimited. The same magicians hit a wall when the plagues increased in intensity.Clearly there are some things Satan cannot imitate and some things his power cannot accomplish. But the Pharisees ignore those limitations with their claim that Jesus has done this amazing miracle by the power of Satan.

MacArthur describes **the some of them** as "propagandists spreading the lies of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, were quick to offer their slanderous, false explanation of the Lord's miraculous power. The same lie that had been spread in Galilee was now heard in Judea as well. Since it was impossible even for His enemies to deny that Christ's miracles occurred (cf. John 11:47), they sought instead to attack the source and assign them to demonic power. (See Luke Commentary)

Steven Cole - In that day, there were a number of Jewish exorcists who tried to cast out demons by special potions or incantations or magical procedures. Sometimes they seemingly succeeded, although they often failed. But every time Jesus cast out a demon, He simply spoke the word and the demon obeyed. Yet in spite of His obvious power, these skeptics accused Jesus of casting out demons by Satan's power. We learn from this that belief in Jesus Christ is not simply a matter of having sufficient evidence. If Jesus had not done these mighty works of miraculous power, or if He had done them by some sleight of hand, surely His critics would have pounced on this and accused Him of practicing magic. But they never used that line of attack. Since they couldn't dispute the fact of the miracles, all they could do was to accuse Jesus of doing them by Satan's power....Truly, the god of this world had blinded them (2 Cor 4:4), as he does every unbeliever! (Luke 11:14-28 The Heavenly War)

Rod Mattoon has a nice alliteration of this section:

- The Rejection of Reality - Luke 11:14-15
- The Rancor of Resentment - Luke 11:16
- The Rending of Relationships - Luke 11:17-22 (Treasures from the Scriptures)

Beelzebul (KJV = Beelzebub - see Gilbrant's note)(954)(**beelzeboul**) is transliterated from the Hebrew phrase "**Baal Zebub**" which means "Lord of the Flies" (or dung) or the "Fly God" ("dung god" see 2 Ki 1:2-3, 5, 16). In Jesus' reply to the accusation of the Jews in Mt 12:24 that He cast out demons by Beelzebul, He answers in Mt 12:26 substituting the name Satan which clearly identifies the Jewish references to **Beelzebul** as another name for Satan. It is interesting that the name **Baalzebul** also appears in the Ras Shamra tablets, where it is used of a Canaanite deity and seems to have the meaning "lord of the high place" or "lord of the dwelling." (See Got Questions entry)

> **Beelzebul** - 7x in 7v - Matt. 10:25+ = Jesus accused of being the embodiment of Satan!!!; Matt. 12:24+; Matt. 12:27+; Mk. 3:22+; Lk. 11:15+; Lk. 11:18+; Lk. 11:19+. Jesus, rejecting His accuser's false charges, pointed out that the expulsion of demons was Satan's defeat, heralding the arrival of God's kingdom (see Luke 11:20-22+).

Gilbrant has an in depth discussion of **beelzeboul** - Beelzeboul was a name Jews gave to "the prince of devils" (Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22; cf. Luke 11:15), that is, Satan. The term does not appear outside the Synoptic Gospels except in later writings based on them. To show contempt for Jesus the Pharisees called Him this name— along with "gluttonous," "winebibber" (Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:34), and "Samaritan" (John 8:48). According to them not only did Jesus have a demon (Mark 3:30; John 8:48,49,52; 10:20,21; compare Matthew 11:17; Luke 7:33) that made Him crazy (John 10:20), but He exorcised demons by the power of this prince of demons (Matthew 9:34; 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15).

The Gospels record two, if not three, occasions when the Jews tried to discount Jesus' miracles by saying that He was in league with the devil: (1) Matthew 9:32-34; (2) Matthew 12:22-37 (cf. Mark 3:19-30); (3) Luke 11:14-26 (may parallel number 2). Beelzeboul occurs seven times in the last three passages, plus Matthew 10:24-33 recounts a private discussion with Jesus' disciples about some previous instance of this same slander. The term also appears in the actual episode Matthew 9 refers to and may be what Jesus meant in Matthew 10. At any rate, the religious leaders used this epithet to create sentiment against Jesus.

The word itself has several interesting features.

Beelzeboul is pronounced almost as a four syllable compound word (the first half has a vowel glide from long to short "e"): Bē-ĕl + ze-boul. A number of spellings appear in English versions depending on how the translators decided to represent the Greek sounds with English letters, on what manuscripts they followed, and on whether they chose to represent the name in its Hebrew or Aramaic form. The first half of the word comes from the Canaanite deity **Baal**, spelled "Beel" in Aramaic, the language that largely replaced Hebrew among the Jews after the Babylonian Captivity; consequently, the full designation appears both as Beelzeboul and Baalzeboul. Baal means "lord," or "master."

The last syllable is **zeboul** or **zebul** depending again on how translators represent the Greek vowel sound in English letters. A greater issue lies behind the difference between **Beelzebul** and **Beelzebub**. In all seven places the ancient Syriac translation, the Latin Vulgate, and a few Greek manuscripts have the latter reading. Most modern textual critics have concluded that the original Greek text, however, carried **-bul**.

Beelzebub was the name of a pagan god worshiped in **Ekron** (2 Kings 1:2,3,6,16). When Ahaziah, king of Israel, severely injured himself in a fall, he tried to consult this deity to see whether he would live (**Ed**: Before we are too hard on Ahaziah, how often is our first reaction to go to sources other than God when confronted with adversity, affliction, etc?). Zebub, the Hebrew word for "fly," is translated in the Septuagint which then reads "Baal muian (**Ed**: muia = fly)" in the four verses of 1 Kings 2. "Lord of the fly," or "Fly-god," might refer to the shape of the idol, to the god's oracles supposedly given by the flight pattern or buzzing of flies, to the swarming of flies around sacrifices offered to him, or to a god that protected from flies and diseases associated with them (for example, the Greek god Zeus Apomyios, "Fly-Averting Zeus"), or to the Roman god Myagros.

If the term for "the prince of demons" has any connection with the god mentioned in 2 Kings, the question is how the shift between Beelzebub and Beelzebul happened. The least likely conjecture is that since the Ras Shamra literature mentions a Canaanite god Baalzebul, Baalzebub is an intentional corruption of that name written into the original Old Testament text itself. In that case, zebul may have derived from a Hebrew word root meaning "habitation" (see Psalm 49:15); Baalzebul could then mean "Lord of the Habitation/Temple" or even "Lord of the High Place." Calling the god of Ekron "Lord of Flies" instead in 2 Kings 1 and later labeling Satan with that name would have been a derogatory shift to Baalzebub. Applying Beelzebub to Jesus would carry a double sting—calling Him the devil and doing so with a derogatory term.

The difficulty here is that the correct reading in the New Testament is almost certainly Beelzebul. A New Testament textual shift to -bub under the influence of 2 Kings is understandable, but one wonders what could explain the opposite shift during the textual history of Greek Gospels.

Especially in post-Biblical rabbinic writings, the Hebrew root meaning “habitation” had another derived meaning, “manure.” It has been frequently suggested that Baalzebub was in fact the name of the god in Ekron and that later Jews caricatured it into a similar sounding name for Satan: “Lord of the Manure Pile” since manure draws flies; so the shift between Beelzebub and Beelzebul would have taken place in the opposite direction from the first scenario. The “double cut” against Jesus, then, would almost have involved a vulgar name.

One last option has been to dissociate the Gospel accounts from the “Beelzebub” of 2 Kings 2 and to simply say that Beelzebul, “Lord of the Temple/Habitation,” was a name Jews used for Satan, a name not in itself particularly derogatory but one that recalled the pagan practices of ancient Canaanite religion and identified them with “the prince of demons.” The application to Jesus, then, would be derogatory insofar as He was being called the devil. Under this explanation commentators have seen special appropriateness in Jesus’ comments to His disciples in Matthew 10:25, “If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?”

In all this ambiguity the central point is clear. The religious leaders were trying to denigrate Jesus’ miracles by associating them with the power of Satan. Accordingly, in Matthew 12:31,32 and Mark 3:28-30 the Lord warned them that assigning to Satan miracles by which the Spirit bore witness to Jesus is blasphemy of the Spirit, a sin which is not forgiven in this age or in the one to come. (Complete Biblical Library)

Ruler (758)(**archon** from present participle of **archo** = to rule) describes one who has eminence in a ruling capacity, referring to earthly figures (Mt 20:25) such as rulers (Acts 4:26), Moses (Acts 7:27, 35), of Christ as the ruler of the kings of the earth (Rev 1:5). In the present context archon refers to the devil as ruler over the demons in Mt 9:34; Mt 12:24; Mk 3:22; Lk 11:15 and Eph 2:2 "the **PRINCE** (archon) of the power of the air." There is a demonic **hierarchy** a word which describes a system or organization in which one is ranked one above others according to status or authority. Paul alludes to this stratification of authority in Ephesians 6:12+ "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the **rulers**, against the **powers**, against the **world forces** of this darkness, against the **spiritual forces** of wickedness in the heavenly places."

> **Archon - 36v - authorities(1), leaders(1), magistrate(1), official(2), official's(1), prince(1), ruler(1), ruler(13), rulers(16).** Matt. 9:18; Matt. 9:23; Matt. 9:34; Matt. 12:24; Matt. 20:25; Mk. 3:22; Lk. 8:41; Lk. 11:15; Lk. 12:58; Lk. 14:1; Lk. 18:18; Lk. 23:13; Lk. 23:35; Lk. 24:20; Jn. 3:1; Jn. 7:26; Jn. 7:48; Jn. 12:31; Jn. 12:42; Jn. 14:30; Jn. 16:11; Acts 3:17; Acts 4:5; Acts 4:8; Acts 4:26; Acts 7:27; Acts 7:35; Acts 13:27; Acts 14:5; Acts 16:19; Acts 23:5; Rom. 13:3; 1 Co. 2:6; 1 Co. 2:8; Eph. 2:2; Rev. 1:5

Luke 11:16 Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven.

> KJV Luke 11:16 And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

- **were demanding of Him a sign** Mt 12:38,39; 16:1-4; Mark 8:11,12; John 6:30; 1 Cor 1:22
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 1 - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 2 - John MacArthur

Parallel passages

> Matthew 12:38; 39+ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we **want to see a sign from You.**” 39 But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;
>
> Mark 8:11; 12+ The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him **a sign from heaven,** to **test** Him. 12 Sighing deeply in His spirit, He *said, “Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.”

THE SEEKING
A SIGN TEST

Others, to test (peirazo) **Him** - This is third reaction to His miracle - first was amazed in Lk 11:14, the next was to ascribe the miracle to Satanic power (Lk 11:15) and here the third is to ask for another miracle, another sign. The intent of their **test** was really to taunt Him and hopefully trip Him up! In Luke 8:44 Jesus described these Jews as sons of Satan, and here we see they are doing

exactly what their father attempted in the Wilderness Testings of Jesus. Earlier Luke recorded "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted (peirazo) by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry." (Lk 4:1-2+)

Were demanding of Him a sign (semeion) **from heaven** - They were not seeking truth but were in a sense "spies" gathering information with which they could condemn Jesus. Luke 11:17 says "He knew their thoughts" and that they were not honest seekers.

Michael Andrus has an interesting thought on the **sign from heaven** (they had just seen a sign on earth) - Now mind you Jesus has just healed a man who was demon-possessed, blind, and mute. But they have the nerve to ask for a sign from heaven. What is this all about? I wonder if they aren't saying, "Maybe you can do miracles here on 3 earth, but we want to see you do a miracle in the heavens—perhaps a strange alignment of stars, an eclipse, or maybe turning the moon into blood (as predicted by the OT prophet Joel (2:31)); then maybe we'll accept you as Messiah."

Robert Stein on **sign** - Only Luke referred to the temptation/test for a**sign**. Some opponents did not see the exorcism as sufficient evidence. They wanted a clearer sign, i.e., a sign from heaven. With this statement Luke tied this pericope to Luke 11:29–32 by foreshadowing it. Luke wanted his readers to understand that to ask for signs, both in Jesus' day and possibly their own (cf. 1 Cor 1:22), was to tempt the Lord (Luke 4:12). There was sufficient proof for faith in the Scriptures (cf. Lk 16:31). (See Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition)

Mattoon - Not only were these folks rejecting the reality of this situation that Christ was God, the Messiah of the world, but their anger, bitterness, and resentment caused them to be peevish and slanderous when they should have been praising the Lord for delivering this demon-possessed man. (Treasures from the Scriptures)

MacArthur comments that these "blaspheming rejecters....taunted Jesus, derisively demanding that He falsify their absurd charge that He was in league with the devil by performing a spectacular miracle. Because the mighty works He had already done were conclusive proof that He was the Messiah and Son of God (John 10:25), Jesus refused their request. As He said to them in Luke 11:29, "This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah." (See Luke Commentary)

Gene Brooks notes that "Isaiah 35:6 tells us that the healing of the mute is a sign of God's end-time salvation. Here is a sign. They ask for a sign, but they do not recognize the signs they want to see." (Luke 11:14-28 - Jesus on Unclean Spirits)

Test (3985)(**peirazo**) is a morally neutral verb which simply means to test but whether the testing is for a good (Heb 11:17) or evil (as the present context indicates) depends on the intent of the one giving the test. As described above these testing Jews were "like father, like son!" When the context indicates the testing is an enticement to evil, the word is most frequently translated as tempt, which of course conveys a negative connotation. Satan tempts us to bring out the worst in us (cause us to fall) while God tests us to bring out the best.

> **Peirazo - 35v - did(1), put(1), put to the test(2), tempt(2), tempted(13), tempter(2), test(6), tested(2), testing(7), tried(2), trying(2).** Matt. 4:1; Matt. 4:3; Matt. 16:1; Matt. 19:3; Matt. 22:18; Matt. 22:35; Mk. 1:13; Mk. 8:11; Mk. 10:2; Mk. 12:15; Lk. 4:2; Lk. 11:16 Acts 5:9; Acts 9:26; Acts 15:10; Acts 16:7; Acts 24:6; 1 Co. 7:5; 1 Co. 10:9; 1 Co. 10:13; 2 Co. 13:5; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 3:5; Heb. 2:18; Heb. 3:9; Heb. 4:15; Heb. 11:17; Heb. 11:37; Jas. 1:13; Jas. 1:14; Rev. 2:2; Rev. 2:10; Rev. 3:10

Sign (4592) **semeion** from **sema** = sign) (See also another discussion of semeion) - a sign is something that serves as a pointer to aid perception or insight. In the NT a sign speaks of a token which has behind it a particular message to be conveyed. In other words, in John's Gospel (where semeion is most concentrated) the apostle recorded certain miracles not for the wonder (cf "wonders") they produced, but because of the message they taught (Jn 20:31). A **sign** directs attention away from its unusual nature to the meaning and the significance it points to. It speaks of outward compelling proof of divine authority. In John a sign is generally a "miraculous sign" that points to some deeper spiritual significance in connection with the event (Jn 2:11, 18). Semeion describes a miracle whose purpose is that of attesting the claims of the one performing the miracle to be true.

> **Wayne Detzler** on **semeion** - Early in its use this word meant a visible sign which someone saw. For instance, when Constantine was embroiled in battle he saw the sign of a cross and the words, "In this sign conquer." This turned him to Christianity, and he granted toleration to the Christians in 313. So first of all semeion meant a real or imagined visible sign. Later it came to mean the intervention of the deities in our world. This is the meaning which the Bible attaches to miracles, when God breaks into the natural world to accomplish some special feat. (New Testament words in today's language).
>
> **Semeion in Luke and Acts** -Lk. 2:12; Lk. 2:34; Lk. 11:16; Lk. 11:29; Lk. 11:30; Lk. 21:7; Lk. 21:11; Lk. 21:25;

Lk. 23:8; Acts 2:19; Acts 2:22; Acts 2:43; Acts 4:16; Acts 4:22; Acts 4:30; Acts 5:12; Acts 6:8; Acts 7:36; Acts 8:6; Acts 8:13; Acts 14:3; Acts 15:12

James Smith - THE STRONG AND THE STRONGER Luke 11:16–22

"If we were not weak,
Should we be less in deed than in desire."
—SHELLEY.

How strange that they should seek "a sign from Heaven" (Lk 11:16) when they see devils being cast out. But men will yet try to ignore the divine character of Christ while there are infallible proofs of it before their eyes in the changed lives and hearts of men. They are like owls sitting in the dark, and crying, "Where is the sun?" Every evil overcome is a proof of the existence of a holier power. **Evil cannot expel evil. This principle leads to God.** "There is none good but God." If sin has been conquered and hated, and the heart changed and filled with love to God, then this is not of man. This is the **finger of God.** In these verses we have two great princes representing two great kingdoms. To one or other all belong, and peace and safety can only be enjoyed by the subjects of the greatest, as the one is most bitterly antagonistic to the other. Here we see the warriors described, the battle fought, the victory won, and the spoil divided. Consider then—

I. The Great Enemy. "Satan," the chief of the devils (Lk 11:15), and his chief end is to deceive and destroy. His deadly campaign commenced in Eden, and goes on still (Gen. 3:1). Notice—

1. HIS CHARACTER. "A strong man" (Lk 11:21). The strength of the devil is in his cunning and deceit. In the garden we have a revelation of the wisdom of this serpent. He is strong because he knows exactly where human weakness lies. He enters the citadel of man's soul as a pledged friend when he comes as an angel of light; how few can discern him in his real malignant form. He is strong to overcome the righteous scruples of the young, and also to deceive the Godward longings of the old. Too late, too late, he whispers, or, you are too great a sinner. But although he is strong he is but a strong man; his is limited strength, not almighty. Yet his "wiles" are innumerable and his darts are fiery.

2. HIS CONDITION. "Armed" (Lk 11:21). His is the armour of darkness; he loves the darkness rather than the light. "While men slept he sowed tares, and went his way" (Matt. 13:25). He is the prince of darkness, and those who are in darkness are under his power (Eph. 2:2). His armour is just the opposite of God's. 1. His girdle is the girdle of falsehood—a liar from the beginning, and so his children go speaking lies from the womb. 2. His breastplate is that of wickedness, for wickedness is in his heart. 3. His feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of enmity. 4. His shield is the shield of doubt. 5. On his head is the helmet of damnation. 6. His sword is the imaginations of the evil heart, and with this he slays the word of truth that darkness and death might reign (compare Eph. 6:11–18).

3. HIS OCCUPATION. "Keepeth his palace" (Lk 11:21). His palace is the dungeon of the unrenewed heart, where every window is glazed with perverting glass, so that things can never be seen as they really are. Here the occupant is a prisoner of darkness and ignorance. He may boast of what he knows of the world of light, truth, and liberty outside, but he knows nothing as he ought to know. Did he but know the truth he could abide no longer in bondage. This his vigilant keeper knows right well, so he keepeth his palace that his goods may have peace. This is the "peace, peace, when there is no peace." The more anxious the soul is to escape the more closely is he kept, If fair promises will not do, the iron fetters of despair will be applied. Notice some of the ways in which he keepeth his palace. "I can read my Bible at home." "You can tell me nothing new." "I go regularly to Church." "I do as well as I can." "You make too much ado," etc.

4. HIS POSSESSION. "Goods" (Lk 11:21). He who occupies the palace of the heart also possesses the powers and faculties of the whole being. These powers and faculties are valuable "goods," their intrinsic worth, who can calculate? The precious blood of Christ speaks volumes as to the value of these "goods." These "goods," generally speaking, may represent all who are under Satan's keeping.

Let us look at the character of an individual article the qualities of a single soul. There is—

(1). Reason, the Governor.
(2). Understanding, the Receiver.
(3). Memory, the Recorder.
(4). Conscience, the Discerner.
(5). Will, the Decider.
(6). Affection, the Distributer.

All these are prisoners to Satan under his power, used for his dark, devilish purposes. "His goods," not even your own free will! Ah,

“strange liberty.”

II. The Great Deliverer. “CHRIST.”

1. HIS CHARACTER. “Stronger than he” (Lk 11:22). Not merely a stronger man, but one whose strength is almighty. “If I speak of strength, lo, He is strong.” The strength of hills is His. “I will send you a Deliverer and a strong One.” “Help has been laid upon One that is mighty.” How mighty is the sun to overcome darkness; how strong are the hills to bear the crushing tempest. So man’s deliverer must be strong both to bear and to overcome. His arm is strong; it upholds the universe and guides the helm of providence. His Word is strong, none can gainsay it, none can hinder it from working. His work is strong, His foundation stands sure. Neither time nor eternity, nor the powers thereof can ever displace one single stone of His building. Hallelujah! One has come to seek and to save, with whom nothing is impossible. No enemy too strong for His power, no difficulty too monstrous for His strength. “The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace” (Exod. 14).

2. HIS ENCOUNTER. “He shall come upon him” (Lk 11:22). The Prince of Life and the prince of darkness must come into close combat according to Genesis 3:15. David must go out to Goliath, come upon him, strip him, and overcome in behalf of Israel, for he fought not for himself, but them, and love constrained him, although, like Christ, his brethren despised and rejected him. Yet he had the King’s favour, and in overcoming the enemy he secured for himself a bride (1 Sam. 17:25). Beautiful picture of our Deliverer who came forth from the Father, like David, to conquer the great enemy and purchase the Church as His bride. He “came upon the wiles of the devil” in the wilderness, upon his enmity and hate in the Pharisees, upon his works in the demon-possessed, upon himself on the Cross. Then was the hour and power of darkness; dreadful conflict!

3. HIS VICTORY. “Overcome him, and taketh from him all his armour” (Lk 11:22). Goliath is slain with his own sword. “Through death Christ destroyed him that had the power of death.” His helmet was broken and his head bruised; his whole armour of darkness wherein he trusted has been destroyed, and the “true light now shineth.” None need now be under his power as He came to set the prisoners free. But, alas, men love darkness rather than the light, and the bondage of Satan rather than the liberty of Christ, saying, “I love my master, and I will not go free.” And so become a slave for ever. Jesus Christ is the rightful owner of the soul. “Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts in the man” (Psa. 68:18, marg.).

> “The number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying … worthy is the Lamb that was slain” (Rev. 5:11, 12).

4. HIS GRACE. He divideth His spoils as the fruit of His warfare. He possesses pardon, peace, power, and paradise. These He willingly divides with the mighty many (Isa. 53). All who believe shall share in His victory. All is yours, for ye are Christ’s (1 Cor. 3:22). This great battle was substitutionary. Man had been spoiled of his goods by the devil, but Christ overcomes and recaptures the possession, as Abraham overcame the kings and brought back all the goods, and also his brother Lot (Gen. 14:16). Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee. None can pluck them out of His hand. Will you share Christ’s victory or the devil’s overthrow? If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed (John 8:36). The spoils of Calvary’s Cross hath made many rich.

Luke 11:17 But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls.

NET Luke 11:17 But Jesus, realizing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is destroyed, and a divided household falls.

GNT Luke 11:17 α τ ς δ ε δ ς α τ ν τ διανο ματα ε πεν α το ς, Π σα βασιλε α φ αυτ ν διαμερισθε σα ρημο ται κα ο κος π ο κον π πτει.

NLT Luke 11:17 He knew their thoughts, so he said, "Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A family splintered by feuding will fall apart.

KJV Luke 11:17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

ESV Luke 11:17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls.

NIV Luke 11:17 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall.

ASV Luke 11:17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is

brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

CSB Luke 11:17 Knowing their thoughts, He told them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is headed for destruction, and a house divided against itself falls.

NKJ Luke 11:17 But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls.

NRS Luke 11:17 But he knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself becomes a desert, and house falls on house.

YLT Luke 11:17 And he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, 'Every kingdom having been divided against itself is desolated; and house against house doth fall;

NAB Luke 11:17 But he knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste and house will fall against house.

NJB Luke 11:17 but, knowing what they were thinking, he said to them, 'Any kingdom which is divided against itself is heading for ruin, and house collapses against house.

GWN Luke 11:17 Since Jesus knew what they were thinking, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is ruined. A house divided against itself falls.

BBE Luke 11:17 But he, having knowledge of their thoughts, said to them, Every kingdom in which there is division is made waste; and a house in which there is division comes to destruction.

- **But He knew their thoughts and said to them** Mt 9:4; 12:25; Mark 3:23-26; John 2:25; Rev 2:23
- **Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste** 2 Chr 10:16-19; 2 Chr 13:16,17; Isa 9:20,21; 19:2,3
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 1 - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 2 - John MacArthur

SATAN WOULD BE DIVIDED AGAINST HIMSELF

But (de) term of contrast. They had just said they wanted a sign, however Jesus knew better for He could read their minds.

He knew (eido) **their thoughts** (dianoema) (cf Lk 5:22; Lk 6:8; Lk 7:39–47; Jn 2:25) - To whom does **their** refer? While the immediate context does not allow dogmatic identification, from comparison with similar passages (cf Mt 12:24+, Mk 3:22+) this could be the **scribes** most of whom were also **Pharisees**. The Jewish crowds at this time were not antagonistic but attracted by His miracles, while the religious leaders were antagonized by His miracles. Mt 12:25+ is similar to Luke recording **and knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them**. The fact that Jesus **knew their thoughts** offers further proof of His deity, since only God knows the heart (1 Sa 16:7; 1 Ki 8:39; 1 Chr. 28:9; Jer. 17:10; Ezek 11:5)

MacArthur on **knew their thoughts** - Their whisperings may have been hidden from the Lord's ears, but not from His omniscience, since He knew their thoughts...Their thought processes, purposes, and intents were transparent to Jesus, and He knew that those thoughts were sinful, blasphemous, and damning. He had every right at this point to abandon them to their unbelief and its inevitable eternal doom. Yet He reached out to them again in mercy, exposing the irrationality of their damning false conclusion (**ED**: THAT HE HAD CAST OUT THE DEMON BY SATAN'S POWER). (See Luke 11-17 MacArthur New Testament Commentary)

Any kingdom (basileia) **divided** (diamerizo) **against itself is laid waste** (eremoo) - One is reminded of the popular saying "United we stand, divided we fall." This is a truth that is simple and obvious, even to His obtuse protagonists. A **divided kingdom** results in civil war and usually the destruction of the **kingdom**. If Satan was empowering Jesus to cast out demons, Satan's **kingdom** would be **divided** against itself and would be ruined.

A house *divided* **against itself falls** - Civil war at any level, even among spiritual beings, is counterproductive and devastating. Again the truth of this statement is obvious. The meaning of **house** is not clear as it could be strife in a family (in the house) or strife between households. Most translations (NIV, RSV, NEB, NASB) imply division and strife within a family. We all have seen the devastating effect of divorce on families. "This phrase pictures one house collapsing on another, what we call today a "house of cards." (NET) The point is that if Jesus' power over the demon was derived from Satan, this would be ridiculous for Satan was the enemy of Jesus and would hardly empower an assault on his own kingdom, the kingdom of darkness (cf Col 1:13, Acts 26:18).

ILLUSTRATION - Abraham Lincoln borrowed Jesus' statement that "**A house divided against itself cannot stand**," in a brief

speech when he unsuccessfully ran for the Senate against Stephen A. Douglas. He used it to convey his belief that the union could never survive with both free and slave states; the nation would have to opt for one or the other. But when Jesus first spoke those words he was not speaking simply of a political and moral issue dividing a particular country at a point of history; rather he was speaking of a tremendous spiritual divide that confronts every individual of all time. And he contends that one must opt for one side or the other; there is no neutrality possible in this spiritual battle.

Knew (1492)(**eido**) means in general to know by perception not so much by experience. Eido is not so much that which is known by experience as an intuitive insight. **Eido**/**oida** is a perception, a being aware of, an understanding, an intuitive knowledge which in the case of believers can only be given by the Holy Spirit. **Eido** also suggests fullness of knowledge, absolute knowledge (that which is without a doubt), rather than a progress in knowledge. The idea is that Jesus knew beyond a shadow of a doubt.

Thoughts (only NT use)(1270)(**dianoema** from **dianoéomai** = to agitate in mind from diá = denoting separation + noéō = think over) means the content of what a person is thinking about. It refers to a thought or reflection with an evil connotation in the present context.This is the only NT use of this word. **Gilbrant** adds "This term is akin to the verb **noeo**, "to consider," but emphasizes the result of the activity of thought. It overlaps into the realm of purpose, intent, and motive. It was a favorite word of Plato." Six times in the Septuagint - Pr 14:14; Pr 15:24; Isa. 55:9; Ezek. 14:3; Ezek. 14:4; Da. 8:25

Divided (1266) **diamerizo** means to divide, part, share, separate. **Friberg** - (1) divide, separate; passive be separated off, be dispersed (Acts 2.3); (2) distribute, divide up, share (Lk 22.17); middle divide up among (Mt 27.35); (3) figuratively and passive be divided against, be opposed to (Lk 11.17) (Borrow Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

> **Diamerizo** - 13x in NT - distributing(1), divided(4), divided...among(1), divided up...among themselves(2), dividing up...among(1), share(1), sharing(1). Matt. 12:25; Matt. 12:26; Mk. 3:24; Mk. 3:25; Mk. 3:26; Mk. 6:41; Lk. 12:13; Rom. 12:3; 1 Co. 1:13; 1 Co. 7:17; 1 Co. 7:34; 2 Co. 10:13; Heb. 7:2

Laid waste (2049)(**eremoo** from **eremos** = wasteland) means brought to ruin, be laid waste, become desolate, be devastated (Mt 12:25). Of a prosperous city meaning to be ruined or depopulated.

> **Eremoo - 5v - desolate(1), laid waste(4).** Matt. 12:25; Lk. 11:17; Rev. 17:16; Rev. 18:17; Rev. 18:19

Rod Mattoon - We now enter a section of Scripture that has become very familiar because of its use in illustrating truths by famous men. Jesus said in verse seventeen that every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation and a house divided against a house faileth or cannot stand.On June 16, 1858, Abraham Lincoln gave a famous speech known as the House Divided Speech in Springfield, Illinois that was based on this principle. On this occasion, Lincoln accepted the Illinois Republican Party's nomination for United States senator. It became the launching point for his unsuccessful campaign against Stephen Douglas. Lincoln used this speech to create a lasting image of the danger of disunion because of slavery. At that time, there was division in the United States between the slave states and the free states. Lincoln said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new—North as well as South."

One thing for sure, Lincoln understood the principle of this passage. He knew the mess that would be created in this nation as long as it was a divided country. We face a divided nation today. The division has been created by our selfish political leaders that pit black against white, poor against wealthy, homosexuals against heterosexuals, and now socialism and communism against capitalism.

Socialists and communists believe in big government which should be in charge of our lives and provide for the nation through heavy taxation, especially on those who are financially successful. They strongly believe in government-controlled health care. History shows this is how socialism gets its foot in the door and gains governmental control. I don't know about you, but I don't want to have to get permission from someone on some government health-board telling me that I or my family can or can't get medical treatment.

Capitalists on the other hand, believe that people should be responsible to provide for themselves through hard work and private enterprise. They also believe in a small government with little taxation. They believe the government should have to live as we do, and balance their own budget and not spend money they do not have. Our great nation is in a moral and financial mess that continues to deepen every day. One key reason is because we have ignored the Lord and we have also ignored what was laid out by our Founding Fathers in the Constitution of the United States of America. We've got a mess for sure and we need God's help to get out of it. (Treasures from the Scriptures)

Luke 11:18 "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.

NET Luke 11:18 So if Satan too is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? I ask you this because you claim that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.

GNT Luke 11:18 ε δ κα Σαταν ς φ αυτ ν διεμερ σθη, π ς σταθ σεται βασιλε α α το ; τι λ γετε ν Βεελζεβο λ κβ λλειν με τ δαιμ νια.

NLT Luke 11:18 You say I am empowered by Satan. But if Satan is divided and fighting against himself, how can his kingdom survive?

KJV Luke 11:18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

ESV Luke 11:18 And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.

NIV Luke 11:18 If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebub.

ASV Luke 11:18 And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out demons by Beelzebub.

CSB Luke 11:18 If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say I drive out demons by Beelzebul.

NKJ Luke 11:18 "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub.

NRS Luke 11:18 If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?-- for you say that I cast out the demons by Beelzebul.

YLT Luke 11:18 and if also the Adversary against himself was divided, how shall his kingdom be made to stand? for ye say, by Beelzeboul is my casting forth the demons.

NAB Luke 11:18 And if Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that it is by Beelzebul that I drive out demons.

NJB Luke 11:18 So, too, with Satan: if he is divided against himself, how can his kingdom last? - since you claim that it is through Beelzebul that I drive devils out.

GWN Luke 11:18 Now, if Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom last? I say this because you say Beelzebul helps me force demons out of people.

BBE Luke 11:18 If, then, Satan is at war with himself, how will he keep his kingdom? because you say that I send evil spirits out of men by the help of Beelzebul.

- **If Satan also is divided against himself** Mt 12:26
- **For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.** Lk 11:15; Mt 12:31-34; James 3:5-8
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 1 - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 2 - John MacArthur

JEWISH ACCUSATION LACKS LOGIC

Jesus now applies the two analogies He has just made regarding the divided kingdom and divided house in Luke 11:17.

If Satan (satanas) **also is divided** (diamerizo) **against himself, how will his kingdom** (basileia) **stand** - Of course the answer is that it cannot stand. Jesus' reasons that if He was possessed or empowered by Satan against Satan's own demons, then Satan's kingdom could not stand. No divided kingdom can stand. And thus their accusations border on the absurd. Common sense says their accusations against Jesus are ridiculous.

NET Note on "**if Satan...**" - This first class condition, the first of three "if" clauses in the following verses, presents the example vividly

as if it were so. In fact, all three conditions in these verses are first class. The examples are made totally parallel. The expected answer is that Satan's kingdom will not stand, so the suggestion makes no sense.

For you say that I cast out (ekballo) **demons** (daimonion) **by Beelzebul** (beelzeboul) - Jesus is explaining why it would be ridiculous for Satan to be divided against his own kingdom, which would in fact be the case if Jesus truly did cast our demons by virtue of the power of Satan. The conclusion is clear that they were clearly not correct in attributing Jesus' power over the demons to the ruler of the demons. Such a thing would be absurd!

MacArthur - Inconsistencies often appear in the strategies of the kingdom of darkness, since evil is inherently inconsistent, demons operate independently, and Satan is not omniscient, omnipresent, or omnipotent. He may also allow his servants to pretend to cast out demons as part of their cover as angels of light (cf. 2Co 11:14–15). But Satan's goal is to destroy God's kingdom, not his own, and his kingdom is unified in that evil intent. Therefore to argue that he would empower Jesus to cast out demons on an unprecedented scale and thereby destroy his own kingdom is ridiculous. Yet that is precisely what the Lord's opponents were doing by claiming that He cast out demons by Beelzebul. Since that option is irrational and untenable, the only alternative is that Jesus cast out demons by God's power. (See Luke Commentary)

Satan (4567) **satanas** transliterated from Hebrew **Satan** - see 07854 and Aramaic sātānâ) literally means **Adversary**, the evil antagonist who offers opposition, hostility, resentment, etc. An enemy who that contends with, opposes, resists. An **adversary** is one who hates or opposes another person and tries to harm them or stop them from doing something because of hatred and malice. **Satan** is the inveterate, implacable, relentless, ruthless, remorseless, merciless, heartless, pitiless, cruel, hard, harsh, hardened, incorrigible, dedicated enemy of God and man. **Satan** is not a myth or a fable, but a created, fallen angel who is a real, supernatural evil being (Mt 16.23; 1 Th 2.18+) . **Satan** is not divine but is subject to the divine Creator Jesus (John 1:3, Col 1:16+). He was the tempter of Jesus and sifter of men like Peter (Mt 4.1, Lk 4:2+, Mk 1:13+, Lk 22:31+).

> **Satanas - 36x in 33v -** Matt. 4:10; Matt. 12:26; Matt. 16:23; Mk. 1:13; Mk. 3:23; Mk. 3:26; Mk. 4:15; Mk. 8:33; Lk. 10:18; Lk. 11:18; Lk. 13:16; Lk. 22:3; Lk. 22:31; Jn. 13:27; Acts 5:3; Acts 26:18; Rom. 16:20; 1 Co. 5:5; 1 Co. 7:5; 2 Co. 2:11; 2 Co. 11:14; 2 Co. 12:7; 1 Thess. 2:18; 2 Thess. 2:9; 1 Tim. 1:20; 1 Tim. 5:15; Rev. 2:9; Rev. 2:13; Rev. 2:24; Rev. 3:9; Rev. 12:9; Rev. 20:2; Rev. 20:7

Divided (1266)(**diamerizo** from **dia** = through + **merizo** = to divide) means literally to divide (as Jesus' garments - Mt 27:35, Mk 15:24, Lk 23:34, Jn 19:24), in a figurative sense of a kingdom divided (Lk 17:17, 18), of families divided by being forced to choose for or against Jesus (Lk 12:53). Jesus' coming demands a choice and neutrality is not one of the choices! **Diamerizo** has the sense of share as in the Last Supper, where the disciples "divided" (shared) the Passover cup paradoxically as a sign of their unity and allegiance to their Lord.

Gilbrant - The believers made a regular practice (note the imperfect tense here) of selling their material possessions and dividing the proceeds among themselves according to individual needs (Bruce, Acts of the Apostles, p.101). Of Acts 2:3 Marshall says, "A flame divided itself into several tongues, so that each (tongue) rested upon one of the persons present" (Marshall, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 5:68). (Complete Biblical Library)

Among classical writers **diamerizo** was used by Plato of a butcher who cuts animals into pieces. The Septuagint uses **diamerizo** to describe dividing the earth (Ge 10:25), dividing the nations (Deut 32:8), dividing garments (prophecy of Jesus - Ps 22:18), dividing land (Ps 60:6; 108:7; Isa 34:17; Ezek 47:21), of David **distributing** (dividing) food throughout Israel (2 Sa 6:19, 1 Chr 16:3), dividing spoil or plunder (Jdg 5:30; Zech 14:1), and food (2 Sa 6:19).

Thayer - 1. to cleave asunder, cut in pieces: ζωα διαμερισθενα namely, by the butcher, Plato, legg. 8, p. 849 d.; according to a use peculiar to Luke in the passive, to be divided into opposing parts, to be at variance, in dissension: επι τινα, against one, Luke 11:17f; επι τινι, Lk 12:52f. **2.** to distribute (Plato, polit., p. 289 c.; in the Septuagint chiefly for חָלַק): τι, Mark 15:24 Rec.; τι τινι, Luke 22:17 (where L T Tr WH εις ε αυτους for R G ε αυτοις); Acts 2:45; passive Acts 2:3; middle to distribute among themselves: τι, Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24 G L T Tr WH; Luke 23:34; with ε αυτοις added (Matthew 27:35 Rec.); John 19:24 from Ps. 22:18). (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament)

> **Diamerizo** - 17x in 17v in the Septuagint - Gen. 10:25; Gen. 49:7; Deut. 32:8; Jos. 21:42; Jdg. 5:30; 2 Sam. 6:19; 1 Chr. 16:3; Neh. 9:22; Ps. 17:14; Ps. 22:18; Ps. 55:21; Ps. 60:6; Ps. 108:7; Isa. 34:17; Ezek. 47:21; Mic. 2:4; Zech. 14:1;
>
> **Diamerizo** - 11x in 11v - distributing(1), divided(4), divided...among(1), divided up...among themselves(2), dividing up...among(1), share(1), sharing(1).

Matthew 27:35 And when they had crucified Him, they **divided** up His garments among themselves by casting lots.

Mark 15:24 And they crucified Him, and **divided** up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them to decide what each man should take.

Luke 11:17 But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom **divided** against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls.

Luke 11:18 "If Satan also is **divided** against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.

Luke 12:52 for from now on five members in one household will be **divided**, three against two and two against three.

Luke 12:53 "They will be **divided**, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

Luke 22:17 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and **share** it among yourselves;

Luke 23:34 But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, **dividing** up His garments among themselves.

John 19:24 So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be"; this was to fulfill the Scripture: "THEY **DIVIDED** MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS."

Acts 2:3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire **distributing** themselves, and they rested on each one of them.

Acts 2:45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were **sharing** (imperfect tense = over and over they were dividing their possessions) them with all, as anyone might have need.

Luke 11:19 "And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges.

NET Luke 11:19 Now if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

GNT Luke 11:19 ε δ γ ν Βεελζεβο λ κβ λλω τ δαιμ νια, ο υ ο μ ν ν τ νι κβ λλουσιν; δι το το α το μ ν κριτα σονται.

NLT Luke 11:19 And if I am empowered by Satan, what about your own exorcists? They cast out demons, too, so they will condemn you for what you have said.

KJV Luke 11:19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

ESV Luke 11:19 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

NIV Luke 11:19 Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges.

ASV Luke 11:19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

CSB Luke 11:19 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, who is it your sons drive them out by? For this reason they will be your judges.

NKJ Luke 11:19 "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

NRS Luke 11:19 Now if I cast out the demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your exorcists cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

YLT Luke 11:19 'But if I by Beelzeboul cast forth the demons -- your sons, by whom do they cast forth? because of this your judges they shall be;

NAB Luke 11:19 If I, then, drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own people drive them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

NJB Luke 11:19 Now if it is through Beelzebul that I drive devils out, through whom do your own sons drive them out? They shall be your judges, then.

GWN Luke 11:19 If I force demons out with the help of Beelzebul, who helps your followers force them out? That's why they will be your judges.

BBE Luke 11:19 And if I, by Beelzebul, send out evil spirits, by whose help do your sons send them out? so let them be your judges.

- **And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons** Luke 9:49; Mt 12:27,28
- **So they will be your judges** Lk 11:31,32; 19:22; Job 15:6; Mt 12:41,42; Ro 3:19
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 1 - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 2 - John MacArthur

THE CASE OF THE JEWISH EXORCISTS

And if I by Beelzebul (beelzeboul) **cast out** (ekballo) **demons** (daimonion) - The "IF" here is a second class condition which is considered as an unreal case. Jesus did not cast out demons by the ruler of the demons! That would be absurd.

By whom do your sons cast them out (ekballo) - **Your sons** is thought by most commentators as a reference to Jews who practiced exorcism (but a few commentators think Jesus refers to His disciples). On one hand Jesus seems to imply that the so-called Jewish exorcists were successful at making others think that they had truly cast out demons. However Acts 19:13-15+ describes unsuccessful Jewish exorcists who ironically were attempting to use Jesus' Name to cast out demons. Jesus' point is that if He was possessed and/or empowered by Satan to cast out demons then what about the source of power for the Jewish exorcists (whether they were successful or not - and I favor they were not truly successful because only God could empower them and they were not followers of the true God)?

R Kent Hughes - Jewish contemporaries did indeed perform exorcisms (cf. Acts 19:13, 14; cf. Josephus, Antiquities 8.2, 5), and most people believed they did it by the power of God. Were they on Satan's team too? Were all who cast out demons in league with Satan? Absurd! (See Luke That You May Know the Truth)

Trent Butler - Then he turned the charge on them. They claimed to have people in their company with power over demons (Mark 9:38; Acts 19:13–14). Did this mean they were allied with Satan? Oh, no! Their people exorcised demons in God's name. Well then, why could Jesus not do the same? Go let your exorcists be the judge and address the issue: Who has power to cast out demons? (HNTC-Lk)

Geldenhuys - After exposing the absurdity of the accusation of His enemies, the Lord now reveals their wilful falseness by showing that they measure by two standards. It was at that time the general idea among the Jews that when a rabbi or other Jew delivered anyone from possession of the devil, it was a sign that God worked through him. But now that they see that Jesus (indeed in a far more signal manner) releases unhappy possessed people from demoniacal powers, they ascribe this in the wickedness of their hearts to the powerful workings of Satan. Thereby they declare, as it were, that their fellow-Jews also who in God's power freed people from demon-possession, did so through Satan. So they will be judged by their fellow-countrymen. (Borrow Commentary on the Gospel of Luke)

Allison Trites - The point here is that in accusing Jesus of using Satanic power, the Jews were condemning their own people (assuming **sons** does not refer to His disciples which most writers do not favor) of doing the same. This effective use of logic turned the argument of Jesus' opponents back against them....Their rejection of Jesus' exorcisms alone was based upon sheer prejudice and was untenable. (See Luke, Acts Cornerstone Bible Commentary)

So they will be your judges - If Jesus acted by the power of Satan, then **your sons** depended upon the same power. As discussed above the difficult question is who are **your sons**? Most favor these are Jewish exorcists. Others say they are the Lord's disciples. Either way, to condemn Him was to condemn either group.

J C Ryle on **Shall they be your judges.** The meaning of this expression is, "They shall condemn your supposition that I cast out devils by Beelzebub, as unreasonable and absurd. They shall be witnesses that devils are not cast out by devils, but by the power of God." (Luke 11)

Nelson's NKJV Study Bible (online) comment on **by whom do your sons cast them out** - Jesus' question and the implied reply to it can be taken in one of two ways: (1) How did **Jewish exorcists** expel demons? If the answer is by God's power, then why not give

Jesus the same credit? (2) How did Jesus' **disciples**, who were the "**sons**" of Israel, drive out demons? The dissenters not only had to explain Jesus' miracles, but those of His followers. Most scholars prefer the former interpretation.

Steven Cole favors **your sons** as referring to Jewish exorcists rather than Jesus' disciples and writes that "the Pharisees had never accused them (JEWISH EXORCISTS) of being empowered by Satan. If they are going to be consistent, they must say that the Jewish exorcists also did their work by Satan's power. Otherwise, those exorcists served to judge the Pharisees for their hypocrisy in singling out Jesus for condemnation, while accepting the exorcists, who did the same thing." (Luke 11:14-28 The Heavenly War)

John MacArthur favors **your sons** as referring to Jewish exorcists rather than Jesus' disciples and writes "For the sake of argument, Jesus granted their point. Assuming that He was, as they claimed, using the power of Beelzebul (Satan) to cast out demons, the Lord then asked, By whom do your sons (i.e., rabbis, scribes, Pharisees, and their associates) cast them out? The Jews uncritically assumed that their useless exorcists were doing the work of God. Acts 19 records a typical failed attempt by some would-be Jewish exorcists to cast out a demon at Ephesus. Impressed by the miraculous power displayed by the apostle Paul (vv. 11–12), they decided to add the name of Jesus to their repertoire. But the consequences were disastrous (see Acts 19:13-16) The Lord's question exposed their (PHARISEES/SCRIBES) inconsistency, hypocrisy, and lack of integrity. If casting out demons proved someone was in league with Satan, then why were they not suspicious of their own exorcists? How could they not apply the same standards to their **failures** as they did to Jesus' **successes**? By insisting that their own exorcists' **ineffective attempts** to cast out demons were from God, while rejecting Jesus' uniformly effective exorcisms as being from Satan, they were in effect making Satan more powerful than God. (See Luke 1-17 MacArthur New Testament Commentary)

Darrell Bock - The point is that what the opponents say about Jesus, they must accept for anyone else who does the same thing. If Jesus exorcises by Satan, then so do other exorcists. But if others—whether **Jewish exorcists** or **the disciples**—exorcise by God's power, then so does Jesus. It is one or the other. Their works go together. If the opponents' judgment about Jesus is wrong, they can know that these exorcists will judge them for their refusal to accept God's work. (See Luke : Baker Exegetical Commentary)

Bruce Barton - Jesus was not the first person to exorcise demons. In the first century, exorcism was thriving as a business in both Jewish and pagan societies (Mark 9:38; Acts 19:13–14). Many Jewish exorcists were Pharisees. "Now," says Jesus, "if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out?" If it took Satan's power to drive out demons, then those Pharisees who drove out demons were also working under Satan's power. Those Pharisees who had performed exorcisms would act as judges regarding this allegation. Those accusers should go to those Pharisees and find out if they were working for Satan. (See Life Application New Testament Commentary)

R C H Lenski favors **your sons** as referring to Jewish exorcists rather than Jesus' disciples and writes - The emphasis is on the subjects: "I—your sons." The latter are not physical sons or just pupils of the Pharisees but, like the similar expression, "sons of the prophets," Genossen eurer Zunft, experts of your own guild, whom you approve and are proud of because they are able to expel demons. We know nothing further about these Jewish exorcists, especially as to what means they used, or what success they had. We know only that exorcism was practiced, that it was not very successful, judging from the many demoniacs that came to Jesus for healing, and that the means used were not objectionable. The fact that Satan did not and, in fact, could not lend his hand to such expulsions the previous argument has placed beyond question. Whoever drives out demons can do so only by being in the necessary connection with God. What a desperate self-contradiction, therefore, to say: when Jesus drives them out, the connection is Satan; but when their own experts drive them out, the connection is God! Something is viciously wrong with men who ascribe the identical effect to absolutely opposite causes. "Because of this," i. e., the thing Jesus exposes, "they," their own associates, "shall be your judges" before God's judgment bar. God will let these Pharisaic exorcists pronounce the sentence on these blaspheming Pharisees, and what that verdict will be need not be stated.(See The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel)

Luke 11:20 "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

NET Luke 11:20 But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has already overtaken you.

