

Matthew 12:48

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

Analysis

Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? (Τίς ἐστὶν ἡ μήτηρ μου καὶ τίνες εἰσὶν οἱ ἀδελφοί μου; Tis estin hē mētēr mou kai tines eisin hoi adelphoi mou?)—Jesus's rhetorical questions aren't rejection but redefinition. He doesn't dishonor Mary or deny biological family but elevates spiritual kinship above it.

This challenges the Jewish assumption that Abrahamic descent guaranteed spiritual privilege (Matthew 3:9). Jesus's question forces hearers to reconsider the basis of relationship with him—not biology, ethnicity, or religious heritage, but obedient faith. This radically democratizes access to Jesus while raising the standard: family membership requires doing God's will, not merely biological connection.

Historical Context

In a shame-honor culture where family was identity's foundation, Jesus's response was revolutionary. He wasn't dismissing family but establishing that the new covenant community—the church—would be formed around shared spiritual rebirth, not shared ancestry.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's question challenge modern attempts to claim relationship with God through heritage, baptism, or church membership alone?
2. What would change in your life if you truly saw fellow believers as closer family than biological relatives?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	δὲ	ἀποκριθεὶς	εἰπὺντι	τῷ	εἰπὺντι	αὐτῷ,	τίνες		
G3588	But	he answered	and said	G3588	and said	him	Who		
	G1161	G611	G2036		G2036	G846	G5101		
ἐστὶν	ἡ	μήτηρ	μου;	καὶ	τίνες	εἰσὶν	οἱ	ἀδελφοί	μου;
is	G3588	mother	my	and	Who	are	G3588	brethren	my
G2076		G3384	G3450	G2532	G5101	G1526		G80	G3450

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:37 (Parallel theme): He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.