

GNITN

The Rapture The Blessed Hope or Blessed Nope

Week 5

The Terms, The Terms, We Must Discuss The Terms

The Restrainer

For the mystery of lawlessness [rebellion against divine authority and the coming reign of lawlessness] is already at work; [but it is restrained] only until he who now restrains it is taken out of the way. ([2 Thess 2:7, AMP](#))

This famous scripture was written to the Thessalonians to assure them the Rapture had not occurred because the Antichrist was not able to be fully unrestrained. But the question has always been who or what is restraining the man of sin from coming out of the shadows. There are many theories but only one that makes total sense when you consider all the different factors. Here is what we know:

- The Restrainer is [referred](#) to as both neuter (τὸ κατέχον [to katechon] , “what is restraining”) and masculine (ὁ κατέχων [ho katechōn] , “He who now restrains”).
- The Restrainer existed in Paul’s day.
- The Restrainer has been continually and effectively restraining for nearly 2,000 years so far.
- The Restrainer is powerful enough to suppress the spiritual powers of darkness seeking to promote the man of sin.
- The restraint is global.

Knowing these conditions, who or what is the restrainer?

The Various Possibilities

To some it is human government that needs to be taken out his way, but human government is not seen as ending even after the Antichrist is revealed. And some governments actually promote sin. To others it was the Roman Empire, but that ended without the son of perdition showing up. Some thought it was the preaching of the Gospel, but such preaching doesn’t end even after the Tribulation starts. And some think it is Satan himself, but why would he ever restrain sin in any form? The best choice of these is that the restrainer has to be a force that is global and supernatural in nature. Of all the possible explanations, only the Holy Spirit fits all the characteristics. Only He has the power to restrain Satan for close to 2,000 years because He has done it before (see [Gen 6:3](#); [Gen 20:6](#); [John 16:18](#)). It fits the identity of the restrainer since the Holy Spirit is both gender neutral and male in Scripture. But that leads us to another question. If the Holy Spirit is who holds everything together (see [Genesis 1:1–2](#); [Job 26:13](#)), how can He be removed from the Earth? The simple answer is He can’t. How do we reconcile this? There is a powerful solution and it is not the Holy Spirit in general that needs to get out of the way, it is His influence and presence that needs to be removed. As Jesus told his disciples before He left, He needs to leave so the Holy Spirit can come and dwell inside them, be with them all the time. This was a totally new concept and just as the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, He will leave at the Rapture of the church since the believers He indwells will no longer remain on the earth. And this was exactly Paul’s logic when he told the Thessalonians this. If they were still on the earth, the Antichrist can’t be revealed. Simple as that.

How Do We Help?

The restraining is not passive, it is a constant, ongoing restraining which means we can actively restrain the Antichrist by letting the Holy Spirit work through us to hold back the things the spirit of

the Antichrist promotes. This includes working to reduce lawlessness, spiritual coldness, and disunity. It also means promoting and living a Godly life. This means just being active believers in the world influences it and restrains the spirit and actual presence of the Antichrist. In fact, just allowing Him to be seen and going into places that are currently havens for that unholy spirit weakens the influence that spirit has. It is an amazing thing really and something we need to be constantly cognizant of as we live out our lives.

It's All In A Day's Work

Now we address various words that are not correctly defined. When talking about the Rapture there are many terms that sound alike and to totally understand the various events before and during the end times, we need to take a closer look at each of them. Specifically, we need to determine what exactly the Day of the Lord, The Day of Christ, the Day of Wrath, The Day of Indignation, the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord, the Wrath of the Lamb, and The Days of Vengeance are. Other terms we will address are the Time of Trouble, the End of the Age and the Time of the End. Interchanging them just to support one's particular view of when the Rapture occurs is not being theologically sound. Letting the context of the scriptures themselves define them is the best way to approach this.

The Day Of The Lord

Some think that this day refers to the seven-year tribulation period as a whole while others think it refers to the last half of the Tribulation. Still others think it refers to the Battle of Armageddon at Christ's return. If we look at all of the Minor Prophets, we see that it is describing a point inside of the seven-year period. That would be a Minor Prophet point. [Joel 3:12-14](#) starts talking about the Day of the Lord and then describes the Battle of Armageddon. Other minor prophets describe the fire and plagues. [Joel 1:6](#) and [2:2-10](#) describe the invading army in the middle of the seven-year period. [Amos 5](#), however, mentions that the animals will attack during the Day of the Lord: *18 You say, 'If only the Day of the Lord were here, for then God would deliver us from all our foes.' But you have no idea what you ask. For that day will not be light and prosperity, but darkness and doom! How terrible the darkness will be for you; not a ray of joy or hope will shine. 19 In that day you will be as a man who is chased by a lion and is met by a bear, or a man in a dark room who leans against a wall and puts his hand on a snake.* ([Amos 5:18-49](#), TLB)

If we compare these prophecies with [Revelation 6:7-8](#) we see that the animals attack during the Fourth Seal, which is in the first half of the seven-year period. Adding all this up we can conclusively say that the Day of the Lord is the whole seven-year period.

