

10 Topic: The Restrainer

Tuesday, December 26, 2023 10:45 AM

Tagline

"And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [will let], until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed" | Paul, 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8a

Synopsis

There are varying views on the restraining force that keeps the false christ at bay until God's timing. This study is an examination not just of the identity of this restrainer, but also the events surrounding the pivotal time of the revealing of the man of sin and the following persecution as he sets up his kingdom from Jerusalem.

In this short Bible study, we will dig into the details of the primary suggested identities and see what the scriptures have to say about not only who the restrainer is, but some key pieces to understanding the events surrounding that time.

Overview

- Introduction
- What is Being Restrained?
- The Mystery of Iniquity
- Who is the Restrainer?
 - Michael the Archangel?
 - Holy Spirit-Filled Church the Restrainer?
- So Why Does This Matter?
- Conclusion

Details

- Introduction
 - Overview Timeline
 - This entire topic fits primarily in one position on the timeline, just before the middle of the 70th week of Daniel. So there won't be much movement, but in comparison to the other studies it will provide context as this is tied to a very pivotal event.
- What is being restrained?
 - This question comes from a letter to the church in Thessalonica from Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus.
 - In an apparent concern that they had missed the coming of the Lord and their gathering to Him, they had written to them previously. The response gives us a very helpful order of events that must precede His coming.
 - **2 Thessalonians 2:1-6** - "Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."
 - Here we are told that a falling away must come first and the man of sin revealed, in addition to how that revealing would take place. This begins the unparalleled time of great tribulation that faithful Israel is saved out of. This is covered in greater detail in the *Abomination of Desolation* study.

- It is the man of sin being revealed that we are told later is being restrained currently until God's timing.
- And so we know that the revealing of the man of sin at the abomination of desolation will be the beginning of unparalleled tribulation.
- The mystery of iniquity
 - **2 Thessalonians 2:7** - "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [restrain] [will let/restrain], until he be taken out of the way."
 - The mystery of iniquity is a very curious thing, in context of this passage, the work that it is doing seems related to the preparation for the revealing of the man of sin. Many a conspiracy theory could be tied to this amorphous title as the study of Bible prophecy clearly shows many things are being planned for the short period the dragon will have control over the whole earth. And in order to secure that control quickly, plans must be made and carried out in short order because he knows his time is short.
 - **Mystery (G3466)** - From a derivative (to shut the mouth); a secret or "mystery" (through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites): - mystery
 - **Iniquity (G458)** - From G459; illegality, that is, violation of law or (generally) wickedness: - iniquity, X transgress (-ion of) the law, unrighteousness
 - Indeed I tend to lump in many of the things I see happening in the world into this category.
 - Global governance and consolidation of control globally
 - Financial fears
 - Climate fears
 - Wars and rumors of wars
 - Ecumenicalism
 - Spiritual instability
 - Self-centered culture, the love of many growing cold
 - Living your own truth, everyone doing what is right in their own eyes
 - Calling good evil and evil good
 - Gaslighting of those recognition of all these things happening
 - There are many things building up to a place where humanity as a whole will feel chaotic and lost, fearful of the things that are coming and looking for someone to just fix things and bring them back to a place of stability. This is the work of the mystery of iniquity. Not one person or thing, but the influence of the spirit world on humanity, out of sight yet ever-present working toward the end and the reign of the dragon.
- Who is the Restrainer?
 - **2 Thessalonians 2:7-12** - Understanding what is being restrained, the man of sin, is there any identification of who this restrainer is? He is restraining until he is taken out of the way and at point the great tribulation begins at the abomination of desolation.
 - Michael the Archangel?
 - **Daniel 11:45-12:1** - "And he [false christ] shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."
 - Chris White [Daniel commentary](#)
 - Daniel 12:1 Michael standing up
 - ◆ Not getting ready to defend Israel, but if so then he fails since this is the same unparalleled time of Jacob's trouble in Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14, Jeremiah 30:4-7
 - ◆ Michael's "standing up" is what allows the tribulation to begin.
 - ◆ Colin Nicholl "*Michael, The Restrainer Removed*" points out that the term for standing up was noted by Jewish commentators like Rashi to mean "standing still" or to move aside to allow the time of tribulation to

