

¹³“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

Hot off the press, from a May 5th article of the International Business Times,

Aliens may have sent 'seeds' to create life on Earth, claims British scientist

UK researcher and astrobiologist Milton Wainwright and his team are currently studying a microscopic metal globe that they found in Earth's atmosphere, the [University of Buckingham](#) reported. The scientists claim that the dust particle can be an alien "seed of life" designed to create life on Earth. Wainwright suggests: "The structure is made from titanium and vanadium with a 'gooey' biological liquid oozing from its centre. . . . We have considered Directed Panspermia, the theory that organisms were deliberately transmitted to the earth by intelligent beings on another planet. We conclude that it is possible that life reached the earth in this way." Isn't it amazing that a scientist; who would be laughed out of the room were he to state he believed in creation, could be taken seriously for saying that alien life planted life here?

If only they knew and believed that they don't need to seek for the Creator of life out there, when He already came down here and went back home; not as an alien in a spaceship, but as God in the flesh through the virgin Mary; the man by the name of Jesus. This Jesus - in today's text - spoke of going back home to the Father; back to where He came from. **“I am not of the world.”** He spoke to the Father and said **“I am coming to you now.”**

Jesus wanted His disciples, and us as believers, to look at ourselves as aliens on this planet as well; not aliens from outer space; but human beings who have been adopted into a different family and rescued to go to a different world called heaven. Jesus said of His disciples two times, **“they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.”** We sing, “I'm but a stranger here.” We are not called to live eternally here. Jesus came to rescue us from this condemned world and from the realm of Satan.

But this world can be very enjoyable, as it is still God's creation - fallen though it is. We enjoy the same sports that all the rest do. We enjoy much of the same food. We laugh at the same jokes and enjoy the same activities. We look the same; smell the same; laugh the same as everyone else. We have the same weaknesses and the same desires as unbelievers do. There are a lot of things that we enjoy and love about this world; many things we don't want to let go of. We can enjoy them so much that we want them to last forever. We don't want to leave.

But we can't forget about our adoption; about the world to come. We can't forget that Jesus says we are now "**not of this world**" and that we are through our baptism and faith different. We have different values; different beliefs; different goals. We can't forget that.

The great attraction that many churches try to use to attract others to them is to say, "We're normal. We're fun. We're laid back. We're just like you." The last thing they want anyone to think is, "We're different." So as a result of this desire to be "normal", Christianity has become in many senses too "normal." We cuss with the best of them. Have sex like the rest of them. Get drunk with the rest of them. Have the same work ethics. Have the same divorce rates. So that many of our own neighbors and friends might not have any idea that we believe in Jesus or even have a church. Church is thought to be intimidating; so efforts are made to make it easier. Just come and laugh here; drink some coffee; listen to music; and have fun. Live and let live. Eat. Drink. Listen. Laugh. Go home.

But now some are starting to think to themselves, "Why are we going to church at all? Can't we do this at home? And the people that visit or know us might also think, "Why should I be a Christian? What difference does it make if they want to be like everyone else? How hard is that?"

Most of this is ultimately the work of Satan; the evil one; that fallen angel - along with his legion of fallen angels that dwell among us. It was Satan who deceived Eve into believing that she should eat from the Tree of Knowledge so she could be like God; by disobeying God's Word and doing it her way. She could be her own god the easy way, just by eating a piece of fruit.

Satan is a student of humanity. He's lived among us for thousands of years. He's lived in humans. He knows your weaknesses. He wants to use your desires against you; to tear you apart from Christ. He can be very patient and very cunning. He can appear to be beautiful and friendly; to have your best interest in mind; to be all for "justice"; to lead you astray so that God condemns you with him on Judgment Day. Satan wants us to burn in hell with him - for an eternity. He knows his time is short and he is not happy about it.

The way C.S. Lewis portrayed him was as a wicked queen - also known as the White Witch, who led a young boy by the name of Edmund astray. She gave him a warm coat and some Turkish delight; his favorite type of candy. She also promised to make him a prince and then king; all if he simply told her when his family arrived back in Narnia. It was a flat out betrayal. Yet once he gave her what she desired, she fed him nothing but bread crumbs and locked him in prison. This is a good illustration for what Satan does. He is willing to use lies and false promises and temporary pleasures in order to make a liar out of you and get you to betray your Savior.

Jesus knew how cunning and evil Satan is. He personally fought against Satan for 40 days in the desert, which culminated in three temptations that are spoken of in the Gospels. So Jesus, our Great High Priest, prayed for us prior to His ascension. He said, "**My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.**"

That prayer might be a little disappointing. Wouldn't you rather He just take us home right away or just destroy Satan? Wouldn't that be much easier than staying here to be attacked by an evil one? Nobody likes conflict. Life would be a lot easier if we could just sit on the beach and relax. And that is part of his temptation. "Don't sweat the small stuff. Don't sweat anything. If it feels good, do it." That is part of the struggle; a life long

struggle against sins of every type; against despair; against false theology. Like it or not; there will struggle. You have no choice in the matter.

