

The Holy Spirit: Restrainer of Evil

by Chuck Smith

The Holy Spirit is the restraining force against evil, holding back the powers and forces of darkness until the final battle, where the antichrist will seek to destroy the saints and inaugurate a new system of exchange.

Scripture: Genesis 1:26, Matthew 5:13, Matthew 16:18, Luke 4:6, Romans 6:16, 2 Thessalonians 2:7, Hebrews 2:8, Revelation 3:8, Revelation 13:2, Revelation 19:19

Topics: "The Role of the Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Chuck Smith emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit as the restrainer of evil in the world, highlighting the ongoing spiritual battle against Satan's forces. He explains that while Satan is preparing for a final conflict, the Holy Spirit, through the church, is currently holding back the full manifestation of evil. Smith warns that once the church is removed, the antichrist will rise to power, leading to unprecedented darkness. He encourages believers to recognize their role as a purifying influence in a decaying world and to rely on the Holy Spirit for strength and guidance. Ultimately, he calls for readiness for Christ's return and the establishment of His kingdom.

Transcript

Last week we talked about the work of the Holy Spirit in the world and the convicting of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment in drawing men to Jesus Christ. Tonight we wish to continue the subject of the work of the Holy Spirit in the world, as we see Him as the restraining force against evil.

The Bible tells us that there is one final, great battle to be fought before Satan is forced to give over the control of the earth to the Lord. And at the present time, Satan is mustering his forces for this final conflict, in which I feel that Satan is deceived into thinking that he is going to win.

In Revelation 19:19, John said,

And I saw the beast [that is, the antichrist], and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against Him [that is, Jesus Christ] that sat on the horse, and against His army.

So there is this one final conflict before the Lord establishes God's kingdom upon the earth.

In Revelation 13:2, John said,

And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon [or Satan] gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

This is a reference to the antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition, who will soon come on the scene to take over the governments of the world. Satan endows him with his power. He gives to him his throne. And he also gives to him great authority.

Originally the earth was the Lord's and the fullness thereof. He created it. When God created man and placed him upon the earth, He said, "Let Us make man and give him dominion over the earth" (Genesis 1:26). And so, God gave to man that dominion, or rule, over the earth. But man surrendered that dominion unto Satan in his double action of disobedience to the command of God, and obedience to the suggestion of Satan to eat the forbidden fruit.

Paul said in Romans 6:16,

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

And when Adam yielded himself in obedience unto Satan, he became a servant of Satan. And, thus, Satan gained dominion over the earth. Adam rebelled against the authority of God and the commandment of God. And it was a double action of disobedience and rebellion to the commandment of God and, by the same token, it was obedience to the suggestion of Satan. Man became a servant of sin unto death and Satan gained the rule over the earth--the dominion of the earth.

Now, God sent His Son in order to redeem the world back to God. And when Satan took Jesus up to the high mountain, he showed Him the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. And Satan offered them to Jesus if He would just bow and worship him, for Satan boasted, "They are mine and I can give them to whomever I will" (Luke 4:6).

Now this is manifested in Revelation 13:2, when we find that the dragon or Satan gives to the antichrist (the beast), his power, his throne, and great authority. Satan said, "It is mine. I can give it to whomever I will." Jesus did not dispute that. He recognized that Satan was the prince of this world. He called him such. But Jesus had come to redeem the world back to God. And by His death upon the cross, Jesus paid the price for our redemption. We are redeemed not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold from our vain manner of living, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, who was slain as a lamb without spot or blemish.

So Jesus, through the virtue of His death upon the cross, paid the price for the redemption of this world. But in Hebrews 2:8 the writer said,

Thou hast put all things in subjection under his [that is, Jesus'] feet. For in that he put all things in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under Him.

We do not yet see it. He has not yet laid claim to that which He purchased. In the meantime--and we will deal with this more fully at a later discussion--in the meantime, He has sealed us with the Holy Spirit of promise. This is the down payment, so to speak--the earnest of our inheritance until He redeems His purchased possession.

