

**(Study 8 of 9). The Prayer That Can Change The World. The Lord's Prayer. "Deliver us from evil." Matthew 6:13. (Based on Jim Holbeck Blog No.181 posted 25Apr2016)**

There are many believers throughout the world who believe we are seeing an unprecedented level of evil in our world today. It is obviously manifest in the rise of Islamic terrorism which many believe is demonically inspired. But there is also a diminishing level of respect for those who deserve respect. Because of the expanding and readily available forms of media there is a greater exposure to evil than ever before. Temptations in many forms are rife in our communities. Praying the Lord's Prayer and especially this phrase "*deliver us from evil*" can be of supreme importance in trying to live a godly life in an ungodly world.

**What does it mean to "*deliver us from evil*?"** The word for "deliver" is from the Greek word "rhuomai". We see it used in this verse in the Lord's Prayer in Mat 6:13 ( *αλλα* = *but*, *ρυσαι* = *deliver*, *ημας* = *us*, *απο* = *from*, *του* = *the*, *πονηρου* = *evil*). The phrase is a prayer asking God to deliver us from evil. However the phrase has the definite article "the" before the word "evil". It can mean that we are asking God to deliver us from evil in general and specifically to deliver us from the temptations of the evil one, meaning Satan or the Devil.

**A). The first phrase. "DELIVER US ..."**

We see the use of "rescue" or "deliver" in the following ways in the New Testament.

- To rescue the righteous and the godly from temptation and evil. Seen in the Lord's Prayer in Mat 6.13 and in 2 Peter 2:7-9 "*and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked 8 (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.*"
- It can mean to deliver or rescue people from those who would do them harm. For example:-
- Rescue from enemies. eg., in the prophecy of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, Luke 1:74 "*that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear.*" Rescue from evil men. Paul wrote in 2 Thess 3:2 "*that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men.*"
- Rescue from unbelievers. Rom 15:31, "*that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea.*"
- Rescue from persecution. 2 Timothy 3:10 "*You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.*"
- Rescue from the threat of death. 2 Timothy 4:17-18, "*But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.*" 18 *The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen*"
- "Rescue" is used mockingly of Jesus on the cross. Mat 27:43 "*He trusts in God; let God rescue Him now, if He delights in Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'*"
- Rescue from a personal enemy. From the body of death. Rom 7:24 "*Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*"

- Jesus was called “the Deliverer.” *Rom 11:26 “And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;*
- Rescue from difficult situations. *2 Cor 1:10, “He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.”*
- Rescue from the domain of darkness. *Col 1:13 “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.”*
- Rescue from the wrath to come at the Second Coming of Jesus. *1Thess 1:10 “and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”*

**B). The second phrase “FROM EVIL”.** As we noted above, “evil” is from the Greek word “πονηρός” [ponērós]. The expression [ton ponāron = “the evil” or “the evil one”] is used in the New Testament as follows.

1. Of Satan as the evil one [ton ponāron].

- The evil one may tempt people to add to the truth so that it becomes a lie. Eg., in Matthew 5:37 *“Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.”*
- Possibly Mat 6:13 *“deliver us from the evil one”* though it may also refer to evil in general. .
- The evil one attempts to stop the word of God from taking root in human hearts. Mat 13:19, *“the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in his heart”.*
- Those belonging to the evil one may be found among the righteous. Mat 13:38, *“the weeds are the sons of the evil one.”*
- Jesus prayed to His Father to protect His followers from the evil one. John 17:15, *“that you should protect them from the evil one”.*
- The evil one as “diabolos” (the accuser) launches missiles of accusation against God’s people. Eph 6:16 *“the flaming arrows of the evil one.”*
- St Paul affirmed that God will strengthen believers and guard them from evil. 2 Thess 3:3 *“the Lord will protect you from the evil one.”*
- St John affirmed that the young men had learned to overcome the evil one. 1 John 2:13, 2:14 *“you have overcome the evil one.”*
- St John recognised that Cain, who murdered his brother Abel, belonged to the evil one. 1 Jn 3:12 *“Cain who belonged to the evil one.”*
- St John wrote that the evil one does not touch those who are born of God. 1 Jn 5:18, *“He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him”.*
- St John recognised that the whole unbelieving world lay in the power of the evil one. 1 Jn 5:19 *“the whole world is in the power of the evil one.”*

2. Human beings were described by Jesus as being “evil” in the sense they have a human nature which has a bias towards evil.

