

Luke 12:56

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

Analysis

Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? (ὕποκριταί, τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γῆς καὶ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ οἶδατε δοκιμάζειν, τὸν καιρὸν δὲ τοῦτον πῶς οὐ δοκιμάζετε;)—Jesus pronounces them hupokritai (hypocrites, actors). They dokimazō (discern, examine, test) to prosōpon (the face) of sky and earth expertly, yet fail to dokimazō (discern) ton kairon touton (this time, this season, this critical moment).

Kairos denotes qualitative, appointed time—the messianic moment, God's visitation. They're living in history's climax (Messiah present, kingdom offered) yet blind to it. Their hypocrisy is selective perception: they see what requires no moral response (weather) but miss what demands repentance (Christ). This echoes Jesus's lament over Jerusalem: 'thou knewest not the time of thy visitation' (Luke 19:44).

Historical Context

Jewish apocalyptic expectation emphasized recognizing the 'signs of the times'—discerning when God's kingdom was breaking in. Daniel, Ezekiel, and the prophets spoke of appointed times (kairos) when God would act decisively in history. Jesus indicts them for missing the very discernment their tradition emphasized—recognizing Messiah's arrival and kingdom's inauguration.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What 'time' or 'season' of God's working might you be missing because it doesn't match your expectations?
2. How does your competence in earthly/professional matters contrast with your spiritual discernment?
3. What would it look like to be as attentive to spiritual 'signs of the times' as you are to practical daily matters?

Interlinear Text

ὑποκριταί	τὸ	πρόσωπον	τῆς	γῆς	καὶ	τοῦ	οὐρανοῦ
Ye hypocrites	G3588	the face	G3588	of the earth	and	G3588	of the sky
G5273		G4383		G1093	G2532		G3772

οἶδατε	δοκιμάζετε	τὸν	δὲ	καιρὸν	τοῦτον	πῶς
ye can	discern	G3588	but	time	this	how is it
G1492	G1381		G1161	G2540	G5126	G4459

οὐ	δοκιμάζετε
that ye do not	discern
G3756	G1381

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 16:3 (Parallel theme): And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

1 Chronicles 12:32 (Parallel theme): And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.

Matthew 11:25 (Parallel theme): At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

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