

John 15:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

Analysis

He that hateth me hateth my Father also (ο ἐμὲ μισῶν καὶ τὸν πατέρα μου μισεῖ/ho eme misōn kai ton patera mou misei)—this stark declaration establishes the inseparable unity of Father and Son. The present participle misōn (hating) indicates ongoing attitude, not momentary emotion. The verb misei (hates) repeats, showing identical hatred directed at both persons.

Jesus makes an absolute claim: you cannot hate the Son while loving the Father. This demolishes the common assertion "I believe in God but reject Jesus." Such a position is impossible—rejecting Jesus is rejecting the Father who sent Him, whose image He bears, whose will He embodies. As Jesus earlier declared, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30).

This verse parallels John 14:9: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," and Matthew 10:40: "He that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." The corollary is equally true: rejecting Jesus is rejecting the Father. There is no neutral ground, no separated devotion to "God" apart from Christ.

This challenges religious pluralism and all attempts to honor God while dismissing Christ. Muslims claim to worship the God of Abraham while denying Christ's deity and substitutionary death. Jews claim covenant faithfulness while rejecting the Messiah. Jesus' claim is exclusive: hatred of Him equals hatred of the Father.

Historical Context

This declaration directly challenged first-century Judaism's self-understanding. Jewish leaders believed they honored the Father while opposing Jesus. They viewed Jesus as a blasphemer (John 10:33), Sabbath-breaker (John 5:16-18), and deceiver (John 7:12, 47). In their minds, rejecting Jesus demonstrated faithfulness to Yahweh.

Jesus exposes this as self-deception. The same authorities who claimed devotion to God crucified God's Son. Their zeal for the Father, divorced from recognition of the Son, wasn't worship but rebellion. Jesus makes sonship non-negotiable: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Early Christians faced persecution from Jews who believed they served God by opposing the church (Acts 26:9-11, John 16:2). This verse provided theological clarity: such persecution revealed ignorance of both Father and Son. Paul's conversion demonstrated this—his zealous opposition to Christ was opposition to God, requiring radical repentance.

Church history shows repeated attempts to separate Jesus from the Father: Arianism denied Christ's full deity, Islam claims to worship Abraham's God while rejecting Jesus as Lord, liberal Christianity affirms "God" while reducing Jesus to moral teacher. Jesus' statement condemns all such division.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does this verse challenge religious pluralism and the claim that "all religions worship the same God"?
2. What does it mean practically that there is no way to love the Father while rejecting the Son?
3. How can we lovingly but clearly communicate this exclusivity to those who claim to honor God while dismissing Christ?

Interlinear Text

ο	ἐμὲ	μισεῖ	καὶ	τὸν	πατέρα	μου	μισεῖ
G3588	me	He that hateth	also	G3588	Father	my	He that hateth
G1691		G3404		G2532		G3450	

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