

Matthew 10:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

Analysis

Christ continues: 'I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.' This echoes Micah 7:6, connecting Jesus's ministry to prophetic expectations of messianic upheaval. The threefold division encompasses the entire household structure. The verb 'set at variance' (διχάσαι/dichasai) means to divide in two, to cause dissension. This isn't Jesus's desire but the inevitable result of His truth claims in a fallen world. Reformed theology recognizes this as reflecting the radical nature of conversion—regeneration creates new affections and loyalties that supersede natural ties. Following Christ may mean losing the approval, support, and presence of those closest to us.

Historical Context

Micah 7:6 described social breakdown in judgment-era Israel when covenant unfaithfulness corrupted even family relationships. Jesus applies this prophecy to His own ministry, suggesting His coming precipitates a similar crisis of loyalty. In honor-shame cultures like first-century Palestine, family harmony was paramount—individual identity was subsumed in collective family identity. Conversion to Christianity often meant betraying family honor. Jewish converts faced formal disownment through declaration 'You are dead to us.' The Talmud records rabbinical discussions of how to treat Jewish apostates, including provisions for their effective legal death.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does this challenge contemporary Christianity's tendency to present the gospel as improving family relationships without mentioning potential conflict?
2. What does it reveal about Christ's character that He honestly warned prospective disciples about the cost?
3. In what situations might maintaining family peace actually constitute denying Christ?

Interlinear Text

ἥλθον	γὰρ	διχάσαι	ἄνθρωπον	κατὰ	τοῦ	πατρὸς	αὐτῆς
I am come	For	at variance	a man	against	G3588	father	her
G2064	G1063	G1369	G444	G2596		G3962	G846
καὶ	θυγατέρα	κατὰ	τῆς	μητρὸς	αὐτῆς	καὶ	νύμφην
and	the daughter	against	G3588	mother	her	and	the daughter in law
G2532	G2364	G2596		G3384	G846	G2532	G3565
κατὰ	τῆς	πενθερᾶς	αὐτῆς				
against	G3588	mother in law	her				
G2596		G3994	G846				

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:21 (Parallel theme): And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

Luke 21:16 (Parallel theme): And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

Mark 13:12 (Parallel theme): Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

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

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