

Luke 12:53

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

Analysis

The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law (διαμερισθήσονται πατὴρ ἐπὶ υἱῷ καὶ υἱὸς ἐπὶ πατρί, μήτηρ ἐπὶ θυγατέρα καὶ θυγάτηρ ἐπὶ τὴν μητέρα, πενθερά ἐπὶ τὴν νύμφην αὐτῆς καὶ νύμφη ἐπὶ τὴν πενθεράν)—Jesus enumerates specific family divisions: parent/child, mother/daughter, in-laws. The repetition emphasizes comprehensiveness—no relationship immune from gospel division. The preposition *epi* (against) indicates active opposition, not mere disagreement.

This catalog of fractured relationships demonstrates the gospel's radical demand for ultimate allegiance. Christ requires priority over the most sacred human bonds. This isn't hatred of family but recognition that following Jesus may cost family approval, inheritance, even relationship. Discipleship demands willingness to lose everything for Christ.

Historical Context

The mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship was particularly significant in patriarchal culture where brides joined husband's household under mother-in-law's authority. Division here indicated complete household fracture. Jesus's enumeration covers multiple generations and marriage relationships—comprehensive family breakdown over allegiance to him.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What family relationships have been tested or broken by your Christian faith?
2. How do you maintain gospel witness to family members who oppose your faith without compromising truth or relationship?
3. Does your Christianity cost you anything in family dynamics, or have you accommodated faith to avoid conflict?

Interlinear Text

διαμερισθήσεται	πατρί	ἐπὶ	υἱὸς	καὶ	υἱὸς	ἐπὶ
shall be divided	The father	against	the son	and	the son	against
G1266	G3962	G1909	G5207	G2532	G5207	G1909
πατρί	μητρί·	ἐπὶ	θυγάτηρ	καὶ	θυγάτηρ	ἐπὶ
The father	the mother	against	the daughter	and	the daughter	against
G3962	G3384	G1909	G2364	G2532	G2364	G1909
μητρί·	πενθεράν	ἐπὶ	τὴν	νύμφη	αὐτῆς	καὶ
the mother	mother in law	against	G3588	daughter in law	G846	and
G3384	G3994	G1909		G3565		G2532
νύμφη	ἐπὶ	τὴν	πενθεράν	αὐτῆς,		
daughter in law	against	G3588	mother in law	G846		
G3565	G1909		G3994			

Additional Cross-References

Micah 7:6 (Word): For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.

Matthew 24:10 (Parallel theme): And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.