

# **Why Will God Release Satan To Deceive The World Again?**

## **Feast of Tabernacles**

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Well, brethren, I'm sure most all of you hearing this message today have at least some familiarity with the history of World War II. So, if I mention the name Adolf Hitler, I'm sure most of you have some meaning and a picture that comes to your mind when I mention that individual's name. If you're at all familiar with some of the history, you know history largely holds him responsible for World War II. Certainly, Italy and Japan had their major parts in it as well, but history tends to look back. And if they focus on one individual whom they look primarily responsible for that, it's Adolf Hitler.

And if you look at what all the history tells us, it wasn't just wars that he was responsible for. There was an outright attempt to absolutely exterminate the Jewish race. And this was done through concentration camps. They were done not only in Germany but in numerous other nations throughout Europe that Germany had conquered. And through these efforts, there were approximately about six million people who were murdered and exterminated through these camps. And that's just those of Jewish descent throughout the time of Hitler's reign.

Now that doesn't even begin to take into consideration all those that were not of Jewish descent who died within the camps or the number of people who died on the battlefield. Because, you can imagine through all the military conquests, there were many, many people who died on both sides of that equation. Not only in the nations that were being invaded but even on the German side fighting at Hitler's commands, fighting for them. So, there were countless millions of people who were killed as a result of this man's leadership and his actions.

Now, if you're at all familiar with the history of what took place there, you know how this movie ended. Basically as the Allied Forces were closing in and about to conquer Germany, Hitler saw the inevitability that he was about to lose the war. So, he committed suicide. He took his own life, basically rather than being forced to be captured by the Allied Forces.

But for our purposes today, I'd like you to imagine a different scenario that might have ended here. Let's suspend reality for a moment, and again, because what I'm about to tell you is a completely fictitious scenario. But I'd like you just to think about this to kind of get our minds set for where we're going today.

Imagine a different ending to the story. Imagine that the Allied Forces actually got Hitler before he had a chance to commit suicide. And they capture him and they put him in prison. And he's held in prison for a number of years.

During the time that all this takes place, Europe is basically rebuilt. While the destruction that was caused from all the military conquests is rebuilt, the economy is rebuilt and stabilized there. Peace has settled to the whole area of Europe because this extends over a number of years.

And then the Allied Forces get a unique idea. They decide, "You know what? We think we've put him in prison long enough. Let's let him out. In fact, let's just not only let him out, let's give him his old job back. Let's put him back in charge of Germany."

What do you think would be the reaction to that decision? Well, imagine asking a Holocaust survivor what their thoughts on this would be? I'm willing to bet it would sound something like this:

"Have you lost your mind? Have you gone absolutely insane? Do you not remember the atrocities that this man is responsible for? Did you forget all of history? Do you not realize that the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior? And this man's track record gives us a very good idea of what to expect if he is put back in charge again. Do you not realize this? Have you gone completely insane?"

Well, as you can imagine, the scenario I just laid out for you is completely fictitious. As you know, I made it up. That didn't happen.

But, as we look forward in Biblical prophecy, we do know it for an absolute fact there is a scenario very similar to the one I just described that will happen because the Bible tells us that. A little over a week ago, we all kept the Day of Atonement and we all looked forward to a day when Satan the Devil, an individual who is far worse than Adolf Hitler could ever be accused of being, because this is the most evil maniacal being that has ever existed in the history of mankind. He has been a thorn in the side of the human race since the Garden of Eden to this time. And there are way more atrocities that he can be held responsible for than can ever be blamed on Adolf Hitler. This individual is far worse. So, we all look to the fulfilling of the Day of Atonement knowing that's the time this guy gets taken out of the equation and for a thousand years the world gets a break. And they get some peace from this individual.