GNT Luke 11:20 ε δ ν δακτ λ θεο [γ] κβ λλω τ δαιμ νια, ρα φθασεν φ μ ς βασιλε α το θεο .

NLT Luke 11:20 But if I am casting out demons by the power of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you.

KJV Luke 11:20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

ESV Luke 11:20 But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

NIV Luke 11:20 But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

ASV Luke 11:20 But if I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you.

CSB Luke 11:20 If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

NKJ Luke 11:20 "But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

NRS Luke 11:20 But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

YLT Luke 11:20 but if by the finger of God I cast forth the demons, then come unawares upon you did the reign of God.

NAB Luke 11:20 But if it is by the finger of God that (I) drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

NJB Luke 11:20 But if it is through the finger of God that I drive devils out, then the kingdom of God has indeed caught you unawares.

GWN Luke 11:20 But if I force out demons with the help of God's power, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

BBE Luke 11:20 But if I, by the finger of God, send out evil spirits, then the kingdom of God has overtaken you.

- **the finger of God** Ex 8:19; Mt 12:28
- **then the kingdom of God has come upon you** Lk 10:9,11; Daniel 2:44; Acts 20:25; 28:23-28; 2 Th 1:5
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 1 - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 2 - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Matthew 12:28+ “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

THE FINGER OF GOD
IS THE POWER OF GOD

But - This term of contrast presents a contrast between two "IF'S" - the "IF" of Lk 11:19 and the "IF" in this passage! And so Jesus introduces another explanation for His ability to cast out demons and it is the antithesis of the accusation made by the Jews.

If (since) **I cast out** (ekballo) **demons** (daimonion) **by the finger of God** - "**IF**" is not an expression of doubt, but a first class conditional statement (see Conditional statements) which can be paraphrased "***Since*** by the finger of God I cast out demons, ***then*** the kingdom of God has come upon you." it doesn’t even require God to use His arm; just His little finger is enough!)Jesus casting out of demons demonstrated He had defeated the kingdom of Satan. Jesus having demolished their scandalous charge that He was empowered by Satan, now gives the true source of His power, the **finger of God**. The passage in Matthew 12:28+ says "But if I cast out demons by **the Spirit of God**, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that the **finger of God** is synonymous with the **Spirit of God.** And we know from Luke 4:14+ "Jesus returned to Galilee (ALTHOUGH NOW HE WAS IN JUDEA) in the power of the Spirit." Acts 10:38+ Peter summarized Jesus' ministry declaring that "God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power." The fact that Jesus was casting out demons by the Spirit of God was evidence indeed that the **kingdom of God** had come upon the people of that generation. The **kingdom** had come in the Person of the King Himself. The very fact that the Lord Jesus was there, performing such miracles, was proof positive that God's anointed Ruler had appeared upon the stage of history.

We see this same phrase **finger of God** in Exodus 8:19+ where Pharaoh's magicians even admitted that Moses signs pointed to the fact that his power was from God. "Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is **the finger of God**.” But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said." Compare these other allusions to the **finger of God** - The Ten Commandments were inscribed by the “finger of God” (Ex 31:18; Dt 9:10). Ps 8:3 says the heavens are the work of God’s fingers. In sum, the **finger of God** is clearly **anthropomorphism** referring to God's power and not to the power of Satan as proposed by the protagonists. Jesus exorcised the demons by the power of God and the Spirit of God Who filled Jesus and empowered Him for ministry (see Lk 4:1, 14+).

Steven Cole - The term, **finger of God**, goes back to Exodus 8:19+, where the Egyptian magicians recognize God's power through Moses. Jesus is saying that if Satan is not behind His power, then clearly, God is. By saying that the kingdom of God had come upon them, Jesus was referring to the initial phase of the kingdom as manifested in the presence of the King. Jesus' deliverance of people from Satan's bondage anticipates the coming day when Jesus will reign not only in hearts, but on the throne of David, when Satan will be bound from his powerful influence on earth. Until His enemies are made His footstool, Christ exercises His rule from the Father's right hand in the hearts of all who submit their lives to Him. (The Heavenly War)

Then the kingdom (basileia) **of God** - One must understand that there are several phases to the **Kingdom of God.** The first phase is the invisible, internal **Kingdom of God** and which Jesus later described as "**in your midst**" (Lk 17:21+), the Kingdom in which the King reigns in the heart of the person who has accepted Jesus as Messiah. To proclaim the **Kingdom of God** is to preach the Gospel, to proclaim the good news of salvation, explaining how one can enter the **Kingdom of God**. (Jn 3:3-16+) When the King returns on "**the day that the Son of Man is revealed** (apokalupto)," (Lk 17:30+) the heart of every person will also be revealed as to whether they sought the kingdom of "self" or the kingdom of the Savior! The future earthly phase of the **Kingdom of God** is known as the **Messianic Age** or the **Millennial Kingdom**.(See detailed explanation of Jesus' meaning of the **Kingdom of God** in **notes** on Luke 17:20-21). The Messianic Kingdom will be followed by the eternal Kingdom in the New Heaven and New Earth. Jesus knew the Jews were looking for the future earthly aspect of the **Kingdom of God**, (cf Mt 20:21 and Acts 1:6+) but they did not understand the timing was to follow His Second Coming, not His First Coming. Jesus' preaching at this time and that of His disciples later (including all of us today) was to explain how one could enter the invisible aspect of the **Kingdom of God** in the present and in that way they would be assured of experiencing the visible **Kingdoms of God** in the future.

> **THOUGHT** - All of this talk about the Kingdom begs one question dear reader -- Have you entered the **Kingdom of God** by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of that Kingdom? If not today could be the best day of your life (2 Cor 6:2+).

Has come (phthano) **upon you** - **Has come** is the aorist tense, indicative mood which speaks of a completed action, something that has taken place. Jesus' ability to cast out demons who belong to the kingdom of darkness is clear evidence that another Kingdom (and King) has arrived! The miracles of Jesus demonstrated God's victory over the forces of evil, a victory which was consummated on the Cross and validated by the Resurrection. Christ's Kingdom will be established when He returns and defeats the Antichrist (Rev 19:11-16+, Rev 19:19-21+) and casts Satan into prison for 1000 years, the Millennium, (Rev 20:1-3+) and then into the Lake of Fire forever (Rev 20:7-10+ where He had cast the Antichrist 1000 years prior)! That said, it is should be emphasized that Satan is presently still powerful, but His power is limited, his doom is sealed, and his time is short.

> **Bock** on **kingdom of God has come** - Jesus says the miracles are evidences of the arrival of God's promised, redemptive rule. They are audiovisual testimony to God's power and rule....The key term in the verse is ephthasen (from phthano), "**has come**."....The miracles trumpet the arrival of God's ruling power in such a way that Satan's display of power on earth is challenged and is in the process of being defeated.To say the kingdom has arrived is not to argue that consummation has come, only that its presence has begun. The process of establishing kingdom authority is a long one, as Jesus will reveal, and it will take his return to bring the full promise of the kingdom to completion....God is breaking peacefully into the creation through Jesus to reclaim humanity from Satan's grip. Jesus overcomes the presence and power of evil in the world. His **power** is greater than that of demons. He is stronger than Satan. His **power** and authority reverse the effect of sin. This exercise of **power** through Jesus is why Paul can call the gospel "**the power of God**" in Romans 1:16–17+. The story of the gospel is the story of how Satan, sin and the flesh are overcome through Jesus' provision of the Spirit (1 Th 1:5+). So Paul calls the kingdom of God a matter of **power** (1 Cor 4:20) as well as justice, peace and joy inspired by the Spirit (Ro 14:17). And Ephesians 1:15–2:10 and Eph 6:10–18+ refer to the battle we have against the forces of evil and note how Jesus has a position of authority over them. **These theological realities are pictured in Jesus' words**." (Why Miracles?)
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> > **THOUGHT** - IN LIGHT OF THESE TRUTHS - Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm." Eph 6:13+
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> The **NET Note** on **has come upon you** - The phrase is also quite important. Does it mean merely "**approach**" or actually "**come upon**"? The issue here is like the one in Lk 10:9 (see note there on the phrase "come near"). Is the arrival of the kingdom in process or merely anticipated? Two factors favor arrival. First, the prepositional phrase "**on you**" suggests arrival (Da 4:24, 28 Theodotion). Second, the following illustration in Lk 11:21-23 looks at the healing as portraying Satan being overrun. So the presence of God's authority has come.
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> **Allison Trites** on **the Kingdom of God has come** - The exorcisms performed by Jesus provided strong evidence that God's Kingdom, long anticipated and hoped for, had at last entered history in a transforming way. In fact, the words and works of Jesus as a whole revealed the fact that the Kingdom of God had actually

arrived in the person of Jesus of Nazareth (cf. Jesus' answer to John the Baptist's questions in Lk 7:22+; Mt 11:5). Yet, there was still the future time when the purposes of God would be fully realized and consummated, and so the disciples were taught to pray, "May your Kingdom come soon" (Lk 11:2; Matt 6:10). The Kingdom's nearness and imminence (Mark 1:14-15+) called for repentance in preparation for its final realization, when the Son of Man would come in power (Mark 14:62; Matt 26:64; cf. Luke 21:36; 22:69). Both the "already" and the "not yet" dimensions of the Kingdom must be affirmed and kept in careful balance to do justice to the present and future dimensions of the Kingdom theme. For further discussion see Beasley-Murray (1986). (See Cornerstone Biblical Commentary – Volume 12: Luke and Acts)

J C Ryle - **The kingdom of God is come upon you**. The argument here appears to be this,—"If these miracles which I work are really worked by the finger of God, and I am clearly proved by them to be one sent from God, then, whether you will allow it or not, the times of Messiah have evidently arrived. The kingdom of God has come down upon you unawares, and these miracles are signs that it is so."—**This argument reduced the enemies of our Lord to a dilemma. Either they must deny that our Lord cast out devils,—this they could not do;—or else they must admit that their own sons cast out devils by the power of Beelzebub;—this they would not do.**—The nature of the argument appears to show that when our Lord spake of "your sons casting out devils," He could not have meant His own disciples.

Has come (aorist tense) (5348)(**phthano**) originally meant to precede someone, to come before or to anticipate (as in 1Th 4:15+). Over time **phthano** begin to lose the idea of priority and to mean simply to come to or to arrive at. The idea is to come to a particular state or to arrive at a goal and so to attain it. In Mt 12:28+ ""But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God **has come** upon you." **Phthano** pictures progress along a road to a certain point.

Phthano - 7v - arrive(1), attained(1), come(3), first to come(1), precede(1). Matt. 12:28; Lk. 11:20; Rom. 9:31; 2 Co. 10:14; Phil. 3:16; 1 Thess. 2:16; 1 Thess. 4:15

Luke 11:21 "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed.

NET Luke 11:21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his possessions are safe.

GNT Luke 11:21 ταν σχυρ ς καθωπλισμ νος φυλ σσ τ ν αυτο α λ ν, ν ε ρ ν στ ν τ π ρχοντα α το ·

NLT Luke 11:21 For when a strong man like Satan is fully armed and guards his palace, his possessions are safe--

KJV Luke 11:21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

ESV Luke 11:21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe;

NIV Luke 11:21 "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe.

ASV Luke 11:21 When the strong man fully armed guardeth his own court, his goods are in peace:

CSB Luke 11:21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his estate, his possessions are secure.

NKJ Luke 11:21 "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.

NRS Luke 11:21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his castle, his property is safe.

YLT Luke 11:21 'When the strong man armed may keep his hall, in peace are his goods;

NAB Luke 11:21 When a strong man fully armed guards his palace, his possessions are safe.

NJB Luke 11:21 So long as a strong man fully armed guards his own home, his goods are undisturbed;

GWN Luke 11:21 "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own mansion, his property is safe.

BBE Luke 11:21 When the strong man armed keeps watch over his house, then his goods are safe:

- **When a strong man, fully armed,** Mt 12:29; Mark 3:27
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 1 - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 2 - John MacArthur

Parallel Passages:

> Matthew 12:29+ "Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.
>
> Mark 3:27+ "But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.

A LITTLE PARABLE
WAR IN THE COSMOS

When a strong man - Literally "**the strong one**." To whom does Jesus refer? In context**strong man** refers to Satan the king of the demons. The demon-possessed man was an evidence of his power. Jesus explains this is the second reason His opponents were wrong in accusing Him of being empowered by Satan in carrying out His exorcisms. The point is that the One who would attack Satan must be stronger than Satan. Jesus is stronger than Satan, which was the reason He could cast out the demon.

J C Ryle comments that "The literal translation (**the strong one**) brings out the character of the devil, and the applicability of the whole passage to him with much force."

If you as a believer are fearful of the demonic recall John's assuring words "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4+)

Deffinbaugh - In this analogy, Satan is the **strong man** and his "possessions" are those who are demon-possessed and Jesus is the One who has greater power and is taking away those he has possessed. Jesus is saying that He must overpower Satan before He can deliver those whom he had formerly possessed. His enemies refused to acknowledge that Jesus was God or that His power was God's power, and yet logic would once again force them to this conclusion. In order to deliver men and women from demon-possession Jesus had to be greater than Satan. To attribute His power to Satan was foolish. To think He was not greater than Satan was also folly. If the evidence were interpreted according to good logic, the evidence would point to Jesus as the Messiah. (Evidence that Produced Various Verdicts Luke 11:14-36)

Fully armed, guards (phulasso) **his own house, his possessions** (huparcho) **are undisturbed** - **Fully armed** (kathoplizo only here - fully equipped) means completely armed with weapons and in the perfect tense indicates this is a permanent state. This armed guard does not let its guard down. **Guards** (phulasso) is in the present tense picturing the strong man continually on guard. **House** (aule) describes a building large enough and elaborate enough to have an interior courtyard and pictures not a pauper's shack but a palatial mansion or palace. In context, **house** is Satan's sphere of influence, in this case a blind, mute man whom his demons had possessed. **His possessions** is literally "the things that belong to him." **Undisturbed** is literally "in peace" (en eirene).

As explained by Steven Cole the **strong man's own house** and **possessions** are men and women who are not believers and by default who belong to Satan's kingdom, not in the sense that they are "possessed" (as in demon possession) but that in the sense that they are "owned" by Satan and are subjects of his kingdom of darkness.

> **THOUGHT** - When we were born again, we were set free of Satan's power and control. God "rescued (rhuomai) us from the **domain** (exousia - the right and the might of the "strong man") of darkness, and transferred (ONCE AND FOR ALL TIME) us to **the kingdom of His beloved Son**, in Whom we have redemption (apolutrosis) (JESUS PAID THE "RANSOM" PRICE TO SET US FREE = THE BLOOD OF JESUS! SEE 1 Pe 1:18-19+), the forgiveness (aphesis)(SENDING AWAY FOREVER) of sins (PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE)." (Col 1:13-14+) Satan continues to cast accusations and charges at believers (cf Rev 12:10+, Eph 6:16+) but they won't "stick" because we have been forever clothed in the righteousness of Christ (2 Cor 5:21+, 1 Co 1:30, cf Isa 61:3+). John adds "We know that no one who is born of God sins (habitually); but He who was born of God keeps (present tense = CONTINUALLY GUARDS) him, and **the evil one does not touch him**." (1 Jn 5:18+)

Steven Cole has an interesting note on the nature of the **strong man's house** and **possessions** - Jesus further underscores His victory over Satan with the parable of disarming the strong man (Lk 11:21-22). Satan is the strong man armed. He is a powerful spiritual master. His homestead is the heart of unbelievers. All of an unbeliever's powers and faculties are Satan's **possessions**, at his use. Further, these **possessions**, securely under Satan's rule, are **undisturbed**, or "at peace." The unbeliever, dead in his sins, under the sway of the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:1,2+) is unaware of his own desperate condition. (The Heavenly War)

As **Matthew Henry** describes it "The sinner has a good opinion of himself, is very secure and merry, has no doubt concerning the goodness of his state nor any dread of the judgment to come; he flatters himself in his own eyes, and cries peace to himself. Before

Christ appeared, all was quiet, because all went one way; but the preaching of the Gospel disturbed the peace of the devil's palace."

Strong (mighty) (2478)(**ischuros** from **ischuo** = to be able) is an adjective which means strong, powerful, mighty (usually referring to inherent physical strength), able, forcible. Strong, having moral power. Inherently strong. Ischuros denotes power or ability and places "stress on the actual power that one possesses rather than on the mere principle of power. Luke uses **ischuros** in Lk 3:16+, Lk 11:21, 22+, Lk 15:14+.

Guards (5442)(**phulasso**) means to watch, to carry out the function as a military guard or sentinel (cp Ac 23:35, 28:16), to keep watch, to have one's eye upon lest one escape, to guard a person that he might remain safe (from violence, from another person or thing, from being snatched away, from being lost). The NT uses phulasso figuratively of guarding truth (eg, 1Ti 5:21, 6:20, 2Ti 1:14)

Luke uses **phulasso** in 14/31 NT uses to describe the shepherds "**keeping watch** over their flock by night" (Lk 2:8), of the demon possessed man "**kept under guard**" (Lk 8:29), of the blessing on the one who **observes** ("guards") the Word of God after hearing it (Lk 11:28, cf "**observe**" in Acts 16:4), of Jesus' warning to "**be on your guard** against every form of greed" (Lk 12:15), of the rich young ruler who said "all these things I **have kept** from my youth (Lk 18:21), of Israel who did not "**keep**" the law (Acts 7:53, of Paul "**keeping the Law**" = Acts 21:24 and "**abstain**" in Acts 21:25), of James guarded by Herod's guards (Acts 12:4, cf Paul in Acts 23:35 in Herod's Praetorium and later in Rome where the soldier "was guarding him" - Acts 28:16), of Saul "watching out (guarding) for the cloaks" while they were stoning Stephen (Acts 22:20),

Phulasso - 31v - Matt. 19:20; Mk. 10:20; Lk. 2:8; Lk. 8:29; Lk. 11:21; Lk. 11:28; Lk. 12:15; Lk. 18:21; Jn. 12:25; Jn. 12:47; Jn. 17:12; Acts 7:53; Acts 12:4; Acts 16:4; Acts 21:24; Acts 21:25; Acts 22:20; Acts 23:35; Acts 28:16; Rom. 2:26; Gal. 6:13; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Tim. 5:21; 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:14; 2 Tim. 4:15; 2 Pet. 2:5; 2 Pet. 3:17; 1 Jn. 5:21; Jude 1:24

Luke 11:22 But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder.

NET Luke 11:22 But when a stronger man attacks and conquers him, he takes away the first man's armor on which the man relied and divides up his plunder.

GNT Luke 11:22 π ν δ σχυρ τερος α το πελθ ν νικ σ α τ ν, τ ν πανοπλ αν α το α ρει φ πεπο θει κα τ σκ λα α το διαδ δωσιν.

NLT Luke 11:22 until someone even stronger attacks and overpowers him, strips him of his weapons, and carries off his belongings.

KJV Luke 11:22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

ESV Luke 11:22 but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil.

NIV Luke 11:22 But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils.

ASV Luke 11:22 but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him his whole armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

CSB Luke 11:22 But when one stronger than he attacks and overpowers him, he takes from him all his weapons he trusted in, and divides up his plunder.

NKJ Luke 11:22 "But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.

NRS Luke 11:22 But when one stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his plunder.

YLT Luke 11:22 but when the stronger than he, having come upon him, may overcome him, his whole-armour he doth take away in which he had trusted, and his spoils he distributeth;

NAB Luke 11:22 But when one stronger than he attacks and overcomes him, he takes away the armor on which he relied and distributes the spoils.

NJB Luke 11:22 but when someone stronger than himself attacks and defeats him, the stronger man takes

away all the weapons he relied on and shares out his spoil.

GWN Luke 11:22 But a stronger man than he may attack him and defeat him. Then the stronger man will take away all the weapons in which the strong man trusted and will divide the loot.

BBE Luke 11:22 But when one who is stronger makes an attack on him and overcomes him, he takes away his instruments of war, in which he had put his faith, and makes division of his goods.

- Genesis 3:15; Isa 27:1; 49:24,25; 53:12; 63:1-4; Col 2:15; 1 John 3:8; 4:4; Rev 20:1-3
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 1 - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 2 - John MacArthur

OUR STRONGER SAVIOR

But - The contrast here is with the **strong man** of Lk 11:21 who in context is Satan. This contrast shows the dramatic difference between the created being Satan and the Creator, Christ, Who is stronger than the "strong man" Satan.

When someone stronger (ischuros) **than he attacks him and overpowers** (nikao) **him** - Literally "the One stronger than he." This is clearly an allusion, a prophecy if you will, by Jesus of His soon to be accomplished victory over Satan and the Kingdom of darkness on the Cross. Every casting out of a demon was like a "preview" of the main feature so to speak! Jesus' death was in the eyes of the world His greatest point of weakness, but He was in fact at His strongest as He bore the sin of the world, was buried and rose victorious from the grave crushing the power of Satan once and for all. Hallelujah! John the Baptist referred to our Lord as "One is coming who is **mightier** (same word used here ischuros)" (Mark 1:7+, Luke 3:16+)

> **THOUGHT** - "Not only during the trials of life but surely also at the approach of death it is a great comfort to know that Christ, symbolized by "**SOMEONE STRONGER**" has conquered Satan. Therefore Ro 8:31–39+ applies." (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

Several passages describe **SOMEONE STRONGER** overpowering the **STRONG MAN**...

> Satan's defeat was prophesied immediately after his greatest victory in deceiving Adam and Eve and resulting in their sin against God and mankind's spiritual death - "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He (Messiah) shall bruise you (Serpent - Satan) on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." (Ge 3:15+)
>
> The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God (SOMEONE STRONGER) appeared for this purpose, to **destroy** (luo) the works of the devil (THE STRONG MAN). (1 John 3:8+)
>
> Therefore, "since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself (JESUS) likewise also partook of the same, that through death (THE CROSS) He might render powerless (katargeo) him who had the power of death, that is, the devil (diabolos), and might free (apallasso) those who through fear of death were subject (enochos) to slavery (douleia) all their lives." (Heb 2:14-15+) "**Hallelujah**!"
>
> When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 When **He had disarmed** (apekduomai)(CF "ATTACKS AND OVERPOWERS") the rulers and authorities (THE "STRONG MAN" - SATAN AND DEMONIC HORDES), He made a public display of them, **having triumphed over** (thriambeuo) them through Him. (Col 2:13-15+)

He takes away (airo) **from him all his armor** (panoplia) **on which he had relied and distributes** (diadidomi) **his plunder** (skulon) - "Christ is the stronger man who attacks the devil and overpowers him. As Paul puts it, at the cross Christ "**disarmed the rulers and authorities**" and triumphed over them (Col. 2:15+). What no mere man could do, Jesus Christ did in His death and resurrection. Satan is now a defeated foe, although he is still allowed to reign until his being bound at the second coming of Christ. This means that Jesus Christ is the only one powerful enough to save a soul from Satan's dominion and power. Men cannot do it by their own will power or moral reformation. Even though men can get free of problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, or even so-called "sexual addiction," through self-help programs, this is not the same as salvation from sin and Satan. The focus of those programs is never the glory of God, but rather, the happiness of self. Satan is not unhappy if a drunk becomes sober and still goes to hell. What that sinner and every sinner needs is the deliverance that only Jesus Christ can give. As John Calvin put it, "Let us ... learn that, as we

are all subject to the tyranny of Satan, there is no other way in which [God] commences his reign within us, than when he rescues us, by the powerful and victorious arm of Christ, from that wretched and accursed bondage" (Calvin's Commentaries [Baker], "Harmony of the Evangelists," 2:72-73)." (Steven Cole)

Bock on **plunder** (skulon or spoils) - The spoils in these texts are the benefits of salvation distributed to those who have been redeemed. (Ibid)

J C Ryle on **plunder** (KJV = "divideth the spoils") - He takes possession of the affections and intellectual capacities, over which the devil once exercised dominion, and uses them for His own glory. Ford quotes a saying of Bishop Reynolds: "God maketh use of that art, wealth, power, learning, wisdom, intellect, which Satan used against Christ's kingdom, as instruments and ornaments unto the Gospel; as, when a magazine in war is taken, the General makes use of those arms, which were provided against him, for his own service."

One is reminded of a phrase in Isaiah 53:12+ describing one of the effects of Christ's Crucifixion - "Therefore, I will allot Him (MESSIAH) a portion with the great, And **He will divide the booty with the strong;** Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors." (See also Isaiah 49:25-26).

Overpowers (conquer) (3528)(**nikao**) means to conquer, to be victorious or to prevail in the face of obstacles. Satan's kingdom presents obstacles such as the scribes who opposed Jesus, but Jesus overpowers them with His pristine perfect logic. And because He has overcome, all of His brethren are now overcomers in Him even as He promised the first disciples "You are from God, little children, and have **overcome** (**nikao**) them; because greater is He Who is in you (CHRIST AND HIS SPIRIT) than he who is in the world (SATAN AND HIS EMISSARIES)." (1 Jn 4:4+) " For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has **overcome** (**nikao**) the world–our faith." (1 Jn 5:4+) Now we need to bask in and believe His Word for He declared "These things I have spoken to you, so that (PURPOSE CLAUSE) in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have **overcome** (**nikao**) the world." (Jn 16:33) **Overcome** describes the quality of a true saint who may stumble and fall but who God always picks up and he continues onward and upward in the power and motivation of the victory Christ has won for us on the Cross.

> **THOUGHT** - Paul uses a derivative of **nikao** in Ro 8:37KJV+ declaring "But in all these things we **overwhelmingly conquer** (hupernikao) through Him who loved us." This is our lot in this life beloved. Are you living in light of this great truth? If not confess, repent and be filled with all powerful Spirit Who Alone can enable this quality of "overcoming life," which is the will of God for all of His children in Christ!

Takes away (142) **airo** literally means to lift up something (Mt 17:27) and to carry it (Lxx - Ge 44:1, Ex 25:28 = the Ark). In the first Septuagint use of **airo** in Ge 35:2 Jacob told his household "**Put away** (airo) the foreign gods." **Friberg's** summary of airo - (1) literally, as lifting up something take up, pick, raise (Mt 17.27; Rev 10.5); absolutely, of a ship weigh anchor, depart (Acts 27.13); hyperbolically, of a mountain arise (Mt 21.21); idiomatically literally raise one's eyes, i.e. look up (Jn 11.41); literally take up the cross, i.e. be prepared to suffer to the point of death (Mt 16.24); literally lift up someone's soul, i.e. keep someone in suspense without being able to come to a conclusion (Jn 10.24); (2) as lifting up and carrying something away remove, carry off, take away (Jn 11.39); idiomatically = literally take from, i.e. cause to no longer experience (Mt 21.43); (3) of removing by force; (a) do away with, kill, execute (Jn 19.15); (b) sweep away as with a flood (Mt 24.39); (c) destroy, do away with (Jn 11.48); (d) as a religious technical term, of the effect of Christ's paying the complete penalty for sin remove, take away (Jn 1.29) (Borrow Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

Armor (3833) panoplia from **pás** = all, every + **hoplon** = weapon, originally any tool or implement for preparing a thing, became used in the plural for weapons of warfare) is literally wholly armed and refers to the complete set of instruments used in offensive and defensive war. The literal meaning referred to the full preparation of a foot soldier for offense and defense - the complete suit of armor. Certainly Paul could claim knowledge of the Roman soldier's armor, being chained to one for some three years.

Distributes (1239)(**diadidomi** from **dia** = transition, dispersion + **didomi** = to give) literally is to deliver through and means to give out, assign, distribute, dispense, allot, give out especially hand to hand in succession, " apportion among various parties" (BDAG).

Used 4x in NT - Lk. 11:22; Lk. 18:22; Jn. 6:11; Acts 4:35

Plunder (4661)(skulon plural in the NT, for what is stripped off a fallen enemy spoils, booty. the arms striptoff a slain enemy. Thayer - (from the obsolete skuo, `to pull off', allied to xuo xulon (but cf. Curtius, sec. 113; Vanicek, p. 1115)); a. a (beast's) skin stripped off, a pelt. b. the arms stripped off from an enemy, spoils: plural Luke 11:22. (Sophocles, Thucydides, and following; the Septuagint.)*

J C Ryle - Let us observe in these verses what a fearful picture our Lord draws of Satan's power. There are four points in His

description, which are peculiarly instructive. Christ speaks of Satan as a “strong man.” The strength of Satan has been only too well proved by his victories over the souls of men. He who tempted Adam and Eve to rebel against God, and brought sin into the world,—he who has led captive the vast majority of mankind, and robbed them of heaven; that evil one is indeed a mighty foe. He who is called the “Prince of this world,” is not an enemy to be despised. The devil is very strong.

Christ speaks of Satan as a “strong man, armed.” Satan is well supplied with defensive armor. He is not to be overcome by slight assaults, and feeble exertions. He that would overcome him must put forth all his strength. “This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.”—And Satan is also well supplied with offensive weapons. He is never at a loss for means to injure the soul of man. He has snares of every kind, and engines of every description. He knows exactly how every rank, and class, and age, and nation, and people can be assailed with most advantage. The devil is well armed.

Christ speaks of man’s heart as being Satan’s “palace.” The natural heart is the favorite abode of the evil one, and all its faculties and powers are his servants, and do his will. He sits upon the throne which God ought to occupy, and governs the inward man. The devil is the “spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience.” (Eph 2:2.)

Christ speaks of Satan’s “goods being at peace.” So long as a man is dead in trespasses and sin, so long his heart is at ease about spiritual things. He has no fear about the future. He has no anxiety about his soul. He has no dread of falling into hell. All this is a false peace no doubt. It is a sleep which cannot last, and from which there must be one day an awful waking. But there is such a peace beyond question. Thoughtless, stolid, reckless insensibility about eternal things is one of the worst symptoms of the devil reigning over a man’s soul.

Let us never think lightly of the devil. That common practice of idle jesting about Satan which we may often mark in the world, is a great evil. A prisoner must be a very hardened man who jests about the executioner and the gallows. The heart must be in a very bad state, when a man can talk with levity about hell and the devil.

Let us thank God that there is One who is stronger even than Satan. That One is the Friend of sinners, Jesus the Son of God. Mighty as the devil is, he was overcome by Jesus on the cross, when He triumphed over him openly. Strong as the devil is, Christ can pluck his captives out of his hands, and break the chains which bind them. May we never rest till we know that deliverance by experience, and have been set free by the Son of God!

Luke 11:23 "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.

NET Luke 11:23 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

GNT Luke 11:23 μ ν μετ μο κατ μο στιν, κα μ συν γων μετ μο σκορπ ζει.

NLT Luke 11:23 "Anyone who isn't with me opposes me, and anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me.

KJV Luke 11:23 He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

ESV Luke 11:23 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

NIV Luke 11:23 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters.

ASV Luke 11:23 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

CSB Luke 11:23 Anyone who is not with Me is against Me, and anyone who does not gather with Me scatters.

NKJ Luke 11:23 "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

NRS Luke 11:23 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

YLT Luke 11:23 he who is not with me is against me, and he who is not gathering with me doth scatter.

NAB Luke 11:23 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

NJB Luke 11:23 'Anyone who is not with me is against me; and anyone who does not gather in with me throws away.

GWN Luke 11:23 "Whoever isn't with me is against me. Whoever doesn't gather with me scatters.

BBE Luke 11:23 He who is not with me is against me, and he who will not give me help in getting people together is driving them away.

NAS Luke 11:23 "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.

- **He who is not with Me is against Me** Lk 9:50; Mt 12:30; Rev 3:15,16
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 1 - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:14-23 The Vilification of Jesus, Part 2 - John MacArthur

NO NEUTRALITY:
NO MIDDLE ROAD

He who is not with Me is against Me - To take the "middle road" with Jesus is to take a journey on the highway to hell! Simply put there is no middle ground. This is a clear statement that there are only two options in this one life. You are either for Jesus or against Jesus. You cannot straddle the fence, for Jesus did not leave that as an option. Plainly stated, if you are not a follower of Jesus, then by "default" you are a follower of Satan! Satan is your master, not Jesus. If God is not your Father (only true of believers), then by default the Devil is your dad, which might make you mad! You may not be in a "Satanic Cult," but you still owe your allegiance to Satan whether you realize it or not! There is no such thing as a “part time Christian.” If you are only a follower of Christ on Sunday morning then, according to Jesus, you are not really a follower at all.

There is no place for neutrality in the battle between light and dark!
To be undecided is to be decided!

> **THOUGHT** - Have you decided? Are you for Christ? If not you are against Him and more fearful, HE IS AGAINST YOU! If you have decided for Christ celebrate by playing **I Have Decided**. Or Michael Card's version I Have Decided. See story on I Have Decided to Follow Jesus.

Jesus' ministry and specifically in the present context the irrefutable evidence of His power over the kingdom of darkness demands a decision. The only two possible conclusions are that either Jesus comes from God or He does not. And not to believe that Jesus cast out demons by the power of God and not to align with Him is in effect aligning against Him. You cannot be a disinterested bystander! There is no neutrality in this war between Jesus' kingdom of light and Satan's kingdom of darkness. This is the opposite principle from what is stated in Lk 9:50+.

Ron Daniel - Many people think, "Well, I haven't decided yet about this whole Jesus thing." Let me tell you, if you've chosen to be undecided, you've already made your choice - you're against Him.

Steven Cole - You can’t straddle the fence by saying, “I’m not a committed follower of Jesus, but neither am I a follower of Satan!” Nor can you correctly say, “I don’t follow Jesus or Satan. I’m my own master.” Jesus makes it plain: Either you follow Him or you are against Him and in Satan’s camp. Those are the only options.

Deffinbaugh observes that "In football, lining up in the neutral zone is an offense. In life, many seem to think that neutrality is a virtue. In the Bible, neutrality toward the person of Christ is offensive to God. In Lk 11:24-26 Luke will inform his reader that neutrality toward Jesus is also dangerous....Neutrality about the person of Jesus is no virtue, it is a vice, and indeed it invites Satanic involvement, and it leads to a latter state that is worse than the former. Are those who attribute Jesus’ power to Satan His enemies, those who live dangerously? So, too, are those who think they can remain neutral concerning Him, for those who are not for Him are against Him." (Evidence that Produced Various Verdicts Luke 11:14-36)

The Gospel is of such a nature,
as to its offers and its claims,
that it cannot tolerate indifference.
- Broadus

The upshot of Jesus' clear teaching on two kingdoms and two rulers is that Jesus' hearers (and readers) must make a choice of their will to follow Jesus and enter God's Kingdom to follow Satan and his demons and remain in the kingdom of darkness. Luke explains how this "choice" is made. It is choice that is empowered by the Spirit of God and the Gospel of God "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." (Acts 26:18+)

J C Ryle on **He that is not with me is against me** - This is a general truth concerning all waverers, and doubters, and half-hearted, and excuse-making people, of whom no doubt there were many among our Lord’s hearers. They argue that our Lord is exposing the awful danger of many of His Jewish hearers, who had been a little roused by John the Baptist, and seemed likely to receive Christ when He appeared. And yet, when He did appear, they hung back and affected to be troubled with doubts, and so continued neutral

and undecided.—This opinion appears to me by far the most probable, and is confirmed by the passage which immediately follows. The sentence is directed against undecided Jews, who were like the man from whom the unclean spirit had gone forth. Their hesitating neutrality was a most dangerous position. Their last end was likely to be worse than their first (Lk 11:24-26).

"Neutrality in religion is always cowardice.
God turns the cowardice of a desired neutrality into terror."
--Oswald Chambers

William Hendriksen has a pithy comment - **Compromise fails.** When "the sons of God" marry "the daughters of men," the result is the Flood (Gen. 6:1, 2, 13). When King Saul brings God an offering of partial obedience, he is rejected (1 Sam. 15:1–23). By subordinating the true religion of Jehovah to selfish political interests Jeroboam brings a curse upon himself, his family, and his nation (1 Kings 12:25–30; 13:4, 5; 14:6–16). And when Peter, in a moment of weakness, compromises the doctrine of "salvation solely by grace," he deserves the rebuke administered by Paul (Gal. 2:11–21). The policy of "fearing Jehovah and worshiping one's own gods" (2 Kings 17:33) never succeeds. Joshua knew this (Josh. 24:15), and so did Elijah (1 Kings 18:21). Moreover, the sinister policy of half-covenanting with the world, the attempt to compromise, confuses and therefore scatters the sheep (Matt. 9:36); while steadfast loyalty gathers them (Isa. 40:11; John 10:16). (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

MacArthur warns those who think that because they do not show hatred to Christ they are "okay" with Christ -- "It is not necessary to oppose Christ in order to be against Him; it is only necessary not to be with Him. Nor is it necessary to actively interfere with His work in order to be one who scatters; it is only necessary to not gather with Him. The person who does not belong to God is the enemy of God (Ro 5:10); the person who is not a child of God through Christ is a rebel against God." (See Matthew Commentary)....The complete record of the evidence in the inspired Gospels that Jesus is the Son of God and Messiah is more conclusive even than the experience of those who were there during Christ's life. He is either God incarnate or the greatest blasphemer who ever lived. He either speaks for God or for Satan. **To reject the irrefutable evidence concerning Him; to follow instead a satanic false teacher, guru, mystic, or false prophet, is to side with those who openly blaspheme Him, and be worthy of eternal damnation in hell.** (See Luke Commentary)

Let there be no reserve, no compromise, no half-heartedness,
no attempt to reconcile God and mammon in our Christianity.
-- J C Ryle

He who does not gather with Me, scatters (skorpizo) - **NLT** has "anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me and anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me." How are we "**with** Jesus? How do we **gather with** Jesus? We aid in gathering people to be His disciples (Prov. 11:30; Dan. 12:3; Matt. 9:37, 38; Luke 19:10; John 4:35, 36; 1 Cor. 9:22). Jesus is saying if you are not working to advance His Kingdom you are working against Him.

Morgan - "Only two forces are at work in the world, the gathering and the scattering. Whoever does the one contradicts the other."

> **THOUGHT** - Jesus' **axiomatic apophthegm** in Luke 11:23 reminds me of the famous scene in the Alamo - "**Those who stay, cross over the line** (in the sand)." - see "Drawing a Line in the Sand" (Video). The line between the Kingdom of Jesus and the Kingdom of Satan has been clearly drawn in the "eternal sands of time" (so to speak). There is no straddling the middle. Jesus said "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but **whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.** For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?" (Mk 8:34-36+) Have you lost your life for the sake of Jesus? Have you crossed over the line? There is no straddling this line! To not chose to follow Jesus is a decision against Him!

J C Ryle - Let us observe, for another thing, in these verses, how strongly our Lord teaches the **impossibility of neutrality**. He says, "he that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth."

The principle laid down in these words should be constantly remembered by all who make any **profession** of decided religion. We all naturally love an easy Christianity. We dislike collisions and separation. We like, if possible, to keep in with both sides. We fear extremes. We dread being righteous overmuch. We are anxious not to go too far.—**Such thoughts as these are full of peril to the soul.** Once allowed to get the upper hand, they may do us immense harm. Nothing is so offensive to Christ as **lukewarmness** in religion (READ Rev 3:16-17+). To be utterly dead and ignorant, is to be an object of pity as well as blame. But to know the truth and yet "*halt between two opinions*," is one of the chiefest of sins.

Let it be the settled determination of our minds that we will serve Christ with all our hearts, if we serve Him at all. Let there be no reserve, no compromise, no half-heartedness, no attempt to reconcile God and mammon in our Christianity. Let us resolve, by God's help, to be "with Christ," and "gather" by Christ's side, and allow the world to say and do what it will.—It may cost us something at

first. It will certainly repay us in the long run. Without decision there is no happiness in religion. He that follows Jesus most fully, will always follow Him most comfortably.—Without decision in religion, there is no usefulness to others. The half-hearted Christian attracts none by the beauty of his life, and wins no respect from the world.

Gather (4863)(**sunago** from **sun** = with + **ago** = to lead,) means literally to lead together. To gather (in) or gather (up) (Mt 13:47; 25:24, 26; Lk 3:17; 15:13; Jn 6:12f; 15:6). It is the opposite skorpizo (scatter) and merizo (distribute, divide out);

Scatters (present tense - continually)(4650)(**skorpizo**) means scatter or disperse, to cause a group or gathering to go in various directions, scatter, disperse. It is the opposite sunago (gather). It is used as a metaphor drawn from seed sowing, for what one does to help those in need distribute, disperse, give generously (2Co 9.9)

Thayer - (probably from the root, skarp, to cut asunder, cut to pieces; akin is σκορπιος; cf. Latin*scalpere, scrobs*, etc.; Fick 1:240; 3:811, etc.)); to scatter: ο λυκος σκορπιζει τα προβατα, John 10:12; ομην συναγων μετ εμου σκορπιζει, Matthew 12:30; Luke 11:23 (this proverb is taken from a flock to which the body of Christs followers is likened (others regard the proverb as borrowed from agriculture); συναγει τους εσκορπισμενους το οργανον (*i.e.* a trumpet), Artemidorus Daldianus, oneir. 1, 56 at the beginning); τινα, in the passive, of those who, routed or terror stricken or driven by some other impulse, fly in every direction: followed by εις with the accusative of place, John 16:32 (cf. Winers Grammar, 516 (481)) (1 Macc. 6:54; φοβηθεντες εκορπισθησαν, Plutarch, Timol. 4; add, Josephus, Antiquities 6, 6, 3). equivalent to to scatter abroad (what others may collect for themselves), of one dispensing blessings liberally: 2 Corinthians 9:9 from Psalm 111:9 (Psalm 112:9) (cf. Winers Grammar, 469 (437)). (According to Phrynichus the word was used by Hecataeus; it was also used in addition to the writings already cited by Strabo 4, p. 198; Lucian, asin. 32; Aelian v. h. 13, 45 (here διεσκορπιζω (edited by Hercher); λογους (cf. Latin *spargere rumores*), Josephus, Antiquities 16, 1, 2); cf. Lob. ad Phryn (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament)

In Hellenistic Greek skorpizō is used in one case to describe the scattering of materials hastily built into a dam which was struck by a violent flood

TDNT - skorpízō means “to scatter,” “to disperse,” “to divide.” In the LXX it has much the same sense as diaspeírein (diasporá). It is used in the OT for God’s judgment on enemies (2 Sa 22:15). The Egyptians are scattered according to Wis. 17:3. The judgment on Jerusalem in Ezek. 5:1ff. includes scattering as well as fire and sword. The sheep will be scattered when the shepherd is smitten in Zech. 13:7ff.

Skorpizo - 5x in 5v - scattered(2), scatters(3). Matt. 12:30; Lk. 11:23; Jn. 10:12; Jn. 16:32; 2 Co. 9:9 **Skorpizo** - 9x in Septuagint (Lxx) - 2 Sa 22:15; Neh. 4:19; Job 39:15; Ps. 18:14; Ps. 112:9; Ps. 144:6; Ezek. 5:12; Hab. 3:10; Mal. 2:3;

Luke 11:24 "When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'

NET Luke 11:24 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a person, it passes through waterless places looking for rest but not finding any. Then it says, 'I will return to the home I left.'

GNT Luke 11:24 ταν τ κ θαρτον πνε μα ξ λθ π το νθρ που, δι ρχεται δι ν δρων τ πων ζητο ν ν παυσιν κα μ ε ρ σκον· [τ τε] λ γει, ποστρ ψω ε ς τ ν ο κ ν μου θεν ξ λθον·

NLT Luke 11:24 "When an evil spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert, searching for rest. But when it finds none, it says, 'I will return to the person I came from.'

KJV Luke 11:24 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

ESV Luke 11:24 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'

NIV Luke 11:24 "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.'

ASV Luke 11:24 The unclean spirit when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and finding none, he saith, I will turn back unto my house whence I came out.

CSB Luke 11:24 "When an unclean spirit comes out of a man, it roams through waterless places looking for rest, and not finding rest, it then says, 'I'll go back to my house where I came from.'

NKJ Luke 11:24 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says,`I will return to my house from which I came.'

NRS Luke 11:24 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'

YLT Luke 11:24 'When the unclean spirit may go forth from the man it walketh through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding, it saith, I will turn back to my house whence I came forth;

NAB Luke 11:24 "When an unclean spirit goes out of someone, it roams through arid regions searching for rest but, finding none, it says, 'I shall return to my home from which I came.'

NJB Luke 11:24 'When an unclean spirit goes out of someone it wanders through waterless country looking for a place to rest, and not finding one it says, "I will go back to the home I came from."

GWN Luke 11:24 "When an evil spirit comes out of a person, it goes through dry places looking for a place to rest. But it doesn't find any. Then it says, 'I'll go back to the home I left.'

BBE Luke 11:24 The unclean spirit, when he has gone out of a man, goes through dry places, looking for rest; and when he does not get it, he says, I will go back to my house from which I came.

- **When the unclean spirit goes out of a man** Mt 12:43-45
- **it passes** Job 1:7; 2:2; 1 Peter 5:8
- **through waterless places**Judges 6:37-40; Ps 63:1; Isa 35:1,2,7; 41:17-19; 44:3; Ezekiel 47:8-11; Eph 2:2
- **seeking rest** Pr 4:16; Isa 48:22; 57:20,21
- **'I will return to my house from which I came** Mark 5:10; 9:25
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:24-28 The Danger of Moral Reformation - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Matthew 12:43-45+ (MACARTHUR THINKS THIS WAS AN EARLIER EVENT IN GALILEE, LUKE'S VERSION OCCURRING LATER IN JUDEA). "Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it. 44 "Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came'; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. 45 "Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation."

