



The Restrainer: A Refutation of The Rapture Doctrine Teaching On 2Thessalonians 2:7 by Randy Maugans

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Alan Horvath's Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ELApSSiKEQ&feature=autofb>
on 2 Thessalonians 2:7---The Holy Spirit As the Restrainer

In a series of exchanges with a teacher of the pre-trib rapture doctrine, Alan Horvath, I presented the following survey of scriptures which clearly identify the identity of the "restrainer", the one who letteth as Michael the Archangel---NOT the Holy Spirit, who is the third person of the Godhead.

To the end of at least addressing the points I raised, I will respond in a limited fashion to on-point issues based on scripture. Rather than attack the rapture doctrine, I would prefer to challenge the assumption---made by you, as well as most rapture teachers, that the Holy Spirit is this "restrainer", i.e.-the one who holds back. I use restrainer as it is the closest English word applicable to the context.

I will start by saying that this particular chapter of 2Thessalonians contains statements which lack direct corroboration in other scriptures---Paul here mentions previous teachings when he was in Thessalonica, and for which there is no real documentation---as in verse 5: *"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"* For this we lack any direct attribution so we must carefully limit the text to information available. For this reason, I do not think we can establish doctrine from just this letter of Paul without a wider scriptural underpinning. That Paul taught who/what this restrainer/withholder is, is clear, but it is not elaborated on in any other Pauline writings directly, to my knowledge.

As such, we need to establish doctrine on the identity of the restrainer directly from other scriptures which are more direct. This is Biblical: doctrine is established by two or more "witnesses" (scripture). Absent direct attribution we really must not insert any other "understandings".

NIV reads:

5Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? 6And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time.7For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.

AV reads:

2Thess. 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only **he who now letteth** [will let], until he be taken out of the way.

As to this first question: verse 7 refers to the mystery of iniquity (*anomia*), a/k/a-antichrist and by inference, the above mentioned "restrainer". Now I have to ask: WHERE in scripture is the Holy Spirit seen as this one who "holds back"?

The word '*katecho*' is a verb in the lexicon based on Thayer's and Smith's Bible Dictionary, and the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance which are keyed to the large Kittel and the "Theological Dictionary of the New Testament":

kat-ekh'-o - Verb -Definition: to hold back, detain, retain from going away, to restrain, hinder (the course or progress of), that which hinders antichrist from making his appearance; to check a ship's headway i.e. to hold or head the ship, to hold fast, keep secure, keep firm possession of to get possession of, take to possess.

This word is used in 19 verses in the NT and translated variously as: seize (Mat, 21:38), stayed (Luke 4:42), keep (Luke 8:15), take (Luke 14:9), had (John 5:4) made (Acts 27:20), hold or held (Romans 1:18 and 7:6), possessed or keep (1Cor. 11:2, 15:2 and 2Cor. 6:10), hold fast (1Thess. 5:21, Hebrews 3:6, 3:14, 10:23), withhold, let (2Thess. 2:6,7), retain(ed) (Philemon 1:3).

Young's Literal Translation of 2Thessoloni 2:6 says: "and now, what is keeping down ye have known, for his being revealed in his own time,⁷ for the secret of the lawlessness doth already work, only he who is keeping down now will hinder --till he may be out of the way,"

The application of this word in the context of 2Thess. 2:7 indicates a battle or state of war, would it not? In your own post on this subject you so state:

"This is a major point for me:

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus tells Peter that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His Church, while in Revelation 13:7 and Daniel 7:21, Satan makes war with the saints and prevails over them. Again, there is an obvious difference between Church and saints: the saints will be prevailed over, during the Great Tribulation; the Church will not be prevailed over, being in Heaven during the Great Tribulation."

So this is warfare. We agree. We disagree with the artificial division of this "Church" from the "saints"---I will comment on that later. I will add this verse:

Mark 12:36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool .

While YAHWEH states He is a man of war, that HE will "make thine enemies thy footstool", and many other triumphal statements, DOES HE, personally do battle? I preface that by stating: the Holy Ghost/Christ/The Father (YAHWEW) are ONE (John 10:30).

So WHO does fight YAHWEH's battles:

Genesis 3:24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden

Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. (this sounds literally like a "restraining", in fact the Hebrew word, haphak used here is an exact rendering of just such an action)

Numbers 22:31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

Psalm 78:49 He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.⁵⁰ He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence... (NOTE: the word 'evil' here does NOT mean 'fallen'---it means with evil intent, as in fierce.)

Psalm 104:4 Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

Matthew 13:41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity

And here are, I believe, the KEY verses to the identity of the restrainer:

Rev. 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

Rev. 12:9 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.

We now have an identity---tied directly o the end times battle---a battle of angels, headed by a being named Michael. Is there any additional corroboration for this?

Daniel 10:12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. 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.

