

Is The CHURCH The Restrainer ?

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Consider, in part, both sides of this debate:

The Church **is** the restrainer of II Thes. 2:6, 7 VS The Church **is NOT** the restrainer of II Thes. 2:6, 7

Non-content evidences beside, let's not forget to ask this crucial question: What does the text of II Thes. 2 actually say, especially concerning the data which informs on the identity of the restrainer?

The pronouns for restrainer are "what" and "he." The pronoun "what" (vs. 6) does not identify the gender of the restrainer. The other pronouns for the restrainer of these two verses are "he" (fact) and "his" (vs. 6), though some tie "his" to the man of sin|lawlessness, not the restrainer – (this being a matter of interpretation, not fact). **That said, it must be acknowledged that the masculine pronoun is used to partially identify the restrainer.** IF the restrainer is the Holy Spirit of God, the gender of the pronoun would more likely be neuter – "it." IF the restrainer is the Church, the gender of the pronoun would more likely be feminine. Fact: The gender of the pronoun is masculine. The "he" pronouns are singular, not plural. Given the action of the restrainer – he has preeminent authority over the man of lawlessness (He is able to restrain because He is greater than | is sovereign over the man of sin) – the best candidate for the restrainer is God.

Getting back to the matter at hand, we cite another fact: The restrainer (if it is the church), is doing a **horrific** job at restraining evil today. Some could respond: "If the restrainer is not the church & the restrainer is God, then it is God who is doing a horrific job at restraining." This is a faulty perspective due to other options within the big picture of this matter. It very well could be the case – and we at Endurance Ministries believe it to be so – that God has already (yes, today!) withdrawn His restraint over the man of sin with His good purposes in mind. It's not that God is doing a poor at job at restraining the man of sin. It's that He is no longer restraining in order to allow evil to run its course. He has discontinued restraining so that the *end of days* can move into the closing *chapter* before our Lord's 2nd advent to the earth. This possibility needs acknowledgement today so that we avoid a very damning interpretation of this key passage.

We come to a fork in the road at this juncture. One can believe the church is the restrainer and face the problematic tenants flowing from this conclusion OR one can believe God has discontinued His restraining influence over the man of sin and, in light of biblical eschatology, discern we have entered into the remaining years of the final generation – say only years before the final 7 years (Daniel's 70th Week) before Jesus Christ comes back to the earth as outlined in Mt. 25:31 and Rev. 19. One's view on this matter of the identity of the restrainer is a huge issue within end-time considerations.

Now brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our [gathering together](#) to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means, for *that Day will not* come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. II Thes. 2:1-12 (NKJV)