The Lord has redeemed me. I belong to Him. He has not yet claimed me and taken me home. But in the meantime, He has given to me the Holy Spirit to show that He is earnest in His intent to redeem me fully and completely, and to claim me as His own. So, God has put all things in subjection unto Jesus. We do not yet see all things in subjection. He has not yet taken the authority by which He is to reign.

Now in Revelation chapter 5, we find Jesus doing just that--taking authority. We find Him coming, taking the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne, as His worthiness is declared. But that is a yet future event. We do not yet see the world in subjection unto Jesus Christ. In fact, the world lies in the control of the wicked one, even to the present time.

For His own reasons and purposes, God has left Satan in control over the present, evil world system. God intends that during this time in which Satan is still in control, those who desire to serve God, to live with God, can be redeemed from the power of sin through Jesus Christ. They can be sealed with the Holy Spirit, and they can be empowered by the Holy Spirit to live in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, Christians are then waiting for that day.

We are living in an unredeemed world as yet. However, being redeemed and living in this unredeemed world that is still under the power of Satan, we find ourselves in the midst of a spiritual warfare. And it is becoming more pronounced every day. Satan is mustering his forces for this final battle and he is manifesting his power as never before. Satan is seeking to destroy all of the influence of Jesus Christ from this earth and that also entails the destruction of the Christians and their influence of righteousness.

We are in a battle! Jesus said to His disciples, "You are the salt of the earth. You are to be a purifying influence. You are to prevent the rottenness. But if the salt has lost its savor, it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under the foot of man" (cf. Matthew 5:13). We are in a heavy spiritual battle.

Modern technology has brought the darkness of the world right into our homes, by way of television and by way of radio. And the church of Jesus Christ has been extremely weakened by compromise with the world. When Jesus was writing to His faithful church of Philadelphia (and that is the true church in the last days), He said, "Thou hast a little strength" (Revelation 3:8). That is all. We are not a great, mighty force and power for righteousness. Would to God we were. But there has been too much leaven, even within the church. And the church's position, as far as the world is concerned, has been extremely weakened as a result of so many compromises.

It is Satan's strategy to bring all of the governments of the earth under the control of one man, who is referred to in the Bible as the man of sin. He is the son of perdition: the one man that Satan will vest with his powers, with his throne, and with his authority. And so, Satan's instrument to rule the world--and through this man be worshipped by the world--is called by various names in the Bible. "The beast" is the name generally used in Daniel 7 and Revelation 11 and 13. 1 John 2 and 4 refer to him as the "antichrist." Paul calls him, "the man of sin and the son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

Now as he has been vested with the powers of Satan, he will be able to work all kinds of supernatural signs and wonders by which he will astound the world. He will be able to do miraculous things. In Matthew 24:24 Jesus declared,

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Second Thessalonians 2:9 Paul said, "Even him [that is, the antichrist] whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders"--Satan gives him his power. And so he comes with all of these powers and signs and lying wonders.

Revelation 13:11 speaks of the false prophet who will work together with the antichrist.

I beheld another beast [that is, the false prophet] coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, but he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all of the power of the first beast before him, and he causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. (Rev 13:11-13)

Daniel tells us,

And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify [himself] in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. (Dan 8:24-25 KJV)

He will be a violent enemy of God. He will speak blasphemous words against God. Daniel 7:25 says,

And he shall speak [great] words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time [or three and a half years].

Daniel 11:36 says,

And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

Second Thessalonians 2:4, speaks of this man of sin (or 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.

Revelation 13:5-6 says,

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months [three and a half years]. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

And we then read that he will make war against the Jews, who will be known as the saints and God's elect in that day. The church will already have been raptured out of the world. We will deal with that in a moment.

It was given to him power to make war with the saints, Revelation 13:7, and to overcome them. Power was given to him over all the kindreds and tongues and nations.