happen. The Hebrew word to stand is often used for

- ◇ Inaction or a direct contrast to taking action, to stand still. (Joshua 10:13, Habakkuk 3:11, 1 Samuel 9:27, 2 Samuel 2:28, Nahum 2:9, 2 Kings 4:6)
- ◇ to refer to inactivity (2 Chronicles 20:17)
- ◇ describe the cessation of an action (2 Kgs. 13:18; cf. Gen. 29:35; 30:9; Josh. 1:15)
- ◇ 'stand silent' (Job 32:16)
- **Daniel 10:13** - "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia."
 - We see here that Michael, who stands for Israel, has been a restraining force previously.
- Stand up (H5975) - can also be used to arise, appear, come on the scene and as we see in Daniel 12:1, the unparalleled tribulation begins when Michael stands up. Unparalleled tribulation also begins at the revealing of the man of sin. What could Michael's visible rise on the scene mean besides revealing his role as the restrainer?
- **Revelation 12:7-9, 12-13** - "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. ... Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man [child]."
 - We see Michael tied to the start of the unparalleled great tribulation in both the vision of Daniel and John. It seems to be that Michael's role initially is restraining the revealing of the man of sin until God's timing. Then he stands, or steps aside from that job to go to war in heaven and cast the dragon to the earth. He knows he has a short time and so the plans of the mystery of iniquity working for this time go into effect and the dragon gives his freshly minted false christ all his power and great authority on the earth and goes after faithful Israel in Judea first, then once they are protected from him, goes after Jews and Christians globally who refuse to worship him.
- Holy Spirit-Filled Church the Restrainer?
 - I would recommend everyone do a word study of "Holy Ghost" and "Holy Spirit" to see exactly what the Rauch HaKodesh is doing when mentioned in scripture. The term "Holy Ghost" is only found in the New Testament while "Holy Spirit" is found in the Old and New Testaments. They both refer to the same Spirit of God. He is the presence of God **Psalm 51:11**, the fruits of which are seen in **Galatians 5:22-26** and a gift from God. **Luke 11:13** | **1 Thessalonians 4:8** | **John 7:39** | **Acts 2:33;38** | **Acts 8:15-19** | **Acts 10:45-47** What He does is:
 - *relays to us God's Word* **1 Thessalonians 1:5**
 - *baptizes us* **Matthew 3:11** | **Mark 1:8** | **Luke 3:16** | **John 1:33** | **Acts 1:5** | **Acts 10:38** | **Acts 11:16**
 - *seals us* **Ephesians 1:13** | **Ephesians 4:30** | **Romans 15:16**
 - *comforts us* **John 14:26** | **Acts 9:31**
 - *renews us* **Titus 3:5**
 - *shows God's love in our hearts* **Romans 5:5**
 - *brings us joy* **Romans 14:17** | **1 Thessalonians 1:6**
 - *brings us hope* **Romans 15:13**
 - *speak for/through us* **Mark 13:11** | **Luke 12:12** | **Acts 1:16** | **Acts 21:11** | **Acts**

