

Jeanne Marcus: Man against Father

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This is shocking in two ways: the first is Jesus' willingness to be in judgment against the family, which we are used to thinking about as one important structure of an ethical Christian life. The other is Jesus' choice of the image of a sword in naming the challenge he is bringing, when we usually think of Jesus as living a message of non-violence. The usual explanation of this hard saying is that Jesus is commenting on the inevitability of dissension between people when the time comes for individuals either to claim faith in him, or to dismiss him. I have come to a better explanation of this passage.