Daniel 7:21 says,

I beheld and the same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them.

Now Jesus spoke of His church in Matthew 16, after Peter's confession that He was the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). The church of Jesus Christ, though weak, shall still prevail. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the church will prevail.

However, when the antichrist comes on the scene and makes war with the saints, he will overcome them. He will prevail against them, thus showing that those saints cannot be the church; but they are often called the tribulation saints. And for the most part they are the Jews who will turn to Jesus Christ during this period of great tribulation.

The antichrist will rule over all the earth. Revelation 13:7-8 says,

And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Daniel 7:24-25 says,

And the ten horns out of this kingdom [that is the final federation of nations, world governing empire, ten kings combining together] are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak [great] words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

Revelation 17:16-17 again speaks of the ten horns, [the ten kings],

And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, [the false church], shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill His will, and to agree, and to give their kingdom unto the beast.

So, God will put in their (the kings) hearts to turn the world over to the rulership of this man--unto the beast, "...until the words of God shall be fulfilled" (Revelation 17:17).

Now the antichrist will inaugurate a new system of exchange, where money will be done away with and he will usher in a cashless society. Now a few years ago, I used to talk about a cashless society and everybody sort of scratched their heads. They said, "Oh, a cashless society. Whoever heard of that?" Well, who has not heard of that now? If you read the business section of the newspapers, surely you have come across this. If you have read Forbes magazine surely, you have come across this. We are hearing more and more of the cashless society. I noticed just this past week in the grocery store, that it has a sign, "We accept VISA, MasterCard, Discover cards." I mean, it is all there. And more often I find people standing in the line, who are giving their cards at the registers now. They can take their cards and just sign a little receipt. So, more and more we are moving towards this cashless society.

Listen to what the Bible has to say about this,

And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads. And that no man might buy or sell save that he had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. (Revelation 13:16-17)

At home in my drawer, I have a little plastic device that looks sort of like a squirt gun. But it has a little needle and it is a little device to inject these little transmitters, which are about a half of an inch long and a fraction of an inch wide. And some of them are even smaller. It is used to insert these little chips--microchips or transponders--right under the skin. Now with these and with the use of satellites, they can trace, triangulate, and find anybody anywhere in the world, who has one of these little transmitters. I have one of these devices at home, designed to inject these little transmitters under the skin. This microchip, of course, can have all kinds of information concerning you--your bank balance, or whatever. You say, "I am not worried about that. I do not have any money."

People are becoming reluctant (and rightfully so!) to carry cash any more because of the fact that crime is really out of control. The ideal answer is to go to computerized transactions. We are already doing it. We are doing it now with cards, but it would be a very simple step to move it to identification that is affixed upon a person's body, either the right hand or forehead. With this new health program that they are touting, in order to make certain that you have a right for the healthcare, they are talking about everyone receiving a national kind of an identity card or some kind of an identification. Children now, at birth are given social security numbers. I mean, the whole thing is coming down. Where are we?

Well, as we look at the world, it is rapidly moving toward this one-world government. We hear words such as "global community," "global economy," "global banks," and "global action." I mean, we are hearing it all the time. We are moving towards the global world, a one-world government. These terms are constantly being used in the media until they have become very common for us to hear.

We talk about the necessity of global cooperation. We talk about the necessity of united efforts to go in and stop the war in Bosnia, and how it is necessary to have a global army--a global peace force. And more and more the United States is surrendering its troops to control of the U.N. and the generals and so forth of the U.N.--not necessarily the United States--as we are moving towards this global effort to bring global peace.

With the weapons of destruction that have been developed by modern technology, they realize the only hope for survival of mankind is through global government. There are powerful forces here in the United States known as the Council for Foreign Relations and the Trilateralists, who have as their goal this global government and they are in a position to move our nation into cooperation and submission to the global authority. More and more powers are being given to the U.N. to make laws, world laws, which supercede the laws of the states or the independent governments.