But then God does something very puzzling. He lets him loose again. And He gives him his old job back. Now, when we look at that as physical human beings, that can be a real head scratcher. You kind of scratch your head and say, "Okay. I don't get this. I very much get the idea and very much look forward to the day that this evil individual will be taken out of the picture and we get a break from this. Why in the world would you let him loose and give him his old job back? Isn't this going to be 'Ground Hog Day?' Isn't he going to repeat the same scenario again? Isn't the best predictor of future behavior past behavior? Why would you do this? This doesn't seem to make a lot of sense."

What we're going to do today is look at this particular subject, particularly from a logic of "Why? Why would God do this?" That's really what we're going to focus on because, again, when we look at it through human physical eyes, this is a real head scratcher. You say, "Okay, I don't really get this? What's the logic behind doing something like this?" So what we're going to do today is look at the Bible and see a logic as to why God might do something of this nature.

So, if you would like a title for this sermon, it's

### Why Will God release Satan to Deceive the World Again?

Because we're focusing on this aspect of "why?" Because we know from Biblical prophecy that's exactly what's going to happen.

So, to start off with, let's turn over to Revelation chapter 20. Let's read over a couple of scriptures we probably covered wherever you kept the Day of Atonement. You probably covered this because this is very much the meaning of the Day of Atonement. It's Revelation 20 and verse 1:

**Revelation 20:1.** *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.*

*2) He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;*

*4) and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. (NKJV)*

Now, we're going to come back to that last sentence here in just a moment. But as I mentioned here, these first couple verses that we just read, this is the fulfilling of the Day of Atonement. This is when Satan is taken out of the equation, basically put in prison, and held away from affecting mankind for a thousand years.

So, to look at the subject, let's first of all take a brief look at the environment that winds up enabling to be created as a result of him being removed from the picture because it's a very positive one. It's very much what we look forward to in the fulfilling of the Feast of Tabernacles. It's a wonderful environment that comes about as a result of Satan being removed from the equation.

So, let's just take a brief look at a couple of scriptures here and we're barely going to scratch the surface here but just turn over to Isaiah chapter 2. Look at a very common scripture here that we read this time of year. Isaiah 2, we'll start reading in verse 1.

**Isaiah 2:1.** *The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.*

*2) Now it shall come to pass in the latter day that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it.*

*3) Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

*4) He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. (NKJV)*

It's a very common scripture that we tend to read this time of year in looking at the Millennium because it's a fabulous environment. It's a world of peace. Wouldn't it be great to turn on the news and you don't hear any news about all the conflicts and the wars and the strife going on in the world? It's just peace and there is no war. Turn with me over to Micah chapter 4 and we'll look at another scripture very similar to this one. It's Micah 4:1.

***Micah 4:1.*** *Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it.*

*2) Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

*3) He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.*

*4) But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. (NKJV)*

Now notice, if everyone is under their vine and their fig tree and no one makes them afraid, we're not just talking about a world without war, without one nation going to war against another. If no one makes you afraid, you don't have a significant crime problem in your neighborhood. You don't have to worry about your neighbor coming over and breaking in and stealing your stuff or trying to beat you up for it because no one makes you afraid. It's a peaceful positive environment.

And, again as I mentioned here, I'm barely scratching the surface on the scriptures that basically describe this environment. I'm sure you're all familiar with many of the others. The animals will be tamed. The wild animals—the lions and tigers and bears—will be tamed and you can pet them. The crops will be abundant. There will be no scarcity of food. The earth is like a Garden of Eden and it's a peaceful positive environment. It's a wonderful place to be when you look at all these prophecies, what person wouldn't want to live in a world like that? It sounds fantastic. We really look forward to it.

But then something very puzzling happens. Turn back over to Revelation chapter 20. We'll pick up the story where we left off. Revelation 20 and this time we're going to pick up in that last sentence that I mentioned we were going to come back to before in verse 3. As you know the rest of verses 1 through 3 we've already read and know specifically it's referring to Satan being bound. But the last sentence says:

**Revelation 20:3.** *But after these things he must be released for a little while. (NKJV)*

Notice first of all, it says he must be. It doesn't just say he will be. It doesn't just say this is an event that is going to happen. It says he must be. It's telling us this is a requirement.