Satan didn't just give up after the resurrection. He never does. He is relentless. But so also God calls on us to be relentless. We are not to flee from this battle either. Jesus knew it wouldn't be easy. So He prayed for our protection in the midst of battle.

But how? How can we have protection against one that is so much more powerful than we are; who knows how to twist the Scriptures so well; who can attack us invisibly. Jesus said, **Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.**

The word for "sanctify" means to "set aside as holy." So when God would sanctify something, He would regard it as holy and precious and treat it specially, even if it was in its nature no different than anything else. You might think of the Ark of the Covenant. The gold and wood that it was made of was no better than any other gold or wood. But when God had it built and set aside for special purposes, it was supposed to be treated as precious and holy; in the exact way that God wanted it to be held and carried. This is what God said that baptism would do; set us apart as holy and precious in God's sight; as we are bathed into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This gives us special treatment. He designs life so that we won't be tempted beyond what we can bear. He lines up our lives so that we have opportunities to do good things for people that need it. He gives us the truth to set us apart.

I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴ **I have given them your word and the world has hated them.** It might make you wonder why anyone would hate the disciples or us for what Jesus says to us. Just look at the story of Stephen. When Stephen told his fellow Jews that they were "stiff-necked" and "just like their fathers" who stoned the prophets; and who murdered Jesus and needed to repent; well, they didn't like that too well. Were we to be so bold as to speak the truth in such a way; it wouldn't take long for people to want to stone us either. And it is in some senses shameful that more people don't hate us more than they should, because we don't proclaim the Word as Stephen did.

But Jesus didn't say what He said so that the world would hate them. That wasn't His goal. His goal was to give the disciples the full measure of His joy. Usually when we want to make people happy we tell them what they want to hear and don't tell them anything bad. Jesus didn't speak that way. He spoke of sin and death and damnation. He predicted His own betrayal and crucifixion. But Jesus also told the disciples that He was going to the cross to die for them and to be raised from the dead; so that when it all happened they would have the joy of knowing that their sins were forgiven and heaven was theirs. **Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.**

The truth gets us thinking beyond what the world thinks of us; whether we are successful or not; whether we have achieved this or that. It points us to what Jesus did two thousand years ago on the cross and says, "All your sins are paid for. That was for you." The Gospel points to Jesus and says, "He is your righteousness. I look at Him as if He were you." So it sets us aside; gives us a different identity and a different source of holiness. It points us to the empty tomb and says, "That is yours too. Just as Jesus rose from the dead, so will you." This is a gift for you free of charge. You don't have to earn it. You don't have to prove yourself worthy

of it. In spite of what your title is here; divorced; single; mom; dad; cancer survivor; retired; starter; sub; you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. That is what sanctifies us; sets us aside; makes us different in God's sight and in our own minds; and gives us joy. That is the truth; that transcends everything on earth and takes us on a free trip to heaven in the blood and righteousness of Christ.

There's something I love about going to the movies. You walk into a theater, the lights go down; the music goes up; and you are transported out of your world and into a completely different time and place. You get to watch someone else's story; experience the joy and sadness. Sometimes you read a book and you can't wait for the movie to come out. But sometimes the movie is very disappointing. It's not anything like the book read; it isn't how you envisioned it. You leave the theater angry and disappointed. Back to reality after a tub of greasy buttered popcorn, wasted money, and a wasted afternoon.

The disciples had great hopes for Jesus. They envisioned Him setting up a kingdom on earth so they could rule over all things. But that wasn't according to the script. He was going to die and rise from the dead. But He would also go and prepare a place for them. He would come back to take them home. We now know how the story took place. We look forward to the Grand Finale. In the last verses of the Bible Jesus said, "**Yes, I am coming soon.**" The believers responded, "**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**" Then all that Jesus promised us will come true. That is our joy and hope to see Jesus come again; it will be greater than you could ever imagine.

Is there life out there? Are we not alone? Have you seen UFO's? In 1938 a radio program was broadcast that pretended there was an alien invasion. It was called "War of the Worlds." It was said that many people panicked and called the police. Wikipedia stated,

On November 2, 1938, the Australian Age characterized the incident as "mass hysteria" and stated that "never in the history of the United States had such a wave of terror and panic swept the continent". Unnamed observers quoted by the Age commented that "the panic could have only happened in America."

With all of the focus and misdirection turning from evolution to UFO's now, I wouldn't be surprised if Satan were to use it to draw more hearts astray and deceive even more people and bring them into panic. That is why it is all the more important to stay in the Word of Truth; in the Gospel of Christ - to shelter yourself from the lies and the falsehood; to shield yourself with what God has revealed to you in Christ. No matter what is out there, Jesus has come here - died - rose from the dead - ascended into heaven - and is coming again to take you home. He is no UFO. He is clearly identifiable. He is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, ruling, and coming again. Amen.