

2 Thessalonians 2:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

Analysis

And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time—what withholdeth (to katechon, τὸ κατέχον, the restraining thing/force) is neuter gender, referring to an impersonal force or principle. This restrainer prevents the man of sin's premature appearance—**that he might be revealed in his time** (kairō, καιρῷ, appointed season).

Interpretations include:

1. Roman government maintaining order
2. the Holy Spirit
3. the church's presence
4. angelic forces
5. God's sovereign decree.

The Thessalonians knew Paul's meaning from oral teaching (v. 5), but it remains partially mysterious to us. What's clear: evil is restrained until God's appointed time releases it.

Historical Context

Roman law and order (Pax Romana) did restrain anarchy and lawlessness in Paul's day. Many early interpreters saw Rome as the restrainer. When Rome fell, some expected immediate Antichrist appearance. This shows the danger of over-specific identifications of prophetic symbols.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What restraining influences on evil do you observe in current world events?
2. How does God's sovereignty over evil's timing comfort you amid increasing lawlessness?
3. Why might God intentionally leave some prophetic details unclear to original audiences?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	νῦν	τὸ	κατέχον	οἴδατε	εἰς	τὸ	ἀποκαλυφθῆναι
And	now	G3588	what withholdeth	ye know	that	G3588	might be revealed
G2532	G3568		G2722	G1492	G1519		G601
αὐτὸν	ἐν	τῷ	ἐαυτοῦ	καιρῷ			
he	in	G3588	his	time			
G846	G1722		G1438	G2540			

Additional Cross-References

2 Thessalonians 2:3 (Parallel theme): 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;