REFORMATION WITHOUT REGENERATION

Steven Cole - Jesus goes on (Luke 11:24-26) to illustrate what happens to the man who tries to be neutral: It doesn't work. (The Heavenly War)

Michael Andrus adds "The Pharisees were all about reformation, making bad people good and good people better. They had a list of religious rules a mile long—all designed to curb the excesses of human behavior. Even their exorcisms were designed to help a person clean up his act and live a normal life. Jesus has a totally different purpose. When he performs an exorcism, the ultimate purpose is to draw the person (and the people who witness it) to himself, to regenerate them and to give them new life!" (Luke 11:14-11:36 No Switzerlands in this War)

When the unclean (akathartos) **spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest** - When does this occur? This could be a reference to the false Jewish exorcist, the demon temporarily leaving producing the ruse of a real exorcism. Note Jesus does not say the demon was "cast out" (For unclean spirit see Luke 4:33+). **Waterless places** refers to the demon seeking rest in dry, arid places, but MacArthur sees it as a metaphor (below).

MacArthur explains that the phrase **passes through waterless places seeking rest** is a metaphor because "demons are spirit, and they don't need water. It's simply a metaphor for the barrenness of a demon floating around in the nether world, the spirit world. They do their work through people....And here is this demon, who leaves because of some moral change and wanders aimlessly in the spiritual realm with no person through whom to work his diabolical work. To be in that existence outside someone is like being in a barren desert for a demon." (Luke 11:24-28 The Danger of Moral Reformation)

NIV Study Bible has an interesting thought- Jesus is perhaps referring to the work of Jewish exorcists, who claimed to cast out

demons (cf. v. 19 and note) but who rejected the kingdom of God as represented by Jesus and whose exorcisms were therefore ineffective. (Borrow NIV Study Bible)

ESV Study note is more generic - Cleansing from sin must be followed by obedience to God's word, not complacency. (Borrow ESV Study Bible)

Holman Study Bible: NKJV Edition - These verses warn that the exorcism of a demon is incomplete unless Christ enters by faith and indwells the person who is healed. Otherwise, there is nothing to prevent the demon from reentering the person or even making things **worse**.

And not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came- The demon concludes the first **house**, the man from whom he was exorcised, was the better place and determines to return. This refers to demon possession of the person, because the person is the demon's "house" so to speak.

Steven Cole - Perhaps the man has experienced a moral reformation, either through the Jewish exorcists or through his own will power and determination. The demon that he struggled against for years has left him. As **Matthew Henry** describes it, Satan gives order to his troops to retreat temporarily in order to draw the deluded soul into an ambush. At first, it is wonderful! The man sweeps up the dirt from his soul and feels a sense of order and peace that he never felt when he was in bondage to his former sins. But, meanwhile, the departed demon is restless. Passing through waterless places is a metaphorical expression that "denotes that to dwell out of men is to him a wretched banishment, and resembles a barren wilderness" (Calvin, p. 84). The demon is not a happy camper until he moves back in. So, he goes and finds seven other demons more evil than himself and they move in. "The last state of that man becomes worse than the first." **What are we to learn from this illustration? J C Ryle** says it well: "*Let us observe ... how dangerous it is to be content with any change in religion short of thorough conversion to God*". Jesus' words "*are a solemn warning to us, never to be satisfied with religious reformation without heart conversion*" (p. 26). As **Martyn Lloyd-Jones** points out, "*we must always remember that there are other powers, beside that of Christ, which can give 'results.' ... It is possible for men and women to get relief from many of their ills and troubles apart altogether from the gospel*" (Evangelistic Sermons [Banner of Truth], p. 179). This is especially important in our day when truth and doctrine are set aside as of no consequence. We don't really care about doctrine. We want to know, does it work? What will the gospel do for me? Will it help my troubled marriage? If not, I'll go to the world if it will get me some results. I had a church member ask me, "*If my wife finds help by counseling with a Hindu psychiatrist, what's wrong with that*?" I didn't say this in reply, but later I thought that I should have said, *"If she got relief by sacrificing a chicken to Satan, would that be okay*?" (The Heavenly War)

Michael Andrus - In verses 24-26 we have a strange story about a man who has an evil spirit (a demon) but the demon leaves. Now there's a lot we don't know here, but I think from the context it's safe to surmise that this man has experienced some sort of exorcism rite, probably by one of the Pharisees. The passage tells us this about the man: he is "swept and put in order." This indicates that the exorcism has succeeded in getting rid of a number of symptoms, perhaps bad habits and addictions, and it has produced a distinct improvement in the man's behavior and appearance. But then the demon returns and brings with him seven other demons worse than himself. And the final condition of the man is worse than it was originally. What is the point? I think Jesus is saying that exorcism cannot be a goal in and of itself. Exorcism is a means to an end. Its purpose is to drive out evil so that truth and righteousness might take its place. An empty tenement just invites squatters. Another analogy might be that when you delete data from a computer hard drive, the deleted data is still there, in some form, and it can be fully erased only by overwriting it with new data. The place in one's life once controlled by demonic forces must be overwritten by Jesus and the gospel or one's life is not secure from the return of a fatal virus. Friends, here is the question we must wrestle with: Is it ultimately any advantage to enter a Christless eternity sober rather than drunk, generous rather than greedy, celibate rather than promiscuous, clothed and in your right mind rather than naked and foaming at the mouth? Is a reformed sinner any better off in hell than an unreformed one? I don't mean to say that there's no reason to be pleased when someone reforms his behavior. They're surely more pleasant to be around, they make better neighbors, they stop hurting the people who love them. That's all great, but man's dreadful sinful condition can't be healed by a little moral tidying up. In fact, there is a very real sense in which a reformed person without God can actually be worse off than an unreformed person—because at least the latter knows he's messed up and can't save himself, while the former is often proud of the progress he has made on his own. John MacArthur writes cogently: "Jesus had little trouble reaching prostitutes, thieves, extortioners, murderers, and the outcasts of society. But he had an almost impossible time reaching religious and moral people who were under the delusion that outward propriety made them acceptable to God." 7 The fact is, there has probably never been a group more committed to a demanding religious and moral code than the Pharisees, and there has never been a group so far from God. (Luke 11:14-11:36 No Switzerlands in this War)

Unclean (169)(**akathartos** from **a** = without + **kathaíro** = cleanse from **katharos** = clean, pure, free from the adhesion of anything that soils, adulterates, corrupts, in an ethical sense, free from corrupt desire, sin, and guilt) (See study of related word **akatharsia**) in a moral sense refers to that which is unclean in thought, word, and deed. It can describe a state of moral impurity, especially sexual

sin and the word foul is an excellent rendering. The idea is that which morally indecent or filthy. It is not surprising that as noted below this word is repeatedly applied to filthy demonic spirits in the Gospels. The related term **akatharsia** refers to filth or refuse! Now with this description ponder for a moment the true nature of demonic activity - foul, filth, refuse. One cannot help but think of the moral filth and refuse which is now easily found on countless internet pornography sites, which undoubtedly are a reflection of filthy, unclean demonic spirits possessing and influencing the lost, deceived perveyors of this immoral trash! O God, deliver your pristine Bride, especially the believing men therein, from the evil addictive power of these internet sites which are too horrible to even speak about! Amen (cf Ps 101:3 where "fasten grip" = Hebrew dabaq = "stick like glue!" Beware!)

> **Unclean spirits** is a term used 23x in the NT, mostly in the Gospels: Zech. 13:2; Matt. 10:1; Matt. 12:43; Mk. 1:23; Mk. 1:26; Mk. 1:27; Mk. 3:11; Mk. 3:30; Mk. 5:2; Mk. 5:8; Mk. 5:13; Mk. 6:7; Mk. 7:25; Mk. 9:25; Lk. 4:36; Lk. 6:18; Lk. 8:29; Lk. 9:42; Lk. 11:24; Acts 5:16; Acts 8:7; Rev. 16:13; Rev. 18:2

Luke 11:25 "And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order.

> NET Luke 11:25 When it returns, it finds the house swept clean and put in order.
>
> GNT Luke 11:25 κα λθ ν ε ρ σκει σεσαρωμ νον κα κεκοσμημ νον.
>
> NLT Luke 11:25 So it returns and finds that its former home is all swept and in order.
>
> KJV Luke 11:25 And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.
>
> ESV Luke 11:25 And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order.
>
> NIV Luke 11:25 When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order.
>
> ASV Luke 11:25 And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished.
>
> CSB Luke 11:25 And returning, it finds the house swept and put in order.
>
> NKJ Luke 11:25 "And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order.
>
> NRS Luke 11:25 When it comes, it finds it swept and put in order.
>
> YLT Luke 11:25 and having come, it findeth it swept and adorned;
>
> NAB Luke 11:25 But upon returning, it finds it swept clean and put in order.
>
> NJB Luke 11:25 But on arrival, finding it swept and tidied,
>
> GWN Luke 11:25 When it comes, it finds the house swept clean and in order.
>
> BBE Luke 11:25 And when he comes, he sees that it has been made fair and clean.

- **it finds it swept and put in order** 2 Chr 24:17-22; Ps 36:3; 81:11,12; 125:5; Mt 12:44,45; 2 Th 2:9-12; 2 Peter 2:10-19; Jude 1:8-13
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:24-28 The Danger of Moral Reformation - John MacArthur

THE DEADLY DECEPTION OF MORALISM

The parallel passage in Mt 12:44 adds one phrase (see **bold** words below)

> "Then it says, 'I will return to my house (NOTE THE DEMON SEE THE PERSON AS HIS POSSESSION!) from which I came'; and when it comes, **it finds it unoccupied**, swept, and put in order.
>
> > **Comment**: The only way to absolutely assure that one won't be seen by a demon as his "possession" is to be "possessed" by Jesus Christ. Titus 2:14+ says Jesus "gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for **His own possession**, zealous for good deeds." (cf 1 Peter 2:9+) In short "**swept and unoccupied**" is the problem with morality because the moral man's heart is empty. Only Jesus can fill his heart and thereby prevent a worse situation ("more evil" - Lk 11:26).

And when it comes, it finds it swept (saroo) **and put in order** (kosmeo) - **Swept** and **put in order** describes the person as ostensibly in "good shape" but the problem is his "spiritual house" is empty and the strong man's henchmen can return. And so the

demon returns to possess the man again. How is this possible? Clearly it is possible because the man does not have the **Spirit of Jesus dwelling within him** (I realize that this did not routinely happen to believers until after Pentecost when all received the indwelling Spirit). Presumably even before the giving of the Spirit if one truly was **born again** they would be in effect "immune" from demonic possession.

We must not only be moralized, but spiritualized.
We must not only be reformed, but born again.
--- J C Ryle

Hendriksen on one whose "house" is **put in order** - "I don't smoke; I don't drink; I don't swear. Hallelujah, I'm a Christian." If a telephone pole could talk, it might say the same thing. But a series of zeros does not make a Christian. A million negatives do not produce even one positive. We pity the man with an empty mind. But what about the person with an empty heart … and an empty life? (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

As **MacArthur** asks "Do you know what moral rearmament will do for you? Do you know what moral reformation will do for you? It will kick open a double door for the demons to come in. This is a frightening reality, folks. One demon went out and eight came back. We're talking here about a very religious person. We're talking here about a person who cleans up his act. By the way, this is almost identical to the parable that Jesus told in the very similar account in Matthew 12. There, Matthew 12:43-45, the similar discussion months earlier in Galilee. The main point is this, **moral reformation is dangerous. Morality without salvation is frightening.** (Luke 11:24-28 The Danger of Moral Reformation)

John MacArthur has an interesting application of Jesus' teaching that speaks to a prevalent mindset among many in America today - True Christians rightly decried the abandonment of the saving gospel for the social gospel by the liberal mainline denominations in the previous century. Yet the emphasis among current professing believers on restoring public morality amounts to nothing more than a form of neo-liberalism. Once again the saving gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is being set aside in favor of a different, non-saving message. Albert Mohler defines **moralism** as "the belief that the Gospel can be reduced to improvements in behavior" ("Why Moralism Is Not the Gospel—And Why So Many Christians Think It Is"). It is a false gospel and hence under the condemnation of God (Gal. 1:8–9). Dr. Mohler goes on to note that "Moralism … promises the favor of God and the satisfaction of God's righteousness to sinners if they will only behave and commit themselves to moral improvement … we sin against Christ and we misrepresent the Gospel when we suggest to sinners that what God demands of them is moral improvement in accordance with the Law. (ibid.) He then concludes by noting the sharp contrast between the **saving Gospel** and **moralism**: "**Moralism** produces sinners who are (potentially) better behaved. The Gospel of Christ transforms sinners into the adopted sons and daughters of God" (ibid). Moralism was never the message of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Old Testament prophets, or the New Testament apostles. On the contrary, Jesus reserved His most scathing denunciations for the outwardly moral scribes and Pharisees, characterizing them as hypocrites, destined for eternal punishment in hell (Matt. 23; Luke 11:37–54). Improving a nation's morality, like bodily discipline, does have the limited temporal value of making life safer and more peaceful. But making a society more moral will not and cannot bring God's blessing, which comes only from true godliness (1 Tim. 4:8). A more outwardly moral society will not escape the same divine judgment that falls on perverted killers, any more than Pharisaic Judaism in Jesus' time escaped the devastating judgment of God in A.D. 70 and the eternal hell that followed. There is only one reality that God blesses—penitent saving faith in and love for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. That is not to say, of course, that Christians should not at all times hate evil and in all places oppose wickedness in every form. The issue is whether we are to carry out that effort by pursuing societal moralism through human effort, or by preaching personal salvation through the power of God. (**For more in depth discussion read Dr MacArthur's interesting message wherein he gives 15 dangers of promoting cultural morality without regeneration of hearts** - Luke 11:24-28 The Danger of Moral Reformation)

Swept (4563)(**saroo**) mans to sweep by using a broom. The verb is used by Matthew in the parallel passage (Mt 12:44) and also by Luke in his description of the woman who sweeps the house to search for her ten silver coins (Lk 15:8-note). There are no uses in the Septuagint. In classic Greek writings saroo has a metaphoric meaning of "exhausted." (*Liddell-Scott*).

Put in order (2885) (**kosmeo** from **kosmos** = adorning or order, ornament, decoration, adornment -- this root word gives us our English ***cosmetic*** something women use to "adorn" their face and make themselves more physically attractive) speaks of that which is to put in order. To make congruous, fitting or orderly. To decorate. To embellish (to make beautiful with ornamentation; to heighten the attractiveness of by adding decorative details) **Kosmeo** conveys the idea of arranging something in proper order so as to give it symmetry, comeliness, and beauty. **Kosmeo** depicts one who looks good on the outside but is filled with rottenness on the inside! What this man needed was not **reformation** (put in order) but **regeneration** (a brand new "house" so to speak).

QUESTION - Can a Christian be demon possessed? Can a Christian be demonized?see video

ANSWER - While the Bible does not explicitly state whether a Christian can be possessed by a demon, related biblical truths make it abundantly clear that Christians cannot be demon possessed. There is a distinct difference between being possessed by a demon and being oppressed or influenced by a demon. Demon possession involves a demon having direct/complete control over the thoughts and/or actions of a person (Matthew 17:14-18; Luke 4:33-35; 8:27-33). Demon oppression or influence involves a demon or demons attacking a person spiritually and/or encouraging him/her into sinful behavior. Notice that in all the New Testament passages dealing with spiritual warfare, there are no instructions to cast a demon out of a believer (Ephesians 6:10-18). Believers are told to resist the devil (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9), not to cast him out.

Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). Surely the Holy Spirit would not allow a demon to possess the same person He is indwelling. It is unthinkable that God would allow one of His children, whom He purchased with the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19) and made into a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), to be possessed and controlled by a demon. Yes, as believers, we wage war with Satan and his demons, but not from within ourselves. The apostle John declares, “You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Who is the One in us? The Holy Spirit. Who is the one in the world? Satan and his demons. Therefore, the believer has overcome the world of demons, and the case for demon possession of a believer cannot be made scripturally.

With the strong biblical evidence that a Christian cannot be demon possessed in view, some Bible teachers use the term “demonization” to refer to a demon having control over a Christian. Some argue that while a Christian cannot be demon possessed, a Christian can be demonized. Typically, the description of demonization is virtually identical to the description of demon possession. So, the same issue results. Changing the terminology does not change the fact that a demon cannot inhabit or take full control of a Christian. Demonic influence and oppression are realities for Christians, no doubt, but it is simply not biblical to say that a Christian can be possessed by a demon or demonized.

Much of the reasoning behind the demonization concept is the personal experience of seeing someone who was “definitely” a Christian exhibiting evidence of being controlled by a demon. It is crucially important, though, that we do not allow personal experience to influence our interpretation of Scripture. Rather, we must filter our personal experiences through the truth of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Seeing someone whom we thought to be a Christian exhibiting the behavior of being demonized should cause us to question the genuineness of his/her faith. (**Ed**: *That is he/she might be a professor but not a possessor of genuine salvation in Christ*). It should not cause us alter our viewpoint on whether a Christian can be demon possessed / demonized. Perhaps the person truly is a Christian but is severely demon oppressed and/or suffering from severe psychological problems. But again, our experiences must meet the test of Scripture, not the other way around. GotQuestions.org

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Luke 11:26 "Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

NET Luke 11:26 Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there, so the last state of that person is worse than the first."

GNT Luke 11:26 τ τε πορε εται κα παραλαμβ νει τερα πνε ματα πονηρ τερα αυτο πτ κα ε σελθ ντα κατοικε κε · κα γ νεται τ σχατα το νθρ που κε νου χε ρονα τ ν πρ των.

NLT Luke 11:26 Then the spirit finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before."

KJV Luke 11:26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

ESV Luke 11:26 Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first."

NIV Luke 11:26 Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first."

ASV Luke 11:26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more evil than himself; and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first.

CSB Luke 11:26 Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and settle down there. As a result, that man's last condition is worse than the first."

NKJ Luke 11:26 "Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they

enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

NRS Luke 11:26 Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first."

YLT Luke 11:26 then doth it go, and take to it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and having entered, they dwell there, and the last of that man becometh worst than the first.'

NAB Luke 11:26 Then it goes and brings back seven other spirits more wicked than itself who move in and dwell there, and the last condition of that person is worse than the first."

NJB Luke 11:26 it then goes off and brings seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and set up house there, and so that person ends up worse off than before.'

GWN Luke 11:26 Then the spirit goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself. They enter and take up permanent residence there. In the end the condition of that person is worse than it was before."

BBE Luke 11:26 Then he goes and gets seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they go in, and take their places there: and the last condition of that man is worse than the first.

- **more evil than itself** Mt 23:15
- **and the** Zeph 1:6; Mt 12:45; John 5:14; Heb 6:4-8; 10:26-31; 2 Peter 2:20-22; 1 John 5:16; Jude 1:12,13
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:24-28 The Danger of Moral Reformation - John MacArthur

BEWARE OF REFORMATION WITHOUT REGENERATION

Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there - Now the man is possessed by even more demons, more evil than the one originally exorcised. In other words, to fail to respond is to risk a worse fate than when one started. It is somewhat analogous to riding a bicycle -- it we don't keep pedaling, we will fall and be hurt. To not make progress, is to regress. Standing still in the spiritual life is not a good thing!

It is not enough to turn over a new leaf!
We need to be a new creation!
(2 Cor 5:17+)

The last state of that man becomes worse than the first - **Worse** because of more demons of an even more evil character. Notice Jesus is teaching that while all demons are evil, some are characterized by an even greater degree of evil! "Not to advance means to retreat. There is no standing still." (Hendriksen) **Phillips** adds that "The Bible gives examples of multiple demon possession, including Mary Magdalene and the Gadarene demoniac. Even when evil spirits are expelled, unless the Holy Spirit comes in, the unfortunate host can be repossessed. One obvious lesson from all of this is the hopelessness of r**eformation apart from regeneration**." (Exploring Luke)

They are a solemn warning to us,
never to be satisfied with religious reformation without heart conversion.
-- J C Ryle

John MacArthur warns of the deceitful condition of **reformation without regeneration** warning that "There really is no more serious danger than the danger of *morality*. **It's like the leper with no sense of pain. Such a person destroys himself without knowing it.** Leprosy is a nerve disease that obliterates feeling. And lepers rub off their fingers and rub off their feet and rub off their faces because they can't feel anything. This is the deadly danger of morality. So to attempt to clean your life up without Christ coming to dwell there is to be exposed to an even greater danger. That statement, "The last state of that man becomes worse than the first," is very definitive. **In the end, being moral is more dangerous than being immoral. There is no benefit in reformation without regeneration."** (The Danger of Moral Reformation)

Arrington adds that "After the man's deliverance from the evil spirit, he continues to live apart from God. The Holy Spirit does not occupy his heart. In other words, deliverance from the power of evil is not enough. The heart must be filled with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Getting rid of an evil spirit never means we are immune to Satan's assaults. Satan is persistent, and unless our hearts are filled with God, the outcome can be tragic. (The Spirit-Anointed Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of Luke)

Jesus spoke of this same spiritual dynamic in Matthew 23 declaring "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, **you make him twice as much a son of hell as**

yourselves." (Mt 23:15) Why **twice as much a son of hell**? Because the proselyte becomes more fanatical for self-righteous works than the teacher.

Peter describes this deceptive spiritual dynamic writing about the false teachers (2 Pe 2:1-2) "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (CLEARLY THEY WERE NOT BORN AGAIN), they are again entangled in them and are overcome, **the last state has become worse for them than the first**. For **it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness**, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. 22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire." (2 Peter 2:20-22+) In a sense they have reached a state of self-deceit from which they can never be saved.

Life Application Study Bible - Our desire to reform often does not last long. In Israel's history, almost as soon as a good king would pull down idols, a bad king would set them up again. It is not enough to be emptied of evil; we must then be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's new purpose in our life (see also Matthew 12:43-45; Galatians 5:22). (See Luke Application Study Notes)

MacArthur emphasizes the danger of morality writing "The church's message can never be morality. Jesus' message was never morality. Morality makes people double sons of hell. Morality kicks the door wide open for more demons. Morality makes the last state worse than the first. Let me say this to you, and it may shock you that I say it, it is better to be immoral than moral without Christ. It is better to be irreligious than religious without Christ. Because morality and religion are a seduction. Morality and religion give the deception of all is well with God when it is not. Morality and religion is a soul numbing deception. As long as a person believes he is immoral, he can be saved, right? It's when a person believes he's moral, doesn't need a Savior. As long as a person knows he's irreligious, he's iniquitous, he's wretched, he is in a position to be delivered. When a person comes to believe in his own righteousness, he is not redeemable. It was never the immoral people, by the way, that blasphemed Jesus!...Moral people, religious people are self-congratulatory, they are self-righteous, they're confident in their own holiness, in their own morality. They are utterly deceived into believing that they have been delivered form the powers of Satan because they live moral lives. And the truth of the matter is they may be more infested with demons than a prostitute or a criminal. Moral people tend to have no vigilance and therefore no protection." (The Danger of Moral Reformation)

Deffinbaugh explains "If Jesus is more powerful than Satan, which His last argument has shown, man is not. Man is not able, in and of himself, to resist Satan. The man who is possessed by a demon can, Jesus said, be re-possessed. The only power that can keep the demons out of a man is the power of the One who is able to deliver that man in the first place. Jesus was warning those who would attempt to remain neutral, who would not come to receive Him as their Messiah and to obey His commandments, that **neutrality toward Messiah is hospitality toward the hostile forces of Satan** It is no blessing for men to be exorcised, rid of demon-possession if men do not have the person of God dwelling within. Just as man is unable to rid himself of a demonic inhabitant, neither is he able to keep an exorcised demon from returning. Jesus must not only be believed in as Messiah, He must also be received into one's life, lest Satan only return in greater force." (Evidence that Produced Various Verdicts Luke 11:14-36) (Bolding added)

J C Ryle has a pithy (and I think accurate) comment on Luke 11:24-26 - Let us observe, finally, in these verses,**how dangerous it is to be content with any change in religion short of thorough conversion to God**. **This is a truth which our Lord teaches by an awful picture of one from whom a devil has been cast forth, but into whose heart the Holy Spirit has not entered.** He describes the evil spirit, after his expulsion, as seeking rest and finding none.—He describes him planning a return to the heart which he once inhabited, and carrying his plan into execution.—He describes him finding that heart empty of any good, and like a house "swept and garnished" for his reception.—He describes him as entering in once more, with seven spirits worse than himself, and once more making it his abode. And He winds up all by the solemn saying, "**the last state of that man is worse than the first.**"

We must feel in reading these fearful words, that Jesus is speaking of things which we faintly comprehend. He is lifting a corner of the veil which hangs over the unseen world. His words, no doubt, illustrate the state of things which existed in the Jewish nation during the time of His own ministry. But the main lesson of his words, which concerns us, is the danger of our own individual souls. **They are a solemn warning to us, never to be satisfied with religious reformation without heart conversion.**

The devil must not only be cast out.
The Holy Ghost must take his place.

There is no safety excepting in thorough Christianity. To lay aside open sin is nothing, unless grace reigns in our hearts. To cease to do evil is a small matter, if we do not also learn to do well.—**The house must not only be swept and whitewashed. A new tenant must be introduced, or else the leprosy may yet appear again in the walls.—The outward life must not only be garnished with the formal trappings of religion. The power of vital religion must be experienced in the inward man.—The devil must**

not only be cast out. The Holy Ghost must take his place. Christ must dwell in our hearts by faith. We must not only be moralized, but spiritualized. We must not only be reformed, but born again.

Let us lay these things to heart. Many professing Christians, it may be feared, are deceiving themselves. They are not what they once were, and so they flatter themselves, they are what they ought to be. They are no longer sabbath-breaking, daring sinners, and so they dream that they are Christians. They see not that they have only changed one kind of devil for another. They are governed by a decent, Pharisaic devil, instead of an audacious, riotous, unclean devil.—But the tenant within is the devil still. And their last end will be worse than their first. From such an end may we pray to be delivered! Whatever we are in religion, let us be thorough. Let us not be houses swept and garnished, but uninhabited by the Spirit. Let us not be potsherds covered with silver, fair without, but worthless within. Let our daily prayer be, "Search me, O God;—and see whether there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:24.)

Luke 11:27 While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed."

> KJV Luke 11:27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

- **Blessed is the womb that bore You**Lk 1:28,42,48
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:24-28 The Danger of Moral Reformation - John MacArthur

A WOMAN FOCUSES OF
A WOMB NOT THE WORD

While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed(makarios) **is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed** - Notice the praise is for His mother and this is a compliment to Jesus. The incident is peculiar to Luke. It is interesting as being the first direct fulfilment of the words of the Magnificat, "All generations shall call me blessed" (Luke 1:48).

NET Note - Both the reference to **the womb** and **the breasts** form a figure of speech called metonymy. In this case the parts are mentioned instead of the whole; the meaning is "Blessed is your mother!" The warnings seem to have sparked a little nervousness that brought forth this response. In the culture a mother was valued for the accomplishments of her son. So this amounts to a compliment to Jesus.

William Hendriksen - An emotional outburst, if rooted in truth, has its value. One must be careful, however, not to make primary that which is, after all, secondary. Note the careful manner in which Jesus corrects and completes this lady's statement. He does so without discouraging her … a lesson for us all. (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

Steven Cole - The way to be on Jesus' side is to **hear** the word of God and **do** it. As Jesus was speaking, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said, "**Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts at which You nursed**." It is interesting that right in the context of Jesus' teaching about demons, this woman extols Mary! She may have been well-meaning, but clearly she was misguided. She was trying to give praise to Jesus by saying, "Your mother is a woman truly blessed to have a son like you." Of course, that was true; Mary was blessed by God to be the mother of Jesus. His response does not deny this, but He does correct the direction of this woman's thoughts. He says in effect, "**Natural family ties to Me are not the point; the point is to hear God's Word and do it.**" The person who is decidedly with Jesus doesn't just mouth pious platitudes; rather, he hears what Jesus says and acts on it. This is not to teach salvation by works because the Word of God that we must obey clearly teaches that we are saved by grace through faith alone. But the Bible is also clear that saving faith is obedient faith (Rom. 15:18; 16:26). Jesus' clear authority over demonic forces shows that He is both Savior and Lord. Therefore, each person is forced to choose sides in the heavenly war. Having heard the Word of God, we must now act on it in obedience to Jesus or else we are opposed to Him and in league with Satan. **Conclusion -** During that part of the Naval War College course known as Fundamentals of Command and Decision, the instructor was stressing the importance of being able to make sound decisions under pressure. A visiting officer from a small foreign navy spoke up. "Talk about decisions!" he said. "I was 700 miles out to sea in my destroyer when I received a dispatch from my base: 'We have just had a revolution. Which side are you on?'" (Reader's Digest [5/83].) Thankfully, our decision isn't that difficult! We have some solid evidence to go on. We have the clear record of the gospel accounts that relate to us what Jesus said and did. William Barclay puts it this way (cited by Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John [Eerdmans], p. 414): Either, what Jesus said about Himself is false, in which case He is guilty of such blasphemy as no man ever dared to utter; or, what He said about Himself is

true, in which case He is what He claimed to be and can be described in no other terms than the Son of God. Jesus leaves us with the definite choice-we must accept Him fully or reject Him absolutely. That is precisely why every man has to decide for or against Jesus Christ. There is a spiritual battle raging with two and only two sides. Clearly, Jesus has authority over Satan and his forces. We are on one side or the other. If you are not decisively on Jesus' side, you are against Him. To join His side, you must believe in Him and follow Him in obedient faith. (The Heavenly War)

James Rosscup comments on Lk 11:27 - **Correcting a Misguided Focus** -- Jesus taught about prayer (Lk 11:1–13), then about His casting out demons and showing that God is His source (Lk 11:14–26). He has just issued this teaching when a woman in the crowd cries out to Him, touting His mother's womb for bearing Him and her breasts for nursing Him (Lk 11:27). It is time to correct values that can get so twisted (Lk 11:28). Jesus teaches what a proper sense of worth will promote as blessed. The focus will not be on His mother's womb, but on God's Word which is God's source of truth. It will not tout His mother's breasts as nursing Him, but belief in God's Word that begets obedience to it. The woman who addresses Him needs to get her eyes on Him, not on His mother as blessed of God as she is (Lk. 1:28). God is the One who blesses, and she is a recipient, highly blessed by Him. A follow-up to this is His teaching that the generation at the time He is speaking is wicked, getting its attention on a sign it craves. The woman's concentration, the focus of the people at large, should be on Him, the Son of Man. He Himself will be the sign by His resurrection, He being greater than Solomon in wisdom (Lk 11:31), and greater than Jonah in what He preaches (Lk 11:32). Guidelines relevant to prayer derive from this woman's utterance to the Lord. First, it is wise to be sure the focus is on the Lord in a proper way rather than letting a flush of emotion incite one to spout off lightly. Diligence to know God's Word aright can shape the one who speaks to Him to speak along right lines, and not need correcting. People emulate the woman in saying many careless things to the Lord out of ignorance. Second, the Lord's graciousness in correcting what one says to Him, if the person will hear, gives new opportunity. Third, wise prayer can be shaped by giving a true place to hearing God's Word and obeying what one learns. (An Exposition on Prayer in the Bible).

Spurgeon - Morning and Evening -

"A certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." —Luke 11:27, 28

It is fondly imagined by some that it must have involved very special privileges to have been the mother of our Lord, because they supposed that she had the benefit of looking into his very heart in a way in which we cannot hope to do. There may be an appearance of plausibility in the supposition, but not much. We do not know that Mary knew more than others; what she did know she did well to lay up in her heart; but she does not appear from anything we read in the Evangelists to have been a better-instructed believer than any other of Christ's disciples. All that she knew we also may discover. Do you wonder that we should say so? Here is a text to prove it: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." Remember the Master's words—"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." So blessedly does this Divine Revealer of secrets tell us his heart, that he keepeth back nothing which is profitable to us; his own assurance is, "If it were not so, I would have told you." Doth he not this day manifest himself unto us as he doth not unto the world? It is even so; and therefore we will not ignorantly cry out, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee," but we will intelligently bless God that, having heard the Word and kept it, we have first of all as true a communion with the Saviour as the Virgin had, and in the second place as true an acquaintance with the secrets of his heart as she can be supposed to have obtained. Happy soul to be thus privileged!

Luke 11:28 But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."

KJV Luke 11:28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

- **blessed are those who hear the word of God** Luke 6:47-49; Lk 8:21; Ps 1:1-3; 112:1; 119:1-6; 128:1; Isa 48:17,18; Mt 7:21-25; 12:48-50; John 13:17; James 1:21-25; 1 John 3:21-24; Rev 22:14
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:24-28 The Danger of Moral Reformation - John MacArthur

NOT HEARERS BUT DOERS ARE BLESSED

Notice that in contrast to moral "**reformation**" described in Lk 11:24-26, Jesus describes **transformation**, for only a person transformed by the Gospel of grace has the inner power to **hear** and **observe** the **Word of God**. We cannot observe the Word in

reliance on our native (fallen, fleshy) power from within, but only by reliance on a supernatural from without, i.e., the power of God dispensed by His Spirit.

On the contrary, blessed (makarios) **are those who hear the word of God and observe** (**phulasso**) **it** - **Jon Courson** says "Although this woman draws attention to His mother—a position that could be claimed by only one, Jesus redirects her attention to His family—a position available to all (John 1:12)." Thus Jesus corrects the woman's statement by explaining that it is not hearers of the Word who are blessed but doers of the Word. He is not saying keeping the law merits God's blessing, for apart from union with Christ and filling with His Spirit, a human being can do absolutely nothing to please God when what he does emanates from his sinful, fallen flesh (See Ro 8:5-8+). The only way to observe the Word of God is to possess the indwelling Spirit, who energizes the desire and gives the power to obey the Word (see Php 2:13NLT+).

Jesus is "saying it is not enough to commend Jesus, you're not necessarily with Me just because you commend Me, just because you honor Me, just because you respect Me." (MacArthur - Luke 11:24-28 The Danger of Moral Reformation)

Michael Andrus - It almost sounds like a Hail Mary (Lk 11:27)! I'm not sure what is in this woman's mind or what her motivation is. Perhaps she just wants to break the tension produced by the confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees, but let's give her the benefit of the doubt. Let's suppose she is overwhelmed by how wonderful it must be to have a son like Jesus, so she pronounces a blessing on the one who brought him into the world and nursed him. Please notice that Jesus does not reject the woman or criticize her. I can actually see him smiling at her and doing what a great teacher always tries to do when one of his students gives an inane answer to a question. He tries to find something he can affirm and then skillfully turns the conversation in a better direction. The woman has said one thing right—"blessed"—and Jesus picks up on that: "Ah, blessed indeed, but rather than focusing on my mother, let's focus on those who are the most blessed—those who hear the Word of God and obey it." The little word "rather" in Greek "does not question the truth of the preceding statement, but emphasizes the greater relevance of what follows." 8 What really made Mary herself blessed is not the fertility of her womb but the fact that she listened to God's Word when Gabriel brought it to her and acted upon it: "May it be to me as you have said." (Luke 1:38). How does this little vignette fit into the argument between Jesus and the Pharisees concerning the source of Jesus' power? It shines a strong light on the fact that the Pharisees themselves are refusing to listen to the Word of God and obey it.

As **Steven Cole** writes Jesus is in effect saying "**Natural family ties to Me are not the point; the point is to hear God's Word and do it.**" The person who is decidedly with Jesus doesn't just mouth pious platitudes; rather, he hears what Jesus says and acts on it. This is not to teach salvation by works because the Word of God that we must obey clearly teaches that we are saved by grace through faith alone (Eph 2:8-9+). But the Bible is also clear that saving faith is obedient faith (Ro 1:5+, Ro 15:18+; Ro 16:26+). See discussion of the phrase **Obedience of faith**

> **Word of God** - This phrase occurs less than you might think, being found 47x in 46 verses 1 Sam. 9:27; 2 Sam. 16:23; 1 Ki. 12:22; 1 Chr. 17:3; Prov. 30:5; Matt. 15:6; Mk. 7:13; Lk. 3:2; Lk. 5:1; Lk. 8:11; Lk. 8:21; Lk. 11:28; Jn. 10:35; Acts 4:31; Acts 6:2; Acts 6:7; Acts 8:14; Acts 11:1; Acts 13:5; Acts 13:7; Acts 13:46; Acts 17:13; Acts 18:11; Rom. 9:6; 1 Co. 14:36; 2 Co. 2:17; 2 Co. 4:2; Eph. 6:17; Phil. 1:14; Col. 1:25; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Tim. 4:5; 2 Tim. 2:9; Tit. 2:5; Heb. 4:12; Heb. 6:5; Heb. 11:3; Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 1:23; 2 Pet. 3:5; 1 Jn. 2:14; Rev. 1:2; Rev. 1:9; Rev. 6:9; Rev. 19:13; Rev. 20:4

John describes the result of observing or keeping His Word..

> This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. The one who **keeps His commandments** abides in Him, and He in him (THIS DESCRIBES BEING WITH CHRIST). We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. (1 Jn 3:23-24+)

MacArthur comments - **Being with Christ** is not just being moral. Being with Christ is not just honoring Him, very unlike the Pharisees. Being with Christ, He says, is hearing the Word of God and doing it. And the Word of God initially is to believe in the Son and be saved. A moral person is in the greatest danger. That danger is not mitigated by having good feelings about Jesus. A person would still be empty and a haven for demons. On the other hand, a saved person is one who hears the Word concerning Christ, believes it in its fullness, embraces Him as Lord and Savior and sets out on a path of obedience enabled by the indwelling presence of the Spirit of Christ. (Sermon The Danger of Moral Reformation)

In the **Sermon on the Mount** Jesus emphasized this same principle declaring "Therefore everyone who **hears** these words of Mine, and **acts** upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. "And everyone who **hears** these words of Mine, and **does not act upon them**, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall." (Mt 7:24-27+)

James echoes Jesus' words "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 22 But **prove** (present imperative) yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. (James 1:21+, James 1:22+)

Deffinbaugh - Obedience to Jesus is one of the central themes of the Gospels, one of the fundamental elements of discipleship. The Father said it at the mount of transfiguration: "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him" (Luke 9:35+). In John's gospel, the issue of obedience (or of not wanting to obey) is clearly linked with the accusation that Jesus was demon-possessed: "At these words the Jews were again divided. Many of them said, "He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?" But others said, "These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"" (John 10:19-21). The real problem for those who rejected Jesus and who attributed His power to Satan was that of obeying Him. In seeing this as the issue, they were correct. In rejecting Jesus as Messiah, as the Son of God, they were wrong. The woman was wrong, too. She did not interpret the evidence correctly. She saw Jesus as great and His mother as blessed, but she did not see that Jesus was the One to receive and to follow by obeying His commands. How often we view Jesus through the grid of our own needs and desires and our own narrow view of significance. (Evidence that Produced Various Verdicts)

Blessed (3107)(**makarios**) means spiritually satisfied independent of one's external circumstances.

> **Makarios** - 49v - Matt. 5:3; Matt. 5:4; Matt. 5:5; Matt. 5:6; Matt. 5:7; Matt. 5:8; Matt. 5:9; Matt. 5:10; Matt. 5:11; Matt. 11:6; Matt. 13:16; Matt. 16:17; Matt. 24:46; Lk. 1:45; Lk. 6:20; Lk. 6:21; Lk. 6:22; Lk. 7:23; Lk. 10:23; Lk. 11:27; Lk. 11:28; Lk. 12:37; Lk. 12:38; Lk. 12:43; Lk. 14:14; Lk. 14:15; Lk. 23:29; Jn. 13:17; Jn. 20:29; Acts 20:35; Acts 26:2; Rom. 4:7; Rom. 4:8; Rom. 14:22; 1 Co. 7:40; 1 Tim. 1:11; 1 Tim. 6:15; Tit. 2:13; Jas. 1:12; Jas. 1:25; 1 Pet. 3:14; 1 Pet. 4:14; Rev. 1:3; Rev. 14:13; Rev. 16:15; Rev. 19:9; Rev. 20:6; Rev. 22:7; Rev. 22:14

Observes (present tense = continually)(5442)(**phulasso**) has the idea of being on one's guard, watching, defending and so keeping or observing. Friberg - (1) active, of the activity of a watchman; (a) guard, protect, watch (over); idiomatically *phulassein phulakas* - literally guard a guarding, i.e. keep under watch, carefully guard, do guard duty (LU 2.8); (b) guard, keep (from escaping) (AC 12.4); (c) protect, preserve, guard (from theft) (AC 22.20); (d) of law keep, observe, follow (AC 7.53); (2) middle; (a) take care, be on guard against, look out for, avoid (AC 21.25); (b) of law observe, obey (MK 10.20)

God's Word and present tense indicates doing so as the general pattern of one's life. The present tense does not point to perfection, but does indicate the general direction of one's conduct and behavior.

> **Phulasso - 31v -abstain(1), guard(8), guarded(1), guarding(1), guards(1), keep(5), keeping(2), keeps(1), kept(4), kept under guard(1), maintain(1), observe(2), preserved(1), protect(1), watching(1).** Matt. 19:20; Mk. 10:20; Lk. 2:8; Lk. 8:29; Lk. 11:21; Lk. 11:28; Lk. 12:15; Lk. 18:21; Jn. 12:25; Jn. 12:47; Jn. 17:12; Acts 7:53; Acts 12:4; Acts 16:4; Acts 21:24; Acts 21:25; Acts 22:20; Acts 23:35; Acts 28:16; Rom. 2:26; Gal. 6:13; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Tim. 5:21; 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:14; 2 Tim. 4:15; 2 Pet. 2:5; 2 Pet. 3:17; 1 Jn. 5:21; Jude 1:24

Luke 11:29 As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, "This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah.

> KJV Luke 11:29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

- **As the crowds were increasing, He began to say,**Lk 12:1; 14:25,26
- **This generation is a wicked generation** Lk 11:50; 9:41; Isa 57:3,4; Mt 3:7; 23:34-36; Mark 8:38; John 8:44; Acts 7:51,52
- **it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given** Mt 12:38,39; 16:1-4; Mark 8:11,12; John 2:18; 6:30; 1 Cor 1:22
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:29-32 The Last Sign - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

> Luke 11:16 Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a**sign** from heaven.
>
> Mark 8:11 The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a **sign from heaven**, to

test Him.

Matthew 12:38-40+ - Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” (RELIGIOUS LEADERS CALLED FOR SIGN BUT IN LUKE JESUS INITIATES THE SIGN STORY) 39 But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous (NOT IN LUKE - MEANS UNFAITHFUL TO GOD ISRAEL'S HUSBAND) generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; 40 for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (DESCRIPTION NOT FOUND IN LUKE - HERE THE SIGN IS CLEARLY POINTING TO RESURRECTION).

A WHALE OF A TALE

A WICKED GENERATION RECEIVES SIGN OF JONAH

As the crowds were increasing, He began to say- Compare the crowd in Lk 11:14 and Lk 12:1. **Increasing** means literally they were (continually - present tense) gathering together in addition, thronging together, a vivid picture of the crowds gathering around Jesus. **Began to say** is present tense indicating Jesus said this continually, which speaks of His mercy and longsuffering (the Jews remained thick headed and hard hearted!) The increasing crowds speak of His increasing fame, but not necessarily their belief in Him, as He quickly demonstrates with His characterization of them as a **wicked generation**. One wonders if this had any effect at thinning the crowds?

> **Steven Cole** on **as the crowds were increasing** and what Jesus **began to say** - “*You’re all wonderful people. God loves you and so do I*.” That’s not what He said! Jesus wasn’t into giving strokes to everyone to build their self-esteem. Centuries before the false prophets won a large following by saying, “Peace, peace,” when there was no true peace (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). God said that they healed the brokenness of His people superficially. Any preaching that does not confront sin is false preaching. God doesn’t heal by giving lots of hugs to make sinners feel better about themselves. He heals by confronting and cutting out the cancer of sin that is slowly but surely destroying people. So Jesus began by saying, “This generation is a wicked generation.” We tend to view success in the ministry by numbers. If a church is growing, if thousands are flocking to it, then the pastor becomes a model for church growth. He writes books on how he did it and he puts on seminars where thousands of unsuccessful pastors come to hear how they can do what he did. The sad thing is, at very few of these seminars do the pastors hear that they need to preach against sin, to preach the holiness of God, to preach about the awfulness of the coming judgment. What they’re hearing is that they need to preach for only 15 or 20 minutes at the most, and use lots of stories, because people don’t want to hear stuffy doctrinal sermons. Don’t say anything to confront sin, because these people get beat up in the rough world all week long. What they want and need when they come to church is some good feelings and uplifting stories that will inspire hope for the next week. As a result, people in American churches are starving for a word from God. Just before the apostle Paul was martyred, he wrote to his successor in the ministry, Timothy, and gave him one of the most solemn charges in all of Scripture (Read 2 Ti 4:1-4+). Biblical preaching always reproves, rebukes, and exhorts. It does not tickle your ears and go along with your own desires. So when you hear the Word preached or when you read the Word, allow it to confront your sin. God only wounds in order to heal. When Scripture confronts you, don’t dodge it. By owning up to sin and turning from it, you will grow to be more like Jesus. (Luke 11:29-36 How to Respond to God’s Word)

This generation (genea) **is a wicked** (poneros), **generation** (genea) - **Generation** (genea) is used by Jesus to refer essentially to the entire nation and characterizing their character as actively wicked! In Mt 12:39 Jesus called them "**An evil and adulterous generation.**" Earlier in Luke Jesus had characterized them with this description “**You unbelieving and perverted generation**." (Lk 9:41) Luke 11:29 is Jesus' final statement on Israel. This is Jesus' final verdict on Israel. Yes, the "crowds were amazed" (Lk 11:14) at the many miracles Jesus was performing, but it was as Jesus was a great "carnival act" to see, but not a Messiah to be believed in. And thus Jesus crashed the gravel down in His judgment of them as a **wicked generation**. And with this declaration, Jesus was not just speaking of a few Jews but of the majority of their **generation**. And as discussed above, Jesus was not addressing a generation that was overtly immoral in their conduct (contrast what is transpiring now in America where sin is beng flaunted, actively pursued and even praised!). No, these Jews were moral, like the Law keeping Pharisees. However Jesus saw through to their hearts and what He saw on the inside was that they were spiritually wicked to the core! And tragically, as discussed above, in their moral deception they were in an even more deadly condition, for they would think of themselves as having no need for the Gospel of Jesus, no need for repentance. Their "religion" blinded them to their need for a genuine "relationship" with God through belief in the Messiah, Whom they hated because He called them out for their "religiosity!" Religion and morality cuts people off from salvation by

giving them the illusion of a right relationship to God. This is why as we discussed earlier, it is better to be immoral than moral, to feel the full weight of your guilt than to think you could do some meritorious act to assuage your guilt. Self-righteous people are difficult to call to repentance because in their mind they are thinking of what are they going to repent?!