- God’s provision is poured out on the righteous (the good) and the unrighteous (the evil) in His sight. Mat 5:45, *“He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good.”*
- Humans with a bias towards evil can do things that appear to be good. Mat 7:11, *“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children”.* But how much greater is the

provision of the good Heavenly Father, *“how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!”*

- Evil outward expressions come from evil within humans. Mat 12:34-35. *“How can you speak good when you are evil for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 the good man out of his good treasure brings forth good and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.”* AND Luke 6:45, *the evil man out of his evil treasure produces evil”.*
- Outward sins derive from a sin nature within. Mat 15:19-20, *“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These are what defile a person....”*

### 3. Evil (in thought , word or deed)

- Jesus knew when people had evil thoughts. Mat 9:4 *“Jesus knowing their thoughts said ‘Why do you think evil in your hearts’?”*
- John the Baptist reproved Herod for committing evil. Luke 3:19, *“for all the evil things Herod had done.”*
- St John described in Jn 3:19-20 how men loved darkness because of the evil in their lives, *“men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.”*
- Jesus taught what would happen to evil people at the resurrection, John 5:29, *“those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgement.”*
- Jesus taught that the world hated Him because he testified of it that *“its works are evil.”* Jn 7:7

### 4. Evil spirits

Jesus gave His disciples authority over evil spirits. Eph 6:12 *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”*

Thus they would be enabled to have victory in the evil day, *“Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”* Eph 6:13.

**Summing up we can say this.** To pray *“deliver us from the evil one”* is good preventative medicine because it invites God’s protection over us as the only One Who can enable us to recognise and overcome temptation in all its forms. As we pray the prayer we can become more aware of the evil around us and more sensitive to the Holy Spirit who allows us to discern what is evil in our situations.

Likewise it is good curative medicine to pray the prayer to God over ourselves and our loved ones so that they and we might indeed be set free from any evil influences to which we may have succumbed. God knows what those influences are. He also knows how to set people free from evil in all its forms.

Few people have any great understanding as to the horrific nature of evil and how repugnant it is in the sight of God. If they did they would be much more inclined to cry out to God for deliverance from evil. One person who did come to recognise the awfulness of sin was Leon Jaworski, the Chief Prosecutor at the Nuremburg Nazi War Crimes Trials. He commented *“As we cannot envision the heights we can reach by placing ourselves in the hands of God, neither can we imagine*

*the depths to which we can sink without Him.*”The evidence before him demanded such a description of the evil that humans do to each other when they do not depend on God. (Quoted by John White in ” Changing on the Inside” page 61).

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER by individuals or groups. (Added Sat 2nd July 2016)**

**Question 1.** When we pray “deliver us from evil” we are admitting that evil does exist. What forms of evil do you think we can see in the world today?

**Question 2.** In Section A we see the words “deliver” or “rescue” used with regard to a whole range of personal human situations. Can you relate to some of them in your own personal walk in life? Would you be willing to share which ones they might be?

**Question 3.** Jesus obviously believed in the existence of the Devil or Satan. Why do you think some people today find it difficult to believe there is a Devil? How would you try to convince them otherwise?

**Question 4.** Some people rebel at the thought of being labelled as “sinners” when they see themselves as “nice people” who “try not to hurt others” If you were asked to do so, how would you try to explain to them how the words in Section B might apply to them?

**Question 5.** Do you think that Leon Jaworski, the Chief Prosecutor at the Nuremburg Nazi War Crimes Trials (who is quoted at the end of the article above) went too far in describing the evil (as he saw it) in human hearts? Why or why not do you think so?

**Blog No.181. Jim Holbeck. Posted on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016 (Anzac Day in Australia and New Zealand, a day when we remember especially those who laid down their lives in seeking to protect innocent people from the evils done (and attempting to be done) by war mongering individuals and nations). Revisited on Sat 2nd July 2016**