With the crime rate rising, as it is out of control, the only way that can effectively stop all the robberies and the drug dealings, is to get rid of money. It is estimated that the government is losing billions of dollars every year in uncollected taxes. So, if all of the transactions to buy or sell were made by computerized identity numbers, then they will be able to trace everything that you bought or sold and it will eliminate stealing money, because money will be worthless.

I have a five hundred billion dollar bill in my office. It is the largest bill ever printed--five hundred billion dollars! Of course it is Serbian. It is becoming a collector's item. I am going to keep it. It is worth about eight dollars to collectors now, because it is the largest bill ever printed. And so it is becoming sort of

popular with some of the people who collect those kind of things. And so they say it is worth eight dollars now in Germany, as a collector's item.

The banks are calling for a cashless society. The businesses are moving towards a cashless society. In fact, I am still one of those rare individuals who pay cash and I usually shock them. They say, "Do you want to put this on your charge card?" I say, "No, I will pay in cash. Do you still take it?" "Well yeah, but..."

Things are really pretty much in place for the surrendering to the world system--world government. They are definitely in place to eliminate money as a means of exchange, and to go to the cashless society. That could happen any week. You could at any time pick up the morning paper and read that you have two weeks to turn in all of your cash. After two weeks, it will have no value. In fact, this is being proposed right now and if you turn in more than \$5,000 in cash, then you will have to fill out an IRS form and so forth, because they wonder why you have that much cash. And so, this has already been proposed and it could happen over night, and it will happen over night. You will not be given any warning of this. But just one day you will pick up the morning newspaper and it will say that cash is to be eliminated in two weeks. And you will have two weeks to turn in all of your money into the account--the numbered account. Things are in place for this to happen.

What is the delay? What is holding back these powers and forces of darkness that are wanting to take over the full control of the earth? Here we have the work of the Holy Spirit in the world, restraining these powers of darkness and hindering them from inaugurating their final man of power.

Second Thessalonians 2:7 says,

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work. Only he who now hinders will hinder until he is taken out of the way, and then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

The Holy Spirit is hindering, standing in the way, restraining these powers of evil. Until He is taken out of the way, and immediately the wicked one then shall be revealed. Now it is actually the Holy Spirit in the life of the believers that is the hindering force. Some say, well, it is just the Holy Spirit. No, it is the Holy Spirit in the church--in the life of the believers. And as soon as the church is taken out of this world, there will be no more restraining forces against evil--no more voices against evil. The restraining force of the church will be removed and immediately, once the church is removed, this man of sin will take over using his powers that will be given to him by Satan. And the world will be plunged into darkness such as the world has never seen before, or will ever see again, thank God!

It is only the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church that is keeping Satan from this final thrust to gain absolute control over all the earth and plunging the world into its darkest hour. The mystery of iniquity is already at work. We see it. We see the decaying effects of sin. We see it everywhere. The spirit of antichrist is all around us. Jesus Christ is being mocked, being scorned, being ridiculed and derided.

A cultist is now being defined in governmental circles, as one that believes that the Bible is the inerrant word of God and that Jesus is coming again. If you believe these things, you are now being classified as a cultist. And such belief gained you the title of a religious fanatic. And this is a term--watch for it--for they acknowledge the greatest hindrance to this move towards the absolute control over the world, the greatest hindrance is the religious fanatics. And you hear a lot of groups being termed as religious fanatics. And religious fanaticism has been branded as one of the greatest evils in the world today. One of the greatest

threats to peace comes from the religious fanatics. The thing that is holding back the New Age is the religious fanatics. There is a movement towards the eradication of the religious fanatics, in order that there will be nothing to hinder.

Well, there is a master plan to remove a good portion of the religious fanatics and then will the powers of evil have their day. But unbridled evil cannot last long. A society with unbridled evil cannot exist for any length of time. So once the power of the Holy Spirit within the church is removed and no longer restraining, the powers of evil will take over. It will be a quick plunge into the darkest hour of the history of man. It will not last long at all. It will be straight down into the abyss, as far as the world is concerned.

