

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

“And it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And He said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Luke 11:1-4

“...but deliver us from evil.”
—**Luke 11:4**

Although this phrase is not contained in many of the earliest manuscripts of Luke’s Gospel, since it is in the model prayer given to the Lord’s disciples in the Sermon on the Mount (**Matt 6:9-13**), it is still quite useful to examine this phrase from Luke.

From Matthew’s account, the Greek may be literally rendered, “and deliver us from *the* evil.” It is not just evil in general, but specifically, “the evil,” containing the definite article. To what evil was our Lord referring? That would be the Evil One, Satan. The direct article seems to personify the noun, and that’s why many Bible scholars and commentators suggest that it is Satan. And whether the definite article does personify the noun or not, the source of all evil that continues is from Satan, the Father of lies and a murderer from the beginning (**Jn 8:44**).

Although Satan is bound (**Rev 20:2**) and his authority is crushed (**Gen 3:15**), we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but

against satanic forces in this present age (**Eph 6:10-17**). Yet, this prayer is not merely for our deliverance from Satan, but I believe that it is also from every evil we must face as believers since we are left in this world until the return of the Lord and the consummation of all things. To dismiss our spiritual battle as superfluous because Satan’s authority has been crushed at Calvary’s Cross is as harmful to our spiritual walk and spiritual welfare as to blame Satan, who is neither omnipotent nor omnipresent, for every evil thing or wicked situation that we are confronted with.

Jesus promised that we would have tribulation in this world: *“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world”* (**Jn 16:33**).

God promised that we would be persecuted by the world: *“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”* (**2 Tim 3:12**).

The Lord promised that we would be hated of the world: *“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you”* (**Jn 15:18**).

Why would these things befall us? This happens because our sovereign God is working all things *“together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren”* (**Rom 8:28-29**). God’s purpose in these things is to glorify His Son in conforming us into His very image. Though the evil of this world presses against us, it is in the evil and wickedness around us that we mature in faith; that by it we are built up in character; that through it we are kept near the Cross of Christ for refuge.

So, why do we pray for deliverance from the evil? I believe that, although there may be many reasons, there are three primary reasons: (1) to preach the gospel without opposition; (2) to rely

upon God's Spirit and not upon the arm of the flesh; and (3) to hasten the Lord's return.

First, we pray for deliverance from the evil in order "to preach the gospel without opposition." The apostle Paul requested that prayers be made for him in his ministry endeavors, without opposition from the evil that lies in his own unglorified flesh: *"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak"* (**Eph 6:18-20**).

The leaders in Jerusalem also prayed that they may preach boldly despite the threatening that opposed them: *"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word"* (**Acts 4:29**).

Second, we pray for deliverance from the evil so that we may "rely upon God's Spirit and not the arm of the flesh." There is nothing that we are or nothing that we have that can come close to rivaling the power and wisdom of God. We pray in this way with great humility because apart from Jesus Christ we are helpless, as He said, *"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing"* (**Jn 15:5**). It is not of ourselves that we overcome evil, but through the God who has saved us, and by the God who dwells in us: *"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world"* (**1 Jn 4:4**).

Finally, we pray for deliverance from this evil world and the evil corruptions that yet remain in this body of death; praying that the Lord may return quickly to bring about a glorious new heaven and earth and to change our corruptible bodies into glorified bodies like unto His: *"Since all these things are to be destroyed in this*

way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (**2 Pet 3:11-13**, NASB).

Now, that is not to say that our prayers will cause God to change His plans, decrees, and appointed times that are in His own power, by His own will, and for His own good pleasure; yet, when we understand that when we pray, we are not bringing the heavenly plan and decree of God to us, but because the Holy Spirit dwells in the believer, we receive a glimpse of that heavenly revelation. We are brought into eternity, so to speak, passing through the veil that separates our mortal frames from the eternal and heavenly abode of the Triune God. Then, we see His coming. Then, we long for Christ's return. Then we see the blessed hope of Christ's imminent return as He promised, *"Surely I come quickly. Amen."* Then our final prayer is for ultimate deliverance, crying out with the apostle John at the very final utterance of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus"* (**Rev 22:20**).

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. —1 Cor 15:53

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