

- 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,
- 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.
- 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?
- 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.
- 7 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.
- 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

Now read it again and put an **X** over every reference to the *man of lawlessness, lawless one, son of destruction, and who, whom, he, his, himself*. Then list what you learn about the man of lawlessness.

Now put a box over *restrains, he who restrains, and every he* that refers to him. Then list what you learn about the restrainer.

The Restrainer

Who is the restrainer? Only Paul and the Thessalonians really know for sure (verses 5–6). Some believe it is the Holy Spirit, the Helper Jesus spoke of in John 16:7–8.

Read what Jesus says just before His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane and put a **triangle** over every reference to the *Helper*, including every *He* and *Him*.

John 16:7–8

- 7 “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

- 8 “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment”

Read it again and **circle** every *you*. Notice where the Helper comes and what He does when He gets there. Who is going to be convicted and of what?

The Spirit of God Living in You

Every true believer, every true child of God, is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the One who makes us a new creation and helps us to be righteous . . . Could it be that the Holy Spirit in you is the restrainer? And that when we are caught up, the Holy Spirit working in and through us who are described by Jesus as “salt of the earth” and “light of the world” (Matthew 5:13–14) will be removed? We who convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment won’t be doing that any more. Think of the great void that will leave in the culture when the Church is taken out.

Oh Beloved, are you allowing the Holy Spirit in you to show and tell the world about Jesus—and the righteousness He demands, the righteousness that comes from faith? Oh how the world you live in needs to see Jesus in you and needs to hear His Word from your lips!



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See It for Yourself! Bible Study: *Living As God's Restrainer of Evil*



Living As God's Restrainer of Evil Until Jesus Comes

How important is it that you live your life as a messenger and upholder of truth until Jesus takes you home? Can it make a difference in the society in which you are living? Could it restrain the forces of evil? Let's see what God says.

Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians

In Paul's first letter, the Lord led him to write to these new Christians in Thessalonica about Jesus' second coming (for which they were waiting) and being without blame when He comes. In that letter, Paul talks about what will happen to the dead in Christ when Jesus comes **and** about the day of the Lord that will come like a thief in the night. These two different events are connected with Jesus' second coming. Paul deals with them in the order in which they will happen—**first the rapture, then the day of the Lord**. Let's look at the two texts and see what truth we can discover for ourselves.

The Rapture

The first event Paul mentions is often referred to by Christians as **the rapture**. We get "rapture" from *raptus*, the Latin version of the Greek word "caught up" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Read the following verses and underline every reference to *those who are asleep, who have fallen asleep, the dead in Christ*, and any pronoun such as *them*.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–17

- 13** But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.
- 14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Now read it again and mark every reference to *Jesus, Him, Lord* with a cross.

List what you learn from marking *those who are asleep* and *Jesus, the Lord*.

The Day of the Lord

Read the verses that follow and put a mark like this */////* over *the day of the Lord* or any other references to that day like *destruction*.

1 Thessalonians 5:2–6

- 2** For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.
- 3** While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.
- 4** But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief;
- 5** for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;

6 so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

Now read it again and circle every *you, we, and us*.

What do you learn at this point about *the day of the Lord*? Who will it affect? Will it affect Christians? How can you tell from these verses?

After 4–6 months, Paul wrote the Thessalonians a second letter, because apparently they heard from somewhere—a spirit, a message, or a letter—that **the day of the Lord** had already come. If so, what happened to the **rapture**—the dead in Christ being raised and caught up together with the believers who were alive and all being gathered together with the Lord in the air? Had they missed **Jesus coming for them**?

That would be a very upsetting message from wherever it came . . . to miss Jesus' coming and find yourself in the day of the Lord—a day of destruction (1 Thessalonians 5:2–3)! Let's see what Paul writes under God's inspiration. In doing so, you will begin to see how important your life as a Christian is to the culture in which you live.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1–8 and mark every reference to *the day of the Lord (it)* as you did before: */////*. Then make a list of everything you learn from marking it.

2 Thessalonians 2:1–8

- 1** Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,
- 2** that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.