

Kept from the Evil One

We often call the prayer of **John 17** Jesus's high priestly prayer. As the High Priest over the apostles and His kingdom, Jesus prayed for them and ultimately for us, those who have believed in Him through the word of the apostles. I just think that is cool. Nearly two thousand years ago, Jesus was praying for you and me.

In the part of the prayer that was specifically about the apostles, one of Jesus's statements really captures my attention. Though at that time He said He was praying for the 12, I believe now He is offering the same intercession for us. He prayed, "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one" (**vs. 15, ESV**). Keep in mind this is in the same prayer in which Jesus explains the world hates us because we are not of the world. But even though we face the hate of the world, Jesus doesn't pray for us to be removed from the world. Despite the world's hate, He longs for us to stay in the world. Have you considered why?

We often bemoan being trapped in a world that hates us. That is increasingly true as the world seems to increasingly hate us. I've even heard Christians claim they just can't wait to get out of this world. But Jesus doesn't pray that for us. Why does Jesus want us in this world?

Jesus wants us in this world because when we actually grow to be one as He is in the Father and the Father in Him, then the world will believe God sent Jesus (**John 17:21**). He wants us in the world so we can grow and testify to who He is. Aren't you glad Jesus didn't remove all the faithful Christians from the world before you were able to learn the gospel? There are others who may listen to Christ's truth, shouldn't we be glad to stay here and take opportunities to share it with them?

But Jesus knew there was a danger to this plan. While in the world, we are in danger of being trapped by the evil one. **I Peter 5:8** says he is a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone. That someone is you. As Jesus leaves us in this world to rescue others from Satan's snares, there is the danger that we will fall into that snare. So what does Jesus do? He prays for us that we will be kept from the evil one. Think about that. Just as Jesus interceded for Peter and the apostles, He is making intercession for us (cf. **Hebrews 7:25**). Of course, we need to be sober and watchful, drawing near to God, and resisting the devil (cf. **I Peter 5:6-9**), but isn't it comforting to know Jesus hasn't forgotten about us, but always lives to make intercession for us?

Jesus doesn't pray that we will be taken out of the world. He wants to use us in the world. But He does pray that we will be kept from the evil one. Praise the Lord. Let's cooperate with His prayer.