

BIBLE PROPHECY

The Rapture and John 17:15

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Some people wrongly believe that a pre-tribulation Rapture can't happen because Jesus prayed, "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15).

Did Jesus mean that His disciples couldn't be raptured or taken away from the earth? The Greek word for "world" (*kosmos*) can mean "the philosophy of the world" (unbelievers) or it can mean "planet earth." The differences can be seen in these two examples:

1) In John 15:18, Jesus says "If the **world** hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you." He doesn't mean that "planet earth" hates the disciples, but that unbelievers who hold an ungodly philosophy will hate the disciples.

2) Matthew 13:35 says, "I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the **world**." In this case, He is not talking about "the philosophy of the world but the creation of planet earth."

When Jesus prays that the disciples not be taken out of the world, does He mean that they can never be removed from planet earth? Or does He mean that the disciples shouldn't isolate themselves from the unbelieving world? Let's take a look at this passage in context:

John 17:14 "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**."

[This cannot mean "planet earth" hates the disciples, but the unbelieving people in this world will hate them.]

John 17:16 "They are not of the **world**, even as I am not of the **world**."

[The disciples don't agree with the "philosophy of the world" just like Jesus doesn't.]

John 17:18 "As You sent Me into the **world**, I also have sent them into the **world**."

[The disciples must not isolate themselves from the world, but must go to the unbelieving people in the world to share the gospel with them.]

Now let's examine John 17:15: "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one." As we have seen from the context of the surrounding verses, Jesus prays that the disciples will not isolate themselves from the unbelieving world, but will go to them to share the gospel. As they go into this hostile world, He prays for their protection from the evil one (Satan). This passage is not talking about the Rapture or end-time events.

The Scripture informs us that Christians will be taken out of the world (planet earth) when the Rapture occurs: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4:16-17)

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