28:25 | 2 Peter 1:21 | Jude 1:20

◆ *in other languages* **Acts 2:4**

- *speaks to us* **2 Corinthians 13:14**
 - *reveals to us* **Luke 2:26 | Acts 7:55 | 1 Corinthians 2:13 | 1 Corinthians 12:3 | Hebrews 3:7**
 - *sends us* **Acts 13:4**
 - *guides us* **Acts 16:6 | Acts 20:28 | 1 Peter 1:12**
 - *gives us gifts* **Hebrews 2:4**
 - *approves us as ministers of God* **2 Corinthians 6:6**
 - *witness with us* **Acts 5:32 | Romans 9:1 | Hebrews 10:15**
 - And it was the Holy Ghost that implanted Christ into Mary's womb. **Matthew 1:18-20 | Luke 1:35** We are the temples with which that Spirit dwells when we accept Christ and are obedient to His ways of selfless love. **1 Corinthians 6:19** The closest thing to restraining comes in **Acts 16** when the Holy Ghost forbids Paul to preach in Asia. It seems to me that the Holy Spirit is not a restrainer of evil, but our conscience and comforter.
 - **2 Thessalonians 2:1-5** - The first thing to be established is when our gathering to the Lord is to take place. Verses 1-5 make a clear statement regarding the subject of Christ's coming that it is tied to our gathering to Him. Two events are stated to take place before that happens.
 - 1) **Falling away** (apostacia)
 - 2) **Man of sin revealed** (when he reveals himself - more detail in the *Abomination of Desolation* study)
 - 3) **Our gathering to Christ** (harpazo)
 - **2 Thessalonians 2:6-12** - There is a view that holds that by continuing to read verses 6-10, the restrainer is hinted to be the Holy Spirit. Besides there being no indication of this from scripture itself, there's a logical fallacy presented in taking this view.
 - Note that in verse 1-5 the subject is the revealing of Christ, while in 6-10 the subject is the revealing of the man of sin. If we assume that the Holy Spirit is the restrainer, then:
 - 1) **Our gathering to Christ must take place** (The restrainer [Holy Spirit/church] has to be taken out of the way)
 - 2) **Then the man of sin can be revealed**
 - Clearly if the restrainer is the Spirit-filled church, these statements by Paul can't both be right. So was he mistaken? By no means! As we've covered already, there is credible scriptural connection both in context and sequence of events that the restrainer is not the Holy Spirit or the church.
 - The church was not afraid that the great tribulation had come, they were concerned that the day of Christ had come and they were left behind. We've been promised tribulation in this world by this world. **John 16:33** What we've been promised escape from is the wrath of God. That doesn't come until after the revealing of the man of sin and the signs of the sixth seal.
 - **Matthew 24:29-31** - When is the coming of the Lord and our gathering to Him? "Immediately after the tribulation of those days" at the signs of the sixth seal before the great and terrible day of the Lord.
 - **Luke 21:27-28** - "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."
- So Why Does This Matter?
 - Aside from understanding what God put in His Word for us to know, recall that the first thing Yeshua warned of regarding the end is deception. Many will come in His name, or title. We've even been told they will be on the earth while Yeshua returns in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory.

- How many Christians know this from their Bible? How many Christians study Bible prophecy? How many neglect it because it's too confusing and instead rely on teachers to teach them?
- If one spiritualizes scripture to mean what fits their pre-conceived notions instead of taking it seriously, what kind of deception could creep in?
- If we are told to expect Yeshua to return, not knowing how exactly, and the false christ shows up with signs and wonders and seems to fulfill some prophecies, could those who say they are Christians be deceived? I would hope not, but I must share what I see as error unsupported by scripture, however well-intentioned.
- I believe a clear order is presented in 2 Thessalonians 2 of events that must precede Christ's coming that necessitate our gathering to Him after the beginning of the time of Jacob's trouble.
 - As covered in greater detail in the *Great Tribulation* and *Framework of the End* studies however, the difference in time from the abomination of desolation to the coming of the Lord is likely just about a month. This makes pre-trib and pre-wrath positions effectively the same if not exactly when not assuming the tribulation is seven years and instead the midst of the week. It seems clear from Revelation 12:14-17 that this unparalleled time of Jacob's trouble in Judea will not spread globally until after Christ's return and our gathering. So unless you are in Israel at this time, it may be more of a news item than something that will affect you personally. Of course that is not guaranteed, already the mystery of iniquity is setting up the chess pieces to quickly consolidate power and effectuate the dragon's designs for his short rule. Bible prophecy is focused primarily on Israel so we're not given much else about the rest of the world.
- The point is not to be deceived by false christs and if everyone gets that, it doesn't much matter to me what one believes, our God is coming in the clouds with great power and glory.
- Conclusion
 - Something of comfort to be drawn from the deception of this time is that God is always in control. The mystery of iniquity may already be at work, planning for the future destruction of as much of mankind as possible, but God's Word has given us ample warning if we heed it.
 - The central nature of the abomination of desolation and the revealing of the man of sin bring this idea of the restrainer to the forefront of this time. Especially in the surrounding verses that reveal an order of events that must come to pass. But do these line up with other scripture placing the coming of our Lord and our gathering to Him after the start of the great tribulation? Absolutely, and from scripture the details will be covered in the *Harpazo: The Blessed Hope* and the *Framework of the End* studies among others.
 - Each place here a little and there a little throughout scripture agrees with itself and as these come together, a more wholistic picture emerges of what we can expect from our future. God gave us these so we would not be in darkness and to His glory, His Word has remained consistent and available to the end so that we might understand.

May God continue to bless you as you remain in Him.

Associated studies

- [Archangel Michael, the Restraint Removed, 2 Thessalonians 2:6–7 \(Part 2 of 2\) – Ep. 35](#)
- [Daniel commentary](#) by Chris White

References

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Associated Dates

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