MacArthur on **a wicked** (poneros) **generation** (genea) - An attempt to clean your life up without Christ coming to dwell there is to be exposed to an even greater danger. That statement, "The last state of that man becomes worse than the first," (Lk 11:26) is very definitive. In the end, being moral is more dangerous than being immoral. There is no benefit in reformation without regeneration. And this is exactly what the Jews did...And that's why in Lk 11:29 Jesus began to say, "**This generation is a wicked generation**." They wouldn't see it that way at all. They thought they were a righteous generation and that's why they hated Jesus. They were moral but filthy. They were void of the purifying presence of God. **They were damned by morality, damned by religion, damned by reformation**! (The Danger of Moral Reformation)

Steven Cole - Jesus confronted them with their wickedness in seeking for a sign (Lk 11:29). Christ, who knows the hearts of all men (Lk 11:17), knew that a hundred miraculous signs would not be sufficient for these scoffers. They had just seen Him cast the demon out of a man who could not speak so that he became able to speak (11:14). They had seen Him raise the paralytic (Lk 5:17-26), heal the man with the withered hand (Lk 6:6-11), and do many other miracles, but none of these signs had brought them to believe in Him. What was their sin in seeking for a sign? Their sin was their rebellious, unrepentant hearts. They were curious to see Jesus perform miracles, but they were not contrite about their sins. They wanted to watch a good show, but they would have been quick to explain away any signs that Jesus performed because they were not willing to follow Him. In other words, their problem was not a lack of evidence. Their problem was a lack of repentance. (Luke 11:29-36 How to Respond to God's Word)

It seeks for a sign (semeion) - Remember that a sign is a miracle that serves to confirm that what is spoken is true. In that sense Jesus had probably performed 1000's of signs with His many miracles. So why did this wicked generation want a **sign**? Their desire for a **sign** was first voiced in their demand for a sign from heaven in Lk 11:16 in the context of the accusation against Him that He was casting out demons by the power of Satan. So here they pick up their request by asking Jesus for a **sign** to prove to them that He was not the servant of Satan. They had seen countless miracles and had not yet believed. And so they were taunting Jesus saying something like "Just try to do something that would make us believe!"

MacArthur explains that in asking for **a sign** to prove He was not operating by the power of Beelzebul "they were saying their unbelief and their rejection of Jesus Christ and their conclusion that He was satanic rather than divine was His fault, not theirs....that their righteous assessment of the data, that their insight into what He had said and what He had done led them to this conclusion alone, that He did what He did by the power of Satan and they concluded that because they were wise and they were insightful and they were spiritually sensitive and they had great discernment. And if they didn't believe that He was from God, it was His fault. This is blasphemy upon blasphemy. They were blaming Jesus for their conclusion. They were saying Jesus left them no other option than to conclude that He was satanic. This is a blasphemy that is inconceivable. They were a wicked generation because they were blasphemers and their blasphemy went all the way to the extreme of rejecting everything He said and everything He did, or concluding that it only proved He served Satan. (The Last Sign)

NET Note - The mention of a ***sign*** alludes back to Luke 11:16. Given what Jesus had done, nothing would be good enough. This leads to the rebuke that follows.

Michael Andrus - People often imagine they would believe in Jesus if they saw the kind of miracles he performed when here on earth, but frankly this very account is evidence that undisputed miracles do not necessarily produce faith. The problem with most skeptics is not a lack of evidence but rather a Satanic blindness to the truth. They do not have true intellectual problems with the gospel; they have moral problems with it; they don't want God telling them how to live. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16, the rich man dies and in the afterlife is desperate to have his brothers, still living, spared the torment he is experiencing. He begs God to send Lazarus to warn them not to join him in Hades, but Jesus says, "if they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead." And, sure enough, when a few months later someone did rise from the dead, namely Jesus Himself, they remained unconvinced and even became hardened in their opposition to Jesus' followers. I strongly suspect the same would be true today. You have heard me say before that miracles have never been common. In fact, by definition they cannot be common because if they were they wouldn't be miracles! There were only three great periods of miracle even in biblical times—the time of Moses, the period of the great OT prophets, and the time of Jesus and the Apostles. There were few, if any, miracles during the time of the Patriarchs, or during David and Solomon's time, or in the post-exilic period. And miracles were not even that common when Jesus and the disciples were ministering.

Rod Mattoon - A **sign** was a confirming miracle which gave evidence that a spoken message was genuine and truthful. There was nothing wrong in seeking a **sign**, some proof, or evidence that Jesus was the Son of God. That was not the problem here. The problem was the fact that these folks were not satisfied with all they had seen and heard. They were seeking more and more thrills. The Jews had the greatest **sign** they could have, God in the flesh. What more did they want? He demonstrated His great love and

power by feeding the hungry, calming the seas and tormented men, healing the sick, and breaking up funeral processions by raising the dead. They were throwing away their opportunity to believe in the Lord. Jesus (Treasures from the Scriptures)

Yet no sign (semeion) **will be given to it but the sign** (semeion) **of Jonah** - Notice the word "**yet**" which shows God's grace to give the Jews the final sign, but not the kind of sign they were demanding (like doing something incredible with the heavenly bodies, etc). They were testing Jesus (Lk 11:17), in effect taunting Him and even in the face of their wicked behavior, He graciously agrees to give them a sign! And this sign of course is the "sign" of His resurrection, the greatest miracle the world has ever seen.

> **THOUGHT -** Are you looking for a sign? Are you waiting for the Lord to show you a sign? We live in an age of such religious deception and perversity that men and women are taught from the pulpits to do so. Such a generation is described by the Son of God in this passage of holy scripture as a wicked, perverse and adulterous generation. Any faith that is based upon a sign, the observation of a miracle, the proof of logic, a feeling of something spiritual, an experience, or anything else other than the revelation of God in holy scripture is a false faith. True, God-given, saving faith has for its foundation the Word of God alone. That is the message of the text before us. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." (Ro 10:17) May God give us grace to believe him, not our experiences! him, not our feelings! him, not our reason! him, not signs and wonders! (Don Fortner)

A T Robertson on the **sign of Jonah** (ei mē to sēmeion Iōnā). - Luke does not give here the burial and resurrection of Jesus of which Jonah's experience in the big fish was a type (AS DOES MATTHEW - Matthew 12:39ff.), but that is really implied (Plummer argues) by the use here of "shall be given" (dothēsetai) and "shall be" (estai), for the resurrection of Jesus is still future. The preaching of Jesus ought to have been sign enough as in the case of Jonah, but the resurrection will be given. Luke's report is much briefer and omits what is in Matthew 12:41+.

R. Kent Hughes - There is much-needed instruction and correction here for segments of Christianity that have gone headlong in pursuit of miraculous signs and wonders. It is imperative that we recognize that miraculous signs do not ipso facto guarantee that one will believe. This is both implicit and explicit in Luke 11. Verse 16 records that "Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven." These were people who did not want to believe. They were maliciously testing Christ. That is why he indicted them here in verse 29 by saying, "This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign." Ten million signs and wonders would not make the world turn to Christ. Belief is a choice, an act of the will, not a convincing of the intellect. Second, the ultimate sign is "the sign of Jonah," because it makes Christ everything. Jesus was not interested in giving signs abstracted from his person. He is the sign. He is the gospel. (See Luke: That You May Know the Truth)

John MacArthur - Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites because of his miraculous deliverance from certain death, which convinced them that he spoke for God. His experience is analogous to that of the Son of Man, who would be a similar sign to His generation. Both proclaimed judgment and called for repentance. Jonah was swallowed by a deadly sea creature; Jesus was swallowed into the grave. Jonah was miraculously delivered from certain death; Jesus was actually raised from the dead. Jonah's deliverance from the clutches of death ushered him into a great and powerful ministry, as the Lord's resurrection did for Him. The final and greatest sign, then, was Christ's resurrection. But even this most powerful and convincing sign, like all the rest the Lord performed, failed to persuade those whose hearts were hardened against Him (John 12:37). The final sign highlighted the wretchedness of sinful unbelief. The leaders of Israel, who knew He was dead and came to life, bribed the soldiers to lie (Matt. 28:11–15). (See Luke Commentary)

Rescued Jonah and Resurrected Jesus are signs.
--William Hendriksen

John Martin on **sign of Jonah** - This sign has been interpreted in at least two ways: Many say it was the physical appearance of Jonah, for perhaps his skin was bleached white by the sea monster's inner juices. However, nothing in the context hints at this. "**The sign of Jonah**" must have been the words (cf. "preaching," Lk 11:32) Jonah spoke about his miraculous preservation by God when he was at the point of death. The people of Nineveh believed what Jonah said, even if they had no physical evidence. Jesus' words. (See The Bible Knowledge Commentary)

QUESTION - What is the sign of Jonah? watch video

ANSWER - The phrase "**sign of Jonah**" was used by Jesus as a typological metaphor for His future crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Jesus answered with this expression when asked by the Pharisees for miraculous proof that He was indeed the Messiah. The Pharisees remained unconvinced of Jesus' claims about Himself, despite His having just cured a demon-possessed man who was both blind and mute. Shortly after the Pharisees accused Jesus of driving out demons by the power of Satan, they said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the

Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here" (Matthew 12:38–41).

To fully appreciate the answer that Jesus gave, we must go to the Old Testament book of Jonah. In its first chapter, we read that God commanded the prophet Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and warn its people that He was going to destroy it for its wickedness. Jonah disobediently ran from the Lord and headed for the city of Tarshish by boat. The Lord then sent a severe storm that caused the crew of the ship to fear for their lives. Jonah was soon thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish where he remained for "three days and three nights" (Jonah 1:15–17). After the three-day period, the Lord caused the great fish to vomit Jonah out onto dry land (Jonah 2:10).

It is this three days that Jesus was referring to when He spoke of the sign of Jonah. Jesus had already been producing miracles that were witnessed by many. Jesus had just performed a great sign in the Pharisees' presence by healing a deaf man who was possessed of a demon. Rather than believe, they accused Jesus of doing this by the power of Satan. Jesus recognized their hardness of heart and refused to give them further proof of His identity. However, He did say that there would be one further sign forthcoming, His resurrection from the dead. This would be their final opportunity to be convinced.

Jesus' paralleling of the Pharisees with the people of Nineveh is telling. The people of Nineveh repented of their evil ways (Jonah 3:4–10) after hearing Jonah's call for repentance, while the Pharisees continued in their unbelief despite being eyewitnesses to the miracles of Jesus. Jesus was telling the Pharisees that they were culpable for their unbelief, given the conversion of the people of Nineveh, sinners who had received far less evidence than the Pharisees themselves had witnessed.

But what are we to make of the phrase "three days and three nights"? Was Jesus saying that He would be dead for three full 24-hour periods before He would rise from the dead? It does not appear so. The phrase "three days and three nights" need not refer to a literal 72-hour period. Rather, according to the Hebrew reckoning of time, the days could refer to three days in part or in whole. Jesus was probably crucified on a Friday (Mark 15:42). According to the standard reckoning, Jesus died at about 3:00 PM (Matthew 27:46) on Friday (day 1). He remained dead for all of Saturday (day 2) and rose from the dead early on Sunday morning (day 3). Attempts to place Jesus' death on Wednesday to accommodate a literal 72-hour period are probably unnecessary once we take into account the Hebrew method of reckoning of each day as beginning at sundown. So it seems that the expression "three days and three nights" was used as a figure of speech meant to signify any part of three days.

God would often use signs (or miracles) in the Bible to authenticate His chosen messenger. The Lord provided Moses with several miraculous signs in order to prove to others that he was appointed by God (Exodus 4:5–9; 7:8–10;19-20). God sent down fire on Elijah's altar during Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:36–39). He performed this miracle to prove that the God of Israel was the one true God. Jesus Himself would perform many miracles (or "signs") to demonstrate His power over nature (Matthew 4:23; Mark 6:30–44; Luke 8:22–24; John 6:16–24). The "sign of Jonah" would turn out to be Jesus' greatest miracle of all. Jesus' resurrection from the dead would be God's chief sign that Jesus was Israel's long-awaited Messiah (Acts 2:23–32) and establish Christ's claims to deity (Romans 1:3–4).GotQuestions.org

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Related Resources: from Gotquestions.org

- Did Jonah die while he was in the belly of the fish (Jonah 2)?
- What can we learn from the life of Jonah?
- Was Jonah truly swallowed by a whale?
- Why was Jonah angry that the Ninevites repented (Jonah 4:1-2)?
- Why did Jonah try to go to Tarshish instead of Nineveh?

Luke 11:30 "For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation.

KJV Luke 11:30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

- **For just as Jonah...so will the Son of Man** Lk 24:46,47; Jonah 1:17; 2:10; 3:2-10; Mt 12:40-42
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:29-32 The Last Sign - John MacArthur

JESUS' RESURRECTION:

THE SIGN TO THIS GENERATION

For just as Jonah became a sign (semeion) **to the Ninevites** - Imagine the vitriol this reminder stirred up in the minds of the Jewish leaders who hated the Gentiles! Jonah was in the belly of the sea monster for three days until "the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land." (Jonah 2:10, cf Jonah 3:4, 10). And how did the Ninevites respond? Jonah 3:5 says "Then **the people of Nineveh believed in God**; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them." They believed Jonah's message from the true God, not because they had the Scripture, but because God had done a miracle which they believed only He could do and which attested that the messenger had to be from Him. This was the sign of Jonah. As an aside, Jesus' reference to Jonah authenticates this OT book, which many have considered to be a myth!

In Matthew Jesus explains the **sign of Jonah**

> for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41"The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. 42"The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. (Mt 12:40-42)
>
> "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away. (Matthew 16:4)

So will the Son of Man be to this generation (genea) - Which generation? In context the **wicked generation**! Just as Jonah was all but dead in the belly of the sea monster, after three days he came fourth alive. So too Jesus would be in the "belly" of the earth, He would come forth alive after three days. The Resurrection of Christ was the greatest "sign" ever given as it was the seal authenticating that His sacrifice on the Cross was acceptable to His Father.

Jesus explained His sign in Luke 24

> "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.(Lk 24:46,47)

Did the Jews react the way the pagan, Gentile Ninevites did when they heard about the sign of Jonah? No, they (who considered themselves spiritually superior to the pagan Gentiles) persisted in their stubborn unbelief and spread a lie that the "sign of Jonah" was a sham and Jesus was not resurrected by that His body was stolen:

> Now while they were on their way, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. 12 And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' 14 "And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble." 15 And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day. (Mt 28:11-17)

Michael Andrus - Think back to the Jonah story and how at first he refused to go to Ninevah and preach God's judgment. His excuse was that God is too merciful. He knew God would forgive them if the Ninevites repented, and he didn't want them spared. But after the very unpleasant experience of being swallowed by a great fish, Jonah decided that obedience was the wiser path, and he went and preached. Sure enough, Ninevah repented; sure enough God spared them. Here's Jesus' point: If pagan Nineveh repented after hearing a simple message of judgment from a foreign prophet, who actually hated them and performed no miracles in their presence, how much more should this generation repent when God has sent them "something [someone] greater than Jonah," his very Son, who loved them and did stunning miracles before their very eyes.

Below is a table from William Hendriksen's commentary on Luke:

Comparison Between Those Whom Jesus Addresses, and Ninevites	
Scribes and Pharisees and their followers:	**Ninevites: See Jonah**

It is the Son of God himself, "one greater than Jonah," who addresses them again and again, and bids them to be converted (Lk 5:32; 13:3; etc.)	It was a minor prophet who preached to them.
This Christ is completely sinless (Jn 8:46), filled with wisdom and compassion (Mt 11:27–30; 15:32; 1 Co 1:24).	This prophet was a sinful, foolish, and rebellious person (Jonah 1:3; 4:1–3, 9b).
He presents the message of grace and pardon, of salvation full and free (Lk 19:10; Jn 7:37).	His message was one of doom. Though a call to repentance and conversion was certainly implied, the emphasis was on "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah 3:4).
This message is being fortified by miracles in which prophecy is being fulfilled (Lk 4:16–21; cf. Isa 35:5, 6; 61:1–3).	There were no miracles or other authenticating signs to confirm Jonah's message.
It is being brought to a people who have enjoyed ever so many spiritual advantages (Dt 4, 7, 8; Ps 147:19, 20; Is 5:1–4; Am 3:2a; Ro 3:1, 2; 9:4, 5).	Jonah's message was addressed to a people with none of the advantages that scribes, Pharisees, and their followers had enjoyed.

Hendriksen comments - Ninevites repented; most of the Israelites do not (John 1:11; 12:37). Less enlightened people obeyed less enlightened preaching, but more enlightened people refuse to obey the Light of the world. The question is asked, "But was this repentance of Ninevites genuine, that is, unto salvation?" The answer, often given, is that it was not, otherwise Nineveh would not have been destroyed. Objection: The destruction of this great city occurred about the year 612 B.C., that is, about a century and a half after Jonah's preaching. It is therefore unjust to charge Ninevites of Jonah's day with the sins of a much later generation. Scripture nowhere claims that the repentance of all Ninevites was genuine, but neither does it leave the impression that none of them were saved; rather the opposite. That there were indeed genuine conversions in Nineveh, perhaps many of them, seems to be implied both in the prophetic book and here in Luke 11:32. The idea that the repentance of Ninevites was not genuine, that it was merely from vice to virtue, is open to objections: (a) in Luke 10:13–15 Nineveh is not included in the list of Old Testament impenitent cities; and (b) if the repentance referred to here in Luke 11:32 is not genuine it is hard to explain the statement, "Men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it." It should be noted that concerning these "men of Nineveh" it does not say, as it does in the case of those of Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, that in the judgment it will be "more tolerable" for them, but that, like the queen of the South (Luke 11:31), they shall stand up in the judgment and shall condemn "this" generation, that is, the generation of the scribes and Pharisees and their followers. Since it is the teaching of Scripture (Dan. 7:22; Matt. 19:28; 1 Cor. 6:2; Rev. 15:3, 4; 20:4) that God's children are going to participate in the final judgment (for example, by praising God in Christ for his judgments?), this statement of Jesus about the role of certain Ninevites in that Great Assize is understandable, especially if their repentance was genuine.Again the Pharisees and scribes are reminded of the greatness of their sin in rejecting and blaspheming the Christ, the One far more exalted than Jonah...Greater privileges imply heavier responsibilities. Carpe diem! (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

Luke 11:31 "The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

KJV Luke 11:31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

- **The Queen of the South** 1 Kings 10:1-13; 2 Chr 9:1-12; Mt 12:42
- **will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them** Isa 54:17; Jeremiah 3:11; Ro 2:27; Heb 11:7
- **behold, something greater than Solomon is here** 3:22; 9:35; Isa 9:6,7; Col 1:15-19
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

- Luke 11:29-32 The Last Sign - John MacArthur

A QUEEN "CONDEMNS" THE WICKED GENERATION

The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation (genea) **at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold** (idou), **something greater than Solomon is here** - The Queen is the Queen of Sheba (modern day Yemen - see 1Ki 10:1-13), This is a sad commentary on the spiritual state of Israel, for here a Gentile who was a woman and a pagan (all three hated by the Jews!) is more open to the true God than most of Israel. Unlike Israel, she did not say "Show me another sign and I will believe!" In fact Solomon performed no miracles (much like Jonah) and unlike the Queen of Sheba the Jews did not come from what Jews considered to be **the ends of the earth**! Jesus came to them with even greater wisdom then Solomon, the wisest man of his time!

Guzik writes that "She sought after God's word with a tenacity that shames us. The people who asked Jesus for a sign saw His work right there in their own neighborhood, and didn't believe." We again are impressed by the greatness of Jesus' self-claim. To stand in front of these religious leaders and claim to be greater than Israel's richest and wisest king was audacious. Yet the seeming audacity of Jesus was well justified.

Alfred Plummer - Lk. inserts this illustration between the two sayings about Jonah. Mt. keeps the two sayings about Jonah together. Lk. places the Ninevites after the Queen of Sheba either for chronology, or for effect, or both: their case was the stronger of the two. There is a threefold contrast in this illustration: (1) between a heathen queen and the Jews; (2) between the ends of the earth and here; (3) between Solomon and the Son of Man. There may possibly be a fourth contrast between that enterprising woman and the men of this generation implied in andron, which is not in Mt. (Luke 11 Commentary)

The Queen of the South - Read this story of the **Queen of Sheba** in 1 Kings 10:1-13 (2 Chr 9:1-12), which begins "Now when the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD (NLT has "*Solomon's fame, which brought honor to the name of the LORD*"), she came to test him with difficult questions."

Pate - "The irony is biting: the Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba accepted the messengers of God. But Jesus' audience rejected God Himself."

In 1 Ki 10:9 the Queen responds upon hearing Solomon's wisdom:

> "Blessed be the LORD your God Who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel (SPEAKS OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY); because the LORD loved Israel forever (HIS COVENANT WITH ISRAEL), therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness."

Her response indicates the Queen of Sheba was converted by Solomon's words and witness of His God. She had no knowledge of the true God and no invitation to discover anything about Him and yet she sought the truth about Him from Solomon and when she heard, she believed. She was converted despite having had none of the privileges nor hearing any of Jesus' teachings as the Jews of this wicked generation had!

Related Resources:

- Who was the Queen of Sheba?
- Who were the Sabeans?

Will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them - She will rise up because she was converted. This pagan Gentile Queen believed while the moral, religious, law keeping Jews rejected Jesus! What utter irony to this wicked generation that a pagan Gentile believer would judge and condemn them!

MacArthur - Some day in the judgment, in the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15-note) when the final verdicts are made and the ungodly from all of human history...will be thrown into the Lake of Fire to suffer forever for their rejection of the truth in Jesus Christ. This woman will stand up symbolically to condemn them with much less opportunity, much less personal experience and exposure. She heard the truth and believed. It's always dangerous to hear it and not believe it. And for them, the severest judgment awaits. (The Last Sign)

The same idea is shown in Hebrews 11:7, when Noah condemned the world.

> By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is

according to faith.

Barclay - In the day of judgment these people would rise up and condemn the Jews of Jesus' time, because these Jews had had an opportunity and a privilege far beyond anything they had ever had and had refused to accept it. The condemnation of the Jews would be all the more complete because their privileges were so great. Privilege and responsibility go ever hand in hand. (Ibid)

Because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon- She came from modern day Yemen, the most mountainous, fertile part of Arabia. What a constrast - here was Jesus in their midst with miracles and teachers and here is this pagan Queen who travels from afar to hear about the God of Israel. They reject Jesus and she accepts the True God!

Wisdom of Solomon - 1 Ki. 4:34; 1 Ki. 10:4; 2 Chr. 9:3; Matt. 12:42; Lk. 11:31

Behold, something greater than Solomon is here - Some "**thing**" and some "**One**" greater than Solomon. Jesus was a King greater than Solomon, His kingdom was greater than Solomon, He was wiser than Solomon, His Gospel was more fully developed than that of Solomon. And in spite of this far greater insight, they rejected it all! On Jesus and wisdom, see Luke 7:35; Luke 10:21-22; 1Cor 1:24, 30.

J C Ryle on **something greater** - The Queen of Sheba had such faith that she travelled a vast distance in order to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Yet Solomon, with all his wisdom, was an erring and imperfect king. The Ninevites had such faith that they believed the message which Jonah brought from God, and repented. Yet even Jonah was a weak and unstable prophet. The Jews of our Lord's time had far higher light and infinitely clearer teachings than either Solomon or Jonah could supply. They had amongst them the King of kings, the Prophet greater than Moses. Yet the Jews neither repented nor believed!

Cole - **Seek God's wisdom and truth no matter what the cost.** This is the lesson we should learn from the Queen of Sheba ("the South"), who went to great trouble, effort, expense, and time to travel from southern Arabia to learn God's wisdom through King Solomon. Jesus' point was that the men of His day had the very Son of God preaching God's wisdom in their very midst, and yet they ignored Him, whereas this pagan woman was willing to travel hundreds of miles through harsh terrain to seek out someone not nearly as great. We must ask ourselves, "Will the Queen of Sheba rise up and condemn us in the day of judgment?" We have the completed canon of God's Holy Word in our own language. Men like Wycliffe and Tyndale suffered much persecution and Tyndale gave his life so that we could have the Bible in English. There are still many people groups around the world who do not have even one book of the Bible in their own language. Do we read the Word? Do we meditate on it daily? Can we truly say with the psalmist, "The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces" (Ps. 119:72)? I read of a man in Kansas City who was severely injured in an explosion. His face was badly disfigured, and he lost his eyesight as well as both hands. He had just become a Christian when the accident happened, and one of his greatest disappointments was that he could no longer read the Bible. Then he heard about a lady in England who read braille with her lips. Hoping to do the same, he sent for some books of the Bible in braille. But he discovered that the nerve endings in his lips had been too badly damaged to distinguish the characters. One day, as he brought one of the braille pages to his lips, his tongue happened to touch a few of the raised characters and he could feel them. In a flash he thought, "I can read the Bible using my tongue." At the time this incident was reported, the man had read completely through his Bible four times using his tongue! (in Donald Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines cf the Christian Life [NavPress], pp. 30-31). So what's your excuse for not reading your Bible regularly? (Luke 11:29-36 How to Respond to God's Word)

Judgment (2920)(**krisis** from **krino** = to judge, decide) means a decision or judgment, verdict, justice, court (tribunal). Mt 10:15, 11:22, 24 all describe Jesus' sobering warning to the Jews of a specific future and frightening "day of **judgment**." (cp "**sentence** of hell" Mt 23:33, see also 2 Peter 2:9, 11, 3:7, 1 John 4:17)

Condemn (also in Mt 12:41,42)(2632)(**katakrino** from **kata** = down, against + **krino** = to assess, then to separate or distinguish, then to give an opinion upon, judge, then to decide or determine and finally to judge (to judge one down [**kata** = down]), pronounce judgment or to condemn) means to give judgment against, pass sentence upon, pass judgment against and hence to condemn, this latter action implying there has been a crime. It means to pronounce sentence against or to adjudge guilty and always denotes an adverse sentence (to sentence to punishment).

Wisdom (4678) (**sophia**, compare **saphes** = clear) is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding.

> **Luke's** uses of **sophia** - Lk. 2:40; Lk. 2:52; Lk. 7:35; Lk. 11:31; Lk. 11:49; Lk. 21:15; Acts 6:3; Acts 6:10; Acts 7:10; Acts 7:22;

Luke 11:32 "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

KJV Luke 11:32 The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

- **The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it** Jonah 3:5-10
- **behold, something greater than Jonah is here** Jonah 1:2,3; 4:1-4,9; Heb 7:26
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:29-32 The Last Sign - John MacArthur

PAGAN NINEVITES "CONDEMN" THE WICKED GENERATION

The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation (genea) **at the judgment** (krisis) **and condemn it** - Once again Jesus notes Gentile receptivity to the truth was far greater than Israel, for these pagan idol worshipers repented at Jonah's preaching (albeit reluctant) whereas the wicked generation rejected Jesus' preaching.

Because they repented (metanoeo) **at the preaching** (kerugma) **of Jonah** - Woe to those who teach that repentance is not intrinsically integral with belief and salvation. They are guilty of presenting a false Gospel and will be judged accordingly!

And behold (idou), **something greater than Jonah is here** - **Behold** is injected by Jesus to get their attention. Some One greater was standing in their midst and had been traversing their land for almost 2 and 1/2 years.

MacArthur comments - Again it's a comparison of opportunity and response. The Ninevites had so little. One prophet and a self-confessed sinful foolish rebellious prophet, one prophet with one miraculous experience and the whole city repents, hundreds of thousands of people. They had none of the privileges, none of the advantages the Jews who heard the sinless Son of God and saw miracle after miracle had. Ah, but then Jesus said in Luke 16, "If they don't believe Moses and the prophets, they won't believe though one is raised from the dead." The Ninevites repented and God's judgment was prevented for 150 years, through really three generations (See Why Was Nineveh Destroyed?). The Jews rejected the truth in their midst and that generation was destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Roman holocaust. The Jews had the living God in their midst, perfect holiness, perfect wisdom, perfect clarity, perfect love, perfect grace, wielding astonishing power unmistakably proving He was Israel's God and they hated Him. And so at the judgment the Gentile Ninevites who believed stand as symbols of condemnation over a greater privileged Israel because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And behold indeed, something greater than Jonah is here. Jesus saying, "It's Me … It's My message, it's My Kingdom." (The Last Sign)

Steven Cole applies the truth about the Ninevites to us today - **Turn from your sin and obey God no matter how radical the change.** This is the lesson of Jonah and the Ninevites. Jonah despised the Assyrians, whose capital was Ninevah. They were a brutal, godless people, devoted to the destruction of Israel. But God told Jonah to go and preach to them. After his three-day submarine ride, the disobedient prophet repented and went to Ninevah. Just as he feared, though, the Ninevites repented and God withheld His judgment from them. Even the king of Ninevah put on sackcloth and publicly repented of his sin! It was one of the most astounding revivals in history! It shows us that no matter how wicked and worldly the sinner, if he hears the message of God's impending judgment and yet of His great mercy in Jesus Christ, and comes in genuine faith to Christ, he will be transformed. The gospel is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes, whether it be the raw pagan or the religious do-gooder (Ro 1:16). This means that there is hope in Jesus Christ for the worst of sinners. No matter how terrible your past, if you will repent of your sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the one who bore your penalty on the cross, God will transform your life from the inside out. The men of Ninevah are a testimony of what God's grace can do with any sinner who will repent and believe the gospel. (Luke 11:29-36 How to Respond to God's Word)

Adam Clarke (quoted by Guzik) on why the witness of Jesus was greater than Jonah - (1) "Christ, Who preached to the Jews, was infinitely greater than Jonah, in His nature, person, and mission." (2) "Jonah preached repentance in Nineveh only forty days, and Christ preached among the Jews for several years." (3) "Jonah wrought no miracles to authorize his preaching; but Christ wrought miracles every day, in every place where He went, and of every kind." (4) "Notwithstanding all this, the people of Judea did not repent, though the people of Nineveh did."

Repented (3340) (**metanoeo** from **meta** = with, among + **noeo** = to think, exercise the mind <> from **nous** = mind - see study = **metanoia**) means to have another mind. **Metanoeo** means to change one's mind in respect to sin, God, and self. To turn to God and from sin (Luke 15:7 = "one sinner who **repents**", 10, cf 1Th 1:9-note). It is not an intellectual decision but a change of mind that issues in a change of behavior. This change of mind may, especially in the case of Christians who have fallen into sin, be preceded by sorrow (2Cor 7:8, 9, 10, 11); but sorrow for sin, though it may cause repentance, is not repentance.

Luke's uses of **repent** (metanoeo) - more than all the other Gospel writers:

> Lk. 10:13; Lk. 11:32; Lk. 13:3; Lk. 13:5; Lk. 15:7; Lk. 15:10; Lk. 16:30; Lk. 17:3; Lk. 17:4; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 8:22; Acts 17:30; Acts 26:20

Preaching (cf Mt 12:41)(2782)(**kerugma** where **–ma** means the result of <> from **kerusso** = to proclaim or announce in public) means not so much the **act** but the **content** or the **result of preaching**, that which is cried by the **herald** (an officer sent by a king or other high official to proclaim a message or announce good news) or public crier. It can have such senses as "news," "declaration," "decree," "announcement," etc. In Classical Greek the **kerux** (noun from kerusso) was a public servant of supreme power both in peace and in war, one who summoned the **ekklesia** (1577) (later used for the Church), the town gathering. The **kerux** was the public crier and reader of state messages such as the conveyor of a declaration of war or as well as the "publication" of honors or victories.

> **Kerugma - 8v - message preached(1), preaching(5), proclamation(2).** Matt. 12:41; Lk. 11:32; Rom. 16:25; 1Co. 1:21; 1 Co. 2:4; 1Co. 15:14; 2 Tim. 4:17; Titus 1:3

Behold (2400) **idou** is the second person singular aorist middle imperative of eidon which means to see, perceive, look at. In the NT **idou** is used as a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows.**Idou** in the **middle voice** means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The **aorist imperative** is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!"

> **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"
>
> **Zodhiates** writes that **idou** is a "demonstrative particle. "Lo and behold!", serving to call attention to something external or exterior to oneself; usually used at the beginning of a clause or only with kai (and), before it, but sometimes in the mid. of a clause before words which are to be particularly noted (Mt 23:34; Lk 13:16; Acts 2:7). (The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament. AMG)
>
> **Idou in Luke and Acts** - Lk. 1:20; Lk. 1:31; Lk. 1:36; Lk. 1:38; Lk. 1:44; Lk. 1:48; Lk. 2:10; Lk. 2:34; Lk. 2:48; Lk. 5:12; Lk. 6:23; Lk. 7:27; Lk. 7:34; Lk. 9:30; Lk. 10:3; Lk. 10:19; Lk. 11:31; Lk. 11:32; Lk. 11:41; Lk. 13:7; Lk. 13:16; Lk. 13:30; Lk. 13:32; Lk. 13:35; Lk. 14:2; Lk. 15:29; Lk. 17:21; Lk. 17:23; Lk. 18:28; Lk. 18:31; Lk. 19:8; Lk. 19:20; Lk. 22:10; Lk. 22:21; Lk. 22:31; Lk. 22:38; Lk. 22:47; Lk. 23:14; Lk. 23:15; Lk. 23:29; Lk. 24:4; Lk. 24:13; Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:10; Acts 2:7; Acts 5:9; Acts 5:28; Acts 7:56; Acts 8:36; Acts 9:10; Acts 10:17; Acts 10:19; Acts 10:21; Acts 10:30; Acts 11:11; Acts 12:7; Acts 13:11; Acts 13:25; Acts 13:46; Acts 20:22; Acts 20:25; Acts 27:24

Generation (1074) genea gives us our English genealogy) literally refers to those descended from a common ancestor and in this sense refers to a race, a clan or descendants. Generation, offspring, family, race, kind. **Gingrich** - clan, race, kind Lk 16:8. Generation, contemporaries Mt 12:41f; 17:17; Mk 9:19; 13:30; Lk 21:32; Hb 3:10. Age, period of time Mt 1:17; Lk 1:48, 50; Col 1:26. Jesus indicted "this generation," in other words, His "contemporaries," as "evil, adulterous, unbelieving, and perverse" (e.g., Matthew 11:16; 12:39–45; 17:17 with parallels; cf. Luke 11:29; Acts 2:40). In NT Gr. geneá literally means space of time, circle of time, which only in a derived sense signifies the meaning of a time, a race; then generally in the sense of affinity of communion based upon the sameness of stock

> **Genea - 37v - generation(32), generations(10), kind(1).**Matt. 1:17; Matt. 11:16; Matt. 12:39; Matt. 12:41; Matt. 12:42; Matt. 12:45; Matt. 16:4; Matt. 17:17; Matt. 23:36; Matt. 24:34; Mk. 8:12; Mk. 8:38; Mk. 9:19; Mk. 13:30; Lk. 1:48; Lk. 1:50; Lk. 7:31; Lk. 9:41; Lk. 11:29; Lk. 11:30; Lk. 11:31; Lk. 11:32; Lk. 11:50; Lk. 11:51; Lk. 16:8; Lk. 17:25; Lk. 21:32; Acts 2:40; Acts 8:33; Acts 13:36; Acts 14:16; Acts 15:21; Eph. 3:5; Eph. 3:21; Phil. 2:15; Col. 1:26; Heb. 3:10

Luke 11:33 "No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it away in a cellar nor under a basket, but on the lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light.

> KJV Luke 11:33 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

- **No one, after lighting a lamp** Lk 8:16,17; Mt 5:15; Mark 4:21,22
- **puts it away in a cellar nor under a basket, but on the lampstand,** Mt 5:15
- **so that those who enter may see the light** see Mt 5:16; 10:27; John 11:9; 12:46; Phil 2:15,16
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:33-36 A Question of Sight - John MacArthur

JESUS' "LAMP" WAS LIT
TO GIVE "LIGHT"

Related Passages:

> John 3:19-21+ This is the judgment, that the **Light** (Jn 8:12) has come into the world, and men loved (agapao) the darkness rather than the **Light**, **for** (term of explanation) their deeds were evil. 20 "**For** (term of explanation) everyone who does (present tense - habitually practice) evil hates (present tense) the **Light**, and does not come to the **Light** for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (IN OTHER WORDS THEY LOVE THEIR SIN! THEY LOVE UNRIGHTEOUSNESS FAR MORE THAN RIGHTEOUSNESS) 21 "But he who practices the truth comes to the **Light**, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."
>
> Matthew 5:15+ nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. (NOTE - SIMILAR METAPHOR BUT A DIFFERENT APPLICATION)
>
> Mark 4:21+ And He was saying to them, "A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed? Is it not brought to be put on the lampstand? (NOTE - SIMILAR METAPHOR BUT A DIFFERENT APPLICATION)
>
> Luke 8:16-17+ "Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light. 17 "For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light. (NOTE - SIMILAR METAPHOR BUT A DIFFERENT APPLICATION)

Fortner - Our Master often used this symbolism of light (a candle on a candlestick) for various purposes (Matt. 5:15; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16). His intention here is clearly revealed by the context. He is talking about himself. He is declaring that he (the Light of the World) had stood before these men as a bright, shining light. His works, his claims, his ministry were open, public and unmistakably clear. "These things were not done in a corner." He who is greater a greater light and witness than both Jonah and Solomon is the Light which no man lighted. He is indeed the Light! Our Lord is here declaring that man's unbelief and rebellion is inexcusable. He is continuing with the same line of thought and doctrine as he gave in verses 29-32. The doctrine of our text is plain.

Thompson - remember the context. Many religious people were claiming they were right with God and at the same time they were calling Jesus Christ Satanic and demonic (11:14-15). These people were trying to convince others that they needed more proof that Christ was from God (11:16, 29).

John Stevenson - Jesus now turns to the illustration of light. We normally think of these verses in sort of a "stand alone" manner, but they should not be divorced from the context of this passage. The point has already been made that Jesus is speaking to a generation who is being condemned for its unbelief, even though they have had great exposure to the light....I've had the opportunity to go into some caves and caverns that were deep enough so that when you turned out the light, there was total darkness. At such times, it does not matter if your vision is 20-20 of if it is blurry, in both cases you cannot see. Light exists in order that you might be able to see.

Ritchie - the Lord God had given the Jewish people directly by the hand of Moses the law or truth of God's character and moral standards to live a life that would please him and bring joy to their lives. But they were to put that light ".on the lampstand, in order that those who enter may see the light [the truth of God]."

Pulpit Commentary suggests that "The Lord continues his reply to those who asked him to support his claims by a visible sign from heaven, "Do not think for a moment that the sign I speak about, and which was prefigured in the story of the Prophet Jonah, will be an obscure or secret thing. No man lights a lamp to hide: so will it be with that sign which will be given to you." Jesus was speaking all the while of the mighty sign of his resurrection.

Matthew Poole says the metaphor of a lamp "was a kind of proverbial speech, and so applicable to diverse subjects."

No one (oudeis - absolutely no one), **after lighting** (hapto/haptomai) **a lamp** (luchnos/lychnos)**, puts it away in a cellar nor under a basket** (módios)**, but on the lampstand, so that** (term of purpose/result) **those who enter may see the light** - First, ask to whom is Jesus speaking this "light pericope"? If we check the context (always the "king" in interpretation), we see a "**crowds were**

increasing." (Lk 11:29+). Who else is present? His disciples, who He will be intentionally teaching during this last "six month sabbatical," for for when He, the Light of world, was gone, they would then be His lights in the darkness. So part of the audience would be the crowd of Jewish men and women drawn to the dramatic exorcism in Lk 11:14+ which amazed the crowds. Now regarding His words, everyone in the crowds and all the disciples knew the clear truth of this statement. Little oil lamps were placed on a lampstand to give light to the whole room. LIGHTS WERE MEANT TO BE SEEN! So Jesus begins with a fact or truth about which no one could claim ignorance. He is speaking metaphorically (see terms of comparison) by using something well known to reveal something not known, not revealed or not understood (ultimately that HE WAS THE LIGHT). It is axiomatic that physical light reveals, but absence of light, that is, darkness conceals (cf Eph 5:11, 13+). This is a truth in the physical world but more importantly in the spiritual world - spiritual light reveals, but spiritual darkness conceals! Revealing light is what Jesus, the Light of the world, has been doing for about two and one half years - revealing spiritual light to those otherwise hopelessly lost in spiritual darkness! In this passage, Jesus has, as it were, placed Himself on the **lampstand** so that the entire nation of Israel would have spiritual light to see spiritual truth and be spiritually saved.

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges - The comparison is the same as in Matthew 5:14, Mark 4:21; **but the application in the next verse is different. The light is here used for inward enlightenment, not to be seen afar**.

Fortner - Christ is the Light. Some seeing the Light are dazzled by it. One, seeing something of our Lord's brightness cried, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." The malicious Pharisees and religionists saw nothing of the Light. They blatantly imputed the Master's works of mercy to the Devil. Many profess to see so light in him but see so little that they ask for a sign from heaven to make the light more clear! Our Lord's constant answer in his day was the same as it is in ours. The Light just keeps on shining, unaffected by the darkness that cannot see. Brilliant that Light shined in Palestine, it shines more brilliantly today. The Light is meant to be seen. Therefore the Lord God has put the Light of the World upon a lamp stand and lifted him up. Lifted up upon the Cross. Lifted up in His Resurrection. Lifted up in His Ascension.Lifted up in The Gospel.

Hendriksen on the pericope in Lk 11:33-36 - a moment's study immediately reveals that the Lucan paragraph harmonizes beautifully with the preceding context. Christ's enemies have been slandering him. They have been saying, "It is by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons, that he casts out demons" (Lk 11:15). Also they have been demanding "a sign from heaven" (Lk 11:16, 29–32). What all this amounts to is that they have been saying, "It is your fault that we do not believe in you." It is therefore most appropriate that Jesus now shows them that the actual situation is the other way around; to put it colloquially, that "the shoe is on the other foot." It is not Jesus who is at fault but his enemies are to blame. The Light is shining, but they are obstructing it! The Father had sent his Son into the world to be its Light, but these people are turning their backs on this great Gift!..... In the natural sphere no one would think of lighting a lamp and then hiding it in a cellar or under the peck-measure; yet that is exactly what you, my critics, are doing in the spiritual sphere. Instead of allowing my light to shine into your hearts and lives ['on the lampstand,' where everyone who enters can see it], you are obscuring it." How were they doing this? See Matt. 15:3; 23:23. (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

J C Ryle - The saying of this verse is evidently intended to be a rebuke to the unbelieving Jews, who had the light, but would not use it,—and a warning to our Lord's disciples, who believed in the light, that they ought not to conceal the light, but display it to the world. A candle is intended to be placed on a candlestick and give light. So also God's truth is intended to be imparted to others, and exhibited to all around us.

MacArthur points out that in Mt 5:15 Jesus "used the subject of light and darkness to illustrate the testimony of the disciples and how the disciples were giving forth light. But even though there was light, people couldn't see it because they didn't have sight. He was talking about the disciples. Here He uses the same metaphors, the same similes, the same word pictures, only He's referring not to the testimony of the disciples but to His own testimony, His own witness....The simple truth is this, light is everywhere but blind people can't see it." (Luke 11:33-36 A Question of Sight)

So what is the context for the focus on **light** in Lk 11:33-36? Jesus' entire ministry of miracles and teaching was one of bringing spiritual light to the spiritual darkness that dominated the land of Israel. If we go back to Lk 11:14 we see the spiritual light in the form of Jesus' casting out the demons, a "light" which amazed the crowds, but ultimately a "light" which was rejected by most, to the point that they accused Jesus of being possessed by a demon! In a sense they were forced to make that blasphemous accusation, because the miracles were clearly indicative of irrefutable supernatural power over the forces of darkness. And so they were forced to say His miraculous power was Satanic, for the only alternative was to say He was empowered by God and ultimately that He was God. In summary, the spiritual light of His ministry was a clear sign that He was the Messiah.

Now when the Jews asked for a **sign** in Lk 11:16 they were in effect asking for more light. They were implying that with casting out the demon (and all His other miracles), He was not giving them enough "light" but now they needed a sign (like a flashing red stoplight). And what did Jesus call them because of their desire for a **sign**? A wicked generation (Lk 11:29). They were not immoral but even worse were moral and religious. They were not wicked because of their "morality" but wicked because they sought a **sign**!

How wicked were they? Light was all around them and they could not see it (or refused to see it. And so Jesus promised them only one more sign, the **sign of Jonah**, ultimately the sign that demonstrated He had the power over death. But even then the leaders bribed the soldiers to lie about the empty tomb and say His body was stolen. They refused the greatest light any man could be given, the light of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead! They were supremely wicked! (Paraphrased from MacArthur)

It was never an issue of light.
It was always an issue of sight!

MacArthur goes on to explain "It was never an issue of light. It was always an issue of sight. And it is today. You say you don't have enough information about Jesus, you don't know what to conclude about Jesus. I remember one night when Larry King said to me, "I wish I had your faith." Faith comes by hearing the message about Christ. There's plenty of light; the issue is sight. And so Jesus concludes this discussion in Luke 11:33–36 by talking about the difference between light and sight. They were wicked because they were laying the responsibility for their unbelief at the feet of Jesus and simply saying, "You didn't make Your point. We didn't have enough light. We came to the conclusion we came to because that's all the information You gave us. You left us in the dark."But that wasn't really the issue. **They were blind willfully because they hated His message**. **They hated the indictment of their sin and hypocrisy and false religion and self-righteousness**. They hated the idea that He called on them to acknowledge themselves as poor, prisoners, blind and oppressed (cf Lk 4:18+), sinners under the judgment of God headed for eternal punishment who needed to repent and be saved. They hated that message. And so it skewed their ability to see the truth. " (Luke 11:33-36 A Question of Sight)

NIV Study Bible - Jesus had publicly exhibited the light of the Gospel for all to see, but "a wicked generation" (Lk 11:29) requested more spectacular signs. The problem was not with any failure on Jesus' part in giving light; it was with the faulty vision of his audience.

So what is Jesus saying? His point is that He had light (of course He was the Light, see Scriptures below) and did not try to hide His light (His miracles and His teaching) but placed His light in the open for all the Jews to see. As He has already explained, the Jews had far more spiritual light than the Ninevites of Jonah's day and the Queen of Sheba, but even those with this lesser amount of light still believed. Had God not given them spiritual light, they could never have understood the spiritual truth about God. And so for the three years of Jesus' ministry, the nation of Israel was flooded with spiritual light! So the problem of the wicked generation was not enough light but no sight! The sad truth is they loved darkness, because they could hide (or thought they could hide) their sin in the darkness (See Related Passages above - John 3:19-20).

JESUS AS LIGHT

The Scriptures repeatedly allude to Jesus as the Light of God or from God. According to tradition, Light was one of the names of the Messiah.

> John 8:12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."
>
> John 1:9; There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.
>
> 1 John 1:5; This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.
>
> 2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.
>
> Daniel 2:22 "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him.
>
> Psalms 36:9 For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.
>
> Luke 1:78 Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,
>
> Isaiah 9:1 But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. 2 The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.
>
> Isaiah 42:6 "I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over

you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations,

Isaiah 49:6 He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Malachi 4:2 "But for you who fear My name the Sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.

Lighting (681)(**hapto/haptomai**) means to touch but in the active voice as here refers to lighting or kindling a fire, causing illumination to take place (cf Acts 28:2, Lk 8:16, Lk 11:33, Lk 15:8, 22:55).

