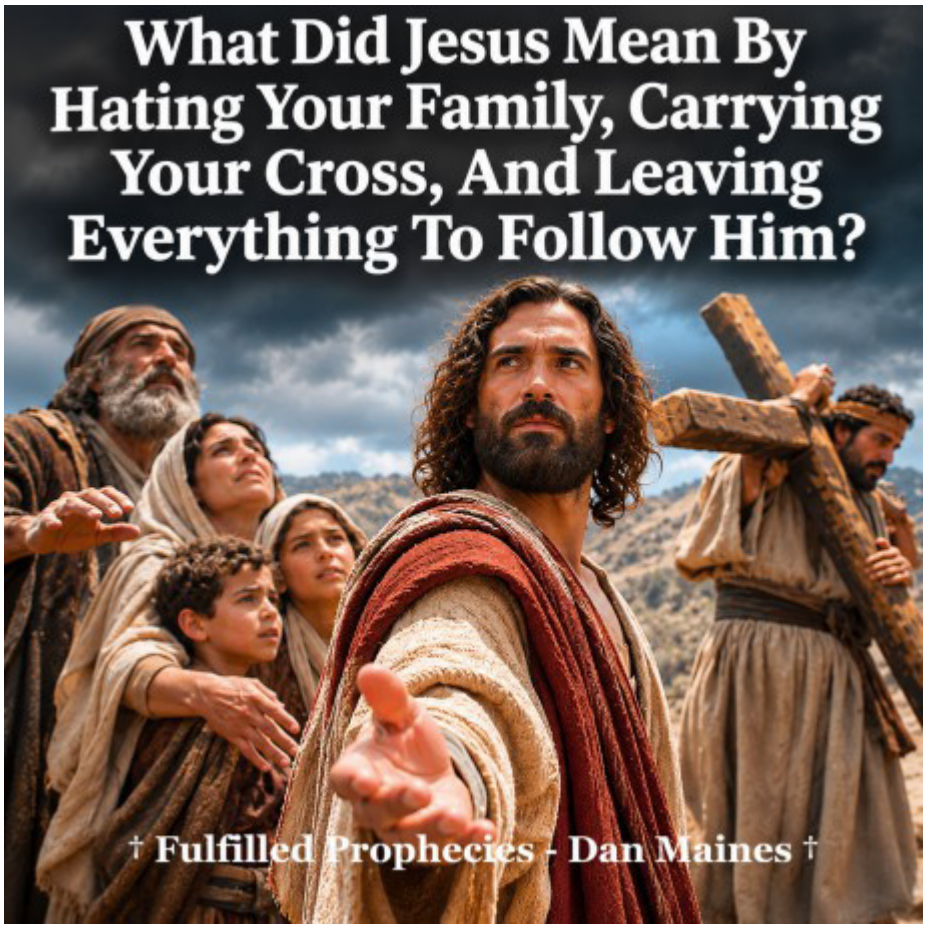
Fulfilled Prophecies

What Did Jesus Mean By Hating Your Family, Carrying Your Cross, And Leaving Everything To Follow Him?



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† Jesus made some of His strongest statements about discipleship when He told His followers they must hate their families, carry their crosses, and be willing to leave everything behind. At first glance, these words seem to contradict His commandments to love one another and honor our parents. However, when we examine the historical setting and compare Scripture with Scripture, His meaning becomes clear. Jesus

wasn't commanding hatred toward family members. He was demanding complete loyalty to Himself above every earthly relationship.
† In Matthew 19:28-29, Jesus also promised His apostles twelve thrones, authority to judge the twelve tribes of Israel, and eternal life for those who sacrificed everything for His name. These promises weren't disconnected from the approaching end of the Old Covenant age. They belonged to the first-century transition from the Old Covenant order into the completed New Covenant kingdom (Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 24:34).
† We must distinguish between the specific promises Jesus made to His apostles and the continuing principles of discipleship that apply to believers today. Understanding that distinction prevents us from turning first-century promises into events that must still happen in our future (Luke 21:22; Hebrews 8:13).