The Day Of Christ

*2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that **the day of Christ** is at hand. 3 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; 4 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... 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming* ([2 Thess 2:2-4, 8](#) KJV)

In this portion of scripture, Paul assures the Thessalonians that they haven't missed the Rapture because the Antichrist has not been revealed. He mentions his rise, the desolation of the Temple and his destruction at the Second Coming of Christ which are events that happen at the beginning, middle and end of The Tribulation. So, the Day of the Lord and the Day of Christ refer to the whole seven-year period.

The Day Of Wrath

While God can and has poured out His wrath at any time and on anyone He chooses the term “The Day of Wrath” is a specific time. [Rom 2:5-9](#) mentions a time when God will pour out His wrath out on the wicked but the righteous get eternal life. This would include the Rapture and Day of the Lord. [Zeph 1:14-15](#) seems to show that the Day of Wrath is another name for the Day of the Lord.

Time Of Trouble

[Daniel 12](#) describes a time of trouble. This time begins with the rescue of believers. It refers to happening “at that time” which refers to the events mentioned in [Daniel chapter 11](#) (remember there were no chapter divisions in the original text). Chapter 11 mentions the rise and fall of the Antichrist, including the war with Egypt. This shows us that the Time of Trouble is the whole Tribulation period.

End Of The Age/Time Of The End

In [Matt 24](#) Jesus talked about the “time of the end” taking place after the Birth pangs, when the Abomination occurs. The term “end of the age” is a reference to [Daniel 11](#) where the prophet describes the rise and fall of the Antichrist including the war he will fight with Egypt. That war will occur during the first three and a half years of the Tribulation. This shows that the terms “the time of the end” and “end of the age” are referring to the whole seven-year period. [Daniel 12](#) also confirms this in the listing and timing of all the events in the Tribulation.

The Day Of Indignation

²⁴ *Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in **the day of indignation.*** ([Ezekiel 22:24](#))

Read in context, this refers to God judging the nations and separating out Israel through the fire of His wrath as gold from all other metals. If one also reads [Zephaniah 1:14-15](#) and [Isaiah 26:19-20](#) which both mention God’s Wrath ([Isaiah](#) also mentions the believers being rescued or raptured beforehand) it is clear that the Day of Indignation is referring to the entire seven-year period as well.

The Lamb’s Wrath

This is the time when Jesus, who is the Lamb of God, pours out His wrath possibly in response to the severe persecution of the Antichrist. This wrath is defined in [Rev 6:16-17](#) and [15:1](#) and takes place during the time of the trumpet and bowl judgments.

The Great And Terrible Day Of The Lord

This particular phrase only occurs twice in the Old Testament. In both cases it is referring to a time in the second half of the Great Tribulation:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord... ([Malachi 4:5](#), *KJV*)

³¹ *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.* ([Joel 2:31](#), *KJV*)

The sun going dark marks the middle of the Great Tribulation. Elijah ministers in the first half of the Tribulation and is killed at exactly the end of the first 1,260 days so this term refers to an event just after the midpoint of the Tribulation and is different from the general term “Day of the Lord.”

What Can We Conclude?

We have no less than seven terms that clearly refer to the seven-year period called the Great Tribulation. This offers conclusive proof that the Day of The Lord refers to the entire seven-year period.

What Is The Purpose Of The Great Tribulation?

This is a pretty important question since many believe the Church will be a part of the seven-year period of judgment. However, many scriptures support that the Church will not be around for these

events. Here are just a few of those passages:

¹⁰ *And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. ([1 Thess 1:10](#), KJV)*

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ ([1 Thess 5:9](#), KJV)

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. ([Rev 3:10](#), KJV)

Comfort?

¹⁵ *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words. ([1 Thess 4:15-18](#), KJV)*

Knowing what will happen in the Great Tribulation hardly brings a great deal of any comfort. Think about all the judgments that will come to the earth whether it be from demons, natural disasters, or human war weapons. Plagues, earthquakes, nuclear bombs will all beset the earth along with executions and disease none of which make a person feel good. The Rapture only brings hope if it rescues us from all of that.

The Purpose Is To Judge The Godless Nations And Bring Israel Back To God

So many times, we have seen how a nation rejects God. They persecute His people and even kill them all in rejecting the Gospel message they bring. It's happening even as we speak, and God is not sitting idly by powerless. He is biding His time and will judge these actions in a worldwide tempest of actions. But there is one thing He will not do and that is let all of those judgments come anywhere close to the very people He is wanting to protect. And He finally wants His beloved Israel and its people to accept Him as the Messiah He is.

And He Still Offers Salvation

Which is the most amazing act of love ever when you realize why the judgments are happening. He really doesn't want anyone to perish just as He said. Angels proclaiming the Gospel, 144,000 Jewish witnesses along with the two witnesses using world-wide communications to get their Good News out. There is a ton of mercy in the Tribulation and an innumerable number of martyrs and conversions happening so yes, God is more than desiring people to turn to Him in the most difficult time in the history of the earth. He even cuts the days short or no one would survive. Yes there is God's wrath being poured out, but His mercies are also being poured out to those who want it. The one thing missing is the Church who accepted Jesus before the Rapture. For them Jesus' death on the cross took that wrath for them. And all of this is a good place for an amen!