Lamp (3088) (**luchnos/lychnos** from **leukos** = brilliant, shining white) refers to a portable lamp fed with oil, not a candle. Friberg - (1) literally lamp other than a candle, light (Mt 5.15+); figuratively, of the eye as the organ that admits light and enables understanding (Mt 6.22); (2) metaphorically, of people or things that enable spiritual understanding: of prophecies (2Pe 1.19); of John the Baptist (Jn 5.35); of Christ (Rev 21.23); of the lives of believers (Lk 12.35) (Borrow Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

Basket (Peck-measure) (3426) (**módios**) refers to a Roman measuring basket of various sizes to measure dry material and was large enough to cover a light. **Modios** is a Latin word for a unit of dry measure equal roughly to 8 dry quarts or 1 peck. These containers, which held 2 to 7 gallons, were common household items in those times. Jesus uses the **peck-measure** (or grain-measure) to indicate a familiar object which is found in every house. **Friberg** says modius, was one-peck measure, a Roman grain measure holding 16 **sextarii**, equivalent to 2 English gallons or about 1 peck (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

Modios is used on in Mt 5:15, Mk 4:21, Lk 11:33 and not in the Septuagint.

James Smith - SINGLENESS OF EYE AND FULLNESS OF LIGHT Luke 11:33–36

"Earth's crammed with Heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes,
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries,
And daub their natural faces unaware,
More and more from the first similitude!"
——BROWNING.

"Light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun." So is it also with the light of truth that beams from the Son of Righteousness. It is in His light that we see light clearly. Blessed are such eyes that see. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is here teaching us the blessedness of the single eye, bad in Himself in a pre-eminent degree the single eye; so His whole body was full of light. His light was not put in a "secret place" nor "under a bushel" (v. 33), but was "lifted up" on the lampstand of the Cross that all in the house of this world may see it. "There was the true Light which lighteth every man coming into the world" (John 1:9, R.V.). Ye are the light of the world; let your light so shine. In examining this portion we would note—

I. The Medium. "The light (lamp) of the body is the eye" (v. 34, R.V.). The eye is—

1. PASSIVE. It does not, and cannot, create the light, neither can it form or transform any object. It is simply a receiver and a reflector of outward objects to the inner consciousness of man, a channel through which visible things are revealed to the invisible spirit.

2. VERY SENSITIVE. A little thing mars the vision of the eye. It is very easily offended. So with a tender conscience. They are blessed indeed who are as careful about their conscience as they are about the apple of the eye (Acts 24:16). Oh, that our spirits were as sensitive to the things of the Spirit of God!

II. The Means. "LIGHT." The light was made for the eye, and the eye for the light. The successive waves of light that lash with infinite tenderness upon the eye prove the divine adaptation of the one to the other. But light is not more suitable to the eye than Christ is to the soul of man. There is a deep meaning in the words of Goethe, "Were thine eye not sunny, how could it ever see the sun?" So were thy soul not God-like, how could it ever enjoy God? No one would be foolish enough to say "I have an eye of my own, I don't need the light." The eye is utterly useless without the light, so the spirit of man is utterly helpless and powerless to discern the things of God apart from the revelation of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14). The true Light now shineth. Oh, that the eyes of the understanding might be opened (Luke 24:31, 32).

III. The Manner. Christ is the Light of the World, but there are two ways of looking at or dealing with this Light. These are represented by the “single eye” and the “evil eye,” the pure and the impure, the honest and the deceitful, the new heart and the old.

1. THE SINGLE EYE and its effects. The single eye is one that has been anointed with the heavenly eyesalve (Rev. 3:18). The blood-washed spirit that looks through this eye has been reconciled to God, and seeks to know the truth as it is in Jesus. There is now no mixed motives in the life, no mingling of self-interest with the kingdom of God. The whole forces of the soul are now concentrated in “this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, I press on toward the mark.” Such an eye fills the whole body with light, because the Spirit of God takes the things which are Christ’s, and reveals them to those who have the pure eye for the glory of His Name. If our motives are single, one with Christ’s, then we shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of His life within us. To be filled with the Holy Spirit of Truth is to be filled with light. The spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened” (Eph. 1:17, 18).

2. THE EVIL EYE and its effects. The evil eye is the coloured lens of an unclean heart. The eye of prejudice can only see objects in a contorted fashion. The unrenewed heart of man can no more appreciate the light of revelation than the blinking owl of the night can enjoy the sunshine. The “evil eye” is like the eye of the hawk, always staring downward when flying upward. Remember Lot’s wife. “If thine eye be evil, thy whole body is full of darkness.” The darkness within is an evidence of an evil and doubting heart. We look to Christ with an evil eye if we look to Him only that self may be honoured and gratified; as Keble put it:

> “We see far in holy ground
> If duly purged our mental view.”

IV. The Message. “Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness” (v. 35). If the light that is in us is not a revelation from God it is but the flickering “spark of our own kindling,” a light that is certain to deceive. The light that was in the Church of Laodicea was darkness, for although they said that they had need of nothing, yet was Christ, the Light, outside (Rev. 3:17–20). There is no darkness so great as the darkness that is mistaken for light (Matt. 6:23; Prov. 16:25). Woe unto them that put darkness for light (Isa. 5:20). “When the pilot is drowned, the light quenched, and the captain taken prisoner, what hope is left for the crew?” While ye have the light, believe in the Light (John 1:9).

J C Ryle has an excellent comment with pithy application to all of us - WE learn from these words of the Lord Jesus, the importance of making a good use of religious light and privileges. We are reminded of what men do when they light a candle. They do not “put it in a secret place,” under a bushel measure. They place it on a candlestick, that it may be serviceable and useful by giving light.

When the Gospel of Christ is placed before a man’s soul, it is as if God offered to him a lighted candle. It is not sufficient to hear it, and assent to it, and admire it, and acknowledge its truth. It must be received into the heart, and obeyed in the life. Until this takes place the Gospel does him no more good than if he were an African heathen, who has never heard the Gospel at all. A lighted candle is before him, but he is not turning it to account. The guilt of such conduct is very great.

God’s light neglected will be a heavy charge against many at the last day.(Lk 10:13-15+)

But even when a man professes to value the light of the Gospel he must take care that he is not selfish in the use of it. He must endeavor to reflect the light on all around him. He must strive to make others acquainted with the truths which he finds good for himself. He must let his light so shine before men (Mt 5:16+, Phil 2:15+), that they may see whose he is and whom he serves, and may be induced to follow his example, and join the Lord’s side. **He must regard the light which he enjoys as a loan, for the use of which he is accountable**. (cf "stewards" - 1Co 4:1-2+) He must strive to hold his candle in such a way, that many may see it, and as they see it, admire and believe (IN THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD - Jn 8:12).

Let us **take heed** to ourselves that we do not neglect our light. The sin of many in this matter is far greater than they suppose. Thousands flatter themselves that their souls are not in a very bad state, because they abstain from gross and glaring acts of wickedness, and are decent and respectable in their outward lives. But are they neglecting the Gospel when it is offered to them? Are they coolly sitting still year after year, and taking no decided steps in the service of Christ? **If this be so, let them know that their guilt is very great in the sight of God. To have the light and yet not walk in the light, is of itself a great sin. It is to treat with contempt and indifference the King of kings.**

A man’s religion may well be suspected,
when he is content to go to heaven alone.

Let us **beware** of selfishness in our religion, even after we have learned to value the light. We should labor to make all men see that we have found “the pearl of great price,” (Mt 13:46+) and that we want them to find it as well as ourselves. **A man’s religion may well be suspected, when he is content to go to heaven alone.** The true Christian will have a large heart. If a parent, he will long for the salvation of his children. If a master, he will desire to see his servants converted. If a landlord, he will want his tenants to

come with him into God's kingdom. This is healthy religion!

The Christian who is satisfied to burn his candle alone,
is in a very weak and sickly state of soul.

Luke 11:34 "The eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness.

> KJV Luke 11:34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

- **The eye is the lamp of your body** of Ps 119:18; Mt 6:22,23; Mark 8:18; Acts 26:18; Eph 1:17
- **when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light** Acts 2:46; 2 Cor 1:12; 11:3; Eph 6:5; Col 3:22
- **but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness** Genesis 19:11; 2 Kings 6:15-20; Ps 81:12; Pr 28:22; Isa 6:10; 29:10; 42:19; Isa 44:18; Jeremiah 5:21; Mark 4:12; 7:22; Acts 13:11; Ro 11:8-10; 2 Cor 4:4; 2 Th 2:9-12
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:33-36 A Question of Sight - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

> Matthew 6:22+ "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 23 "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

THE PROBLEM: NOT THE LIGHT BUT THE SIGHT!

The eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is clear (haplous), **your whole body also is full of light** (photeinos) - This expresses the straight-forward truth that the eye is the organ that allows light into our body. The light rays are "translated" by the mind into information that makes things clear (most of the time, unless we are reading Plato!). The eye is the lamp of the body and the lamp of the body is the soul. The eye of the soul is the heart. **When** is a time phrase meaning at that time, whenever, as soon as. (Always pause and query time phrases). The **eye** is the only organ that allows light into our body and so **when** it is **clear** and light can enter, there is in effect **light** for the entire body. So in the context of the incredible **light** Israel had access to in Jesus the **Light** of the world, the problem with Israel was **not the Light, but the sight** of the people of Israel. They did not (and still do not) have spiritual sight which allows them to perceive the **Light** they have received. Their eyes now have been blinded (cf 2Co 4:4+, synonymous with hardened minds/hearts in 2Co 3:14,15+).

Zodhiates points out that "When the eye accomplishes its purpose of seeing things as they are, then it is haplous, single, healthy, perfect."

Fortner adds "When the eye is clear, single, unclouded, then the whole body is full of light. When the eyes of our souls are opened and enlightened by the Spirit of God into the truths of the Gospel, when there is nothing clouding our vision of the glory of Christ in the gospel, the whole soul is filled with light, joy, comfort and peace."

J C Ryle - The eye is to the body, what the heart is to the man. If the eye is dimmed—does not see objects clearly, the whole action of the body is more or less affected. If the heart is double-minded and compromising, the whole character of the man will be influenced by it. His course will be wavering and unstable. His life will be trimming and inconsistent.

Michael Andrus - The function of light is to illuminate. It was not easy to light an oil lamp in those days. There were no light switches to flip. It was more like starting a campfire with flint. No one would go to all that trouble and then put the lamp in a place where it would not illuminate. The function of the eye is to receive light. Your eye is like a light to your body. If your eye is healthy and lets in plenty of light, your whole body benefits. You're going to see the beauty around you, you're not going to trip over objects, you're going to be able to read and understand truth, etc. But if you have cataracts or macular degeneration or a detached retina, your eyes don't let in sufficient light, your whole life suffers. The opposite of the positive benefits I just mentioned will be true of you. What is needed is not more light but better eyesight. Jesus makes it clear that he is speaking metaphorically and spiritually. "Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness." Obviously we do not always have control over our physical eyes. But spiritually speaking we are responsible for what our eyes take in, and he places the responsibility squarely on our shoulders to bask

in the light. Light ignored results in darkness, and the darkness can become so thick that it results in blindness. A popular expression has it that one “goes over to the dark side.” 2 Cor. 4:4 puts it this way: “The god of this age (that’s Satan) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” The issue in the Gospel of Luke is what do we do with the truth we hear? What do we do with Jesus’ call to follow? There is no neutral ground.

Guzik - Even as a bad eye will make a person blind, so bad hearts will make one spiritually blind. One must be spiritually blind to attribute Jesus’ miracles to Satan and to ignore the work of Jesus right before the eyes or to live as a hypocrite.

John Stevenson - Jesus is the light. He has come to a people who have been living in darkness. Now the question is whether they will be able to see. The point being made here is that they WILL be able to see as long as they have spiritual eyes with which to see. If you can’t see the Light, the fault isn’t in the Light, it is in You. These people are in the presence of Jesus. They are in the presence of the light. If they hear the gospel and then do not believe the gospel, it is not the fault of the gospel. The fault lies in their own spiritual blindness. Quite a number of years ago, Josh McDowell wrote a book entitled, "Evidence that Demands a Verdict." It is replete with evidences demonstrating that the Bible is authoritative and that Jesus is who He said He was and that He is indeed risen from the dead. Given that great weight of evidence, why don’t people believe? The fault lies, not in the evidence, but in the eyes. They don’t see because they have been spiritually blinded.

Israel's eyes were blinded by the love of their sin manifest not by immorality and vile wickedness, but by external morality, legalistic adherence to the laws, hypocrisy and self-righteousness. Their religion is a religion which blinds them to a relationship with the Light, Christ Jesus. They are deceived and do not acknowledge their sinful condition (are blind to it), and so they see no need for a Savior.

Fortner describes things that blind the eyes of men **-** The Darkness of Our Nature. The Cataracts (blinding scales) of Tradition and Heresy. The Glaucoma (haziness) of Self-righteousness. The Myopia (shortsightedness) of Worldliness—Mammon repays its worshippers with blindness.

Paul described Israel's tragic condition and the condition of every human being who fails to see (cf "**eye**") their sin against God and to repent and believe

> And even if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing (apollumi in present tense = EVERY UNBELIEVER IS IN THE PROCESS OF PERISHING EVEN NOW! WOE!), in whose case the god of this world (SATAN) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving (THEY FIRST DISBELIEVED THE GOSPEL AND THEN SATAN "ABETTED" THEM SO THAT THEY WERE "DOUBLY BLIND" SO TO SPEAK), **that they might not see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God**. (2 Cor 4:3-4+)

NIV Study Bible - Those asking for a sign do not need more light; they need good eyes to allow the light to enter.

Spurgeon - If you do not see Jesus, it is not because he has hidden himself in darkness, but because your eyes are blinded. (Luke 11 - exposition)

Reformation Study Bible - When the eye is functioning correctly the body receives the benefit of light ("is full of light"; cf. Ps. 18:28). The people seeking a sign (Lk 11:29) did not need more light, but better receptiveness to the light they already had. What God was doing in Jesus was plain enough.

But when it is bad (poneros), **your body also is full of darkness** (skoteinos) - An "evil" (bad) eye cannot see light and therefore is full of darkness. In a sense, the "light" of Christ was turned into darkness. Israel had seen the One Who was Light, had heard His teachings and had seen his miracles and yet now they even accused Him of being empowered by Satan. As **Ritchie** says "In essence this nation's lamp had gone out, and their hearts were filled with darkness caused by evil desires, pride and prejudice."

> **THOUGHT** - Jesus' teaching presents a vital principle in our modern age where visual stimuli are everywhere and sadly (and seductively) much of what our eyes are exposed to is spiritual darkness. The implication is clear --- when we take in the spiritual darkness that is so pervasive in our immoral, godless society, we are at definite risk of making out body full of darkness! This reality is why the command in the next verse is so crucial to obey!

Hendriksen - The figure is easy to understand. When a person’s eyes (sing. “eye” here for plural) are in good condition, the entire body “will be illumined,” will know exactly what to do. The foot will know where to step. The hand will realize how to take hold, etc. The opposite is true when, through some illness, a person’s eyes do not function properly. Such a person will be groping in the dark. Those bodily organs over which he would normally exercise conscious control will now refuse to function properly. They are, as it were, “in the dark” as to what to do. So also when a person’s inner disposition is right, having been sanctified by the Holy Spirit, his entire personality will be illumined. He will possess the true knowledge of God, will experience peace of mind that passes all understanding, and will be able to thank the Lord for joy unspeakable and full of glory. On the contrary, when his heart is not right

with God, this lamentable condition will also affect his entire personality. Instead of spiritual progress there will be spiritual retardation and deterioration. (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

Nelson's NKJV Study Bible has an application of Jesus' words - It has been said that "you are what you eat." But even more accurately, you are what you see. This is why David said, "I will set nothing wicked (worthless - Hebrew = belial) before my eyes" (Ps. 101:3). A person who concentrates on what is **good** (God's teaching) is healthy. But a person who focuses on what is **bad** (the false teaching of the world) is **full of darkness.**

MacDonald - The application is this: God is the One who has **lit** the **lamp**. In the Person and work of the Lord Jesus, He provided a blaze of illumination for the world. If anyone doesn't see the Light, it isn't God's fault. In Lk 8:16-17+ Jesus was speaking of the responsibility of those who were already His disciples to propagate the faith and not to hide it under a vessel. Here in Lk 11:33 He is exposing the unbelief of His sign-seeking critics as caused by their covetousness and fear of shame. (Borrow Believer's Bible Commentary - excellent).

R Kent Hughes - The idea here is simple but beautiful. The eye is pictured as the window through which light comes into the body. If a window is clean and the glass is clear, the light that comes in will properly light every part of the room. If the window is dirty, or if the glass is uneven or tinted or discolored, the light will be hindered, and the room will not receive the full benefit of the light. The amount and quality of the light that comes into a room depends on the condition of the window through which it comes. So it is with the eye. The condition of the eye determines the quality of the light that enters the body. If you are color-blind, all the reds and greens of Christmas decorations are lost to you. If you have cataracts, you may sit next to someone and perceive only a shadow. If your eye is blind, "how great is that darkness." There are no colors, no forms, no motion. Of course, Jesus is not giving us a lesson on optics. **He is saying that the light that comes into a man's soul depends on the spiritual condition of the eye through which it has to pass because the eye is the window of the body**. (See The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom)

Don Fortner - The evil eye here is not talking about the evil eye of witchcraft, but the understanding that is perverted, so perverted that light is turned into darkness. In the natural world light can never become darkness; but in spiritual matters it often does. Take heed to the gospel and the ministry of the gospel, take heed, lest you despise the light and it become darkness to your soul. Light despised will become darkness; and there is no blindness like judicial blindness. From such there is no recovery. Perhaps you are thinking, "How can the light that is in a person become darkness?" Let me show you. Men turn light into darkness when…

- ·They turn the grace of God into lasciviousness.
- ·They pervert the ordinances of the gospel into sacraments.
- ·They make God's holy law a means of holiness.
- ·They make freedom from the law a license to sin.
- ·They make the graces of the Spirit conditions of grace.
- ·They make the doctrine of Christ salvation.
- ·They make divine sovereignty an excuse for irresponsibility.
- ·They make character and conduct meaningless.
- ·They make character and conduct a basis of hope and assurance.

David Thompson has an interesting note on **clear** (haplous) writing that "This is a rare word that comes from a root word that means to go on a *voyage* (Ibid., p. 866). The point Christ is making is that when **an eye keeps its single focus on the light of the word** and does not go on some *voyage* away from the light, the entire body will be full of light. On the other hand, if an eye goes on some *voyage* into evil, then the whole body will be full of darkness. A great **illustration** of this very point is a camera. That camera will reproduce what the focus of the lens is. It will reproduce a picture of its focus. So it is with people spiritually. They will produce a picture of their real focus. If they are focused on the righteousness of God and Jesus Christ and the word of God, they will reflect it. If they are focused on the things of this world, things of religion, their lives will reflect it. Whatever you feed into your eyes and lens will eventually fill up the picture of your life.

Clear (single, generous) (573)(**haplous** from **a** = negation + **pleko** = twine, braid, weave, knit) means single (as translated by the KJV), simple, uncomplicated, sincere, generous, sound. In Luke 11:34 **haplous** is used in the sense of sound, healthy, normal. **Haplous** pertains to being motivated by singleness of purpose so as to be open and aboveboard, without guile, sincere, straightforward, i.e. without a hidden agenda. **Marvin Vincent** says "The picture underlying this adjective (haplous) is that of a piece of cloth or other material, neatly folded once, and without a variety of complicated folds. Hence the idea of simplicity or singleness (compare simplicity from the Latin simplex; *semel*, once; *plicare*, to fold). So, in a moral sense, artless, plain, pure. Here sound, as opposed to evil or diseased. Possibly with reference to the double-mindedness and indecision condemned in Mt 6:24+."

Haplous - 2v - Matt. 6:22; Lk. 11:34

Full of light (5460)(**photeinos** from **phos** = light) means shining, bright, full of light, radiant (Mt 17:5). Full of light, illuminated (Mt 6:22; Lk 11:34, 36). **Friberg** - (1) as describing what is composed of or full of light illuminated, well-lit, clear (Mt 6.22); (2) as what is characterized by light bright, shining, radiant (Mt 17.5) (Borrow Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

> **Gilbrant** - This adjective is related to the noun phōs, "light," and can be found in classical Greek from the Fourth Century B.C. meaning "shining, bright" (Liddell-Scott). It appears five times in the New Testament, four of which are located in the parallel accounts of Jesus' teaching on the sound eye (Mt 6:22, 23; Lk 11:34–36). Through the eye gate proceeds light or darkness, depending on the person's spiritual outlook. The other instance is in Matthew's description of the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration where "a bright cloud overshadowed them" (Mt 17:5). A cloud like this often accompanied the presence of God (cf. Ex 40:34f.; Nu 9:15f.; 1 Ki 8:10, 11). (Complete Biblical Library)
>
> > **Photeinos in the NT** - 5x/4v - bright(1), full of light(3), illumined(1). Matt. 6:22; Matt. 17:5; Lk. 11:34; Lk. 11:36. No uses in the Septuagint.

Bad (4190)(**poneros** from **pónos** = labor, sorrow, pain) is not just evil but speaks of active evil which seeks to injure and thus it comes as no surprise that Satan is called poneros (1 Jn 3:12, 1 Jn 5:18-19). **Friberg** - (1) adjectivally; (a) as what is physically disadvantageous = bad, harmful, evil, painful (Eph 5.16; Rev 16.2); (b) of persons and things, as of little worth to anyone = useless, unprofitable, unserviceable (Mt 7.18; 18.32; perhaps Mt 6.23 and Lk 11.34); (c) in a moral sense of persons and things characterized by ill will = evil, wicked, malicious (Mt 12.35; probably Mt 6.23 and Lk 11.34); (2) substantivally; (a) of persons = evildoer, wicked person, bad person (Mt 13.49); (b) as a term for the devil = the evil or wicked one (Mt 13.19) (c) neuter = generally evil (MT 5.11) (Borrow Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

> **Poneros in Luke and Acts** - Lk. 3:19; Lk. 6:22; Lk. 6:35; Lk. 6:45; Lk. 7:21; Lk. 8:2; Lk. 11:13; Lk. 11:26; Lk. 11:29; Lk. 11:34; Lk. 19:22; Acts 17:5; Acts 18:14; Acts 19:12; Acts 19:13; Acts 19:15; Acts 19:16; Acts 25:18; Acts 28:21

Full of Darkness (4652)(**skoteinos** from **skotos** = darkness) means dark, without light. Friberg says skoteinos means "in the dark; figuratively, as characterized by lack of moral and spiritual perception full of darkness, i.e. unable to know the difference between right and wrong "

> **Gilbrant** - In classical Greek usage this noun denotes "darkness." It describes the state of things that are difficult to see and the results of such a state (e.g., perilous movement, a kind of paralysis, danger, and fear). To be locked outside the city gates after dark was to be at the mercy of vicious bandits and wild animals. Darkness also signifies ignorance, obscurity, deception, or even the inability to "see," that is, to learn anything new. Hence, darkness can refer to all that is dangerous or evil (Ps 69:23). Darkness is also the condition of death and the underworld (Job 10:20-22; Ps 88:6). The evil person is "darkened" (spiritually blinded). (Complete Biblical Library)
>
> > **Skoteinos** us used only in Mt 6:23, Lk 11:34, 36 but 15x in 15v in the Septuagint - Ge 15:12; 2 Ki. 5:24; Job 10:21;15:23; Ps 18:11; 88:6; 143:3; Pr. 1:6; 4:19; Isa. 45:3; 45:19; 48:16; Jer. 13:16; Lam 3:6; Dan. 2:22

J C Ryle - We learn, secondly, from these verses, the value of a **single** (clear = haplous) **and undivided heart** in religion. This is a lesson which our Lord illustrates from the office of the eye in the human body. He reminds us that when the eye is "single," or thoroughly healthy, the action of the whole body is influenced by it. But when, on the contrary, the eye is evil or diseased, it affects the physical comfort and activity of the whole man. In an eastern country, where eye diseases are painfully common, the illustration is one which would be particularly striking.

But when can it be truly said that a man's heart is single in religion? What are the marks of a single heart? The question is one of deep importance. Well would it be for the church and the world if single hearts were more common.

The single heart is a heart which is not only changed, converted, and renewed; but thoroughly, powerfully, and habitually under the influence of the Holy Ghost. It is a heart which abhors all compromises, all luke-warmness, all halting between two opinions in religion. It sees one mighty object,—the love of Christ dying for sinners. It has one mighty aim,—to glorify God and do His will. It has one mighty desire,—to please God and be commended by Him. Compared with such objects, aims, and desires, the single heart knows nothing worthy to be named. The praise and favor of man are nothing. The blame and disapprobation of man are trifles light as air. "**One thing I desire,—one thing I do,—one thing I live for:**" this is the language of the single heart. (Ps. 27:4.; Luke 10:42; Philip. 3:13.) Such were the hearts of Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Paul, and Luther, and Latimer. They all had their weaknesses and infirmities. They erred no doubt in some things. But they all had this grand peculiarity. They were men of one

thing. They had single hearts. They were unmistakeably “men of God.”

The blessings of a single heart in religion are almost incalculable. He who has it, does good by wholesale. He is like a light-house in the midst of a dark world. He reflects light on hundreds whom he knows nothing of. “His whole body is full of light.” His Master is seen through every window of his conversation and conduct. His grace shines forth in every department of his behavior. His family, his servants, his relations, his neighbors, his friends, his enemies, all see the bias of his character, and all are obliged to confess, whether they like it or not, that his religion is a real and influential thing. And not least, the man of a single heart finds a rich reward in the inward experience of his own soul. He has meat to eat the world knows not of. He has a joy and peace in believing to which many indolent Christians never attain. His face is toward the sun, and so his heart is seldom cold.

Let us pray and labor that we may have a single eye and a whole heart in our Christianity. If we have a religion, let us have a thorough one. If we are Christians, let us be decided. Inward peace and outward usefulness are at stake in this matter. Our eye must be single, if our whole body is to be full of light.

Luke 11:35 "Then watch out that the light in you is not darkness.

KJV Luke 11:35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

NET Luke 11:35 Therefore see to it that the light in you is not darkness.

CSB Luke 11:35 Take care then, that the light in you is not darkness.

ESV Luke 11:35 Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness.

NIV Luke 11:35 See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness.

NLT Luke 11:35 Make sure that the light you think you have is not actually darkness.

NRS Luke 11:35 Therefore consider whether the light in you is not darkness.

YLT Luke 11:35 take heed, then, lest the light that is in thee be darkness;

- Pr 16:25; 26:12; Isa 5:20,21; Jer 8:8,9; Jn 7:48,49; 9:39-41; Ro 1:22; 2:19-23; 1 Cor 1:19-21; 3:18-20; Jas 3:13-17; 2 Pe 1:9; 2:18; Rev 3:17
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:33-36 A Question of Sight - John MacArthur

A STRONG WARNING
AGAINST STUBBORN UNBELIEF

Then (Better = "Therefore") - This is a term of conclusion. Based on the points in Lk 11:33-34, Jesus issues a warning shot across the bow, so to speak.

Watch out (skopeo - singular not plural) **that the light** (phos) **in you** (singular = addressing each individual listening) **is not darkness** (skotos) - Jesus issues this warning in a present imperative which calls for continual fixing of one's attention. Jesus anticipates the reaction to His teaching about light, knowing that His hearers considered themselves to be "*bearers of the light.*" (Indeed Israel was originally supposed to carry out that exact function to be a light to the nations, but sadly most of them missed the true Light - even in the Old Testament!) The religious leaders felt their spiritual insights were superior and that they understood spiritual truth better than anyone (self-righteousness is a very deceptive and dangerous "darkness" because in your deception, you think you are "OKAY" with Jesus! WRONG!). So Jesus says "You think you have the **light** of spiritual insight, but your so-called "spiritual light" is in fact spiritual **darkness**!"

There comes a time when God turns out the lights,
when further opportunity for salvation is forever lost.
-- Michael Andrus

Robert Stein on **the light** (phos) **in you is not darkness** (skotos) - This oxymoron or paradox is intensified by the imperative “**see to it.**” Make sure that what directs your thoughts/life is in fact the true light. (See Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition)

What the Bible Teaches - The eye that fails to see is now looked at as the eye of the soul, blinded by unbelief so that no ray of divine light is able to penetrate it (Matt 13:14-16). They stood in the midst of the full light of divine revelation. He had come to reveal

the Father (Lk 10:22), but though they had eyes, they saw Him not. No wonder He said to His own "But blessed are your eyes, for they see" (Matt 13:16).

In some of his last words to the nation of Israel shortly before He went to the Cross, Jesus gave a frightening warning to all who would not receive the Light of the world that they might be "wholly illumined"

> So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the **Light** is among you. Walk while you have the **Light**, so that **darkness** will not overtake you; he who walks in the **darkness** does not know where he goes (cf Lk 11:34b). 36 "While you have the **Light**, believe in the **Light**, so that you may become **sons of Light.**" These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them. 37 But though He had performed **so many signs before them**, **yet they were not believing in Him**. 38 This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?" (John 12:35-38)

Hendriksen - It is important to notice that while in Lk 11:19, 20 Jesus was addressing his audience as a whole, using the plural **you** and **your**, he now directs his attention to each person individually, and binds it on the conscience of each to ask himself whether the light of the gospel has brought about a genuine, deep, inner change in his heart and life; that is, whether he now truly loves God and the neighbor, so that the fruits of the Holy Spirit are evident in his life; or whether perhaps even that which he considers to be **light** is actually **darkness**....There are two kinds of **darkness**: (a) that of **ignorance**, and (b) that of **stubborn unbelief.** The second kind, here in view, is by far the more dangerous. It was that kind of darkness which reigned in the hearts of those who hated Jesus. Once present, it is hard to dislodge. "**Watch out, therefore**."(Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

MacArthur explains that "Every time you hear some liberal theologian deny some truth of Scripture because he's come to some profound, historic understanding and he's been lifted above the errors of the Bible, you know what he thinks is light is actually **darkness**. Every false religion, every form of heresy, every system in the world apart from the true gospel of Jesus Christ is nothing but another form of **darkness**. **But the sad reality of it is the people think it's light**. There are people who think Jewish Cabala is light—it's **darkness**. There are people who think that Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses have the light—it's **darkness**. And Jesus is saying to these Jewish leaders, You better be careful, you better watch out that the light you think is in you is not in fact **darkness**. This is so hard to deal with. When a person thinks they have the light, they come to a very dangerous place. This is why Satan disguises himself as an angel of … light. That's his great deception, to make people think they found the light when in fact it's the darkness. Listen to the words of Paul, Romans 1:21-22-note, "Even though they knew God, or had the knowledge of God available to them, they didn't honor Him as God, didn't give thanks, they became empty in their speculations, their foolish heart was darkened." These are people who reject the truth. "Their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise they became fools" (**morons** in the Greek). Their heart was darkened and they congratulated themselves on their wisdom. They're fools. **This is the deepest darkness of all. This is the deception that makes the sinner think that darkness is light. All unconverted sinners are in the darkness without exception**. But it seems to me that most of them think they're in the light, particularly those in religion. That's why Jesus says you better take another look, watch out, you better look again. What you think is light is darkness. (Luke 11:33-36 A Question of Sight) (Bolding added)

Jesus alluded to this spiritual blindness to Biblical truth in Matthew (quoting Isaiah's prophecy)

> Therefore I speak to them in parables (which are riddles if not explained); because while **seeing** they do not **see**, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; (Mt 13:13-14 from Isa 6:9)

MacArthur explains "Jesus says I talk in parables because they will not hear; they will not see; they have closed their eyes. They will not listen; they will not understand. They will not repent. And because they will not, now they cannot. And so now I speak in parables....What started out as a willful rejection of the truth in Isaiah's day became a judgment of God, confirming them in their unbelief. And it's stark and frightening. In Isaiah 29:10, "The Lord has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep. He has shut your eyes. He has covered your heads. You wouldn't and now you couldn't." In Isaiah 44:18, "They do not know nor do they understand, for He, God, **has smeared over their eyes so they cannot see in their hearts so they cannot comprehend**" What a frightening judgment. And by the way, that judicial hardening, that judicial blindness, judicial deafness is reiterated all through the New Testament. All of the NT passages go back to that same Isaiah passage to explain how that if someone goes far enough in willfully not seeing and hearing, God locks them in that condition as a judgment. Jesus here is then warning us and saying, **watch out, watch out** that your willful blindness doesn't become judicial blindness, that because you won't see, you can't see. **Watch out.** Don't interpret the darkness as if it were light. And this isn't just Israel. This is a universal issue. In writing to the church in the book of Revelation 3:17-18 "Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and **blind** and naked. I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and

eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see" There are people sitting in "*Christendom*," sitting in churches today, who can't see either, and you better be careful because it goes from **I won't see** to **I can't see**. **Watch out** for the state of your heart and your openness to see the truth. If you want to see the light, you have to turn from sin and repent and ask God to forgive and cleanse and open your spiritual eyes." (Ibid) (Bolding added)

Life Application Study Bible - The lamp is Christ; the eye represents spiritual understanding and insight. Evil desires make the eye less sensitive and blot out the light of Christ's presence. If you have a hard time seeing God at work in the world and in your life, check your vision. Are any sinful desires blinding you to Christ? (See Luke Application Study Notes)

David Thompson applies Jesus' command to all of us -- The verb '**watch out**" means to look, behold and contemplate. We need to carefully check ourselves to see that we are actually taking in light things and not dark things. What Jesus Christ is saying is watch your inside. Look at yourself and see what is really going on inside you. Don't look at what you are projecting, look at what is "in you." Look inside and make certain you are not dark. Do an honest, personal introspection of self. Christ is challenging each individual to conduct an honest self-examination of one's own true spiritual condition. This is the real problem of the Pharisee. A Pharisee loves to look at and judge others, but he does not want to look at and judge himself (Luke 11:39). Every God-honoring believer will be doing a constant analysis of himself to see what is really there. Every Christ-like believer will be judging himself so that he does not have to be judged. We all have 168 hours per week with which to work. Do we use those hours for godliness or worldliness?

Watch out (4648) (**skopeo** from **skopos** = distant mark looked at, goal or end one has in view; English '**scope**" as in microscope or telescope) means to "spy out", to look at, to observe, to contemplate, to mark (to fix or trace out the bounds or limits of). **Skopeo** implies mental consideration and so conveys the picture of attentively fixing one's attention upon something with desire for or interest in. The idea can be to "aim at".

> **Skopeo - 6v - keep your eye on(1), look(2), looking(1), observe(1), watch(1).** Lk. 11:35; Rom. 16:17; 2 Co. 4:18; Gal. 6:1; Phil. 2:4; Phil. 3:17

Darkness (4655)(**skotos** from **skia** = shadow thrown by an object. Skia it can assume the meaning of skotos and indicate the sphere of darkness) is literally that sphere in which light is absent. **Friberg** on **skotos** - (1) literally, as an enveloping sphere where light (phos) is absent darkness, gloom, obscurity (Mt 27.45); in relation to the world, as the primitive chaos before light was created (2Co 4.6); idiomatically literally *the outer darkness*, i.e. the place of punishment, as the region of future exclusion from the kingdom of God (Mt 8.12); (2) figuratively, as an absence of moral and spiritual renewal ignorance, lack of understanding (Acts 26.18); metaphorically, as the domain under the authority of the devil and demons realm of evil, evil world (Lk 22.53; Ep 6.12) (Borrow Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

Luke's uses of skotos -Lk. 1:79; Lk. 11:35; Lk. 22:53; Lk. 23:44; Acts 2:20; Acts 13:11; Acts 26:18;

ILLUSTRATION OF LIGHT THAT IS DARKNESS - On April 15, 1991 the San Francisco Chronicle had a banner headline in its "Nation" section that read, "Jewish sect is expecting its Messiah by Sept. 9". According to some leaders within the Hasidic sect, the "miraculous" Allied defeat of the Iraqi army is more than just a military victory. It is the sure sign that the long awaited Jewish Messiah will reveal himself before the Jewish New Year, September 9, sending the Jewish people back to Jerusalem "on clouds of glory." The article went on to say, "Although Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament, Orthodox Jews are still waiting for the righteous king of Israel to reveal himself." They also see September 9 as the first coming of the Messiah, in which Jews will gather back in Israel, the temple will be rebuilt, and he will inspire the nations of the world to make peace and to recognize him and his teachings. It continues to be apparent that when the Jewish people look at Jesus they reject Him as their Messiah and look for another. (Ron Ritchie) Below is his outline for Luke 11:14-36 - Whom do you see when you look at Jesus?

- I. Some See a Servant of Satan Luke 11:14-26
- II. Some See a Beautiful Son Luke 11:27-28
- III. Some See a Miracle Worker Luke 11:29-32
- IV. Some See the Light of the World Luke 11:33-36

Luke 11:36 "If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it will be wholly illumined, as when the lamp illumines you with its rays."

BGT Luke 11:36 ε ο ν τ σ μ σου λον φωτειν ν, μ χον μ ρος τι σκοτειν ν, σται φωτειν ν λον ς ταν λ χνος

τ στραπ φωτ ζ σε.

KJV Luke 11:36 If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

NET Luke 11:36 If then your whole body is full of light, with no part in the dark, it will be as full of light as when the light of a lamp shines on you."

CSB Luke 11:36 If, therefore, your whole body is full of light, with no part of it in darkness, it will be entirely illuminated, as when a lamp shines its light on you."

ESV Luke 11:36 If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light."

NIV Luke 11:36 Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you."

NLT Luke 11:36 If you are filled with light, with no dark corners, then your whole life will be radiant, as though a floodlight were filling you with light."

NRS Luke 11:36 If then your whole body is full of light, with no part of it in darkness, it will be as full of light as when a lamp gives you light with its rays."

YLT Luke 11:36 if then thy whole body is lightened, not having any part darkened, the whole shall be lightened, as when the lamp by the brightness may give thee light.'

GWN Luke 11:36 If your whole body is full of light and not darkness, it will be as bright as a lamp shining on you."

NKJ Luke 11:36 "If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light."

NAB Luke 11:36 If your whole body is full of light, and no part of it is in darkness, then it will be as full of light as a lamp illuminating you with its brightness."

MIT Luke 11:36 If, therefore, your whole being experiences the brilliance of light—not having any part darkened—it will be fully bright as when a flash of lightning illuminates you.

NJB Luke 11:36 If, therefore, your whole body is filled with light, and not darkened at all, it will be light entirely, as when the lamp shines on you with its rays.'

ASV Luke 11:36 If therefore thy whole body be full of light, having no part dark, it shall be wholly full of light, as when the lamp with its bright shining doth give thee light.

DBY Luke 11:36 If therefore thy whole body is light, not having any part dark, it shall be all light as when the lamp lights thee with its brightness.

BBE Luke 11:36 If, then, all your body is light, with no part of it dark, it will be completely full of light, as when a flame with its bright shining gives you light.

NIRV Luke 11:36 "Suppose your whole body is full of light. And suppose no part of it is dark. Then your body will be completely lit up. It will be as when the light of a lamp shines on you."

RSV Luke 11:36 If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light."

- **If therefore your whole body is full of light** Ps 119:97-105; Pr 1:5; 2:1-11; 4:18,19; 6:23; 20:27; Isa 8:20; 42:16; Hosea 6:3; Mt 13:11,12,52; Mark 4:24,25; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 4:14; Col 3:16; 2 Ti 3:15-17; Heb 5:14; James 1:25; 2 Peter 3:18
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:33-36 A Question of Sight - John MacArthur

THE PRECIOUSNESS OF SIGHT

These titles are from John MacArthur's outline

- The presence of light - Luke 11:32

- The problem of sight - Luke 11:33
- The pretense of sight - Luke 11:34
- The preciousness of sight - Luke 11:35

If therefore your whole body is full of light (photeinos), **with no dark** (skoteinos) **part in it, it will be wholly illumined** (photeinos) - **IF** is a first class condition which assumes the following to be true. Jesus states for those who turn from their blinding sin and unto God, the Spirit of truth and the Word of truth (the Gospel) enables them "to **open their eyes** so that they may **turn from darkness to light** and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me (Jesus for He is speaking to Paul)." (Acts 26:18+) And when that happens, their whole body becomes full of light with no dark part because it is wholly illumined by the Gospel.

They had tauntingly ask Jesus for a sign in Lk 11:16+ and He graciously told them they would have one more sign, the sign of Jonah (Lk 11:29+). As John 12:37 said Jesus "had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him" which is why "He went away and hid Himself from them." John's words should frighten everyone who continues to deny the truth of the Gospel, because there may come a day when they will no longer be able to believe the Gospel. Jesus will have hidden Himself from them!

John's description goes on to record

> Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him (same verb homologeo in Ro 10:9-10!), for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the **approval of men** rather than the **approval of God**. (John 12:42-42, cf John 5:44, 9:22, Jn 2:23-25)
>
> > **MacArthur comments** on this passage - That will send you to hell. And what was it that damned them? They knew; it was obvious. But people, religious people and their religious system, and the approval of their religious leaders was more important to them than the approval of God. False religion damns—even Judaism, even false Christianity. The light is everywhere...The problem isn't light; the problem is sight. And the deadly danger is to have the pretense of sight and to miss the preciousness of the true sight when the scales of sin come off your eyes and everything becomes clear. This is God's gift to the penitent who puts his trust in Christ. God knows your heart. He knows where you are. Before you reach the point where your blindness becomes permanent, this is the time to plead for your sins to be forgiven, scales to come off your eyes, embrace Christ. (Luke 11:33-36 A Question of Sight)
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> > **Henry Morris** of "Defender's Study Bible" has an interesting note: "A mental belief in the facts concerning Christ is not sufficient for salvation. Open confession is an evidence of saving faith (Ro 10:9,10)."
> >
> > **Steven Cole** has an interesting discussion of John 12:42-43 - The sticky issue is whether John is describing true believers or not. Some emphasize "**believed**" and argue that John is talking about men like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who were secret believers for fear of the Jews (Jn 19:38-39). They would say that they were saved, although their faith was defective. But I would contend that while these rulers later may have come to saving faith, at this point John is describing men who were not yet saved. We saw this "non-saving belief" back in Jn 2:23-25, where many **believed** in Jesus but He didn't entrust Himself to them. Those verses set the stage for Jesus' interview with Nicodemus. We saw the same thing in Jn 8:31-59, where John says that the Jews **believed** in Jesus, but they clearly do not believe in a saving way. John's comment here about these men loving the approval of men, not of God, goes back to Jn 5:44, where Jesus asked His opponents, "**How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the *one and* only God?**" (The word translated "approval" in Jn 12:43 is literally, "glory," which stands in contrast to Jn 12:23, Jn 12:28, & Jn 12:41.) Added to this are Jesus' words in Mk 8:38, "**For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.**" These Pharisees would not confess Jesus because of their fear of being put out of the synagogue and their love of man's glory over God's glory. Unless they later became willing to confess Christ whatever the cost (**Ed**: E.g., notice Joseph of Arimathea's willingness to go before Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus which surely was not without danger - Mk 15:43), I contend that their faith was not saving faith. Why does John include verses Jn 12:42 and Jn 12:43? Perhaps to warn those who say they believe, but are afraid to confess Christ, that they will face Jesus in judgment someday ("**He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day**. Jn 12:48). He wants us to see that true faith sees Jesus' glory and confesses Him, no matter what the cost. True Christians are not ashamed to confess Christ before this adulterous and sinful generation. Man's approval may last a few years; God's approval lasts forever. (Why People Don't Believe in Jesus John 12:36b-43)

Warren Wiersbe - Many people reject the truth simply because of the fear of man (John 12:42-43). Among those who will be in hell are "the fearful" (Rev. 21:8). Better to fear God and go to heaven than to fear men and go to hell!

Comment: In fairness, it should be noted that other commentators favor these **rulers** to be genuine believers, saying things like a "mute" person cannot confess Jesus (would not a sign language confession be acceptable to God Who knows the heart?) Ultimately God knew the hearts of these rulers who John says believed.

THOUGHT - Becoming a believer and having your spiritual eyes opened opens limitless vision to you so that you understand spiritual things heretofore hidden from you. You go from total spiritual blindness to total spiritual sight (not that you understand everything immediately but you now have the mind of Christ, the Spirit of truth and the potential to understand the Word of truth which previously was foolishness to you!). You go from total spiritual blindness to 20/20 spiritual vision.

Don Fortner - When light comes it, it shines. If the eye is right, if it is single, and clear, there is no great work for it to do that it may get light. The light is shining. All the eye does is see it. When the sun is shining, if you want light just open your eyes. You don't need to rub your eyes. Just open them.—You don't need to exercise your eyes. Just open them.—You don't need to discipline your eyes. Just open them.—You don't need to get your eyes into the proper position to see. Just open them!—You don't need to adorn your eyes. Just open them! When the eye is sound it takes in light and takes pleasure in the light. It conveys the image of things external to the mind within. If the Lord, in his great grace, has made your eye single, so that you desire only to know the truth, then without toil or labor you shall know the truth. The light enters when the window is open. And when the Light comes in you know it. It is not possible to pass from darkness into light without knowing it.

- ·The shining light dispels darkness.
- ·The shining light exposes what is in us.—What we are!
- ·The shining light reveals that which is outside us.—The Gospel!
- ·The light shining in us shines out of us to others.—The darker the night the more radiant the light!

We repeatedly see the Scripture use the metaphor of light in the description of believers

John 8:12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me **will not walk in the darkness,** but **will have the Light of life**."

Eph 5:8+ for you were **formerly darkness**, but **now you are Light in the Lord**; walk as **children of Light**

Comment: Notice Paul does not say they were IN darkness, but their intrinsically WERE darkness! Woe!

Col 1:12-13+ (Now as those who are in the Light, in Christ we give) thanks to the Father, Who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints **in light**. For He delivered (rescued) us **from the domain of darkness**, and transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son (the Kingdom of Light),

1 Thes 5:4-6+ But you, brethren, are **not in darkness**, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all **sons of light** and sons of day. **We are not of night nor of darkness**; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

1 John 1:6-7+ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet **walk in the darkness,** we lie (present tense) and do not practice the truth; but **if we walk in the Light** as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Romans 13:12+ (An exhortation to the children of light) The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore **lay aside the deeds of darkness** and **put on the armor of light**.

1 Peter 2:9+ But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has **called you out of darkness** into **His marvelous light;**

David Thompson once again applies Jesus' description of to all of us those **full of light** -- One will radiate externally what one is internally. When you see one truly shining forth grace righteousness, you are looking at one who is right inside. One will eventually radiate what one really is. One focused on light will radiate light. One focused on darkness will radiate darkness. Light comes from God and darkness comes from Satan. The matter of who or what is dominating us is a matter of focus. If we love the Lord and are focused on the word, we are filled with a light that will radiate from us. If we are not focused on the Lord and the word, we do not shine for the glory of God because we are living in darkness. Judas was an imposter and no one but God knew it. But the truth is,

God did know it. God knows what we are. God knows the truth and wise are those who honestly evaluate it. It is possible for a while for people to wear some religious costume. It is possible to outwardly look one way and inwardly be another way. It is possible to fool people but it is impossible to fool God. It is extremely important that we respond to light because the alternative is we are dark

John Stevenson - God has already provided the light. You go to Him and ask Him for the spiritual vision and He will supply that, too. Are you having problems seeing? Are you having problems understanding? Are you having problems with doubt? Are you having problems believing? You go to the One who is known as the Father of lights and you ask Him for spiritual vision and that He will remove the blinders and that He will work faith in you.