Luke 14:26-27
If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.
† Jesus used strong comparative language to establish the priority of discipleship. The word hate must be understood alongside Matthew 10:37, where Jesus explained that loving father or mother more than Him made someone unworthy of Him. The issue wasn't emotional hostility but divided loyalty (Matthew 10:37).
† In the first century, following Jesus could result in rejection by one's family, exclusion from the synagogue, and persecution by religious authorities. His disciples had to decide whether family approval or obedience to Christ would govern their lives (John 9:22; John 16:2).
† Carrying one's cross wasn't a reference to ordinary

inconveniences. Under Roman rule, the cross represented suffering, humiliation, and death. Jesus was warning His followers that discipleship could cost them their lives (Matthew 10:38-39).
† Jesus wasn't abolishing family responsibilities. He was teaching that no earthly relationship could take the place of His authority. A person could love family deeply while refusing to abandon Christ to satisfy family demands (Ephesians 6:1-3; John 13:34-35).

Matthew 10:37-39
He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.
† Matthew explains what Luke meant by hate. Jesus didn't say that loving parents or children was wrong. He said that loving them more than Him was wrong. The comparison concerns priority, not the destruction of natural affection (Luke 14:26).
† The original disciples faced a genuine choice between preserving their earthly security and remaining faithful to Christ. Some would lose their lives because they refused to deny Him (Matthew 24:9; Revelation 12:11).
† Finding one's life referred to protecting earthly existence at the expense of faithfulness. Losing one's life for Christ meant surrendering that security rather than abandoning Him. Jesus promised that faithfulness to Him was greater than anything this world could take away (John 12:25).
† These words also establish an enduring principle. Our relationship with Christ must govern every other relationship, but that loyalty must be expressed through love, righteousness, and obedience rather than cruelty or neglect (John 14:15; 1 John 4:20-21).

Luke 9:23-24
And He was saying to them all, If anyone wishes to come after

Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

† Jesus described discipleship as a daily commitment. Denying oneself meant surrendering self-rule and placing His authority above personal desires, ambitions, and worldly security (Galatians 2:20).

† The first-century disciples understood the danger of carrying a cross because Roman crucifixion was a public reality. Jesus wasn't promising an easy life. He was preparing them for opposition and suffering as they proclaimed His kingdom (Acts 14:22).

† The command to follow Christ remains meaningful today, although the historical circumstances have changed. We aren't waiting for the destruction of Jerusalem or the completion of the Old Covenant age. We follow the King whose kingdom has already been established (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28).

† Taking up our cross today means remaining faithful when obedience becomes costly. It doesn't mean deliberately seeking suffering or abandoning legitimate responsibilities. It means that our loyalty to Christ isn't for sale (Romans 12:1-2).

Matthew 19:28-29

And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.

† Jesus was speaking directly to His apostles in response to Peter's question about what they would receive for leaving everything to follow Him. The promise of twelve thrones was specifically connected to those apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:27; Luke 22:28-30).

† The regeneration described the renewal associated with

Christ's kingdom and the transition from the Old Covenant order into the New Covenant order. Jesus wasn't describing the physical destruction and recreation of planet Earth. Scripture identifies the passing covenant order as approaching its end in the first century (Hebrews 8:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17).
† The Son of Man sitting upon His glorious throne concerns His royal authority. Jesus received all authority following His resurrection, and His reign was already being proclaimed by the apostles before Jerusalem fell (Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:30-36).
† The twelve thrones represented apostolic authority in relation to Israel. The apostles proclaimed the gospel, established the foundation of the church, and bore witness against the unbelieving covenant nation. Their authority came from Christ, not from earthly political power (Ephesians 2:20; Acts 13:46).
† The judgment of the twelve tribes must be understood within the first-century judgment upon covenant Israel. Jesus had already declared that judgment would come upon that generation, and Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70 marked the public end of the Old Covenant system (Matthew 23:35-36; Luke 21:20-22).
† Jesus also promised that those who sacrificed homes, possessions, and family relationships for His name would receive far more than they surrendered. This wasn't a guarantee of financial wealth. It was a promise that belonging to Christ and His kingdom provided an inheritance greater than earthly possessions (Mark 10:29-30; Romans 8:16-17).
† Eternal life wasn't postponed until the physical world ended. Jesus identified eternal life with knowing the Father and Himself, and believers already possessed that life through faith in Him (John 17:3; John 5:24).

