

Matthew 12:47

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

Analysis

Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee (ἡ μήτηρ σου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί σου ἔξω ἐστήκασιν ζητοῦντές σοι λαλῆσαι, hē mētēr sou kai hoi adelphoi sou exō hestēkasin zētountes soi lalēsai)—The verb zēteō (ζητέω, 'seeking/desiring') suggests persistent effort, not casual interest.

The messenger assumed biological family took precedence, but Jesus's response redefines family around spiritual kinship. Notably absent is 'Joseph,' confirming Joseph had died by this point in Jesus's ministry. The verse provides clear evidence against claims of Mary's perpetual virginity—adelphoi (ἀδελφοί) means 'brothers,' not cousins (which would be anepsioi, ἀνεψιοί).

Historical Context

In first-century Jewish culture, family obligations were paramount, and interrupting a teacher for family was expected and honorable. Jesus's response would have shocked his audience, signaling that kingdom priorities transcend even legitimate family claims.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's redefinition of family challenge modern culture's tendency to make family the ultimate value?
2. What does this passage teach about the priority of spiritual relationships over biological ones when they conflict?

Interlinear Text

εἶπεν	δέ	τις	αὐτῷ	Ἰδοὺ,	ἡ	μήτηρ	σου	καὶ	οἱ
said	Then	one	unto him	Behold	G3588	mother	thy	and	G3588
G2036	G1161	G5100	G846	G2400		G3384	G4675	G2532	
ἀδελφοί	σου	ἔξω	ἐστήκασιν	ζητοῦντές	σοι	λαλῆσαι			
brethren	thy	without	stand	desiring	with thee	to speak			
G80	G4675	G1854	G2476	G2212	G4671	G2980			

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