Michael Andrus - It's possible to carry away from this message a sense of fear, either for yourself or for some loved one. And that's okay, for there is such a thing as healthy fear. John MacArthur tells the story of an American naval force in the North Atlantic during WWII, which was engaged in heavy battle with enemy ships and submarines on an exceptionally dark night. Six planes took off from the carrier to search out those targets, but while they were in the air an eminent threat caused the captain to order a total blackout for the carrier in order to protect it from attack. Without lights on the carrier's deck the six planes could not possibly land, and they made a radio request for the lights to be turned on just long enough for them to come in. But because the entire carrier, with its several thousand men as well as all the other planes and equipment, would have been vulnerable, no lights were permitted. When the six planes ran out of fuel, they had to ditch in the freezing water and all the crew members perished. **There comes a time when God turns out the lights, when further opportunity for salvation is forever lost.** But fear is not the only reaction one can take from this passage. What I most want you to carry away is the hope and confidence that forgiveness of sins and eternal life is yours today if you will receive it! Jesus came with the power and authority of God. He performed some amazing miracles, like this one in Luke 11. His purpose was not to stun an audience but to demonstrate his power and authority over sin. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Romans 6:23 tells us, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." There is only one requirement to receive God's forgiveness and the eternal life that accompanies it—and it's not keeping the Ten Commandments, or being baptized, or joining the church, or any other rite or ritual, human or divine. It's the simple requirement to believe, to put your faith in Jesus. Ephesians 2:8-9 states the issue clearly: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works so that no one can boast." But we must understand that faith is not a passive word but an active one. It's not just giving mental assent to the fact that Jesus lived a perfect life, died a martyr's death, and then rose from the dead. But it's giving one's whole self to Christ. It means rejecting the myth of neutrality. It means agreeing with God in heart, soul, and mind that we are indeed sinners and Jesus is our only hope.

Steven Cole - Respond obediently to the light that you have been given and you will receive more light. This is the main thrust of the parable that Jesus goes on to give (Lu 11:33-36). Jesus' teaching is the lamp set on the lampstand. He was displaying God's truth openly for all to see (Lu 11:33). If a person's spiritual eye is clear, he can see the truth that Jesus proclaims. But, if a person's heart is darkened by sin, the light does no good. No amount of light helps a blind man (Lu 11:34). Thus, the warning, "Watch out that the light in you may not be darkness." Respond obediently to the light that you've been given through Jesus and you will receive more light. Ignore or reject the light that you've been given, and it will be taken away and you'll be left in total darkness. But if you respond obediently to the light Jesus gives, your entire life will be lit up and you will be a light unto others (Lu 11:36). Thus **great privilege is also great responsibility**. It is a great privilege to hear God's Word preached and to read the Word. But that privilege also means that we are responsible to obey what we hear and read in the Word. If we respond obediently, our lives will be illumined by God so that we will know how to live in a manner pleasing to Him. Also, He will use our lives to shine on others who are lost in the darkness of sin. But, if we disregard the Word, even the light we have received will become darkness.

Disregard the light you have been given and you will face eternal judgment. It is plain from our text that Jesus believed in a coming judgment where all the living and dead will be present. The Queen of Sheba and her retinue will be there. The people of Ninevah will be there. The men of Jesus' day will be there. You and I and everyone we know will be there. God, the righteous judge, will judge every person based on the light they received and their response to it. As Paul argues in Ro 1 and Ro 2, God has made Himself evident to all people through creation and through conscience, but men "did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Ro 1:21). All people have violated both the law of God and their own consciences and thus stand justly condemned before God (Ro 2:12-16). Any darkness in our lives is not God's fault. It is due to our own sinfulness and our stubborn refusal to obey God's Word. Thus all people need a Savior from the coming judgment. Thank God, He has provided that Savior!

Our faith must be in Jesus Christ who is God's only way of salvation Jesus is the lamp on the lampstand, set there for all to see. He and His teaching is the "something greater" than Solomon or Jonah. His death and resurrection from the dead is the sign we need to confirm that He is God's chosen one, God's Savior. As Paul argues (1Co 15:12-19), the entire Christian faith rests on the reality of Christ's resurrection from the dead. If we don't see Him and flee to Him for refuge from God's wrath, the problem is with our darkened eyes, not with His shining light. We must cry out to God for eyes to see the light of Jesus Christ, who offered up Himself

as the perfect sacrifice for sinners. “There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Conclusion Several years ago, a man and his wife started attending the church I pastored in California. She was a believer, but he was not. After a few months, the wife needed surgery, and so I went to the hospital to sit with the husband while she was being operated on. After we had chatted about general things for a while, I said, “Bruce, you’ve been coming to the church for quite a while. I’d be interested to know whether you have yet put your trust in Christ as Savior or not.” He replied, “No, I still have some unanswered questions.” I said, “Well, what are they? Maybe I can shed some light on them.” He said, “I have a lot of them.” I said, “Well, we’ve got lots of time right now. What are the main ones?” He still hesitated, so I said, “How about if you give me a list of your questions. If I can give reasonable answers to them, then will you become a Christian?” He said, “If I’ve been hearing you correctly, if I trust in Christ then I have to yield my whole life to Him and do what He says. Is that right?” I said, “You got it!” He said, “I’m not ready to do that yet.” Thankfully, a few months later he made that commitment to Christ and I baptized him. The issue isn’t that you need more evidence. The issue is that you need repentance. You need to acknowledge that you have sinned against the holy God and that your good works could never pay for your sins. You need a Savior. You need to recognize that Jesus Christ is that Savior. He offered Himself on the cross to pay the price you deserve. If you will turn from your sin and trust in Christ as your sin-bearer, you will be flooded with light from God. You will be able to say, “I once was blind, but now I see!” (Luke 11:29-36 How to Respond to God’s Word)

Luke 11:37 Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined at the table.

KJV Luke 11:37 And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat.

- Lk 7:36; 14:1; 1 Cor 9:19-23
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:37-44 How to Evangelize Religious People - John MacArthur

John MacArthur's Outline
Luke 11:37-54 Characteristics of False Religionists

False Religionists Are Characterized By What They Love (Lk 11:38-44)

- False Religionists Love The Symbolic (Lk 11:38)
- False Religionists Love The Sinful (Lk 11:39)
- False Religionists Love The Simplistic (Lk 11:40-41)
- False Religionists Love The Secondary (Lk 11:42)
- False Religionists Love The Showy (Lk 11:43-44)

False Religionists Are Characterized By What They Lack (Lk 11:45-54)

- False Religionists Lack Spiritual Power (Lk 11:46)
- False Religionists Lack Spiritual Life (Lk 11:47-51)
- False Religionists Lack Spiritual Truth (Lk 11:52-54)

Related Passages:

Lk 7:36+ "Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table."

Reclining At the Dinner Table

GUESS WHO'S
COMING TO LUNCH?

Hendriksen suggests that the link of Luke 11:38-54 with the previous topic on the seriousness of having great spiritual light and rejecting it could only result in great judgment. And in this present section we see Jesus "reveal to them what would be the result of their continued hostility. He now does this by pronouncing “woes” upon them." (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

Now when He had spoken - This refers to Jesus' teaching on Light in Luke 11:33-36 where Jesus emphasized that the problem of the wicked generation in Israel was not a problem of light but of sight. It was not that they did not have adequate spiritual light (they had the 3 year ministry of Jesus), but that they did not have spiritual sight (or insight). In a very real sense the present story of the Pharisee in Lk 11:37ff is a living example of spiritual light without spiritual sight.

Pharisee (pharisaios - "separated one") **asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined at the table**- From this text, there is nothing to suggest the **Pharisee** had an ulterior motive to test or expose Jesus. He wanted to share a meal with this Man Who had gained such a huge following. Jesus shows us that He is willing to be associated with the religious group, who were among those He had labeled a **wicked generation**. He still sought to see them converted. Even Lk 11:36 was a positive statement that they way of salvation was open to those who responded to the Light. Reclined at the table was the middle eastern custom of lying on one's side on pillows rather than sitting in chairs as depicted in the painting above (which was actually the last supper).

> **THOUGHT**- This is a great example of our Lord to all of us, for we tend to push away from religious hypocrites, but Jesus shows us we should at least be willing to dialogue with them. Many of Jesus' teaching opportunities arose during meals (cf. Lk 14:1-24; Matt. 15:1-20; 23:1-36; Mark 7:1-22).

J C Ryle writes "Christ is our pattern as well as our propitiation. There are evidently times and occasions when the servant of Christ must mix with the ungodly and the children of this world. There may be seasons when it may be a duty to hold social intercourse with them, to accept their invitations, and sit down at their tables. Nothing, of course, must induce the Christian to be a partaker in the sins or frivolous amusements of the world. But he must not be uncourteous. He must not entirely withdraw himself from the society of the unconverted, and become a hermit or an ascetic. He must remember that good may be done in the private room as well as in the pulpit. One qualification, however, should never be forgotten, when we act upon our Lord’s example in this matter. Let us take heed that we go down into the company of the unconverted in the same spirit in which Christ went. Let us remember His boldness in speaking of the things of God. He was always “about His Father’s business.”—Let us remember His faithfulness in rebuking sin. He spared not even the sins of those that entertained Him, when His attention was publicly called to them. Let us go into company in the same frame of mind, and our souls will take no harm. If we feel that we dare not imitate Christ in the company which we are invited to join, we may be sure that we had better stay at home."

MacArthur begins his sermon with some interesting thoughts on the nature of ceremonial religion - Now as we look at the story, you’re going to see the state of apostate Judaism; you’re going to see the character of Pharisaism. But I want you to get beyond that also. You’re going to see an example of all false religion and how it operates, how it functions in its blinding, iniquitous, deceptive hypocrisy. Religious hypocrites with unchanged hearts cut off from God are left to do nothing but be hypocrites. And we’re very familiar with it, whether you’re talking about the Roman Catholic Church, for example, the Greek Orthodox movement, Anglo-Catholicism, Hindus, Muslims—whatever you’re talking about. It’s the same kind of thing; it’s all for show and absent of any reality. Their religion was purely external. And what happens is this: in order to live out your religion and put on a convincing show, you elaborate the external, so you expand the emblems; you expand the functions; you expand the ceremonies; you expand the rituals; you proliferate the prescriptions. That’s exactly what the Jews had done—way beyond the Old Testament. That’s what the Roman Catholics, the Greek Orthodox have done—way beyond what the New Testament teaches, adding almost endless rituals, routines, ceremonies, regulations, because there’s nothing on the inside—but you can create a bigger illusion that way. (See entire edifying sermon on How to Evangelize Religious People)

Pharisees (5330) see study of **pharisaios** from an Aramaic word **peras** (found in Da 5:28), signifying "to separate. (See Wikipedia article) **Pharisees** were a relatively small Jewish sect (about 6000 in Jesus' day) but were the most influential of the three major Jewish sects. Their major tenet was strict adherence to the Mosaic Law, not only as it was written, but more importantly, how they interpreted it adding their extra-biblical teachings and traditions. By strictly adhering to these rules they sought to attain (self) righteousness before God. Ironically, it was the zeal of the Pharisees for the law that caused them to become focused on rituals and external keeping of the law. They abandoned pursuit of relationship with God in lieu of outward behavior modification and ritual which they, in their deluded state of spiritual blindness (cf "Light" in Lk 11:33-36), thought would be pleasing to God. The totally missed the mark of true spirituality.

Lunch (709)(**aristao** from **ariston** = breakfast) means to eat a meal and generally referring to the meal nearer breakfast (perhaps akin to our "brunch"). It is clearly used in the context of breakfast in the only other NT occurrences (Jn 21:12, 15). **MacArthur** on **aristao** - This is the word for lunch. So it was the meal after a few hours of work; and a significant meal, a meal that took some time. And so in the typical fashion it wasn't a snack, it wasn't on the run, and this required an invitation, and He went in and did what you do at a prolonged meal, to have a prolonged conversation—you recline at the table, extending yourself toward the table, your feet away from the table in a sort of comfortable posture on a kind of couch—you get ready for an extended meal and conversation."

Steven Cole - There is probably no sin more tolerated or more widespread in the Christian world than **legalism**. It may surprise you to hear it labeled as sin. Legalists are thought to be a bit overzealous or "uptight," but they aren't usually thought of as sinning in the same sense as adulterers, thieves, liars, and the like. To the contrary, legalists seem to be concerned about holiness. Yet the Lord Jesus had more conflicts with the legalists of His day than any other group. It wasn't the adulterers, the robbers and that sort, who put Jesus on the cross. It was the legalists. Later on, the Apostle Paul had the same experience, as the legalists dogged his steps, perverting the gospel of the grace of God. When you study the life of Christ, it is noteworthy how He deliberately did things to provoke the legalists. He could have healed people on any other day of the week, but He often did it on the Sabbath. He could have been more discreet in violating the Pharisees' rules, but He did it openly. When a Pharisee invited Jesus to dinner, He could have gone along with their elaborate hand-washing custom, but He deliberately ignored it. When they questioned Him about it, He could have been more polite, but He blasted them for their hypocrisy. When a lawyer pointed out that Jesus had offended them as well, He didn't say, "I'm sorry! I didn't mean to offend you good folks." He said, "Woe to you lawyers as well!" Jesus confronted legalism as sin.

And yet many Christian churches today are riddled with legalism, but the pastors are too "nice" to stand up to the legalists and say, "You're not going to do that in this church!" The evangelical church today is plagued by "niceness." Somehow we've gotten the idea that to be like Jesus means always being nice, never offending anyone, never confronting anyone. But clearly, if we want to be like Jesus, we must confront sin. And, legalism is sin!

What is legalism? Some erroneously confuse it with an emphasis on obedience. I have been accused of being legalistic because I preach that we must obey God's Word. But every book of the Bible teaches that we must obey God. Being under grace does not mean that we are free to disobey God.

Others say that legalism is when we set up any man made rules. But there are many areas not specifically addressed in the Bible where we need some rules in order to function as a family or church. Parents are not being legalistic when they set a curfew for their kids. Churches are not being legalistic when they follow certain procedures or practices.

So, what is legalism? Legalism is an attempt to gain favor with God or to impress our fellow man by doing certain things (or avoiding other things), without regard to the condition of our hearts before God. At the root of legalism is the sin of pride, because the legalist thinks that he is able to commend himself to God by his own good deeds. Invariably, he is only looking at **externals**, not at his heart. Also, the legalist's pride motivates him to exalt himself in the sight of others by his **outward behavior,** again neglecting to see the corruption of his own heart. Thus legalism denies human depravity and exalts human ability. As such, it is opposed to the gospel of God's grace. That's why both Jesus and Paul clashed with the legalists.

Jesus hates legalism because it does not deal with the condition of our hearts before God.

Christianity is primarily a matter of the heart. Everything flows from a heart relationship with God, who transforms our hearts when He regenerates us. The Jewish religious leaders seemingly were seeking after God, but in reality they were self-seeking. They didn't see themselves as sinners in need of a Savior. They saw themselves as good people because they kept the Law. But in reality, they didn't keep the Law because they didn't apply it on the heart level. Thus, Jesus in effect said that if they would be as careful about clean hearts as they were about clean hands, then they would be what they ought to be. (Luke 11:37-54: Why Jesus Hates Legalism)

ILLUSTRATION - **Typhoid Mary** In the early twentieth century, typhoid fever was a major epidemic in the United States. In 1907, Mary Mallon became the first person to be identified as a typhoid carrier. She was an Irish immigrant and a cook in New York City. Many of the families she cooked for became infected with typhoid fever and some of them died. In 1906 one of those families hired a typhoid researcher to investigate the cause of the fever. He believed it all traced back to Mary Mallon. But Mary was adamant that she was not a carrier. You see, from all external appearances, Mary was in perfect health. She showed no outward symptoms of typhoid. She was what doctor's call asymptomatic. So she secretly kept moving around from family to family, cooking and spreading her disease. Eventually, she was busted and put into prison, then quarantined. While in prison, they did tests and determined that she was a typhoid carrier. She was responsible for spreading typhoid to at least fifty-three people and the death of at least three people. Some believe that she is responsible for the death of up to fifty people. Mary Mallon is now known as Typhoid Mary. This title is still given to people today; but not to people who are carriers of typhoid fever. The title is given to people who unknowingly spread a literal or a figurative disease.1 In our passage this morning, Jesus encounters two groups of religious leaders, who are like Typhoid Mary. **From all external appearances the Pharisees and lawyers are perfectly healthy.** They look good on the outside. But Jesus knows that they are infected; they're carriers of greed and wickedness. They were deadly.

James Smith - THE HYPOCRITE Luke 11:37–44

"A lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies!
A lie which is all a lie may be met and fought outright,
But a lie which is part of a truth is a harder matter to fight!"
—TENNYSON.

This mongrel lie which is part of a truth finds its incarnation in the hypocrite. The one is as difficult to deal with as the other. The names scribe and Pharisee as used by our Lord here are synonymous of hypocrite. Their characteristics as detailed before us in these verses are the outstanding features of the hypocrite.

I. He is more concerned about the traditions of men than the truth of God. "The Pharisee marvelled that He had not first washed before dinner" (v. 38). The Pharisee of Christ's day not only held the traditions of the elders about hand-washing, but in their superstitious zeal bathed their bodies before meat (Mark 7:4, R.V.). Jesus Christ in the heavenly truthful dignity of His character simply ignores it, so that the hypocritical marvel at His liberty. The sons of God are not to be in bondage to the opinions of men. Whom the Son of God makes free are free indeed. Although Christ Himself, the embodiment of truth and holiness, stood before this Pharisee, yet would he despise Him because He did not conform to his petty theory of hand-washing. The popular tradition about the way of salvation is, "Do as well as you can," to the denial of the truth of God's saving grace. There are other traditions concerning the Lord's coming and Church worship that are equally subvertive of the truth as it is in Jesus.

II. He is more careful about outward than inward purity. "They make clean the outside of the cup, but the inward is full of ravening and wickedness" (v. 39). The only good side of a hypocrite is the outside, for they do "make clean the outside." They live as in the eyes of their fellow-creatures, seeking not the honour that comes from God only. They are men pleasers. They will make their hands clean, although their hearts should be full of wickedness. They look upon the things which are seen. They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him (Titus 1:16). They practically deny that "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," etc., and that these are the things which defile a man (Matt. 15:19, 20). He is utterly indifferent about the righteousness of God if he can only get his own established (Rom. 10:3), and when he prays it is with himself (Luke 18:11). He flatters men with his outward manners, while the inward manner of the heart is an abomination to God (James 4:8).

III. He stickles for trifles, and neglects the things which are indispensable. "Ye tithe all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God" (v. 42). God demanded that the fruit of the land should be tithed (Lev. 27:30), but they would tithe even the fragrant plant, and pass over justice and the love of God as if these were unworthy of notice. Such would not rob a child of a pin, but they would unblushingly rob God of their whole life. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15:22). By their fruits ye shall know them; they stand up stoutly for orders and forms of worship, while they pass over the promises of God and the power of the Holy Ghost. They will argue vehemently for the rules of the Church, and pass over the law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus. He is very particular in adapting certain tunes to certain psalms, but it concerns him nothing as to whether he himself is reconciled to God and adapted to the kingdom of Heaven. He could not pass the plate at the Church door without putting something into it, but he can pass through a whole service without giving to God one grateful feeling for the gift of His Son. They pass over the LOVE OF GOD.

IV. He seeks self-glorification through his religious profession. "Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues," etc. (v. 43). The hypocrite is religious, but only so far as it will help to honour himself and minister to his vanity. He has no thought of adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, but he seeks to be adorned by the doctrine. If he holds office in the Church it is that it may add to his dignity. He would appropriate all the privileges purchased by the agony and death of the Son of God for the

exaltation of his own deceitful self. He is seldom out of his place in the house of prayer, but his god is himself. It is not the synagogue or church that he loves so much as those "uppermost seats" that help to lift him up. He will be very zealous in religion if he can thereby gain the flattery of others. He is one who sits in the place of God, and who robs Him of His honour and glory. A hypocrite, it has been said, is "like a glow-worm, it seems to have both light and heat, but when you touch it it has neither."

V. His real character is loathsome, although it appears not in the sight of men. "Woe unto you, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them" (v. 44). Those who walked over or passed by those whited sepulchres little thought of the foulness and rottenness that were inside. "Within, full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness" (Matt. 23:27). A sow that is washed is only a washed sow. A hypocrite may manage by his white-washing to give no offence to his fellow-man, but God looketh upon the heart (1 Sam. 16:7). Be not deceived, God is not mocked; the hidden man of the heart is naked and bare before the eyes of the Lord, and that is the man that must give his account unto God (Psa. 7:9). The hypocrite lives for that which is "highly esteemed among men," but this is "an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). Your woe, O hypocrite, is coming, for hath not the Lord Jesus Christ said, "I am He which SEARCHETH THE HEARTS?" (Rev. 2:23). What wilt thou do on that solemn day?

Luke 11:38 When the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal.

KJV Luke 11:38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

- **he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed** Mt 15:2,3; Mark 7:2-5; John 3:25
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:37-44 How to Evangelize Religious People - John MacArthur

THE RITUAL OF CEREMONIAL HANDWASHING

He was surprised (amazed - thaumazo) **that He had not first ceremonially washed** (baptizo) **before the meal** - **He was surprised** does not record any spoken word by this Pharisee , so undoubtedly this is another episode in which Jesus knew what the man was thinking. Recall Simeon's prophetic words to Mary in Luke 2:35+ "and a sword will pierce even your own soul–to the end that **thoughts from many hearts may be revealed**." (cf Lk 1:51+, Lk 11:17+). The thoughts in this Pharisee's heart were known by the omniscient Jesus. Jesus kept the Mosaic Law, but there was no regulation in the Mosaic Law stating one needed to ceremonially wash before meals. And they were not washing for sanitary reasons but legalistic reasons. Men added this hypocritical "rule" which dealt only with **external** "uncleanliness" but said nothing about the **internal** uncleanness of the heart. They demonstrated (they thought) their holiness by focusing their attention to **external** cleanliness but it was all show, all a "put on," because their **heart** remained unclean before God (see the words of Jesus below). What they really need to wash was their hearts as James commanded "Cleanse your **hands**, you sinners; and purify your **hearts**, you double-minded." (James 4:8+).

Mark records

> The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem 2 and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. 3(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the **traditions** (see paradosis) of the elders (presbuteros); 4 and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing (baptismos) of cups and pitchers and copper pots.) 5 The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure (common, unclean, unholy = koinos) hands?" (Mk 7:1-5+)
>
> **Comment**: In their minds the **traditions of the elders** were superior to Truths of the Scripture and thus was the only reliable interpretation of God's Word. (see the prayer below) See John MacArthur's sermon "Scripture Twisting Tradition" on Mark 7:1-13

Matthew records a confrontation between Jesus and the religious leaders over **hand-washing**:

> Then some Pharisees and scribes *came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, 2 "Why do Your disciples break the **traditions** (see paradosis) of the elders (presbuteros)? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." 3 And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God **for the sake of your tradition**? 4 "For God said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' and, 'HE WHO

SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.' 5"But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God," 6 he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And **by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition** 7 "**You hypocrites**,(hupokrites) rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: 8 **THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS** (EXTERNAL/WORDS**), BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME**. (NO INTERNAL CHANGE) 9 'BUT **IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.**'" (Mt 15:1-9) (See MacArthur - Confusing Man's Traditions with God's Commandments)

MacArthur adds that they would wash their hands ceremonially if by chance they had "touched a Gentile that day or touched something a Gentile touched, or touched something an unclean person touched, or touched something else unclean (**Ed**: like a dead animal). This ritual was to symbolize their holiness and their desire to be clean from all the defilements of the world. And the Mishnah actually describes how this was to be done. It even gets down to the amount of water. You were to use enough water to fill one and a half egg shells, and it was to be poured across the tips of the fingers, running down to the wrist, and then the hands were to be washed, symbolizing this bathing/cleansing. (How to Evangelize Religious People)

See an interesting Jewish article on **the ritual of handwashing** (sample quote) = "*A benediction is recited over the washing of the hands: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with Thy commandments and has* ***commanded us concerning the washing of the hands***" Notice how the benediction falsely ascribes this ritual to a commandment from God! When you are deceived, you don't even know it!

Edersheim, the great Jewish scholar, writes, "Water jars were kept ready to be used before every meal. The minimum amount of water to be used was a quarter of a log, which is defined as enough to fill one and a half eggshells. The water was first poured on both hands, held with the fingers pointed upward. It must run down the arm as far as the wrist and drop off from the wrist, for the water itself was now unclean having touched the unclean hands. If it ran down the fingers again, it would render them unclean. The process was repeated with the hands held in the downward direction, the fingers pointing down, and finally, each hand was cleansed with being rubbed with the fist of the other, and a strict Jew would do this before every meal and between every course in every meal." (Quoted from MacArthur's sermon Confusing Man's Traditions with God's Commandments)

Manners and Customs of Bible Lands - CUSTOMS AT MEALTIME -- Eastern habits, connected with the eating of a meal, are such a decided contrast to Western habits, that much care should be given to the study of them, if the many references in the Bible to eating, are to be interpreted accurately. **Washing Of Hands Before Eating** - Orientals are careful to wash their hands before a meal, but they would think that the Occidental way of washing in the water already made dirty by the hands, to be very untidy and disgraceful. The servant or whoever takes his place, pours water on the hands to be washed as they are held over a basin. Often the basin has a concave cover with holes, so as to allow the dirty water to run through and thus be out of sight. The method of eating without knives, forks, or spoons, makes this washing a necessity. That this method of washing was in vogue in the days of the prophets is seen by the way Elisha was characterized by the king's servants: "Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah" (2Kings 3:11). Elisha had served as Elijah's servant, and pouring water, so that his master could wash his hands, was an important part of his duties. **When the Pharisees complained against the disciples of Jesus, because they ate bread without washing their hands (Matt. 15:1, 2; Mark 7:1-5), it was concerning a lengthy ceremonial washing of hands that they spoke**. The Jewish hierarchy of that day had given forth a positive injunction as to exactly how this ablution should be done. It was not a law of Moses but a tradition of the elders. Jesus refused to sanction it as a rule that was binding. It was not the custom of washing hands before eating that Jesus objected to, but the authority the rabbis claimed to have in telling the people the exact and detailed manner in which it must be done. (Scroll to page 70 in Manners and Customs Pdf)

See Wikipedia article - Ritual Washing in Judaism

Ablution in the Jewish Encyclopedia (click for full article) - For the purpose of actual or ritual purification, ablutions or washings form an important feature of the Jewish religious ceremonial. Judaism is in thorough accord with the proverb, "Cleanliness is next to godliness" (see Mishnah, Soṭah, ix. 15): indeed, it goes further; for it holds practically that cleanliness is godliness itself. There are three kinds of Ablution recognized in Biblical and rabbinical law: (1) Washing of the hands, (2) washing of the hands and feet, and (3) immersion of the whole body in water.

Surprised (astonished, amazed)(2296) see previous note on thaumazo. This is the same verb Luke used to describe the reaction of the crowd when Jesus cast out the demon (Lk 11:14+).

Ceremonially washed (907)(**baptizo** from **bapto** = cover wholly with a fluid) literally means is to submerge, to dip or immerse as in water. A study of the 77 NT uses (See below) reveals that most of the uses of **baptizo** in the Gospels and Acts are associated with literal water baptism. Here we see the Pharisee's teaching of "ceremonially baptizing" your hands before a mean. The ritual was not about hygiene but hypocrisy!

Mishnah (Yadaim 1:1-2)

1:1 A [To render hands clean] a quarter-log of water do they pour for hands,
B for one,
C also for two.
D A half-log [is to be used] for three or four.
E A log [is to be used] for five and for ten and for a hundred.
F R. Yose says, “And on condition that for the last among them, there should not be less than a quarter-log.”
G They add [to the water used] for the second [pouring], but they do not add [to the water used] for the first [pouring of water over the hands].

1:2 A With all sorts of utensils do they pour [water] for hands,
B even with utensils made of dung, utensils made of stone, utensils made of [unbaked] clay.
C They do not pour [water] for hands either with the sides of [broken] utensils, or the bottom of a ladling jar, or with the plug of a barrel.
D Nor should a man pour [water] for his fellow with his cupped hands.
E For they draw, and they mix [water with the ash of the red cow], and they sprinkle purification water, and they pour [water] for hands only with a utensil.
F And only utensils afford protection with a tightly fitted cover, and nothing affords protection from the power of a clay utensil [in the Tent of a corpse] except utensils.

Luke 11:39 But the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness.

KJV Luke 11:39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

- **Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter** Mt 23:25; Gal 1:14; 2 Ti 3:5; Titus 1:15
- **but inside of you** Lk 16:15; Ge 6:5; 2 Chr 25:2; 31:20,21; Pr 26:25; 30:12; Jer 4:14; Mt 12:33-35; 15:19; John 12:6; 13:2; Acts 5:3; Acts 8:21-23; James 4:8
- **you are full of robbery and wickedness.** Ps 22:13; Ezekiel 22:25,27; Zephaniah 3:3; Mt 7:15
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:37-44 How to Evangelize Religious People - John MacArthur

Related Passage:

Matthew 23:25 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence

Luke 16:15+ And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

Jeremiah 4:14 Wash your heart from evil, O Jerusalem, That you may be saved. How long will your wicked thoughts Lodge within you?

JESUS' CONFRONTS FALSE RELIGION

But the Lord said to him - Jesus knew that failing to ceremonially wash would incite a reaction from the Pharisee. He allowed the confrontation because He wanted to highlight the foolishness of their empty ritual and worthless religion.

Your dishes may be clean, but your hearts are filthy!

Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter - Now think about what Jesus is saying to the Pharisee. Everyone knows a good host would not dare put a cup out that did not have even the outside spotless and the same for a plate. You could turn this host's plate over and look at the bottom and it would be clean! But when we drink from a cup or eat off of a plate, we

are not generally concerned with the outside but we are definitely concerned with the inside. You can see how Jesus is leading this Pharisee to apply the same logic to our body and soul. **External** cleanliness is fine, but **internal** cleanliness is crucial. And this is where Jesus calls out the Pharisee, not on the external but on the internal.

Nelson's NKJV Study Bible - The Pharisees washed the outside of cups, making sure that the cups had not become unclean through contact with a dead insect (see Lev. 11:31-38).

The Pharisees had clean dishes but dirty hearts!

but inside of you, you are full (gemo) **of robbery** (harpage) **and wickedness** (poneria) - Jesus introduces a striking picture meant to prick and convict the hearts of these religious Pharisees. They had clean dishes but dirty hearts! Jesus uses **full** (gemo) to describe their soul as full of **robbery and wickedness.** and He uses the present tense indicating that they are continually filled. This is their condition or state. What a horrible, albeit accurate, description of the souls of this "super religious" sect. Imagine you are a guest in someone's house and you respond to them with words like Jesus did! Jesus is saying in essence that their symbolic charade lacked spiritual substance, as did their entire religious system! In fact it is a characteristic of most false religions, that the more symbols and symbolic acts they employ, the less spiritual reality there is. And what does all the external symbolism hide? It hides the sinful state of their heart. We see this symbolism (pomp and circumstance) in Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Hinduism, Buddhism, Mormonism, etc, but it is all for naught because it does nothing the for internal wickedness of their heart. But the deadly deception of their symbolism, is that it makes them think that that they are "**okay**" inside, that they are somehow compensating for the wickedness of their heart. The tragedy is that they are deceived and unless they repent and believe in Jesus Christ, they are destined for eternal punishment.

The Pharisees could keep the external rules fastidiously, but they had no rule over their hearts and the internal wickedness which filled their soul. The Pharisees were concerned with what one ***does***, while Jesus points out they lacked concern for what one ***is***. Being is more critical than doing!

> **THOUGHT**- As we read about the Pharisees, we all do well to examine our own heart, because just as the Pharisees were professors of religion without possession of relationship with God, so too are many in the church today. They claim to know Christ and yet continually compromise and live more like the devil. In short while they say they believe they show no fruit indicating genuine belief. This is a deadly deception which will take a person to hell unless they repent and come to their senses and truly believe in Christ (cf 2 Ti 2:24-26+). (See Profession of Faith and Can a person believe in some sense but not be saved?)

MacArthur paraphrases Jesus' words - "*You know what your problem is, you clean the part of the plate that nobody eats from. You clean the part of the plate that doesn't matter. You clean the outside of the cup and the outside of the platter. It is pointless. All your symbolic stuff doesn't touch the inside that's filthy and putrid*." And then He says it, Lk 11:39, *"Inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness*." Would you call that a direct approach? That is the direct approach. In your heart you are wicked. You say, "How could He say that?" Well, first of all, He is omniscient, so He knows. But more than that, He understands religion that is false is always a cover-up, always. Again, Matthew 23:25, "**Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, you clean the outside of the cup and dish, inside you're full of robbery and self-indulgence. First clean the inside of the cup and the dish so that the outside of it may become clean also**." You see, they loved sin on the inside. In John 3:19, Jesus said, "You men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are" … What?… "are evil." Their soul was feeding on pride. Their soul was feeding on lust. Their soul is feeding on deception. (How to Evangelize Religious People)

Jesus accuses the Pharisees not just of plundering people's possessions but of the far worse crime of "stealing" their souls. In Matthew Jesus describes their robbery of people's souls declaring "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, **you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves**." (Mt 23:15).

Steven Cole on applying this section - Before we look specifically at the theme, take note that Jesus accepted social invitations from unbelievers. But, also note that He did not hesitate to confront unbelievers with their sin! He deliberately provoked this confrontation by doing something that surprised His host. But we need to be careful about how we apply this. Jesus was in a cultural context that understood the bold language of the prophets. Also, He is the Lord and as such has both the insight and authority to speak in this manner. Paul instructs us, "Walk with [NASB, margin] wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person" (Col. 4:5, 6). **The metaphor of salt implies that we can and should be provocative, but we also must speak in a gracious and sensitive manner.** But in every social contact with unbelievers, keep your purpose clear. You're there to be the instrument of the Holy Spirit in convincing the person about sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to proclaim the good news of God's grace in Christ. (Luke 11:37-54: Why Jesus Hates Legalism)

MacArthur quips that "this approach of Jesus is utterly contrary to every evangelistic strategy you hear being applied today. But where are you going to go if you don't get to the core of the issue? You can only get to the cross when you've gone through this kind of exposure. They love symbols on the outside; they love sin on the inside." (How to Evangelize Religious People)

Full (1073)(**gemo**) means to be full of something, to contain, to be stuffed, to be filled ful**Gilbrant** - In the New Testament, as in the Septuagint, gemō is used both in the literal sense of something which is filled to capacity and in a metaphoric sense. The metaphoric usage of gemō is most common in the New Testament. For example, Jesus portrayed the scribes and Pharisees, who were so careful to maintain proper outward appearances, as being "**full**" of robbery and self-indulgence (Mt 23:25; Lk 11:39), and as being "**full**" of dead men's bones and all uncleanness (Mt 23:27). The Book of Revelation often uses **gemō** in describing events of the end times. For example, the four living creatures before the throne of God are "**full**" of eyes in front and behind (Rev 4:6,8) who possess golden bowls "**full**" of incense, described as the prayers of the saints (Rev 5:8). The living creatures also possess golden bowls "**full**" of the wrath of God (Rev 15:7) to be poured out upon the wicked. (Complete Biblical Library)

The last NT use in Rev 21:9 describes "the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues" which is the final pouring out of God's righteous wrath on a sinful, God hating world.

> **Gemo** - 11x read passages to see what they are full of - interesting! - Mt. 23:25; Mt. 23:27; Lk. 11:39; Ro 3:14; Rev. 4:6; Rev. 4:8; Rev. 5:8; Rev. 15:7; Rev. 17:3; Rev. 17:4; Rev. 21:9
>
> **Gemo** - 5x in the Septuagint - Gen. 37:25; 2 Chr. 9:21; Ps. 10:7; Ps. 14:3; Amos 2:13 The Septuagint uses **gemo** refers to a heavy load of material goods in a camel caravan (Ge 37:25), a ship's cargo of precious goods (2 Chr 9:21), a mouth which is full of cursing and bitterness (Ps 10:7), and a wagon load of straw (Amos 2:13).

Robbery (724)(**harpage** from **harpazo** = to seize and carry off with force, of the "Rapture" 1 Thes 4:17! from the root ***harp***---, seen in Eng., "rapacious;" an associated noun, with the same spelling, denoted a rake, or hook for drawing up a bucket) means robbery, pillage, plunder, extortion, that which has been stolen such as loot or prey. In the New Testament harpagē is that which was gained unlawfully by the Pharisees and which was gained by extortion. (See Matthew 23:25.) In Hebrews 10:34 it is used of that which was taken from the Christians illegally and for which they were compensated by a better possession. Note that in Luke 11:39 it can refer to the desire in the heart of a man to indulge in gain that comes from greediness. **Friberg** on **harpage** - (1) as an action of carrying off someone's belongings by force robbery, plundering (Heb 10.34); (2) concretely what has been seized, plunder, booty (probably Mt 23.25); (3) as an attitude greediness, covetousness (Lk 11.39). Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament

> **Harpage** - 3x - Mt 23:25, Lk 11:39, Heb 10:34. Used 5x in 5v in the Septuagint - Lev. 6:2; Eccl. 5:8; Isa. 3:14; Isa. 10:2; Nah. 2:12. In the Septuagint harpage described that which was stolen from the poor and was in the house of the robber (Isa 3:14). The lion when taking care of its young and filling its den with prey is said to fill its dwelling place with "spoil" (Nah2:12).

Wickedness (4189)(**poneria** from **poneros** from **pónos** = labor, sorrow, pain and and **poneo** = to be involved in work, labor) refers to depravity, to an evil disposition, to badness or to an evil nature. **Poneria** is used in the NT only in the moral and ethical sense and refers to intentionally practiced ill will. **Poneria** describes the state of lacking moral or social values (baseness, sinfulness, maliciousness, malevolence). **Poneria** is active malice. **Poneria** is malevolence, not only doing evil, but being evil. Webster defines malevolence as the condition which arises from intense often vicious ill will, spite, or hatred. **Poneria** is used only two other times in Gospels - Matthew 22:18 Mark 7:22. Peter uses poneria in his confrontation of the Jewish audience boldly declaring ""For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning (apostrepho) every one of you from your **wicked** (poneria) ways." (Acts 3:26). **Poneria** describes our demonic enemies as "spiritual forces of **wickedness** in the heavenly places." (Eph 6:12-note).

> **Poneria - 7v - malice(1), wicked ways(1), wickedness(5).** Matt. 22:18; Mk. 7:22; Lk. 11:39; Acts 3:26; Rom. 1:29; 1 Co. 5:8; Eph. 6:12

Luke 11:40 "You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also?

> KJV Luke 11:40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?

- **You foolish ones** 12:20; 24:25; Ps 14:1; 75:4,5; 94:8; Pr 1:22; 8:5; Jeremiah 5:21; Mt 23:17; Mt 23:26; 1 Cor 15:36
- **did not He who made the outside make the inside also**Genesis 1:26; 2:7; Numbers 16:22; Ps 33:15; 94:9; Zechariah 12:1; Heb 12:9
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

- Luke 11:37-44 How to Evangelize Religious People - John MacArthur

FOOLISH PHARISEES!

You foolish (aphron) **ones** - **Foolish ones** (aphron) is one who does not use his rational powers, one not employing his understanding especially as it relates to practical matters, in this context the practical matter of entrance into the Kingdom of God. Aphron means lack of good judgment and can refer to folly in action. What a way to address one's host! Unless, as in this case, it was the truth. How could He possibly win then to faith in the Gospel unless they had full understanding of their lost, sinful condition. This is sadly not the approach many take today in presenting the Gospel, but if you read Paul's pattern in Romans, he emphasized first the bad news (Romans 1-3) and then the good news of the availability of justification by faith (Romans 3-5). Yes, Jesus said not to call anyone a fool (Mt 5:22+), but that was a different context (where one was using it as a coarse, disparaging epithet) and it was also a different word (moros). The word Jesus uses here (aphron) conveys the sense of one who is unwise or imprudent which is an accurate description of the mindset of most of the Pharisees. Paul used aphron in his letter to the saints at Ephesus exhorting them "So then do not be **foolish**, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Eph 5:17+) To be sure, the Pharisees did not understand the will of God!

Jesus calls the ritualistic Pharisees **fools** because they thought that, by doing something external, they could gain favor with God (self-righteousness). That line of reasoning then and now is imprudent and unwise and will end up taking one straight to hell.

William Hendriksen - "**You fools**." Whether, as English equivalent, we prefer "You fools" or "**You foolish ones**," either way, would a modern audience approve of being addressed in this manner? We should remember, however, that Christ's all-seeing "eyes" were able to do what today's ministers cannot do. Those eyes were able to penetrate to the very depths of human hearts. Accordingly, the passage cannot mean that any clergyman now has the right to call the members of his congregation "fools." On the other hand, it is also true that there are times when a faithful minister will have to use language that is not exactly complimentary. The result? The following summarizes what actually happened in the case of a pastor who was bidding farewell to his congregation. A certain lady shook his hand very firmly and, with tear-filled eyes, remarked, "*No minister has ever hurt me as much as you did. Thanks be to God. I needed it*!" (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

To restrict one's holiness to the external is
to wholly shortcut God's holiness.

Did not He Who made the outside make the inside also- Even a foolish Pharisee could grasp this simple truth, that God **made the outside** (the body we see) and the inside (the soul we cannot see). He made them both. The implication is clear, the One Who made you is concerned about the outside and the inside. The Pharisees thought the external rituals made them holy, but failed to reflect on the fact that God is holy and so He is concerned about both the outside and the inside of those who call themselves "holy." To restrict one's holiness to the external is to wholly shortcut God's holiness. Jesus statement implies that the Pharisees know "deep inside" that is, in their soul, they are not holy. Paul explains this in (1 Cor 2:11+) asking (rhetorically) "*who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him*?" So all men know what they are like on the interior, at the heart level. And yet what were the Pharisees focused on, their internal heart condition or their external behavior? And of course the answer Jesus says is they were focused on the externals of religion and devoid of the internal relationship with God. And that is why Jesus justifiably called them **foolish**!

These men who were supposedly teachers of the Law ignored the repeated teaching in the Old Testament that God had always been interested in man's heart. David could not have stated it more clearly then when he wrote "For Thou dost not delight in sacrifice (EXTERNAL), otherwise I would give it; Thou art not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart (INTERNAL), O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Ps 51:16-17+, cf King Josiah's tender heart in 2 Ki 11:19)

C. R. Erdman - Jesus declared that to wash the body while the heart is impure is as absurd as to clean the outside of an unclean cup or platter. He declared that God who made the body created the soul also, and that God is more concerned with the latter than with the former. (Luke 11 Commentary)

Leon Morris says this passage speaks of "the importance of a right inward attitude when we give alms. We must give from our hearts and not just make an outward gesture. 'The gift without the giver is bare' (Lowell, cited in Arndt). When one gives from the heart everything is clean. No amount of pouring of water can make up for a wrong state in the inward life." (Borrow The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary)

J C Ryle - Let us notice in this passage the foolishness which accompanies hypocrisy in religion. We are told that the Pharisee with whom our Lord dined marvelled that our Lord "had not first washed before dinner." He thought, like most of his order, that there was something unholy in not doing it, and that the neglect of it was a sign of moral impurity. Our Lord points out the absurdity of attaching

such importance to the mere cleansing of the body, while the cleansing of the heart is overlooked. He reminds His host that God looks at the inward part of us, the hidden man of the heart, far more than at our skins. And He asks the searching question, "**Did not He that made that which is without, make that which is within also?**" The same God who formed our poor dying bodies, is the God who gave us a heart and soul. **Forever let us bear in mind that the state of our hearts is the principal thing that demands our attention**, if we would know what we are in religion. **Bodily washings, and fastings, and gestures, and postures, and self-imposed mortifications of the flesh, are all utterly useless if the heart is wrong. External devoutness of conduct, a grave face, and a bowed head, and a solemn countenance, and a loud amen, are all abominable in God's sight, so long as our hearts are not washed from their wickedness, and renewed by the Holy Ghost.** Let this caution never be forgotten. The idea that men can be devout before they are converted, is a grand delusion of the devil, and one against which we all need to be on our guard. There are two Scriptures which are very weighty on this subject. In one it is written, "Out of the heart are the issues of life." (Pr 4:23+) In the other it is written, "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at the heart." (1Sa 16:7) There is a question which we should always ask ourselves in drawing near to God, whether in public or private. We should say to ourselves, "**Where is my heart?**"

Foolish (878)(**aphron** from **a** = without + + **phren** = understanding, means originally meant diaphragm and was regarded as the seat of mental and spiritual activity, then mind or understanding -- see another study on **aphron** - click here) is literally a lack of sense, reflection, understanding or reason. **A** It can express a reckless and inconsiderate habit of one's mind. Related ideas inherent i n **aphron** are not using common sense, mindless or unmindful of the consequence of a thought or action, acting rashly. The **aphron** is not a dim-witted person or clown (as in 'play the fool'), but in secular Greek was the person who had lost the correct measure of himself and the world around him. He was one who lacked prudence (= the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason and includes the idea of acting with or showing care and thought for the future)

> **Aphron** - **11x/10v - fool(2), foolish(8), foolish ones(1).** Lk. 11:40; Lk. 12:20; Rom. 2:20; 1 Co. 15:36; 2 Co. 11:16; 2 Co. 11:19; 2 Co. 12:6; 2 Co. 12:11; Eph. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:15

Luke 11:41 "But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you.

KJV But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

NET But give from your heart to those in need, and then everything will be clean for you.

ESV But give as alms those things that are within, and behold (idou), everything is clean for you.

NLT So clean the inside by giving gifts to the poor, and you will be clean all over.

CSB But give to charity what is within, and then everything is clean for you.

NIV But give what is inside the dish to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.

NAB But as to what is within, give alms, and behold, everything will be clean for you.

NKJ "But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you.

NJB Instead, give alms from what you have and, look, everything will be clean for you.

- **But give that which is within as charity** Lk 12:33; 14:12-14; 16:9; 18:22; 19:8; Deuteronomy 15:8-10; Job 13:16-20; Ps 41:1; Ps 112:9; Pr 14:31; 19:17; Eccl 11:1,2; Isa 58:7-11; Daniel 4:27; Mt 5:42; Mt 6:1-4; 25:34-40; 26:11; Acts 9:36-39; 10:31,32; 11:29; 24:17; 2 Cor 8:7-9,12; 9:6-15; Eph 4:28; Heb 6:10; 13:16; James 1:27; 2:14-16; 1 Jn 3:16,17
- **then all things are clean for you** of such things as ye have Acts 10:15; Ro 14:14-18; 1 Ti 4:4,5; Titus 1:15
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:37-44 How to Evangelize Religious People - John MacArthur

But give that which is within as charity (eleemosune) **- Give** is a command (aorist imperative) and the only way to obey this command is to be enabled by the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees may even give your alms to the poor, but they did it out of a sinful heart! Clearly Jesus is calling for them to be born again, and receive a new heart so that instead of ***getting*** they begin truly ***giving***. In a sense, Jesus is indirectly giving this Pharisee good news of the way he could be transformed. The simple fact is that if their good deeds did not come from a good heart then they were not good (God) deeds. The heart of the problem with the religious leaders was the problem of their hearts!