Daniel 10:20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. 21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: **and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.**¹{holdeth: Heb. strengtheneth himself}

¹ This word, **prince** is the Hebrew word שַׂר sar, Strongs Exhaustive Concordance # 8269-from 8323; a head person (of any rank or class):--captain (that had rule), **chief (captain)**, general, governor, keeper, lord, ((-task-))master, prince(-ipal), **ruler, steward.**

Jude 1: 9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

This supplies THREE WITNESSES in scripture (all translations) which provide a clear view of this great battle in the heavens. Three witnesses as to the ONLY being named in scripture responsible for RESTRAINING, HOLDING DOWN --- kat-ekh'-o. NOWHERE in scripture is the Holy Spirit seen in this posture of warfare.

The work of the Holy Spirit is:

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you...26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged... 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Acts 1:2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:
(this is key: the Holy Spirit directs believers)

I think in this survey I have presented you with solid scripture as to the identity of this one (he) who restrains/letteth/witholdeth. The body of evidence as to the restrainer being Michael, the archangel, is compelling. Likewise, the mission of the Holy Spirit is documented in the verses noted above. I submit, Alan, that the insertion of the Holy Spirit into 2Thess. 2:7 does not withstand scriptural scrutiny---it is an insertion by certain Bible teachers into the verse by false interpretation. As I noted on your most recent FaceBook posting of the YouTube video of November 26, 2 Thessalonians | An Important Clarification (and which you apparently deleted): your study is based upon INTERPRETATION and not EXEGESIS. Your presentation holds underlying PRESUMPTIONS not evident in the plain rendering of the texts, regardless of translation.

I will note that for this discussion the subject of the (pretrib?) rapture is not necessary. But by divorcing this false assertion that the Holy Spirit is the restrainer; that HE is "removed" (taken out of the way) from the text of 2Thess. 2, other assertions made by you and other prominent

rapture teachers become more tenuous.

The notion that the "Church" (what 's up with the capital letter/proper name? Not in scripture.) is the Holy Spirit's presence would be fine if someone could tell me WHO is this "Church". The word rendered as "church" in the scriptures is ecclesia ---this ecclesia (called out ones) is seen throughout the entire book of Revelation! Your assertion of a distinction between believers and this mystical "Church" has no corollary in scripture. The term church means the believers:

ekklesia-a calling out, i.e. (concretely) a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both):-- assembly, church.

The church is simply a term for the believers, corporate or singular; equal to the temple in the NT which Paul noted:

1Cor. 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

Sorry, many of the arguments offered by pre-tribulation rapture teachers are specious: inventions by men like Chuck Missler and based on false teachings of Darby, Scofield, and Moody. The *harpazo* is likewise real, but separating it from the 7th trumpet resurrection is another invention. Alan, you said you are willing to be shown the truth in scripture. The above study is independent of MY personal view. I did the same study, and more like it based on some simple facts: I DON'T KNOW, I'M NOT THAT SMART, and I DON'T TRUST MAN to teach me.

Inserting the Holy Spirit into 2Thess 2:7---without any corroborative texts is an act of "adding to" the Word of God. It is NOT plainly written as such. As I've shown, IF you just read what scripture says and properly represent those written facts WITHOUT prejudice the picture is more clear than the elaborate web-spinning of the convoluted, self-referential "rapture" doctrine. Forget the rapture. Just take the scriptures and search out the contexts absent any bias. The truth will present itself and no man need show you.

I do not wish to dishonor you, or to be rancorous. But I hear many of the same tired, convoluted language used in rhetorical speakers of all stripes---notably the propagandists of Marxism. Jargon-laden inventions of language divorced from context. I have debated theologians and scholars on this. WHEN they abandon their rhetoric and adhere to solid, context-rooted expounding of doctrine, their arguments whither away.

I find agreement with you, and great truth in your other teachings, so this is not a broadside. I find myself grieved by the specific teaching noted above as many believers lack the ability to rightly divide scripture. To the end of truth I pose to you this most puzzling contradiction.

In Christ,
Randy Maugans-The Threshing Floor
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Epilogue:

The goal of an apologetic encounter is always to correct errant doctrine, as we are admonished to do in scripture (1Thessalonians 5:14; Ephesian 4:3,4; Galatians 6:1, among others). However, the fruits are not always evident as entrenched belief structures are difficult to break, unless the person is submitted to the Holy Spirit for correction.

As I have repeatedly found in dealing with rapture doctrine believers, their internal system of exegesis, flawed skills in rightly dividing the word, and dishonest tactics, often prevent them from any correction---even in matters where the case is air-tight. The above study was presented to Mr. Horvath who then proceeded to utilize his crafty skills to dissemble the plain facts presented---and to twist and distort the facts brought forward. His response is at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GspLunU1xWs>