

Matthew 5:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

Analysis

The command to love neighbors was clear (Leviticus 19:18), but 'hate thine enemy' was an addition never commanded by God. Jewish tradition sometimes justified hostility toward Gentiles and enemies. Jesus exposes this distortion and will command the radical alternative: enemy-love.

Historical Context

While the OT commanded love for neighbors, it also commanded destruction of Canaanites and sometimes harsh treatment of enemies. Some Jews extrapolated that hating enemies was permissible or even righteous. The Qumran community explicitly taught hating 'sons of darkness.'

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do you justify hatred or hostility toward certain groups or individuals?
2. What cultural or political enemies are you most tempted to hate rather than love?

Interlinear Text

Ἐγκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη, Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου
Ye have heard that it hath been said Thou shalt love G3588 neighbour thine
G191 G3754 G4483 G25 G3588 G4139 G4675

καὶ μισήσεις τὸν ἔχθρον σου
and hate G3588 enemy thine
G2532 G3404 G2190 G4675

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 19:18 (Love): Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

Matthew 19:19 (Love): Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Deuteronomy 23:6 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.

James 2:8 (Love): If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

Psalms 41:10 (Parallel theme): But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.