The noun **charity** (or **alms**)(eleēmosúnē) is the result of being eleémōn, merciful, and it is the outward expression of **eleos**, active

compassion or mercifulness. Applying this truth to the Pharisees, Jesus is saying that if they gave out of mercy, it would signify that they had a heart of mercy and by "default" that would be "clean" in heart. Their giving of alms would not **MAKE** them clean, but instead would demonstrate that they **HAD BEEN MADE CLEAN** by grace through faith.

God has always been interested in the internal before the external .In Amos God says to Israel

> "Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps (THEY ARE HYPOCRITICAL). But (AS A REFLECTION OF TRUE CHANGE OF HEART) let justice roll down like waters And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (Amos 5:23-24)

Alms = something such as money or food given freely to relieve the poor. Our English word "alms" is from Latin eleemosyna in turn from the Greek word eleemosyne.

Giving was an important part of ancient Judaism where even those gleaning the fields were told to leave behind some of the sheaves so that the poor could gather and have food, Moses recording that…

> 'Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 'Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the LORD your God. (Lev 19:9-10-note)

Since there is no longer a Temple, or priests, modern religious Jews instead pray or offer tzedakah as a form of charity.

William Barclay on **charity** -

> **To the Jew almsgiving was the most sacred of all religious duties.** How sacred it was may be seen from the fact that the Jews used the same word—tzedakah—both for righteousness and almsgiving. **To give alms and to be righteous were one and the same thing. To give alms was to gain merit in the sight of God, and was even to win atonement and forgiveness for past sins.**
>
> > “Prayer with fasting is good, but better than both is almsgiving with righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than wealth with wrongdoing. It is better to give alms than to lay up gold. For almsgiving saves from death and purges away every sin. Those who give alms will enjoy a full life, but those who commit sin and do wrong are their own worst enemies. (Tobit 12:8)…
>
> There was a rabbinic saying:
>
> > “Greater is he who gives alms than he who offers all sacrifices.”
>
> **Almsgiving stood first in the catalogue of good works**. It was then natural and inevitable that the man who desired to be good should concentrate on almsgiving. The highest teaching of the Rabbis was exactly the same as the teaching of Jesus. They too forbade ostentatious almsgiving.
>
> > “He who gives alms in secret,” they said, “is greater than Moses.”
>
> The almsgiving which saves from death is that
>
> > “when the recipient does not know from whom he gets it, and when the giver does not know to whom he gives it.”
>
> There was a Rabbi who, when he wished to give alms, dropped money behind him, so that he would not see who picked it up.
>
> > “It were better,” they said, “to give a man nothing, than to give him something, and to put him to shame.”
>
> There was one particularly lovely custom connected with the Temple. In the Temple there was a room called **The Chamber of the Silent.** People who wished to make atonement for some sin placed money there; and poor people from good families who had come down in the world were secretly helped by these contributions. (Gospel of Matthew - Daily Study Bible) (Bolding added)

And then all things are clean (katharos) **for you** - Here is the **ESV** " and **behold** (idou), everything is clean for you." The word **behold** (sadly not translated in most modern versions) calls for the reader to pay special attention to what follows. In other words Jesus is saying not just their outside, but their inside would be **clean**. As noted there deeds of charity would reflect their "**clean**" (pure) heart. A pure heart would contrast with the heart of the Pharisees who gave alms (and even with great fanfare to be seen by

men - cf Mt 6:2-4+) but did so from a heart that was unclean, unregenerate.

Jesus made a similar statement in Matthew "You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become **clean** (katharos) also. (Matthew 23:26)

Paul made a statement very similar to Jesus "But the goal of our instruction is love from a**pure** (katharos) heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. (1 Timothy 1:5+)

James said "This is **pure** (katharos) and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (James 1:27+)

NET Note - In Jewish culture giving alms to the poor was a very important religious observance; it was meant to be an act of mercy, kindness, and love (D. L. Bock, Luke [BECNT], 2:1114). The implication from the text is that the Pharisees gave alms, but without any of the spiritual concern which should have motivated those generous actions. Here Jesus commands the Pharisees to give from within themselves to those in need instead of just giving of their possessions. In so doing they would show true inner purity acceptable to God. This is in keeping with the author's social concerns elsewhere in the Gospel (cf., e.g., Luke 1:52–53, 4:18–19, 6:20–21, 14:13). The expression everything **will be clean for you** refers to the agreement that should exist between the overt practice of one's religious duties, such as almsgiving, and the inner condition of one's heart, including true love for God and the poor; one is not only to wash the outside of the cup and plate, but the inside as well, since as Jesus said, God created the inside too. Religious duties are not to be performed hypocritically, i.e., for the applause and esteem of people, but rather they are to be done out of a deep love for God and a sensitivity to and concern for the needs of others. Then, everything will be clean, both hearts and lives.

Steven Cole - The meaning of verse 41 is debated, but Jesus seems to be saying that if we deal with our hearts before God, then everything that flows outward is clean. As **J C Ryle** explains, “Give first the offering of the inward man. Give your heart, your affections, and your will to God, as the first great alms which you bestow, and then all your other actions, proceeding from a right heart, are an acceptable sacrifice, and a clean offering in the sight of God” (Luke 11:37-54: Why Jesus Hates Legalism)

MacArthur explains this verse this way - All your symbolic alms giving, all your symbolic prayers, all your symbolic fasts are hypocritical as long as you keep plundering people, pillaging people, raping people, both body and soul. Give that which is within. Give your heart. Give your life and then all things are clean for you. (**ED**: AKA "**BE**" BEFORE YOU "**DO**!") (How to Evangelize Religious People)

Charity (Alms) (1654)(**eleemosune** from **eleemon** = merciful from **eleos** = mercy, kindness, compassion) signifies mercy or pity and came to be applied particularly in giving **alms** because it refers to the actual helpful action of the pity. Stated another way alms represents money given out of mercy for the poor. **Eleēmosúnē** is the expression of mercy to be contrasted with **oiktirmós**, which conveys more the expression of sentiment than the outward manifestation of character.

Clean (2513)(**katharos**) literally describes that which is free of dirt and thus **clean**. It describes that which is free from admixture or adulteration and thus is **pure**. From a biblical standpoint the concept of cleansing is deeply rooted in both the Old and the New Testaments.The Levitical laws placed heavy emphasis on ceremonial cleansing and thus contact with any unclean animal, substance, person, or place was strictly forbidden. By the time Christ came this preoccupation with ceremonial cleanness had unfortunately displaced true worship with many of the Jews, most notably the Pharisees. It is not surprising then that the New Testament focuses mainly on an **inward cleanness** (heart, conscience), rather than on an external or ceremonial cleanness. **Katharos** is an adjective that figuratively is used in both the OT and the NT to describe the state of one's **heart**. When a person is **pure** in heart and mind, his or her perspective on all things is pure, and that inner purity produces outer purity. Katharos has to do with attitudes, integrity, and singleness of heart as opposed to duplicity and double mindedness.

Here are some related uses of **katharos**

> Matthew 5:8 (note) "Blessed are the **pure** in heart (see representative uses in the Septuagint below), for they shall see God.
>
> John 13:10 Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely**clean**; and you are **clean**, but not all of you."
>
> Titus 1:15 (note)To the **pure**, all things are **pure**; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is **pure**, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

Luke 11:42 "But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard

justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

> KJV Luke 11:42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

- **But woe to you Pharisees** Mt 23:13-27
- **For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb** Lk 18:12
- **yet disregard justice and the love of God** Deuteronomy 10:12,13; 1 Samuel 15:22; Pr 21:3; Isa 1:10-17; 58:2-6; Jeremiah 7:2-10; Jeremiah 7:21,22; Micah 6:8; Malachi 1:6; 2:17; John 5:42; Titus 2:11,12; 1 John 4:20
- **without neglecting the others.** Leviticus 27:30-33; 2 Chr 31:5-10; Nehemiah 10:37; Eccl 7:18; Malachi 3:8
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:37-44 How to Evangelize Religious People - John MacArthur

Related Passage:

> Leviticus 27:30 (USES TO SUPPORT TITHING HERBS) 'Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S; it is holy to the LORD.
>
> Luke 18:12+ (A PRIDEFUL, SELF-RIGHTEOUS PHARISEE) 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

Jesus Pronouncing Woes on Religious Leaders

THE FIRST WOE:
TITHING WITHOUT JUSTICE AND LOVE

But - What is Jesus contrasting? He has just described giving from an inside (heart) that is clean. The heart of the Pharisees was in stark contrast. It was an evil heart, a spiritually darkened, spiritually bankrupt heart. They were going through the motions so to speak. They invented external things they could observe to hide the truth that they had no power to keep the precepts that God desired men to obey (by the power of the Spirit). They had symbol but no substance. They were religious hypocrites. Sham shysters.

> **THOUGHT**- Do we ever do that in Christianity? Certainly a number of denominations have routines that are part of their worship service. While in many cases there is substance behind the ritual (e.g., reciting the Lord's Prayer as a congregation), what was meant to be substance can too often become only empty ritual. This principle is true in our individual lives. We have our morning devotional, but there are many days when it seems more like an empty ritual than a meeting with the King. Father, by Thy Holy Spirit and Thy Holy Word, and for the sake of Thy dear Son, Jesus, deliver us from falling into the subtle trap of a ritualistic relationship with Thee. Amen

Woe (ouai) **to you Pharisees!** - **NLT** paraphrases it "What sorrow awaits you Pharisees!" Jesus gives the first of 6 woes in this section (Mt 23:13-29 has 7 woes!). Can you imagine Jesus' host, by this time he must have been totally rattled!

Hendriksen adds the following differences between the woes in Luke 11 and Matthew 23

- Those reported by Luke were addressed to Pharisees (Lk 11:42–44) and law-experts, scribes (Lk 11:46, 47, 52). Those reported by Matthew 23, though also directed to the scribes and Pharisees, were addressed "to the crowds and to Christ's disciples."
- Those found in Luke 11 were spoken somewhat earlier than those found in Matthew 23 (the latter on Tuesday of Passion Week).
- The six in Luke 11 were pronounced in a home, the seven in Mt 23 in the temple. (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

For - term of explanation - Explaining why He is crying **Woe** to the Pharisees.

You pay tithe (apodekatoo) **of mint and rue** ("herb of grace") **and every kind of garden herb** - These hypocrites are majoring on the minors! They were ridiculously meticulous on minutiae! They were punctilious regarding the petty! Imagine the burden of detailed counting of seeds and stems, not to mention how foolish this was! There were no such onerous rules related to the tithe in the Old Testament. They added to the Scripture, which is never a good thing to do (cf Pr 30:6) Jesus emphasizes their fastidious attention to external details, details which are not mentioned in Lev. 27:30–33; Dt. 14:22–29; 2 Chr 31:5–12). However Jesus' statement

without neglecting the others in context could be interpreted as a reference to their herbal tithing. In other words Jesus may not necessarily have condemned them for their tithe of minutiae. Alternatively, Jesus may be referring to the tithing clearly stated in Lev 27:30-33 because that text makes no mention of tiny herbs. **MacArthur** says yes, "they ought to have tithed. Jesus says, "You ought to have done that, the reasonable tithe, the required tithe, you ought to have done that." But tithing herbs is "over the top" and I agree.

Lev. 27:30 ("the seed of the land") was used to support the tithing of herbs and spices.

What is interesting is that their own extra-biblical writings in the Mishnah said that **rue** is exempt from any tithe. These men were not even paying attention to their own traditions! They were fastidious with their minutia on the outside and oblivious to justice and love that came from the inside, from the heart. **Rue** is a strong-scented herb - see Wikipedia.

The tithing of various herbs was based on Lev. 27:30 "'Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S; it is holy to the LORD." Though tithing of grain, fruit, wine, and oil was demanded (cf Nu. 18:12; Dt. 14:22-23), the scribes had expanded the items required to be tithed to include even the smallest of herbs.

Yet disregard justice and the love of God - The Pharisees were disregarding the spirit of the Law. And frankly they had no power to do otherwise because they were so corrupt inside. These are attitudes and actions which emanate from within, for a heart that is clean. These were basic things that the prophets also had warned about...

> Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?
>
> Zechariah 7:8-10 Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah saying, 9 "Thus has the LORD of hosts said, 'Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; 10 and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.'

Love God—and do what you please.
If you love, what He wants will please you.
-- Augustine

The first great commandment

> AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' (Mark 12:30)

The Pharisees did not keep this commandment. They could not, because their heart was unclean!

But these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others - NLT paraphrases it "You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things." NIV - "You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone." They should have practiced the far more important matters of justice and the love of God. Tithing of tiny herbs could be done, but not in lieu of justice and love of God.

The Pharisees were clever and would tell even their own parents that they could not help them financially because their money had been devoted to God (Mark 7:11+ see Dictionary article, another or Korban). Technically, they were tithing, but practically, they were neglecting to love their own parents!

Steven Cole - Modern day legalists also major on the minors and minor on the majors. Some churches and Christian parents put major attention on rules about petty issues, such as dress codes or certain activities, but they tolerate serious sins, such as gossip, greed, and pride. If we shun people because of how they look, or over certain behaviors that, according to the Bible, are not major, we are guilty of the sin of the Pharisees. For example, you may be surprised to know what Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, G. Campbell Morgan, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, and C. S. Lewis all had in common. Yes, they were all godly Christian leaders who were greatly used by God. All except Lewis were gifted Bible expositors and pastors. But also, at least some of the time they were in the ministry, they all smoked! Many Christians question your salvation if you smoke! I think that if you smoke, you should quit as soon as possible, because it is not good stewardship of your body. The men I just mentioned all lived before that medical evidence was known. But my point is that there are many Christians who are more concerned with getting people to stop smoking than with getting them to walk in the Spirit and stop doing the deeds of the flesh. (Luke 11:37-54: Why Jesus Hates Legalism)

Woe (alas) (3750)(**ouai** pronounced "oo-ah'ee," an eerie, ominous foreboding sound some say is like the cry of an eagle) is an onomatopoeic word (an imitation of the sound) which serves as an interjection expressing a cry of intense distress, displeasure or horror. Jesus uses it to convey a warning of impending judgment and disaster on the Pharisees. For example in Mt 23:13 the Woe says they will "not enter" the kingdom of heaven and Mt 23:15 the Woe prefaces Jesus' referring to them as "a son of hell." In Mt

23:29-31 the Woe relates to killing of the prophets and the Pharisees "bear witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets." And then in Mt 23:33 Jesus asks them "how shall you escape the sentence of hell?" The answer is they won't escape!

> **Ouai - 47x/36v - woe(46), woes(1)**. Matt. 11:21; Matt. 18:7; Matt. 23:13; Matt. 23:14; Matt. 23:15; Matt. 23:16; Matt. 23:23; Matt. 23:25; Matt. 23:27; Matt. 23:29; Matt. 24:19; Matt. 26:24; Mk. 13:17; Mk. 14:21; Lk. 6:24; Lk. 6:25; Lk. 6:26; Lk. 10:13; Lk. 11:42; Lk. 11:43; Lk. 11:44; Lk. 11:46; Lk. 11:47; Lk. 11:52; Lk. 17:1; Lk. 21:23; Lk. 22:22; 1 Co. 9:16; Jude 1:11; Rev. 8:13; Rev. 9:12; Rev. 11:14; Rev. 12:12; Rev. 18:10; Rev. 18:16; Rev. 18:19

Pay tithe (586)(**apodekatoo** from **apo** - from + **dekatoo** = to collect tithes) means to pay or collect a tenth.**Friberg** - 1) pay tithes, give one-tenth or one part out of every ten of something (Mt 23.23); (2) collect a tithe from someone (Heb 7.5) (Borrow Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

> **Apodekatoo** -4x in NT - Matt. 23:23; Lk. 11:42; Lk 18:12 Heb. 7:5 - Use in Septuagint - Gen. 28:22; Deut. 14:22; Deut. 26:12; 1 Sam. 8:15; 1 Sam. 8:16; 1 Sam. 8:17;

Disregard (present tense)(3928) **parerchomai** from **para** = beside, near + **erchomai** = come, go) means to pass near, pass by or pass away and is used in both a literal and figurative sense, with the figurative uses predominating in the NT. **Parerchomai** describes literal passing by, passing through (**LXX** - Nu 20:17, 19, 21, 23, twice in Josh 4:23YLT = the Red Sea and across the Jordan, Neh 9:11) or coming beside (near) (Mk 6:48, Mt 8:28, Lk 18:37 cp **LXX** - Ge18:3, 33:19, 22, 34:6, Ex 3:3, 1Ki 19:11).

Justice (2920) **krisis** from **krino** = to judge, decide) means a decision or judgment, verdict, justice, court (tribunal). The first use is by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount declaring "'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court." ("in danger of judgment") (Mt 5:21, cp also Mt 5:22) Mt 10:15, 11:22, 24 all describe Jesus' sobering warning to the Jews of a specific future and frightening "day of judgment." (cp "sentence of hell" Mt 23:33, see also 2 Peter 2:9, 11, 3:7, 1 John 4:17) In Jn 5:24 Jesus gives sinners the way of escape, the way to miss the horrible day of judgment (Heb 10:27)! In Mt 12:18 God's judgment is equated with justice, for He is the righteous and just Judge (cp Mt 12:20, 23:23, Rev 16:7). Note the striking contrast in Jn 5:29 "those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment." There is no such thing as reincarnation but only one life, one death, one judgment (Heb 9:27)

Love (26) agape is unconditional, sacrificial love and Biblically refers to a love that God is (1Jn 4:8,16), that God shows (Jn 3:16, 1Jn 4:9) and that God enables in His children (fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22+). It is not surprising that Greek literature throws little light on its distinctive NT meaning. Biblical agape love is the love of choice, the love of serving with humility, the highest kind of love, the noblest kind of devotion, the love of the will (intentional, a conscious choice) and not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship. Agape is not based on pleasant emotions or good feelings that might result from a physical attraction or a familial bond. Agape chooses as an act of self-sacrifice to serve the recipient. From all of the descriptions of agape love, it is clear that true agape love is a sure mark of salvation.

> **Agape in the Gospels** - Matt. 24:12; Lk. 11:42; Jn. 5:42; Jn. 13:35; Jn. 15:9; Jn. 15:10; Jn. 15:13; Jn. 17:26;

Mishnah on tithing

9:1
A Rue, goosefoot, wild coriander, water parsley, and eruca of the field are exempt from [separation of] tithes and may be bought from anyone during the Sabbatical year,
B because produce of their type is not cultivated [but grows wild].
C R. Judah says, “Aftergrowths of mustard are permitted [may be bought during the Sabbatical year],
D “because transgressors are not suspect concerning them [they are not suspected of cultivating mustard and then claiming that it is an aftergrowth].”
E R. Simeon says, “All aftergrowths are permitted, except aftergrowths of cabbage,
F “because produce of this type does not [grow uncultivated] among wild vegetables.”
G And sages say, “All aftergrowths are forbidden.”

Luke 11:43 "Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places.

KJV Luke 11:43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

- **For you love the chief seats in the synagogues** Lk 14:7-11; 20:46; Pr 16:18; Mt 23:6; Mark 12:38,39; Ro 12:10; Phil 2:3; James 2:2-4; 3 John 1:9
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:37-44 How to Evangelize Religious People - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Matthew 23:6 "They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, 7 and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men.

Mark 12:38 39+ In His teaching He was saying: "**Beware** (present imperative) of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like respectful greetings in the market places, 39 and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets,

Luke 20:46+ "**Beware** (present imperative) of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets,

Matthew 6:1-3+ **Beware** (present imperative) of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. 2 "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 3"But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

THE SECOND WOE:
LOVE OF THE "SPOTLIGHT"!

Woe (ouai) **to you Pharisees!** - Warning woe number two of six in Luke 11. Surely this warning does not apply to Christians? Of course, that question is rhetorical! We are all continually vulnerable to falling into the fallen flesh's trap of desiring the spotlight more than some other brother or sister in Christ.

THOUGHT - Pride is a subtle sin that can creep up on us when we least expect it. We all do well to frequently pray Psalm 139:23-24 "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way." Amen

For you love (continually - present tense of agapao) **the chief seats** (protokathedria - "seats of honor") **in the synagogues** (sunagoge) - The root of this sin is pride. These were not the "front row" seats but a semi-circular bench that faced the congregation so that dignitaries could be seen by all the Jews gathered in the synagogue! Pride loves publicity and prestige!

Steven Cole - They were focused on their own glory, not on God's glory. Pride is at the heart of legalism; humility is at the heart of true Christianity. The legalist can take pride in himself and his attainments because he is looking at outward matters, not at issues of the heart. He doesn't acknowledge that his heart is just as sinful as the heart of the prostitute or robber. If he had been reared in their circumstances or had encountered the problems in life they had faced, he would have engaged in the same behavior, because he had the same heart of lust and greed. No, he sees himself as a notch above these sinners. He has attained a righteous life by his own hard work and discipline. The legalist is puffed up with pride.Scripture declares that God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble (Prov. 3:34; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). One sure mark of the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts is that we see ourselves as terrible sinners in the sight of God. We see that we deserve His judgment because of our pride, selfishness, and rebellion. Rather than comparing ourselves with others and concluding that we are basically good, we compare ourselves with God and conclude that no good thing dwells within us. Thus convicted of our great need, we flee to the cross for mercy. But legalists don't like the message of the cross, because it confronts their pride. (Luke 11:37-54: Why Jesus Hates Legalism)

NET Note on **chief seats** - Or "seats of honor." The term here is plural and is not a reference only to the lead "seat of Moses" in the synagogue, but includes the front seats near the ark.

Hendriksen - Thus seated a person enjoyed the double advantage of (a) being near the person reading or leading in prayer, and (b) being able to see everybody. Besides, being ushered to such a seat was regarded as a mark of honor.As to "the formal salutations in the market places," this indicates not a mere cheery "hello" but a demonstration of respect, an elaborate verbal recognition of the prominence of the person(s) addressed. (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

The respectful greetings (aspasmos) **in the market places** (agora) - Matthew adds they loved "**being called Rabbi by men**." (Mt 23:7) The Hebrew word "rabbi" is transliterated from the Hebrew and literally meant literally "my great one" or "my lord" but was used as a respectful term of address for a scribe or one recognized as an outstanding teacher of the law, especially heads of rabbinical schools. So it was clearly a term of prestige which is what these prideful Pharisees insatiably craved.

Barclay - The more exaggerated the respect of the greetings the Pharisees received in the streets the more they were pleased.

NET Note - The later Jewish summary of oral tradition, the Talmud, notes elaborate greetings for rabbis. The rebuke here is for pride.

Jesus instructed His followers "Do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. (Matt. 23:8–12; cf. Luke 14:8–11+)

MacArthur - They loved status. O do religious leaders love to be somebody—hypocritical, self-righteous, proud, loveless, without justice or mercy, pillaging and raping the possessions and souls of people, covering their wretched sin. What do they want? They want to be loved and admired and accorded reverence and have elevated position and be venerated and be admired and have all kinds of titles and to be distinguished from everybody else by all the stuff they wear, so that somehow you think they're holy. "Woe to you for wanting to be up in front where everybody can see you. Woe to you for all your elaborate titles, terms of exaltation....And this applies not only to Pharisees but all across the board, even into the modern time to all religious hypocrites. And that means all religious people apart from the true gospel of Jesus Christ." (How to Evangelize Religious People)

Barclay - Two things stand out about the Pharisees and for these two things Jesus condemned them.
(i) They concentrated on externals. So long as the externals of religion were carried out that was all that mattered. Their hearts might be as black as hell; they might be utterly lacking in charity and even in justice; but so long as they went through the correct motions at the correct time they considered themselves good in the eyes of God. A man may be regular in his church attendance; he may be a diligent student of his Bible; he may be a generous giver to the church; but if in his heart there are thoughts of pride and of contempt, if he has no charity in his dealings with his fellow men in the life of the everyday, if he is unjust to his subordinates or dishonest to his employer, he is not a Christian man. **No man is a Christian when he meticulously observes the conventions of religion and forgets the realities.**
(ii) They concentrated on details. Compared with love and kindness, justice and generosity, the washing of hands and the giving of tithes with mathematical accuracy were unimportant details. Once a man came to Dr Johnson with a tale of woe. He worked in a paper factory; he had taken for his own purposes a very little piece of paper and a very little bit of string, and he had convinced himself that he had committed a deadly sin and would not stop talking about it. At last Johnson broke out, "Sir, stop bothering about paper and packthread when we are all living together in a world that is bursting with sin and sorrow." How often church courts and church people get lost in totally unimportant details of church government and administration, and even argue and fight about them, and forget the great realities of the Christian life! (Luke 11 Commentary)

Chief seats (4410)(protokathedria from **protos** = first, chief + **kathedra** = a seat) means a seat of honor in a meeting place, most important place, place of honor, best seat, a position or place indicative of special honor for the person occupying it,

> **Protokathedria** - 4x Matt. 23:6; Mk. 12:39; Lk. 11:43; Lk. 20:46 and none in Septuagint.

Synagogue (4864) **sunagoge** from **sunago** = lead together, assemble or bring together) refers to a group of people "going with one another" (**sunago**) literally describes a bringing together or congregating in one place. Eventually, **sunagoge** came to mean the place where they congregated together. The word was used to designate the buildings other than the central Jewish temple where the Jews congregated for worship. Historically, the Synagogues originated in the Babylonian captivity after the 586 BC destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar and served as places of worship and instruction.

> **Sunagoge in Luke and Acts** -Lk. 4:15; Lk. 4:16; Lk. 4:20; Lk. 4:28; Lk. 4:33; Lk. 4:38; Lk. 4:44; Lk. 6:6; Lk. 7:5; Lk. 8:41; Lk. 11:43; Lk. 12:11; Lk. 13:10; Lk. 20:46; Lk. 21:12; Acts 6:9; Acts 9:2; Acts 9:20; Acts 13:5; Acts 13:14; Acts 13:43; Acts 14:1; Acts 15:21; Acts 17:1; Acts 17:10; Acts 17:17; Acts 18:4; Acts 18:7; Acts 18:19; Acts 18:26; Acts 19:8; Acts 22:19; Acts 24:12; Acts 26:11

Respectful greetings (salutations)(783) aspasmos from **aspazomai** = welcome, greet, to salute) describes the use of set words or phrases to express a welcome or farewell -- salutation, greeting, either orally or by letter. Acknowledgement or expression of good will on meeting. Louw-Nida = "employ certain set phrases as a part of the process of greeting, whether communicated directly or indirectly." Liddell-Scott adds an embrace.

Aspasmos - 10v - greeting(5), greetings(4), salutation(1). Matt. 23:7; Mk. 12:38; Lk. 1:29; Lk. 1:41; Lk. 1:44; Lk. 11:43; Lk. 20:46; 1 Co. 16:21; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17

Market places (58) agora was the town-square where the people assembled in public. It can also refer to a market or thoroughfare or a broad street. Here it refers to a forum or a market place where things were exposed for sale and where assemblies and public trials were held (See similar use in Mk 7:4; Acts 16:19; 17:17) (see **use** in Acts 16:19)

Simon J. Kistemaker noted that the **agora** functioned not only as a marketplace, but also "as the social center of the city. Here the unemployed waited for suitable work, the sick were healed, and the magistrates judged court cases. In those days, a plaintiff could drag a defendant into court and ask the judge to pass a verdict (James 2:6). The owners of the slave girl were acting according to Roman law when they laid their hands on Paul and Silas and put their grievance before the city authorities. (New Testament Commentary: Acts [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990], 595)"

Luke 11:44 "Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it."

KJV Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

- **For you are like concealed tombs** Numbers 19:16; Ps 5:9; Hosea 9:8; Mt 23:27,28; Acts 23:3
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:37-44 How to Evangelize Religious People - John MacArthur

Related Passage:

Matthew 23:27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For**you are like whitewashed tombs** which on the **outside appear beautiful,** but **inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. (THEY DID NOT KNOW HOW SPIRITUALLY ROTTEN THEY WERE!)**

THE THIRD WOE:
"CONCEALED TOMBS"

Woe (ouai) **to you!** - Whereas the woes above are warnings for the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, this woe is a warning to them for their influence on others. Of course, this woe speaks to all of us, for we all "touch" other people's lives at home, at school, at work, etc.

THOUGHT - The question we each need to ask ourselves is "Am I salt and light" to those I encounter each day? Or have I lost my saltiness and has my light grown dim? Am I sour, bitter, unforgiving, etc, so that contact with me is like a Jew walking over a concealed tomb? Lord, show me and deliver me from such spiritual dryness and deadness for Jesus' sake. Amen (cf Ps 139:23, 24)

For you are (present tense) **like concealed** (better = "unmarked graves") **tombs** - Talk about irony! They thought Jesus was unclean because He did not ceremonially wash His hands. Their "unwashed hearts" were like defiling unmarked graves! The Jews whitewashed the tombs as a warning so that no one would accidentally touch them and be ceremonially defiled for 7 days (Nu 19:16+). In this cultural context, Jesus makes an incredible statement, for these men considered themselves bastions of holiness, and here Jesus is saying they are the exact antithesis, in fact they are paragons of perfidiousness, if you will. Their teachings seemed to be true to their hearers, but were perverted, non-biblical and thus misleading and defiling and as noted below had the potential to lead their hearers to hell (Mt 23:15). Woe! The paragons of purity were the pinnacle of perversion of God's standards of right and wrong. They who should have been a purifying influence, proved to be a defiling one. You can see the Pharisees wincing with this description!

Steven Cole - The picture behind these ceremonial laws was that sin leads to death and that the contamination of sin and death spreads to others if it is not dealt with. The Jew who became contaminated by contact with a dead body had to take responsibility for cleansing through the ashes of a red heifer and ritual washing (Num. 19:1-11). Here, Jesus accuses the Pharisees, who were meticulous about such laws of cleanliness, of defiling the Jewish nation through their own spiritual death! The charge must have shocked them! **The application** is that the sin of legalism contaminates unsuspecting people. It turns off unbelievers and keeps them from the truth of the gospel, because they can see the hypocrisy of the legalists. It contaminates young believers, who are mistakenly taught that if they do certain things and do not do other things, they will grow in holiness and be pleasing to God. But

invariably, the things that they are told to do and not do are not the important issues of the Bible, such as the love of God and neighbor (as summed up in the Ten Commandments). Rather, they are petty things, often things that Scripture does not directly command. One reason many kids who grow up in Christian homes later reject the faith is that the parents and the church have been shot through with legalism. Instead of the joy of knowing God and of having our sins forgiven through His grace, the focus was on the rules and the outward conformity that had to be maintained so that everyone else would think that the kids (and parents) were good Christians. I'm not saying that Christian homes should not have any rules. But the emphasis in our homes and church should be on the joy of knowing God. As Paul says, "the kingdom of God is ... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). (Luke 11:37-54: Why Jesus Hates Legalism)

Leon Morris - People who walked over unmarked graves became ceremonially unclean. And people who walked in the teaching and ways of the Pharisees became morally unclean. (Borrow The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary)

William Hendriksen - According to a Jewish custom, just before the arrival of vast caravans of people traveling to Jerusalem to attend the Passover, graves were whitewashed. The reason this was done was that they might be clearly visible, so that no one would ceremonially defile himself by walking over a grave. But at times some graves were inadvertently left unwashed, unmarked. (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

The people who (present tense = continually) **walk** (peripateo) **over them are** (absolutely) **unaware of it** - The OT forbade touching a corpse. The Jews added to the Scripture and broadened this law to also forbid contact with a grave. Thus graves were marked to prevent accidental **ceremonial defilement.** Jesus is comparing the Pharisees to unmarked tombs, indicating any contact with the false, legalistic teaching of the Pharisees would bring **spiritual defilement**. Having led the people astray, the Pharisees were like unmarked graves, defiling the souls of those who came into contact with them. Graves spoke of death, which was a picture of the effect of the teaching of the Pharisees! The sad irony is that their teaching which should have effected an opening of the hearer's eyes and given spiritual light and life had the exact opposite effect of causing spiritual death! Jesus alluded to the effect of their false teaching in Matthew declaring

> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte (persuade God-fearers to become full converts to Judaism by undergoing circumcision); and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell (literally "child of gehenna") as yourselves. (Mt 23:15)
>
> > **Comment**: They not only shut men out of the true kingdom (Mt 23:13), but they turned them into children of gehenna, the place of eternal punishment! In other words, their eternal destination was eternal destruction! Woe to teachers who do this!

Here is an OT passage related to dead bodies...

> Numbers 19:11-16+ '**The one who touches the corpse of any person shall be unclean for seven days.** 12 'That one shall purify himself from uncleanness with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and then he will be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. 13 'Anyone who touches a corpse, the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water for impurity was not sprinkled on him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him. 14 'This is the law when a man dies in a tent: everyone who comes into the tent and everyone who is in the tent shall be unclean for seven days. 15 'Every open vessel, which has no covering tied down on it, shall be unclean. 16 'Also, anyone who in the open field touches one who has been slain with a sword or who has died naturally, or a human bone or a grave, shall be unclean for seven days.

NET Note - In Judaism to come into contact with the dead or what is associated with them, even without knowing it, makes one unclean (Num 19:11–22; Lev 21:1–3; Mishnah, m. Demai 2:3). **To Pharisees, who would have been so sensitive about contracting ceremonial uncleanness, it would have been quite a stinging rebuke to be told they caused it**!

MacArthur - The false religionists are going to be judged not only for their own iniquity but for the corruption and defilement of all those who followed them. "Woe to you, not for your own evil, but for the evil you transmit to others for impacting your nation the way you have, for all the people who have been defiled for your hypocrisy, who have bought into your false religion....The Old Testament had laws about touching a dead body. Leviticus 21, you couldn't touch a dead body. You were considered ceremonially defiled. If you did touch a dead body, the ninth chapter of Numbers says you couldn't observe the Passover without going through a seven-day purification. That seven-day purification is described in the nineteenth chapter of Numbers. So God kept people away from corpses, certainly for protection from illnesses. But there was symbolic cleansing to remind people of what they needed to do in their hearts. The Jews, of course, understood that they could not touch a dead body. They extended it even beyond a dead body and decided you couldn't touch a grave'cause if you touched a grave you'd be ceremonially defiled, you'd have to be disassociated from

the people, you'd have to go through a very elaborate, costly, time-consuming, seven-day purification ceremony. So every grave in Israel was marked so the people didn't touch them inadvertently or step on them. Jesus just uses this familiar thing and says, "You know, you're liked unmarked graves. People have no idea that they're walking all over you and being defiled all the time. People come in contact with you and they don't know it, but you're not making them holy—you're making them unholy. You're defiling them." What a terrible description of someone, but that's how it is with those in false religions—they are unmarked graves. And you touch them and you're defiled. And your defilement is not just ceremonial, it is spiritual. And it's not just your body; it's your soul. And it's not just a ritual defilement, it's a real defilement. And they were making twice the sons of hell as they themselves. (How to Evangelize Religious People)

ILLUSTRATION - [A certain college] had a **student demerit system for everything**. Students received demerits for walking on the grass. At night, boys and girls were required to walk at least three feet apart on campus. A certain number of demerits led to a letter to the pastor, then a second level to pastor and parents, and then finally to expulsion. In other words, three strikes and you were out! One student apologizing to a professor for a prank pulled in class asked for forgiveness but received a lecture that he would never amount to anything and never be a success in ministry. The professor refused to talk with him after his confession. Something is wrong when grace is elevated as the central message of God's Word and little grace is evidenced in actual practice. While these rules may have been well motivated, many of the students suffered great emotional damage. It is difficult to appreciate grace and forgiveness while living the Christian life in such a scorecard environment. Legalism is like carbon dioxide suffocation; it kills slowly and sometimes very subtly. (Darrell Bock)

Luke 11:45 One of the lawyers said to Him in reply, "Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too."

KJV Luke 11:45 Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.

- **when You say this, You insult us too** 1 Kings 22:8; Jeremiah 6:10; 20:8; Amos 7:10-13; John 7:7,48; 9:40
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:45-52 Kingdom Obstructionists - John MacArthur

AN EXPERT IN THE LAW
CHIMES IN WITH A REPROACH

One of the lawyers (nomikos) **said to Him in reply** - Little did he know that his rebuking comment would come back like a boomerang with three more woes!

Leon Morris on **lawyers** (nomikos) - The lawyers, as we have noticed before, were men who gave themselves over to the study of the Old Testament Law. They were religious men and many of them were **Pharisees**. There was a difference in that the lawyer was a member of a learned profession and the Pharisee of a religious party. There was a link in that the essential Pharisaic position was based on a close study of the Law. (Borrow The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary)

Cole - At this point, an expert in the Jewish Law who was at the dinner spoke up. Probably he thought that this young rabbi did not grasp the full implication of His words. He was not only indicting the Pharisees; His scathing words also insulted the **lawyers** and the entire Jewish religious leadership. But rather than apologizing or backing down, Jesus laid into the lawyers with three more woes. (Luke 11:37-54: Why Jesus Hates Legalism)

Hendriksen - In reality all six woes were meant for the **Pharisees** and the law-experts, but Nos. 4, 5, and 6 were more directly aimed at the men who had made the study of the law, in the light of tradition (!), their main field of interest. (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

William MacDonald - The **lawyers** were the scribes—experts in explaining and interpreting the Law of Moses. However, their skill was limited to telling others what to do. They did not practice it themselves. One of the lawyers had felt the cutting edge of Jesus' words, and reminded Him that in criticizing the Pharisees, He was also insulting the legal experts. (Borrow Believer's Bible Commentary - excellent).

Teacher (didaskalos), **when You say this, You insult** (hubrizo in present tense - continually insult) **us too** - **NAB** picks up on the present tense = "You are insulting us also." **KJV** = "Thou reproachest us also." **MIT** (idiomatic translation of the NT) = "you reflect disparagingly on us as well." BBE = "you give a bad name to us as to them." He is saying that Jesus is expressing disapproval of not just the Pharisees but also the Lawyers. And he is getting a "rise" out of both groups. One can only imagine the

blood pressure is rising and faces are beginning to flush (I am a medical doctor so had to throw that in). It was clearly taken as a rebuke by this lawyer, with the implication that "You are discrediting and disgracing us." **Hubrizo** was commonly used for outrageous treatment, quite a bold accusation against the **Teacher**!

Lawyers (3544)(**nomikos** from **nomos** - law) means related to the law and generally refers to a legal scholar, an expert in the Mosaiac law, in interpreting Jewish law. Many of them were also Pharisees and as noted below they are also called scribes. They were "Not *legal practioners,* but interpreters and doctors of the Mosaic law." (Vincent) The lawyers were in league with the Pharisees, as seen by the fact that the Pharisee had the lawyer attend the luncheon for Jesus. In the previous chapter a **lawyer** had stood up to put Jesus to the test (Lk 10:25) This lawyer stands up to confront Jesus' bold declarations. **Lawyers** were closely related to **scribes**. In fact it may be inferred that "scribes" is a generic name, and lawyers are the specialized ones skilled in law and jurisprudence of the Law of Moses. In this last section Jesus seems to interchange lawyer and scribe, first addressing them as **lawyers** (Lk 11:45) and then as **scribes** (Lk 11:53).

> Most of the 9 NT uses of **nomikos** are in Luke - Matt. 22:35; Lk. 7:30; Lk. 10:25; Lk. 11:45; Lk. 11:46; Lk. 11:52; Lk. 14:3; Tit. 3:9; Tit. 3:13

Teacher (1320)(**didaskalos** from **didasko** = teach to shape will of one being taught by content of what is taught <> cp **didaskalía**) is one who provides instruction or systematically imparts truth. It is interesting that the lawyer acknowledged Jesus as "Teacher." He is correct of course but did not have a tender, teachable heart to humbly receive the Teacher's pithy and powerful points!

> **Luke's** uses of **didaskalos** - Lk. 2:46; Lk. 3:12; Lk. 6:40; Lk. 7:40; Lk. 8:49; Lk. 9:38; Lk. 10:25; Lk. 11:45; Lk. 12:13; Lk. 18:18; Lk. 19:39; Lk. 20:21; Lk. 20:28; Lk. 20:39; Lk. 21:7; Lk. 22:11 Acts 13:1;

Insult (5195)(**hubrizo** from **húbris** = injury, insult, reproach, arrogance, insolence, ill-treatment) means act with insolence, wantonness, wicked violence, to treat injuriously. To act spitefully toward someone, treat shamefully, and therefore to injure or to abuse. It conveys the idea of treating someone contemptuously in an insolent and arrogant way.

> **Hubrizo is used only 5x insult(1), mistreat(1), mistreated(3).**- Matt. 22:6; Lk. 11:45; Lk. 18:32; Acts 14:5; 1 Thess. 2:2.

Luke 11:46 But He said, "Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers.

> KJV Luke 11:46 And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

- **Woe to you lawyers as well** Isa 10:1; Mt 23:2-4; Gal 6:13
- **For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear** Isa 58:6
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:45-52 Kingdom Obstructionists - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:46-50 What's Missing in False Religion, Part 1 - John MacArthur

WOE NUMBER FOUR:
YOU BURDEN MEN

But - In contrast to letting the lawyers off easy, Jesus does not back down but proceeds to direct His woeful ("woe filled") criticisms directly at this prestigious group.

He said, "Woe (ouai) **to you lawyers** (nomikos) **as well** - **NLT** Paraphrase has "Yes," said Jesus, "what sorrow also awaits you experts in religious law!" Remember that Jesus is Spirit filled (Lk 4:1+) and thus He is empowered to speak boldly, an effect of the Spirit we see throughout the book of Acts (e.g., Acts 4:31+).

For (hoti - because) is a term of explanation. Jesus now proceeds to explain the reason for His cry of **'Woe**!"

You weigh men down (phortizo - present tense - continually) **with burdens** (phortion) **hard to bear** (dusbastaktos) - This is a reference to the lawyers' interpretations of the Law and also their giving priority to the traditions of men. The NLT paraphrases it

"**you crush people with impossible religious demands**." They are pictured as overloading the laity like beasts of burden. In fact the root of phortizo refers to the freight on a ship! Jesus is speaking of course of spiritual not physical burdens, all their rules and regulations that were impossible to "carry" out. They were placing the people under legalism with all of their man-made rules and regulations concerning matters of no real importance.

The Jewish Mishnah (see also What is the Mishnah? What is a midrash?) actually had a statement that men's traditions took precedence to God's Word (What pretentious arrogance!). Here is "Sanhedrin 11:3 from the Mishnah:

> **A** **A more strict rule applies to the teachings of scribes than to the teachings of Torah.**
> **B** He who rules, "There is no requirement to wear phylacteries," in order to transgress the teachings of the Torah, is exempt.
> **C** [But if he said,] "There are five partitions [in the phylactery, instead of four]," in order to add to what the scribes have taught, he is liable.

Leon Morris explains the so-called "logic" of the Mishnah - The reasoning is that if it was a serious matter to offend against the Law which was sometimes hard to understand, it was a much more serious matter to offend against the interpretation which, the scribes thought, made everything clear. The lawyers ought to have expounded God's Law in such a way that it helped and inspired people. Instead they made it a wearisome burden. (Borrow The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary)

Josh Black - The lawyers were quick to teach and give commands, but they did nothing to help people make progress in their faith. They were quick to tell others what to do, but they did nothing to support them in doing it. And worst of all, they didn't model in their lives what they called others to do. These lawyers are like a bad coach in the weight room who gives a severe a workout regimen to his student. He keeps loading the 45 lb. plates onto the bar. It's up to 300 lbs., and he tells his student to start lifting. But the coach has never lifted 300 lbs. in his life. And now he's not even willing to spot the guy he's given the workout to. And then he criticizes him when he can't lift it.

MacArthur gives us background to help picture **the burdens** of the common folks - The picture Jesus gives here reflects the common custom of that day, and of people in many underdeveloped countries today, of loading up a donkey, camel, or other beast of burden to the point where it can hardly move. As they traveled down the road, the owner would walk alongside, carrying nothing himself, berating and bearing the animal if it happened to stumble or balk, with no concern for the animal's feelings or welfare. (See Matthew Commentary)

Luke has already alluded to some of these **burdens** that were hard to bear - He had just mentioned the requirement of ceremonial washing (Lk 11:38).

> Luke 6:1-2 Now it happened that He was passing through some grainfields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the grain. 2 But some of the Pharisees said, "Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"
>
> Luke 6:6-11 On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. 7 The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him. 8 But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!" And he got up and came forward. 9 And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?" 10 After looking around at them all, He said to him, "Stretch out your hand!" And he did so; and his hand was restored. 11 But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus

John adds some other examples related to Sabbath keeping rules

> John 5:9-10, 16, 18 Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day. 10 So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet." (5:16) For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. (5:18) For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.
>
> John 9:14, 18 Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. (9:18) The Jews then did not believe it of him, that he had been blind and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight,

Leon Morris gives an example of a burden the religious leaders placed on the people - On the Sabbath, they taught, a man may not

carry a burden “in his right hand or in his left hand, in his bosom, or on his shoulder.” But he may carry it “on the back of his hand, or with his foot or with his mouth or with his elbow, or in his ear or in his hair or in his wallet (carried) mouth downwards, or between his wallet and his shirt, or in the hem of his shirt, or in his shoe or in his sandal (Shabbat 10:3). Multiply this by all the regulations of the Law and ordinary people have a burden beyond bearing even to know what they might do and might not do. **But there is also a multitude of loopholes for a lawyer who knew the traditions which enabled him to do pretty well what he wished**. (Borrow The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary)

While you yourselves will not even touch (prospsauo) **the burdens** (phortion) **with one of your fingers** - The lawyers laid the burdensome regulations on the laity, the regular folks, but were unwilling to help the people bear these heavy, often ridiculous legalistic burdens. And when the people were unable to keep the silly rules and regulations the religious leaders would chide them for not keeping the law which resulted in a sense of guilt that only added to their burden.

A T Robertson - It is a fierce indictment of scribes (lawyers) for theirpettifogging interpretations of the written law in their oral teaching (later written down as Mishna and then as Gemara), a terrible load which these lawyers did not pretend to carry themselves, not even "with one of their fingers" to "touch" (prospsauō, old verb but only here in the N.T.), touch with the view to remove. Matthew 23:4 has kinēsai, to move. A physician would understand the meaning of prospsauo for feeling gently a sore spot or the pulse.

The lawyers had mastered the art of manipulating the rules so that they themselves were not burdened by them! They were experts in evasion! They were hypocrites, demanding absurd degrees of obedience from the "little" people but bypassing the rules themselves. And of course they never could have obeyed them anyway because they had no spiritual power! They needed a new heart that brought with it new power (See Ezek 36:26-27+)

Jesus alluded to their hypocrisy in Mt 23:3

> saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe (THE THINGS THEY SAY THAT ARE SCRIPTURAL), but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them. “They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.

What a contrast the rules of the legalistic formalists were when compared to the gentle invitation of Jesus to help bear their burdens...

