

John 10:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

Analysis

There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings—The Greek σχίσμα (schisma, "division") literally means a tear or split, the word used for rending garments. Jesus's words didn't produce consensus but violent disagreement. The adverb "again" (πάλιν/palin) indicates this is a recurring pattern (see John 7:43, 9:16)—wherever Jesus teaches, people divide into opposing camps. Truth polarizes; it cannot be neutrally received.

The phrase "for these sayings" (διὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους/dia tous logous toutous) identifies the cause: Christ's claims about laying down His life and taking it again, about being one with the Father, about gathering one flock. These weren't abstract theological musings but direct challenges to their categories. Some heard divine authority; others heard blasphemy. There was no middle ground.

This division demonstrates a crucial principle: Christ's teaching demands decision. Indifference is impossible when confronted with His claims. C.S. Lewis famously argued Jesus must be either Lord, liar, or lunatic—the one option unavailable is "merely a good teacher." The division among Jesus's audience proves this: His claims were too extreme for casual acceptance or polite acknowledgment.

Historical Context

First-century Judaism had various sects (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots), but they shared fundamental convictions: monotheism, Torah authority, temple

centrality, Abrahamic covenant. Jesus's teaching threatened these shared foundations by claiming authority equal to God, redefining covenant membership, and declaring Himself the true temple (John 2:19-21). Such claims inevitably produced schism.

John's Gospel repeatedly notes divisions caused by Jesus (7:43, 9:16, 10:19). This wasn't failure but fulfillment of His mission. Jesus declared, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). Truth divides light from darkness, belief from unbelief, sheep from goats. The early church experienced this division: families split, synagogues expelled believers, persecution arose. Yet this very conflict validated that the gospel was authentic—comfortable religion doesn't threaten the status quo.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Why does authentic Christianity inevitably produce division rather than universal acceptance?
2. How should we respond when our faith creates tension or conflict with family, culture, or religious institutions?
3. What does persistent division over Jesus's identity reveal about the nature of His claims—can He be merely a great moral teacher?

Interlinear Text

Σχίσμα οὖν πάλιν ἐγένετο ἐν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις διὰ
a division therefore again There was among G3588 the Jews for
G4978 G3767 G3825 G1096 G1722 G3588 G2453 G1223

τοὺς λόγους τούτους
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Additional Cross-References

John 9:16 (Parallel theme): Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

Acts 14:4 (Parallel theme): But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

1 Corinthians 3:3 (Parallel theme): For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

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