

# Matthew 10:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

## Analysis

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Jesus declares 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword'—shattering all sentimental views of His mission. The 'sword' is metaphorical—not military violence but the dividing power of truth. Christ's gospel necessarily creates division because it demands absolute allegiance and exposes all rival loyalties. The Greek word for 'sword' (μάχαιραν/machairan) refers to a short sword used in close combat—suggesting intimate, painful divisions. This verse demolishes the notion that Christianity is merely about being nice or maintaining social harmony. Reformed theology affirms that true peace with God often produces temporary conflict with the world (John 16:33). The peace Christ brings is first vertical (with God through justification) before it can be horizontal.

## Historical Context

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In first-century Jewish culture, family loyalty was paramount—the extended household was the basic social and economic unit. A family member's religious apostasy brought shame and often economic hardship on the entire clan. Jesus's words would have been shocking: He was claiming authority to supersede even the Fifth Commandment's honor toward parents. The immediate context involves sending out the Twelve into a Jewish society that would largely reject His message. Early Christian texts document countless instances of families divided by the gospel. The Roman government charged Christians with being 'haters of humanity' because their exclusive truth claims disrupted social harmony.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. How do you respond when the gospel creates conflict with loved ones—do you compromise truth or maintain it with grace?
2. What false forms of 'peace' might Christians pursue that actually betray the gospel's demands?
3. How does understanding the necessary divisiveness of truth help you evaluate whether you're truly following Christ?

## Interlinear Text

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Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον βαλεῖν εἰρήνην ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν.  
**not** **Think** **that** **I am come** **to send** **peace** **on** <sup>G3588</sup> **earth**  
G3361 G3543 G3754 G2064 G906 G1515 G1909 G1093

οὐκ ἦλθον βαλεῖν εἰρήνην ἀλλὰ μάχαιραν  
**not** **I am come** **to send** **peace** **but** **a sword**  
G3756 G2064 G906 G1515 G235 G3162

## Additional Cross-References

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

**Acts 14:2** (Parallel theme): But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.