Mark 10:29-30
Jesus said, Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and

farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.
† Mark supplies an important detail. Jesus said His followers would receive blessings in the present age while also experiencing persecutions. He didn't promise that following Him would eliminate hardship (John 16:33).
† The hundredfold blessing included the enlarged spiritual family created through the gospel. Believers who lost family relationships because of their faith found brothers, sisters, and spiritual support among God's people (Acts 2:44-47; Acts 4:32-35).
† The age to come was the approaching New Covenant age, not a distant physical world awaiting creation thousands of years later. The Old Covenant was becoming obsolete, and its passing was near when Hebrews was written (Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 9:26).
† The promise of eternal life was fulfilled through Christ's completed redemptive work. We now live under the established New Covenant, where eternal life belongs to those who are in Him (John 3:16; 1 John 5:11-12).

John 13:34-35
A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.
† This passage settles any suggestion that Jesus commanded literal hatred toward family members. His disciples were commanded to love one another according to the example He personally established (John 15:12).
† Jesus never taught that devotion to Him justified cruelty, abandonment, or mistreatment of others. He condemned religious traditions that allowed people to avoid caring for their parents while claiming devotion to God (Mark 7:9-13).
† The defining evidence of discipleship isn't hostility toward family or society. It's love that remains faithful to Christ even when others reject that faith (Matthew 5:44; 1 John 4:7-8).

† We can love our families without allowing them to determine what we believe. Christ must remain first, but His commandments require us to demonstrate that loyalty through love and truth (Ephesians 4:15).

Romans 8:16-17
The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.
† Paul identified believers as God's children and heirs. Their inheritance came through their relationship with Christ, not through ownership of earthly property or membership in the physical nation of Israel (Galatians 3:26-29).
† The first-century saints experienced suffering while awaiting the completion of the covenant transition. Their inheritance was tied to the redemption Christ accomplished, not to the restoration of an earthly political kingdom (Romans 8:18-23; Hebrews 9:15).
† Today, believers share in the blessings of the completed New Covenant. We don't need to wait for another coming of Christ to establish His kingdom or provide access to eternal life (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 10:19-22).
† The inheritance Jesus promised is greater than anything a disciple might surrender. Earthly relationships and possessions are temporary, but life in Christ isn't dependent upon them (2 Corinthians 5:1-8; Philippians 1:23).

Hebrews 12:22-23
But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,
† The writer of Hebrews told first-century believers that they had already come to heavenly Jerusalem. This demonstrates that the promised kingdom wasn't merely a future geographical

destination (Galatians 4:26).
† The church belongs to the heavenly Jerusalem through Christ. The completed passing of the Old Covenant order in AD 70 confirmed the removal of the former covenant system and the establishment of the New Covenant order (Hebrews 8:13; Revelation 21:2).
† The apostles' foundational authority, the inheritance of believers, and the heavenly Jerusalem belong to the same redemptive accomplishment. These promises don't require a future rebuilding of national Israel's temple or government (Ephesians 2:19-22; Revelation 21:9-10).
† We now belong to the kingdom that cannot be shaken. Our calling is to live faithfully under Christ's authority, loving others and recognizing that our greatest inheritance is already found in Him (Hebrews 12:28; Colossians 3:1-4).

Historical References
† Josephus, writing in The Jewish War, described the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in AD 70. His account provides historical evidence of the judgment that brought the Old Covenant temple system to its visible end. Josephus wasn't interpreting Jesus' promises about the twelve thrones, but his history confirms the destruction of the city and sanctuary (Luke 21:20-22).
† Eusebius, in Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5, recorded the tradition that Christians departed Jerusalem and settled in Pella before the city's destruction. This tradition illustrates the seriousness with which early believers regarded the approaching danger (Matthew 24:15-16).
† John Chrysostom, in his homilies on Matthew, explained the priority of loving Christ above family relationships. His discussion of Matthew 10:37 supports the distinction between loving family members and placing them above Christ (Matthew 10:37).
† These historical writers help us understand the circumstances of early Christianity, but Scripture remains our authority for identifying the meaning and fulfillment of Christ's promises (Acts

17:11).