There are powerful men who have been in the media spotlight for many years, who are waging a powerful war against the born again believers. Steve Allen, Carl Sagan, Ed Asner, and Norman Lear, have all been seeking to subvert the faith of many and to make Bible-believing Christians look like people who are bereft of their senses. Oh, how the powers of darkness long to take over the control of the world completely! But they cannot just yet. The Holy Spirit in the church is restraining it. He is that restraining force in the world today, holding back the tide of evil that is building up and ready to flood over the earth.

We are told in the Bible about two witnesses that God is going to send to the Jews in these last days after the church is gone. And they are, quite possibly, Moses and Elijah. We are told how they will be hated by the world. And if a person seeks to hurt either of these two witnesses, fire comes from their mouths and destroys their attacker. Thus, the Scripture says, those who try to hurt these witnesses of God are to be killed.

You remember when Elijah was on the earth before, the king sent out a captain with fifty men to bring him in as a prisoner. And he said, "Oh thou man of God, come down. The king has sent me to arrest you." And Elijah said, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And fire came down and consumed him with his fifty men. The king sent out another captain with fifty and he said the same thing, "Oh thou man of God, come on down. You are under arrest." Elijah said, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you with your fifty men." The third fellow was a little smarter. He said, "I am a family man, sir. And I am under orders of the king. Please, would you mind? Have mercy on me." But here again, anyone seeking to hurt them, fire comes out of their mouth and destroys them and thus are they killed.

However, the Scripture says, when they have completed their testimony, then the beast will make war against them and overcome them and put them to death. But he cannot do it until they have completed their testimony, until the church has completed its testimony. We are here to be a restraining force against the evil through the power of the Holy Spirit, not through the political processes. That will never work. This is a spiritual battle and it is only through spiritual weapons that we will ever have any hope of success.

Satan loves to draw the Christian into the physical arena because he can make mincemeat out of him. Jesus said, "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8). And if you try to go in and fight the political processes, look out--you are going to get just taken care of, but good! God has given us spiritual weapons. We need to use them. They are the only thing that we have of real force in this conflict. God will preserve us until we have finished our testimony. And when the church has finished its testimony, then the Lord will remove His church. The restraining forces will be gone and Satan will take over. Then the powers of darkness will be in full control.

In Revelation 5, John sees the church in heaven rejoicing over the victory of the Lamb. The church is declaring the worthiness of the Lamb to take the scroll and to loose the seals--the title deed of the earth. When Jesus takes the scroll, when He begins to loose the seals in chapter six--first notice the church is in heaven in chapter five. They are rejoicing in the Lamb and declaring His worthiness, because He has redeemed us by His blood out of every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. He hath made us kings and priests unto our God. We shall reign with Him on the earth. But then in chapter six, when He begins to break the seals of this title deed to the earth, the first seal brings forth the antichrist, coming forth to conquer and to destroy.

The power of the Holy Spirit in the world is to restrain the power of the antichrist from taking over. As soon as the Spirit of God within the church is removed, then the powers of darkness move in. So, the Holy Spirit in our lives today is a very important factor in this world that is ready and willing to be taken over by the powers of darkness. The forces of darkness are in control now.

I personally believe that they cannot quite understand why the whole program cannot be culminated. They have been attempting to, but I do not think that they even--well, I think they are beginning to realize it because they are beginning to talk about the religious fanatics that are keeping back the progress of world peace. So they are beginning to realize what it is. But they are ready to move. Me too! I am ready to move. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!

Father, we thank You for the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. And Lord, we pray that we might be that purifying influence while we are here. Let us be, Lord, a strong witness for You. May we bear faithful testimony to the truth. Lord, we pray that You will hasten the day, that we might complete our testimony. Lord, that You might receive us out of this dark, black world, in order that those powers of sin might have their final day, in order that You might come and establish Your kingdom of righteousness, light, joy, and peace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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