

Biblical Notes — John 17:14-19

14-19 – I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. [15] I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. [16] They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. [17] Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. [18] As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. [19] For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. (14. ἐγὼ δέδωκα αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον σου καὶ ὁ κόσμος ἐμίσησεν αὐτούς, ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου καθὼς ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου. 15. οὐκ ἐρωτῶ ἵνα ἄρῃς αὐτούς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, ἀλλ' ἵνα τηρήσῃς αὐτούς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ. 16. ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου οὐκ εἰσὶν καθὼς ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου. 17. ἀγιάσον αὐτούς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ· ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς ἀλήθεια ἐστίν. 18. καθὼς ἐμὲ ἀπέστειλας εἰς τὸν κόσμον καγὼ ἀπέστειλα αὐτούς εἰς τὸν κόσμον· 19. καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν [ἐγὼ] ἀγιάζω ἑμαυτόν, ἵνα ᾧσιν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἡγιασμένοι ἐν ἀληθείᾳ)

The point that is being made here is not the Jesus is praying that they be kept from the Tribulation period or Daniel's 70th week, but rather that they be kept "from the evil one" this is that they remain pure and sanctified (v.17) in their work of bringing the Gospel to the world (v.18). Jesus has no desire that they die but rather that they labour for the Gospel.

"1. Christ does not desire that his faithful apostles should soon die, and be taken to God. No: but that they may live long, labor long, and bring forth much fruit.

2. He does not intimate that they should seclude themselves from the world by going to the desert, or to the cloisters; but that they should continue in and among the world, that they may have the opportunity of recommending the salvation of God.

3. Christ only prays that while they are in the world, employed in the work of the ministry, they may be preserved from the influence, τοῦ πονηροῦ, of the evil one, the devil, who had lately entered into Judas, John 13:27, and who would endeavor to enter into them, ruin their souls, and destroy their work. A devil without can do no harm; but a devil within ruins all."

—— Adam Clarke, Adam Clarke Commentary, Commentary on John 17:15.

"Shouldest keep them from the evil - This may mean either from the evil one that is, the devil, or from evil in general that is, from apostasy, from sinking in temptation. Preserve them from that evil, or give them such grace that they may endure all trials and be sustained amid them. See the notes at Matthew 6:13. It matters little how long we are in this world if we are kept in this manner."

—— Albert Barnes, Albert Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible, Commentary on John 17:15.

"From ... is from the Greek term meaning "out of," and the obvious reason Jesus did not wish the disciples to be taken out of the world was that such a thing would have made impossible the conversion of the world. That the disciples should be kept "out of" the devil was the important thing. The whole concept underlying asceticism which arose in post-apostolic times was based on a failure to appreciate the meaning of these words. It was Christ's desire that the apostles should remain in the world, in contact with its populations, exposed to its culture, and in direct confrontation with its evil. Only this could enable them to convert the world. In this verse also appears the Saviour's concern for the whole of humanity, the only hope of which was dependent on the apostles' proclamation of the truth."

—— James Coffman, Coffman's Commentaries on the Bible, Commentary on John 17:15.

"John 17:15. I pray not, &c.— "My meaning is not that, on account of these difficulties, John 17:14thou shouldest remove them out of the world by death; I know that the purposes of thy glory, and their own improvement and usefulness, will require their longer continuance. I only pray, that thou wouldst grant them the direction of thy Spirit, and protection of thy providence, whereby they will be preserved both from the evil of sin and temptation, and from the subtlety and malice of the evil one,— τοῦ πονηροῦ ." See 1 John 5:18-19."

—— Thomas Coke Commentary on the Holy Bible, Commentary on John 17:15.

"15. ἐκ τ. πονηροῦ. From the evil one: comp. 1 John 2:13-14; 1 John 3:12, and especially John 5:18-19. The world and the Gospel are regarded as in ceaseless opposition in S. John's writings, and the evil one is 'the ruler of this world' (John 12:31, John 16:11). Just as Christ is that in which His disciples live and move, so the evil one is that out of which (ἐκ) He prays that they may be kept. Believers are ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ, ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ (1 John 5:20): but the world ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται. In 1 John 4:4 we have the opposite mode of statement; Christ is in believers and the evil one is in the world. All these passages seem to shew that τοῦ πονηροῦ must be masculine."

—— Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges, Commentary on John 17:15.

“Keep them from the evil—For how easy is it for them to assimilate by gentle shadings with the world. The world, then, will no longer hate, however much they will despise them for the compromise. God keeps them, not merely for themselves, but for the honour of his own name, and from mercy to the world that hates them.”

—— Whedon's Commentary on the Bible, Commentary on John 17:15.

“John 17:15. The simplest escape from the anger of the world was removal from it, but for this He would not ask: οὐκ ἔρωτῶ ἵνα ἄρῃς αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου. They had a work to do which involved that they should be in the world. It also involved the fulfilment of the petition, ἵνα τηρήσῃς αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ. Luther, Calvin, etc., take πονηροῦ as neuter; recent interpreters in general consider it to be masculine, “from the evil one,” as in 1 John 2:13; 1 John 4:4; 1 John 5:18; cf. Matthew 6:13. “The evil one” as the prince of this world and “a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44) was the instigator of persecution.”

—— The Expositor's Greek Testament, Commentary on John 17:15.

“from = out of. Greek. ek, as in the former clause. the evil = the evil one. See on Matthew 6:13. Compare 1 John 5:19. Three things the Lord requested for His disciples: to be kept from the evil one, to be sanctified through the truth (John 17:17), and to behold His glory (John 17:24).”

—— E.W. Bullinger's Companion Bible Notes, Commentary on John 17:15.