How It Applies To Us Today

† Jesus must remain first in our lives. This doesn't mean we should hate our parents, spouses, children, or other relatives. It means that no relationship should require us to abandon our faithfulness to Christ (Matthew 10:37).

† Carrying our cross means remaining committed to Christ even when doing so involves rejection, sacrifice, or suffering. It isn't a command to manufacture hardship or neglect our responsibilities (Luke 9:23).

† We must remember that the twelve thrones were promised specifically to the apostles in connection with Israel's covenant judgment. We aren't waiting for twelve physical thrones to appear in a future earthly government (Matthew 19:28; Ephesians 2:20).

† We don't follow Christ to become wealthy. Our inheritance is eternal life, fellowship with God, and membership in His kingdom. Those blessings are greater than anything the world can offer (Romans 8:16-17).

† Our love for Christ should make us more loving toward others, not less. A believer who uses Luke 14:26 to justify hatred has misunderstood the very Lord who commanded His disciples to love one another (John 13:34-35).

† We aren't waiting for the Old Covenant age to end. That transition was completed in AD 70. We live in the established New Covenant kingdom, where Christ reigns and His people possess eternal life through Him (Hebrews 12:22-28; John 5:24).

Q & A Appendix

Q: Did Jesus literally command His disciples to hate their families?

A: No. Matthew 10:37 explains that Jesus was demanding greater loyalty to Himself than to any family relationship. He also commanded His disciples to love one another (Matthew 10:37; John 13:34-35).

Q: What did carrying one's cross mean in the first century?
A: It meant accepting the possibility of persecution, rejection, suffering, and even death rather than denying Christ. Roman crucifixion made this warning especially serious (Luke 9:23-24; Matthew 10:38-39).
Q: Does carrying our cross mean abandoning our families today?
A: No. Christ must come first, but Scripture also commands believers to honor parents, love others, and fulfill family responsibilities (Ephesians 6:1-3; 1 Timothy 5:8).
Q: Who was promised the twelve thrones?
A: Jesus specifically promised them to the apostles who had followed Him. The twelve thrones represented their authority in relation to the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:28-30).
Q: What was the regeneration Jesus mentioned?
A: From the fulfilled perspective, it referred to the renewal associated with Christ's kingdom and the transition into the completed New Covenant order, rather than the physical recreation of the planet (Matthew 19:28; Hebrews 8:13).
Q: When did the judgment associated with Israel's covenant order occur?
A: It reached its historical fulfillment in the first century, culminating in Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70, within the generation Jesus identified (Matthew 23:35-36; Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:20-22).
Q: Did Jesus promise His followers that they would become financially wealthy?
A: No. Mark 10:29-30 included persecutions alongside the promised blessings. The spiritual family, kingdom inheritance, and eternal life are greater than material wealth (Mark 10:29-30).
Q: What does it mean to inherit eternal life?
A: It means possessing life through Christ. Believers already have eternal life in Him, and physical death doesn't separate them from His presence (John 5:24; 2 Corinthians 5:8).
Q: Are we still waiting for Christ to establish His kingdom?

A: No. From the fulfilled perspective, Christ established His kingdom, completed the covenant transition, and brought the promised New Covenant order into its fullness by AD 70 (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28).
Q: What is the main lesson of these passages?
A: Jesus must come before everything else. True discipleship requires faithfulness, sacrifice, and love, while our greatest inheritance is found in Christ and His completed kingdom (Luke 14:26-27; Matthew 19:28-29).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †
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Source Index
† Luke 14:26-27; Matthew 10:37-39; Luke 9:23-24; Matthew 19:28-29; Mark 10:29-30; John 13:34-35; Romans 8:16-17; Hebrews 12:22-23.
† Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5; John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew.

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