> “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Mt 11:28-30+)

Steven Cole - The fourth woe: Legalism burdens people with peripheral commandments - The lawyers had taken the commands of Scripture and had multiplied them into hundreds of minute adaptations. But, like lawyers in every age, they had also come up with **legal loopholes** that enabled them to skirt around their own rules, while the average guy was still burdened with them. For example, on the Sabbath the lawyers determined that you could only travel 1,000 yards from your home. But if a rope was tied across the end of the street, the end of the street became his residence and he could go 1,000 yards beyond that. Or, if before the Sabbath a man left at any given point enough food for two meals, that point technically became his residence and he could go 1,000 yards beyond that. On the Sabbath, you couldn’t tie a knot, because that was work. But a woman could tie a knot in her girdle. So if you needed to draw water out of the well on the Sabbath, you couldn’t tie a rope to the bucket, but you could tie a woman’s girdle to the bucket! (These examples are in William Barclay, The Gospel of Luke [Westminster Press], p. 158.) The Sabbath laws were given for our benefit, so that we would set aside one day in seven for worship and rest. I believe that modern Christians err by throwing out the entire Sabbath principle. Most Christians treat Sunday just like every other day. But some err by coming up with specific lists of what you can and cannot do on the Lord’s Day. The main issue is our heart before God. We are to honor Him one day each week by ceasing from our normal routine and worshiping Him. Legalism burdens people with peripheral issues and rules. Biblical holiness frees people by pointing them to the beauty of God’s holiness and love. As 1 John 5:3 states, “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.” When we obey out of a heart of love for God, even though it is not always easy, it will always result in great joy and blessing. To summarize, Jesus is elaborating on the theme that legalism puts the emphasis on the external to the neglect of the internal. He has shown that it majors on minors, it focuses on self-glory, it subtly corrupts others, and it burdens people with peripheral rules. (Luke 11:37-54: Why Jesus Hates Legalism)

Leon Morris - Perhaps we can see something of the situation by considering an example. On the sabbath, they taught, a man may not carry a burden ‘in his right hand or in his left hand, in his bosom or on his shoulder’. But he may carry it ‘on the back of his hand, or with his foot or with his mouth or with his elbow, or in his ear or in his hair or in his wallet (carried) mouth downwards, or between his wallet and his shirt, or in the hem of his shirt, or in his shoe or in his sandal’ (Shabbath 10:3). Multiply this by all the regulations of the Law and ordinary people have a burden beyond bearing even to know what they might do and might not do. But there is also

a multitude of loopholes for a lawyer who knew the traditions which enabled him to do pretty well what he wished. (Borrow The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary)

William Barclay (Luke 11 Commentary) on the evasions of the lawyers and Pharisees - Here are some of their evasions.

1. The limit of a Sabbath day's journey was 2,000 cubits (1,000 yards) from a man's residence. But if a rope was tied across the end of the street, the end of the street became his residence and he could go 1,000 yards beyond that; if on the Friday evening he left at any given point enough food for two meals that point technically became his residence and he could go 1,000 yards beyond that!
2. One of the forbidden works on the Sabbath was the tying of knots, sailors' or camel drivers' knots and knots in ropes. But a woman might tie the knot in her girdle. Therefore, if a bucket of water had to be raised from a well a rope could not be knotted to it, but a woman's girdle could, and it could be raised with that!
3. To carry a burden was forbidden, but the codified written law laid it down, "he who carries anything, whether it be in his right hand, or in his left hand, or in his bosom, or on his shoulder is guilty; but he who carries anything on the back of his hand, with his foot, or with his mouth, or with his elbow, or with his ear, or with his hair, or with his money bag turned upside down, or between his money bag and his shirt, or in the fold of his shirt or in his shoe, or in his sandal is guiltless, because he does not carry it in the usual way of carrying it out."

Weigh down (5412) **phortizo** from **phortos** = something carried [Acts 27:10 = freight of a ship], from **phero** = to bring or carry) means to load or burden with something, to cause someone to carry something, to overburden. Phortizo in a figurative sense describes overburdening someone spiritually (with ceremony, rules, laws, etc).

Burdens (cargoes, loads) (5413) phortion from **phortos** = something carried, used of the freight of a ship Acts 27:10) is literally that which is carried. It is an old word used for a ship's cargo (Acts 27:10). A load or burden. **Liddell Scott** says a secular use of phortion was of a child in a womb (Xenophon). **Phortion** is the pack a soldier is expected to carry. **Phortion** is used figuratively in a positive sense to describe the commands of Christ (Mt 11:30).

> **Phortion - 6x/5v - burden(1), burdens(3), cargo(1), load(1).** Matt. 11:30; Matt. 23:4; Lk. 11:46; Acts 27:10; Gal. 6:5

Hard to bear (1419)(dusbastaktos from bastazo = to take up, carry) means being burdensome or difficult to endure, hard to bear. Only in Lk 11:46, Mt 23:4. **Gilbrant** - This compound, a form of bastazō , can be found in classical Greek as early as the First Century A.D. to mean "intolerable, grievous to be borne." Its single appearance in the Septuagint is found in Proverbs 27:3 where a fool's wrath is said to be heavier than both a heavy stone and cumbersome sand. In the two New Testament occurrences, Jesus used dusbastaktos to refer to the "burdens" the Pharisees and scribes put on the people, while they themselves never touched such things (Matthew 23:4; Luke 11:46). The implication goes beyond "heaviness" and suggests something about the burden that makes it a "grievous" experience, "hard to bear." This is contrasted by Jesus' invitation and promise of an easy yoke and a light burden (Matthew 11:29, 30).

Touch (4379)(**prospsauo** from **prós** = to, at + **psaúō** = to touch, touch lightly, which is from psáō (n.f., see psēlapháō [5584]), to touch.) means to touch (lightly), metaphorically touch in a concerned way, i.e. help in some way. Only in Luke 11:46.

Luke 11:47 "Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them.

> KJV Luke 11:47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

- **For you build the tombs of the prophet** Mt 23:29-33; Acts 7:51; 1 Th 2:15
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:45-52 Kingdom Obstructionists - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:46-50 What's Missing in False Religion, Part 1 - John MacArthur

HYPOCRISY OF HOMAGE TO THE PROPHETS

Related Passage:

> Matthew 23:29-37 (THIS IS A SERIES OF WOES GIVEN AT A LATER TIME) "Woe to you, scribes and

Pharisees, **hypocrites**! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' 31 "Consequently you bear witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 "Fill up then the measure of the guilt of your fathers. 33 "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall you escape the sentence of hell? 34 "Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify (JESUS), and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues (JESUS), and persecute from city to city, 35 that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar (THEIR ACTIONS PROVED THEY APPROVED IN THEIR HEART OF THE MURDER OF THE PROPHETS BY THEIR FATHERS). 36 "Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation. 37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who **kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her**! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. (See MacArthur's related sermon Matthew 23:16-33 The Condemnation of False Spiritual Leaders 4)

Barclay - The attitude of the scribes to the prophets was paradoxical. They professed a deep admiration for the prophets. But the only prophets they admired were dead; when they met a living one they tried to kill him. They honoured the dead prophets with tombs and memorials, but they dishonoured the living ones with persecution and death. (Luke 11 Commentary)

Instead of building tombs to "honor" the OT prophets,
they should have honored their message!

For you build the tombs of the prophets - Instead of building tombs to "honor" the OT prophets, they should have honored their message! They were hypocrites (cf Mt 23:29) By building they tombs they are trying to show others that they honored the prophets, but they were not being truthful. In fact they hated the prophets just as their fathers did. Here was the greatest Prophet standing in their midst (cf Dt 18:15, 18+) and they hated Him because He boldly attacked their hypocrisy just like the OT prophets had done, resulting in their murder, just as it would for Jesus! They failed to honor the Prophet in their midst by regulating their lives according to His teaching, even as their fathers had failed to listen to the prophets of their day. Building a few tombs hardly proved they were better than then fathers who killed the prophets. As with most of their religion, it was all a sham, all external show, but void of any true internal (heart) transformation. They were hypocrites to the core of the deepest abyss of their soul! Instead of building tombs, they should have condemned their fathers for killing the prophets, but they uttered not a peep of paternal condemNation!

Leifeld comments that "Yet this very act ironically symbolized approval of their forefathers' crimes against God's messengers." J.D.M. Derrett ("`You Build the Tombs of the Prophets' [Luke 11:47-51, Matt 23:29-31]," *Studia Evangelica* 4 [1968]:187-93) suggests that the building of tombs was a way of acknowledging guilt analogous to the offering of blood money to a victim's survivors by a relative of one guilty of murder." (Borrow The Expositor's Bible Commentary)

Steven Cole - The fifth woe: Legalism dodges the personal application of God's holiness, but pretends outwardly to honor it (Lk 11:47-51). The religious leaders of Jesus' day did not submit their lives personally to the message of the Old Testament prophets, but they built monuments to them to make it look as if they honored them. (Luke 11:37-54: Why Jesus Hates Legalism)

It was your fathers who killed them - The acorn does not fall far from the tree. Like father, like son. Jesus sees through the veneer of their claim to honor the very prophets their fathers killed. Matthew records Jesus' commentary of hypocritical homage to the prophets:

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, '**If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.**' (THEY WERE LYING) 31 "So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 "Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. 33 "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell? (Mt 23:29-33)

Luke 11:48 "So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs.

KJV Luke 11:48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

- **So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers** Joshua 24:22; Job 15:6; Ps 64:8; Ezekiel 18:19
- **because it was they who killed them** 2 Chr 36:16; Mt 21:35-38; Heb 11:35-38; James 5:10
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:45-52 Kingdom Obstructionists - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:46-50 What's Missing in False Religion, Part 1 - John MacArthur

Related Passage:

> Matthew 23:31 "So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

So you are (present tense - continually) **witnesses** (martus/martys) **and approve** (suneudokeo - present tense - continually) **the deeds of your fathers because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs** - Jesus goes to the heart of the matter which is the problem of their hearts. He says that they are **witnesses** in effect against themselves because they approve the murder of these prophets by their fathers. The fact that they did not condemn their father's actions was tantamount to tacit approval! They were in a sense "accomplices" to these high crimes against God's messengers who brought God's words and so ultimately their crime was against God Himself! And as Jesus a result of their guilt, Jesus declared "**how will you escape the sentence of hell?**" (Mt 23:33) The answer of course is that they would not!

Why did they kill the prophets? Because the prophets spoke of the sin of the Israelites and the judgment that was coming.

A T Robertson - It is a somewhat subtle, but just, argument made here. Outwardly the lawyers build tombs for the prophets whom their **fathers** (forefathers) killed as if they disapproved what their fathers did. But in reality they neglect and oppose what the prophets teach just as their fathers did. So they are "**witnesses**" (martures) against themselves (Matthew 23:31).

Steven Cole - Jesus lumps the current leaders with their ancestors who killed the prophets. He is saying that the current leaders are finishing off the job that the earlier generations started. As in all the other woes, the underlying problem is that though outwardly they act as if they honor the prophets, inwardly they do not repent of the very sins which the prophets condemned. (Luke 11:37-54: Why Jesus Hates Legalism)

Witnesses (3144)(**martus/martys**) basically describes one who remembers something and testifies concerning what they remember. Notice that **martus** has a two fold meaning of (1) describing one who has seen and/or experienced something or someone and (2) one who testifies to what he or she saw.

You approve (present tense - continually)(4909)(**suneudokeo**) approve along with another and so approve of, means to give hearty approval to something. In this case they were continually heartily approving of the murders of the prophets by their fathers. Notice the lawyer does not say "Objection," because he knew Jesus' charge was accurate. The building of the tombs might to some suggest they did not approve of the murders, but Jesus saw through the external hypocrisy and into the true state of their hearts. The OT prophets were persecuted and killed (cf 1 Kings 19:10, 14; Jer 7:25-26; Mal 3:10).

ILLUSTRATION - a modern day example to help us understand the type of hypocrisy that was going on. When Martin Luther King Jr. was alive, the American government did all they could to discredit his character. But once he was dead they declared a national holiday in his honor.9 That's what the lawyers were doing. Their fathers had killed the prophets when they were alive. Now their progeny is trying to honor them when they're dead. But the fact is the lawyers were no different from their fathers.

Luke 11:49 "For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute,

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> KJV Luke 11:49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:

- **For this reason also the wisdom of God said** Pr 1:2-6; 8:1-12; 9:1-3; 1 Cor 1:30; Col 2:3 Probably by the Wisdom of God we are to understand the [logos] or Word of God, that is, our Lord himself; this being a dignified and oriental mode of expression for I say, as it is in the parallel passage.
- **I will send to them prophets and apostles** Lk 24:47; Mt 23:34; Acts 1:8; Eph 4:11
- **some of them they will kill and some they will persecute,** Lk 21:16,17; Mt 22:6; John 16:2; Acts 7:57-60; 8:1,3; 9:1,2; 12:1,2; 22:4,5; Acts 22:20; 26:10,11; 2 Cor 11:24,25
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

- Luke 11:45-52 Kingdom Obstructionists - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:46-50 What's Missing in False Religion, Part 1 - John MacArthur

A PROPHECY CONCERNING GOD'S MESSENGERS

For this reason - This is a term of conclusion. Since they killed the former prophets and rejected their words of warning, God would send more prophets and apostles. He could have sent wrath, but He sent men who would tell them the truth, showing His longsuffering in spite of their hypocrisy, rebellion and rejection. However the conclusion continues in Lk 11:50, so that what Jesus is saying is since your fathers were such murderers, and you are in agreement with them, the blood of the prophets they murdered would be exacted from you (more accurately "**this generation**").

The wisdom of God - "The statement introduced by "the wisdom of God also said" is not a direct quotation from the O.T. The idea of the statement is found in 2Ch 36:15, 16. In Mt 23:34 Jesus makes this statement, and Luke probably intends "the wisdom of God" as an indirect reference to Jesus Himself." (Criswell)

Steven Cole - When Jesus refers to the **wisdom of God**, He is not quoting any specific Scripture, but rather is summarizing and personifying all of God's wisdom as revealed through the prophets. (Luke 11:37-54: Why Jesus Hates Legalism)

Henry Morris feels that "**The wisdom of God**" is here used as a synonym for "the Scriptures," which is surely the source of the true wisdom in all matters it addresses. The passage paraphrased is 2 Chronicles 36:15,16. It may be also here that Jesus is actually calling Himself "the wisdom of God," thus asserting His right to paraphrase or expand on Scripture as He will." (Defender's Study Bible - wisdom of God)

MacArthur - The apostate religious leaders' future actions would prove the truth of Jesus' assertion that they were no better than their fathers....Their mistreatment of the gospel preachers would conclusively demonstrate Christ's point that the scribes and Pharisees were as wicked and godless as their ancestors. In fact, they were much worse. (see Luke Commentary)

I will send (apostello) **to them prophets** (prophetes) **and apostles** (apostolos) - These men are sent out by the Father whereas in Mt 23:34 He says "I send," reflecting the interrelationship in the Trinity.

And some of them they will kill and some they will persecute (dioko) - The "prognosis" for the prophets and apostles was not good in earthly terms - murder for some, and persecution for others. This prediction in fact began to come to fruition during the book of Acts when James was the first apostle martyred (put to death with a sword = Acts 12:2-3+, cf Stoning of Stephen = Acts 7:1-50, 51,52, 53-60+). According to extra-biblical sources eventually all of the apostles were martyred and John was banished to the island of Patmos Patmos, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." (Rev 1:9+)

Josephus records the murder of Jesus' own half-brother James, the author of the epistle of James. (Here is an excerpt from *Antiquities* 20. Chapter 9.1 =

> "*Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the Sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them* ***the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ,*** *whose name was* ***James****, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned*").

Jesus' prophecy of persecution proved true in the life of the apostle Paul and his helpers who met with fierce opposition in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:45, 50), Iconium (Acts 14:2), Lystra (Acts 14:19), Thessalonica (Acts 17:5), Berea (Acts 17:13), Corinth (Acts 18:12; 20:3), Jerusalem (Acts 21:27; 23:12), and Caesarea (Acts 24:1–9).

Jesus warned again and again that persecution would befall His emissaries..

> "But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all because of My name.(Lk 21:16,17)
>
> "They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. (John 16:2)
>
> (Jesus prophecy to Peter) "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He *said to him, "Follow Me!" (John 21:18, 19). (Tradition says Peter was crucified upside down - see painting portrayal but see discussion of the evidence).

"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for **in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you**. (Mt 5:11-12-note)

"Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. (Mt 24:9)

I will send (649)(**apostello** from **apo** = from, away from + **stello** = to withdraw from, avoid) means to send off, to send forth, to send out. The idea is to send off on a commission to do something as one's personal representative, with credentials furnished. Jesus uses this very verb in His sending out the apostle Paul (Acts 26:17).

Apostello in Luke and Acts - Lk. 1:19; Lk. 1:26; Lk. 4:18; Lk. 4:43; Lk. 7:3; Lk. 7:20; Lk. 7:27; Lk. 9:2; Lk. 9:48; Lk. 9:52; Lk. 10:1; Lk. 10:3; Lk. 10:16; Lk. 11:49; Lk. 13:34; Lk. 14:17; Lk. 14:32; Lk. 19:14; Lk. 19:29; Lk. 19:32; Lk. 20:10; Lk. 20:20; Lk. 22:8; Lk. 22:35; Acts 3:20; Acts 3:26; Acts 5:21; Acts 7:14; Acts 7:34; Acts 7:35; Acts 8:14; Acts 9:17; Acts 9:38; Acts 10:8; Acts 10:17; Acts 10:20; Acts 10:36; Acts 11:11; Acts 11:13; Acts 11:30; Acts 13:15; Acts 15:27; Acts 15:33; Acts 16:35; Acts 16:36; Acts 19:22; Acts 26:17; Acts 28:28

Prophets (4396)(**prophetes** from **próphemi** = literally to tell beforehand in turn from **pró** = before, in front of, forth, on behalf of + **phemí** = speak, tell) is primarily a forth-teller or one who speaks out God's message, primarily to their own generation, usually always calling the people to God's truth for them at that moment, often using the phrase "Thus saith the Lord." In a word a prophet is Heaven's (God's) "mouthpiece" on earth. Indeed every believer is called to be God's "mouthpiece" on earth. Would you say you are committing to live your life as His "mouthpiece?"

Prophetes in Luke and Acts - Lk. 1:70; Lk. 1:76; Lk. 3:4; Lk. 4:17; Lk. 4:24; Lk. 4:27; Lk. 6:23; Lk. 7:16; Lk. 7:26; Lk. 7:39; Lk. 9:8; Lk. 9:19; Lk. 10:24; Lk. 11:47; Lk. 11:49; Lk. 11:50; Lk. 13:28; Lk. 13:33; Lk. 13:34; Lk. 16:16; Lk. 16:29; Lk. 16:31; Lk. 18:31; Lk. 20:6; Lk. 24:19; Lk. 24:25; Lk. 24:27; Lk. 24:44; Acts 2:16; Acts 2:30; Acts 3:18; Acts 3:21; Acts 3:22; Acts 3:23; Acts 3:24; Acts 3:25; Acts 7:37; Acts 7:42; Acts 7:48; Acts 7:52; Acts 8:28; Acts 8:30; Acts 8:34; Acts 10:43; Acts 11:27; Acts 13:1; Acts 13:15; Acts 13:20; Acts 13:27; Acts 13:40; Acts 15:15; Acts 15:32; Acts 21:10; Acts 24:14; Acts 26:22; Acts 26:27; Acts 28:23; Acts 28:25

Apostles (652)(**apostolos** from **apo** = from + **stello** = send forth) (Click discussion of apostle) means one sent forth from by another, often with a special commission to represent another and to accomplish his work. It can be a delegate, commissioner, ambassador sent out on a mission or orders or commission and with the authority of the one who sent him.

Apostolos in Luke and Acts -Lk. 6:13; Lk. 9:10; Lk. 11:49; Lk. 17:5; Lk. 22:14; Lk. 24:10;Acts 1:2; Acts 1:26; Acts 2:37; Acts 2:42; Acts 2:43; Acts 4:33; Acts 4:35; Acts 4:36; Acts 4:37; Acts 5:2; Acts 5:12; Acts 5:18; Acts 5:29; Acts 5:40; Acts 6:6; Acts 8:1; Acts 8:14; Acts 8:18; Acts 9:27; Acts 11:1; Acts 14:4; Acts 14:14; Acts 15:2; Acts 15:4; Acts 15:6; Acts 15:22; Acts 15:23; Acts 16:4

Will persecute (1377)(**dioko** from **dío** = pursue, prosecute, persecute) means to follow or press hard after, literally to pursue as one does a fleeing enemy. It means to chase, harass, vex and pressure and was used for **chasing down criminals**. **Dioko** speaks of an intensity of effort leading to a pursue with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain.

D**ioko in Luke and Acts -** Lk. 11:49; Lk. 17:23; Lk. 21:12; Jn. 5:16; Jn. 15:20; Acts 7:52; Acts 9:4; Acts 9:5; Acts 22:4; Acts 22:7; Acts 22:8; Acts 26:11; Acts 26:14; Acts 26:15

Luke 11:50 so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation,

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KJV Luke 11:50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

- **the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world**Genesis 9:5,6; Numbers 35:33; 2 Kings 24:4; Ps 9:12; Isa 26:21; Rev 18:20-24
- **may be charged against this generation** Ex 20:5; Jeremiah 7:29; 51:56

GUILTY OF THE BLOOD OF ALL THE PROPHETS

So that - term of purpose or result. The purpose of sending the prophets and apostles would prove the veracity of Jesus' judgment regarding their approval of their father's murders.

William Hendriksen - The question is asked, "But was it fair to punish the Jews of Christ's time for the blood that had been unrighteously shed 'since the founding of the world'?" The biblical answer is that responsibility increases with the years. Every new generation that fails to take to heart the lessons of the preceding generation is adding to its own guilt and therefore also to the severity of its punishment. This is clear, for example, from such passages as Prov. 29:1; Jer. 7:16; Ezek. 14:14; Luke 13:34. And see especially Dan. 5:22. (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

Henry Morris on **since the foundation of the world** - It is important to note that the blood of God's prophets (beginning with Abel) has been shed "from the foundation of the world," not beginning four billion years after the foundation of the world. This is an incidental, yet striking, confirmation that the world was created from start to finish in six literal days (Mark 10:6).

May be charged (ekzeteo) **against this generation** (genea) - This speaks of a judgment which is just. The generation of Israel which He had already classified as a wicked (actively seeking to injure) generation (Lk 11:29-note).

Leon Morris - Jesus is saying that the blood of all those slain for their faithfulness to God will be required. It is laid at the door of this generation, because the people of the day fully share in the attitude that brought about the deaths of the prophets. (Borrow The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary)

MacArthur - The Lord's shocking declaration that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, would be charged against this generation reveals just how much worse the generation alive at that time was than those who killed the prophets. That God's accumulated wrath would fall on one generation is not unprecedented. The generation alive at the time of the flood experienced the judgment that resulted from generations of wickedness, as will the generation alive during the final eschatological time of the tribulation (Rev. 6–19). This generation, the one alive when Jesus lived, was culpable for the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world because it had the most accumulated revelation, yet engaged in the same sins as previous generations. They had the teaching of the prophets in the Old Testament, they had heard John the Baptist, the twelve apostles, the seventy evangelists and, most significant, they had had the unprecedented privilege of hearing the profound truth of heaven from the lips of Jesus, God incarnate. And they had seen His divine power over demons, disease, death, and nature in a massive, unmistakable display of undenied miracles. (See Luke Commentary

Nelson's NKJV Study Bible feels that "The judgment here refers specifically to the fall of Jerusalem in a.d. 70, and ultimately to the final judgment of God in the Tribulation (**Ed**: "Time of Jacob's Distress" - Jer 30:7+)."

Charged (1567) (**ekzeteo** from **ek** = out or to intensify the meaning + **zeteo** = to seek) means to seek out, to look for, to search diligently for anything lost. The other NT nuance of ekzeteo used in Luke 11 means to require, to demand, or to exact severely (Luke 11:50, 51. See this meaning in the Lxx uses in - "I will require your lifeblood" = Ge 9:5; 42:22; "shall I not now require his blood from your hand" = 2 Sa 4:11; "his blood I will require at your hand" = Ezek 3:18, 20). So the idea of ekzeteo is that the blood of all the murdered prophets is **required** of this generation.

> **Ekzeteo - 7v - charged(2), made careful*(1), searches(1), seek(2), seeks(1), sought(1).** Lk. 11:50; Lk. 11:51; Acts 15:17; Rom. 3:11; Heb. 11:6; Heb. 12:17; 1 Pet. 1:10

Luke 11:51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.'

> KJV Luke 11:51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

- **from the blood of Abel** Genesis 4:8-11; Heb 11:4; 12:24; 1 John 3:12
- **to the blood of Zechariah** 2 Chr 24:20-22; Zechariah 1:1; Mt 23:35
- **it shall be charged against this generation** Jeremiah 7:28
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:45-52 Kingdom Obstructionists - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:51-54 What's Missing in False Religion, Part 2 - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Zechariah 1:1 In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to **Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah**, the son of Iddo saying,

Matthew 23:35 so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of **Zechariah, the son of Berechia**h, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

Hebrews 11:4 **By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain**, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

VENGEANCE FOR
ALL KILLED FROM A TO Z

From the blood of Abel - This murder is described by Moses "Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" 10 He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's **blood** is crying to Me from the ground (Abel's blood cried out for justice). 11 "Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's **blood** from your hand." (Genesis 4:8-11+)

To the blood of Zechariah - Many commentators feel this murder may be the one described in Second Chronicles and since 2 Chronicles was the last book in the Hebrew Bible, that would make it the last murder in the Bible of Jesus' day.

Then the Spirit of God came on **Zechariah the son of Jehoiada** the priest; and he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus God has said, 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.'" 21 So they conspired against him and at the command of the king they **stoned him to death in the court of the house of the LORD.** 22 Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which his father Jehoiada had shown him, but he murdered his son. And as he died he said, "May the LORD see and avenge!" (2 Chr 24:20-22)

Zechariah **was killed between the altar and the house of God** - In other words he was slain the the Temple courtyard which included the Brazen Altar. So Abel was killed after a sacrifice and Zechariah was killed at the place of sacrifice.

John MacArthur has a different interpretation of the identity of **Zechariah** - No speculation is needed because Jesus made clear which of the more than two dozen Zechariah's mentioned in the Old Testament He was referring to. In Matthew 23:35 He called him "**Zechariah, the son of Berechiah.**" This was the prophet Zechariah, the author of the book of Zechariah (Zech. 1:1) whose martyrdom, though not recorded in Scripture, took place near the close of the Old Testament. Evidently **Zechariah the son of Berechiah** was also killed between the altar and the house of God (cf. Joab, who was executed at the altar itself [1 Kings 2:28–34]). The collective guilt for the deaths of all those righteous martyrs would be charged against that wicked generation that had filled up God's wrath to the top. (See Luke Commentary)

Hendriksen - Between Abel and Zechariah ever so many other righteous men had been murdered in cold blood. And even while Jesus was saying this, Israel, by and large, had not repented. In fact, as is clear from 11:53, 54, while Jesus was saying these things the hearts of the scribes and the Pharisees were filled with wrath, vengeance, murder, the murder of the very One who was addressing them! Looking again at this entire passage (verses 49–51), one can hardly fail to be impressed by the marvelous manner in which the divine decree and human responsibility are intertwined here, each receiving its due. Cf. Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23. (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

Steven Cole - Abel was the first man to die because his righteousness convicted his brother of his evil deeds. In the arrangement of the books in the Hebrew Bible, **Zechariah** was the last prophet to be killed (2 Chron. 24:20-25).

Yes, I tell you, it shall be charged (ekzeteo) **against this generation** (genea) - ESV = "Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation." CSB = "Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible." This could not be much clearer. The wicked generation would be charged of murder.

Steven Cole - Jesus is saying that the blood of all the righteous men who were martyred in the Old Testament would be charged against this current wicked generation, because they rejected God's revealed wisdom about their sin. This may point to the awful judgment on **Jerusalem in A.D. 70** or it **may also include the final judgment**. The point is, legalists don't apply God's holiness to their hearts; they just put on an outward show of honoring it. (Luke 11:37-54: Why Jesus Hates Legalism)

Luke 11:52 "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering."

> KJV Luke 11:52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

- **For you have taken away the key of knowledge** Lk 19:39,40; Malachi 2:7; Mt 23:13; John 7:47-52; 9:24-34; Acts 4:17,18; 5:40
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:45-52 Kingdom Obstructionists - John MacArthur
- Luke 11:51-54 What's Missing in False Religion, Part 2 - John MacArthur

KEY TO THE KINGDOM
TAKEN AWAY BY THE LAWYERS

Woe to you lawyers (nomikos) - Jesus tells them they are not only guilty of taking physical life but also guilty of a far worse sin of taking (or at least preventing) spiritual life. These men who were to unlock the Scriptures, were in fact locking them from the people! As **Hendriksen** wells said "They are burying the law of God under a load of man-made "traditions.""

For - term of explanation - Explains why this **woe** is pronounced on the **lawyers**.

You have taken away (airo) **he key of knowledge** (gnosis) - Jesus is referring to the Scriptures. The Scripture is the **key**. The **key** is the pure milk of the Word, unadulterated. The lawyers adulterated the pure Word to the extent that what remained could give no spiritual insight to God and no entree into the Kingdom of God (i.e., no salvation from God). They should have been teachers of Scriptural truth, but they so obscured it with their man-made rules that the people could not discern God's truth from their error.

Look at Jesus' words in Mt 15

> And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?....he is not to honor his father or his mother (see Korban).' And by this you invalidated (made void, nullified) the Word of God for the sake of your tradition.(Mt 15:3, 6)
>
> > **Comment**: What were these religious teachers doing that took away the '**key of knowledge**?" They were depriving God's law of its authority by placing priority on their human traditions!

Pate - "The idea is that the scribes' encrustation of the Word of God with the traditions of men keeps people from encountering the revelation of God."

MacArthur - As their rejecting Christ reveals, the scribes and Pharisees could not correctly understand the Old Testament, which pointed to Him (John 5:39; cf. Luke 24:27; Rev. 19:10). **Their traditions increasingly obscured the truth contained in the Old Testament, turning it into a maze of riddles, allegories, secret meanings, and obscure interpretations, all designed to reinforce their cleverness and sell their false system of self-righteousness**. Not only were they unable to enter the kingdom of God themselves, they also hindered those who were entering. That is the most severe condemnation given by our Lord. (See Luke Commentary)

William Hendriksen - For salvation by trust in God, hence in Jesus Christ whom he sent, they have substituted salvation by obedience to countless man-made regulations and hairsplitting stipulations. For the real key to the true knowledge of God as revealed in Scripture, hence also to the palace of salvation, see such passages as Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 11:28–30; John 3:16; Rom. 3:24; then also Matt. 23:23; Luke 10:27; 11:42; 1 Cor. 10:31. But these men have substituted work-righteousness for salvation by grace through faith. By this method they are shutting out themselves and those who might otherwise have entered. See also John 14:6 and Hos. 4:6. Woe to them! (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

NET Note You have taken away the key to knowledge is another stinging rebuke. They had done the opposite of what they were trying to do.

Leon Morris - Their methods were such that people could not get at the essential meaning of God's word. Instead of opening up the treasures of knowledge, the lawyers closed them fast. They turned the Bible into a book of obscurities, a bundle of riddles which only the experts could understand. And the experts were so pleased and preoccupied with the mysteries they had manufactured that they missed the wonderful thing that God was saying. They neither entered themselves nor allowed others to enter. There were ordinary people on their way to the knowledge of God until these teachers turned them away. (Borrow The Gospel According to St.

Luke: An Introduction and Commentary)

A T Robertson - This is a flat charge of obscurantism on the part of these scribes (lawyers), the teachers (rabbis) of the people. They themselves (autoi) refused to go into the house of knowledge (beautiful figure) and learn. They then locked the door and hid the key to the house of knowledge and hindered (ekōlusate, effective aorist active) those who were trying to enter (tous eiserchomenous, present participle, conative action). It is the most pitiful picture imaginable of blind ecclesiastics trying to keep others as blind as they were, blind leaders of the blind, both falling into the pit.

You yourselves did not enter - They could not interpret the Scriptures accurately themselves because they lacked access to the Spirit the Author and Illuminator of the Scriptures. They would enter the Kingdom of God. The parallel passage in Matthew says "you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people." (Mt 23:13)

You hindered (koluo) **those who were entering** - Their additions to the Law hid the truth from their hearers who were seeking to enter the Kingdom of God. The implication is that they were unable to enter because of the false teaching of the the lawyers (and Pharisees).

This reminds me of Jesus' warning in Matthew referring to causing believers to stumble - "but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea." (Mt 18:5)

Barclay - The scribes shut the people off from scripture. Their interpretation of scripture was so fantastic that it was impossible for the ordinary man to understand it. In their hands scripture became a book of riddles. In their mistaken ingenuity they refused to see its plain meaning themselves, and they would not let anyone else see it either. The scriptures had become the perquisite of the expert and a dark mystery to the common man.
None of this is so very out of date. There are still those who demand from others standards which they themselves refuse to satisfy. There are still those whose religion is nothing other than legalism. There are still those who make the word of God so difficult that the seeking mind of the common man is bewildered and does not know what to believe or to whom to listen. (Luke 11 Commentary)

Steven Cole - The sixth woe: Legalism misses the true knowledge of God and misleads those who seek to know Him (11:52).The key of knowledge refers to the personal knowledge of the living God through His revealed Word. As Jesus said, “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). True religion is a matter of knowing God personally and growing in that relationship with Him. Legalism is a matter of going through rituals and of keeping rules, but it’s devoid of the personal knowledge of God. In many well-meaning but legalistic Christian homes, parents mistakenly think that the way to keep their teenagers in line is to lay down and enforce a lot of rules. But the way to keep your teenagers in line is to lead them to a personal knowledge of the Holy One. He’s with them when you cannot be there. If they truly know Him and know the great love of Christ who gave Himself for their sins, they will want to please Him, beginning on the heart level. As our kids grow in their walk with God, we should be able to ease up on the number of rules, not impose more. Our goal is to get each child to live under the lordship of Jesus Christ, in a growing personal relationship with Him. Legalism takes an external approach; biblical Christianity focuses on the heart relationship. (Luke 11:37-54: Why Jesus Hates Legalism)

Hindered (prevented) (2967)(**koluo** from **kólos** = docked, lopped, clipped, **kolazo** = curtail) means to cut off, to cut short, to weaken and generally to hinder, to prevent, to check, to restrain or to forbid by word or act. **Koluo** describes the keeping back of something from someone, in the present context these experts in the OT law were keeping back truth could have set the hearers free from their sin. **Koluo** pictures these religious hypocrites making it difficult for the laity to enter the Kingdom of God.

> **Koluo - 23v - forbid(2), forbidden(1), forbidding(1), forbids(1), hinder(5), hindered(1), hindering(1), kept(1), prevent(3), prevented(2), prevents(1), refuse(1), restrained(1), stand in...way(1), withhold(1).** Matt. 19:14; Mk. 9:38; Mk. 9:39; Mk. 10:14; Lk. 6:29; Lk. 9:49; Lk. 9:50; Lk. 11:52; Lk. 18:16; Lk. 23:2; Acts 8:36; Acts 10:47; Acts 11:17; Acts 16:6; Acts 24:23; Acts 27:43; Rom. 1:13; 1 Co. 14:39; 1 Thess. 2:16; 1 Tim. 4:3; Heb. 7:23; 2 Pet. 2:16; 3 Jn. 1:10

ILLUSTRATION - Some years ago, a church in Portland near a college wanted to develop more of a ministry to the students. They weren’t sure how to do it, but they tried to make them feel welcome. One Sunday, the church was packed and the service was already underway when a young man with unkempt hair, blue jeans, a T-shirt, and bare feet walked in. He came down the aisle, looking for a seat, but he couldn’t find one. Finally, he just sat down on the carpet at the front of the church. It created an uneasy atmosphere in this crowd of people who were mostly dressed in suits and dresses, seated in their rows of pews. Then, every eye noticed an elderly man in a suit walking slowly toward the young man. Everyone wondered, “Is he going to scold the young man for dressing like that for church? Is he going to ask him to leave?” There was a heavy silence in the church as everyone focused on this scene. Finally, he got down to where the young man was sitting. With some difficulty because of his age, he slowly sat down next to

the young man and worshiped there on the carpet with him. (Told by Becky Pippert, Out of the Saltshaker and Into the World [IVP], pp. 177-178.) It was a great example of not looking on the outward person or majoring on the minors, but of accepting the person as God does. Remember, Jesus hates legalism because it does not deal with the condition of our sinful hearts before God. But Jesus loves grace, because it is by His grace that He transforms sinners into saints who love God and who love others.

Luke 11:53 When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects,

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KJV And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things:

NLT As Jesus was leaving, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees became hostile and tried to provoke him with many questions. (Luk 11:53 NLT)

Hendriksen - When he left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be violently enraged against him, and to ply him with questions, plotting, as if in ambush, to catch him with respect to something (that might fall) from his lips. (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

- **began to be very hostile** Ps 22:12,13; Isa 9:12
- **and to question Him closely on many subjects** Lk 20:20,27; Jeremiah 18:18; 20:10; 1 Cor 13:5
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:51-54 What's Missing in False Religion, Part 2 - John MacArthur

JESUS' DIATRIBE INCITES A HOSTILE REACTION

When He left there - **Left** His luncheon with the Pharisee. Notice that the luncheon guests followed after Him. They were not going to let His warning of condemnation be the last word, and certainly were not about to go down without a fight as we might say today.

A T Robertson quips "What became of the breakfast we are not told, but the rage of both Pharisees and lawyers knew no bounds."

The scribes (grammateus) **and the Pharisees** (pharisaios) **began to be very hostile** (enecho) - Luke uses **scribes** as synonymous with **lawyers**. They were not just slightly perturbed but intensely incensed! The picture ofenecho is that of holding a grudge. The religious leaders in effect took it personally that Jesus had exposed their false religious beliefs and practices. And the present tense indicates that this grudge was not passing displeasure but a persistent personal animosity toward Jesus which would culminate in His murder! Jesus had not only accused them of murder but of keeping people from seeing spiritual truth about the judgment of condemnation by God, a condemnation that the scribes and Pharisees would also experience. It is little wonder that they became **very hostile** after being accused of these horrible sins which warranted them be sent to hell. Their hostile reaction was like a tidal wave of anger against Jesus that ultimately would end in His murder, just as had been the fate of so many of God's prophets.

John MacArthur - Sadly, but predictably, the Pharisees and scribes failed to heed Jesus' mercifully severe warnings. Instead of repenting of their sins, repudiating their false system of religion, and calling for divine mercy, they became even more aggressively hostile to Him. (Luke Commentary)

William Hendriksen - "The scribes and the Pharisees began to be violently enraged against him." Why? For the answer see Luke 18:9, 11, 12. Jesus had exposed the depths of their sinful nature. When that happens, hearers frequently divide into two groups: (a) some would like to stone the minister; (b) others, by God's grace, cry out, "O God, be merciful to me, the sinner." (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

To question Him closely (apostomatizo) **on many subjects** - **NLT** paraphrases it "tried to provoke Him with many questions." Their questioning Jesus in an attempt to trap Him was an outworking of their inner seething hostility toward Him.

Liefeld - His series of woes made the violent hostility against him described in Lk 11:53-54 inevitable. His opponents followed him out of the house and fired at him a barrage of difficult questions (Lk 11:53), such as those later used to embarrass rabbinic scholars. (Borrow The Expositor's Bible Commentary)

Guzik - The religious leaders responded the way many do when they are faced with the correction and the truth of God. Instead of humbly receiving the correction, they responded with outraged accusations. Proverbs tells us what those who refuse correction do.

First, they hate those who correct them (Pr 9:8, Pr 15:12). Second, they do not listen to the one correcting them (Pr 13:1). Third, they despise their own soul (Pr 15:32).. Proverbs also tells us the character of those who refuse correction. They are stupid (Pr 12:1) and they are foolish (Pr 15:5).

Scribes (1122)(**grammateus** from **grapho** = to write) was one skilled in Jewish law and theology scribe, expert, scholar (Mt 2.4). However, being an expert in the Law did not automatically mean that one was a Pharisee, and neither did being a Pharisee mean that one was also a legal expert (e.g., Acts 23:9). Many Pharisees were not legal experts, although most of the leaders of the sect were. Scribes were also found in the party of the Sadducees, but their influence there was only minor. This explains why those who were both Pharisees and experts in the Law receive the most attention in the New Testament.

Very (1171)(**deinos**) means terribly, grievously, vehemently. **Deinos** is an adverb characterized by an extreme degree either of (1) of suffering terribly, fearfully (Mt 8.6); (2) of opposition fiercely, exceedingly (Lk 11:53).

Hostile (1758)(**enecho** from **en** = in + **echo** = to hold) means literally to hold in or hold upon and came to mean ensnare and then by implication to **hold a grudge**. "With the dative: to urge, press upon one (Luke 11:53), to have a quarrel, to spite or have resentment against one, very close to hatred (Mark 6:19; Sept.: Ge. 49:23). In the passive = enéchomai, to be held in or by anything, metaphorically meaning to be entangled in, subject to, followed by the dative (Gal. 5:1)." (Zodhiates) **A T Robertson** says **enecho** is "An old Greek verb to hold in, to be enraged at, to have it in for one. It is the same verb used of the relentless hatred of Herodias for John the Baptist (Mark 6:19)." **Friberg** says **enecho** means "strictly hold fast to, hold within; (1) active, of having hostile feelings hold a grudge against, feel resentful toward, colloquially have it in for (Mk 6.19); absolutely be very hostile to, harass violently, press on fiercely (Lk 11.53); (2) passive with the dative let oneself be entangled in, be subject to, be under the control of (Gal 5.1) (Borrow Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

Enecho - 3x. There are only 3 uses in the Septuagint - Ge 49:23, Ezek 14:4, 7.

> Mark 6:19 Herodias **had a grudge** against him and wanted to put him to death and could not do so;
>
> Galatians 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not **be subject** again to a yoke (figuratively represents the burdensome nature of slavery) of slavery.

Question (653)(apostomatizo from **apo** - from + **stoma** - mouth) **A T Robertson** says "From apo and stoma (mouth). Plato uses it of repeating to a pupil for him to recite from memory, then to recite by heart (Plutarch). Here (alone in the N.T.) the verb means to ply with questions, to entice to answers, to catechize." **Friberg** - strictly require or provoke someone to speak without thinking; hence question closely, ask hostile questions, try to catch in an unguarded moment (Borrow Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

Luke 11:54 plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say.

> KJV Luke 11:54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.
> seeking

- Ps 37:32,33; 56:5,6; Mt 22:15,18,35; Mark 12:13
- Luke 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 11:51-54 What's Missing in False Religion, Part 2 - John MacArthur

Related Passage:

> Matthew 22:15; 18 Then the Pharisees went and plotted together how **they might trap Him in what He said.** But Jesus perceived their malice, and said, “Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites?
>
> Mark 12:13+ Then they *sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Him **in order to trap Him in a statement.**

SCRIBES AND LAWYERS
TRYING TO AMBUSH JESUS

Plotting against (enedreuo) **Him to catch** (thereuo) **Him in something He might say** - **Plotting** is in the present tense and from

this time on, they were "lying in wait" for Him, waiting for Him to slip up. **Plotting** (enedreuo) and **catch** (thereuo) are very interesting verb choices for they are both hunting terms, the former (see more below) picturing the hunter lying in wait for his prey and the latter used of catching a wild animal. Their sin had blinded them so completely that they could not see that "prey" was the long awaited Jewish Messiah, the Creator of the universe, the King of kings, the Redeemer of mankind.

> **THOUGHT** - There is a practical application beloved - If you are a Spirit filled, Word centered pastor or teacher, do not be surprised when the "religious leaders" send their hunting hounds to harass you and trap you in an attempt to overturn your (His) ministry. For example, listen to Paul's warning "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and **from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them**. "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:29-32+)

Hendriksen - Being violently enraged against him, they ply him with questions, hoping by this method to draw out of him some unguarded utterance, an indiscreet statement, which they would then be able to use in framing a charge against him. So intense is their hatred, so vicious their attack, that they are, as it were, lying in ambush in order to catch him. They are trying to hunt him down, as if he were a wild beast. Their curiosity about him has turned into deadly aversion. (Borrow Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

Leifeld - He had challenged those who professed to be the expert biblical teachers. They were out to defend their reputation by discrediting His. (Ibid)

The word **catch** (thereuo) is used only here in the NT and means literally to hunt or to catch and metaphorically, of using treachery to gain advantage over someone who makes a mistake and to to catch them off guard and making a mistake. These wicked wordsmiths are trying to get Jesus to condemn Himself with His own words.

We see this theme of the religious leaders trying to catch Jesus:

> Luke 6:11 But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.
>
> Luke 19:47 And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him, 48 and they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging on to every word He said.
>
> Luke 20:19 The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them. 20 So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they could deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor.
>
> Luke 22:2 The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people.

Having utterly failed to do so, they were forced to bring in false, lying witnesses against Jesus at His trial

> Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death. They did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward, and said, “This man stated, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.’” (Matt. 26:59–61).

John MacArthur applies this teaching on the Scribes and Pharisees - The church of Jesus Christ must in every time and place be ever vigilant against false teachers who pretend to be moral, love God, and teach truth, yet in reality are sinful, self-seeking fools, devoid of spiritual power, spiritual life, and spiritual truth. Because they are guilty of “speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:30), they are not to be welcomed in the name of tolerance, but rejected as “those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching” of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:17; cf. 2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 3:10; 2 John 10–11). The strong words of 2 Peter and Jude stand as the warnings to the church. (See Luke Commentary)

Plotting (lying in wait - present tense = continually) (1748)(**enedreuo** from **enedra** = an ambush - Acts 25:3+, Acts 23:16+) literally means to lie in wait for, to conceal oneself in preparation for a surprise attack, to wait in ambush for someone (as used in the only other NT occurrence = Acts 23.21+ = "lying in wait"). Used in the Septuagint to describe an immoral woman lying in wait to pounce on a man (Pr 7:12). Luke uses **enedreuo** figuratively meaning the serpentine, sinister religious leaders were continually making make plans "to pounce on" Jesus.

Enedreuo is used 18x in 17v in the Septuagint - Dt. 19:11; Jos. 8:4; Jdg. 9:25; Jdg. 9:32; Jdg. 9:34; Jdg. 9:43; Jdg. 16:2; Jdg. 21:20; 1 Sam. 15:5; 2 Sam. 3:27; Job 24:11; Job 38:40; Ps. 10:9; Prov. 7:12; Prov. 26:19; Lam. 3:10; Lam. 4:19;

> Deuteronomy 19:11 “But if there is a man who hates his neighbor and **lies in wait for** him and rises up against him and strikes him so that he dies, and he flees to one of these cities,
>
> Joshua 8:4 He commanded them, saying, “See, you are **going to ambush** the city from behind it. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready.
>
> Judges 16:2 When it was told to the Gazites, saying, “Samson has come here,” they surrounded the place and **lay in wait for** him all night at the gate of the city. And they kept silent all night, saying, “Let us wait until the morning light, then we will kill him.”