In fact, I'd like to share with you the meaning of the Greek word here that is translated as "must" in English. And I'm probably going to mispronounce this. So, I'll apologize upfront but I think it's pronounced "de-i". It's "d-e-i" in English and it's Strong's number 1163. According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon—now Thayer's has a more extensive write-up on the definition of this word than I'm going to share with you. What I'm actually going to read are just a few excerpts from that, but I'm taking several excerpts I think to get to the core of the meaning here.

And here's how Thayer's defines this word: *it is necessary, there is need of, it behooves.* It denotes any sort of necessity; *necessity in reference to what is required to attain some end.* In other words, to attain the end that God intends, this is a necessity. This is a requirement to get to where God wants this to go. And that's an important thing for us to realize. Again, that can be a head scratcher for us as physical human beings, but realize that's what he's telling us. To get to the outcome that God intends, this is a necessity to make that happen.

Now, let's turn over to verse 7 and pick up some more details here, Revelation 20:7.

**Revelation 20:7.** *Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison 8) and [he] will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. (NKJV)*

Now, we're going to come back to that phrase here in just a second.

**Revelation 20:9.** *They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. (NKJV)*

So here we have a picture of Satan being let loose. And what does he do? No big surprise—what does he do? He goes out and stirs up trouble. He stirs up conflict and envy and strife and violence. And now he's got people going to war with each other.

Again, this is “Ground Hog Day.” He’s repeating... I’m referring to the movie with Bill Murray if you’re not familiar with that reference, but basically it’s a repeating of the same scenario again. That’s what’s happening here.

But notice here it mentions with Gog and Magog. It says, “*whose number is as the sand of the sea.*” Now if you take a Bible computer program like PC Study Bible and I reference that one because that’s what’s on my personal laptop. But you do a search on the phrase “the sand of the sea.” You’ll see that’s used a number of times throughout the Bible and the vast majority of times that that particular phrase is used, it’s used as an analogy to refer to the size of the population of how large the Twelve Tribes of Israel would become over time because oftentimes, we’re referring to Abraham and Jacob and others saying, “Your descendents will become as the sand of the sea.” And there are numerous other references, again, throughout the Old Testament, but it’s normally referring to what the population of what Israel would become over time.

Now understand what I’m about to cover here I’m not in any way trying to attach any exact numbers to anything here. That’s not my purpose at all. I’m just trying to get us to grasp the magnitude of these events here because, if we just take the United States alone today, now again that’s only one nation that has descended down from the Twelve Tribes of Israel. And we know there are numerous others, but again just to get us thinking. If you just take the population of the United States today, we’re talking about a population of over three hundred million people. Now, obviously all of those people are not from Israelite descent. That’s a mixture of nationalities, but again you get the idea. If we’re only talking about one nation and there’s a handful of nations today that we would identify as having been primarily descended from the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

My point being this phrase “sand of the sea” is obviously meant to refer to a huge number of people. He’s not talking about a small band of rebels that Satan deceives and gets stirred up to come and cause some trouble. This isn’t a local street gang. This is millions if not hundreds of millions of people that he has gotten stirred up to do this. Again, if we just kind of use how the Bible tends to use these phrases. So understand this is no small conflict. This is a very big deal that’s taking place here.

Now, turn over to Ezekiel chapter 38 and we’ll see some more details described here of this particular event. It’s Ezekiel 38 and we’re going to read through chapter 38 and just summarize some of 39 because both of these chapters describe this particular event in greater detail. It’s referring to the same event that we just read about in Revelation but in much more detail. Again Ezekiel 38:1:

***Ezekiel 38:1.*** Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying,  
2) “Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him,  
3) and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal.

4) *I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all of your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords.*

5) *Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet;*

6) *Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops—many people are with you.*

7) *“Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them.*

8) *After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. (NKJV)*

Notice the people had been dwelling safely prior to this.

**Ezekiel 38:9.** *You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many people with you.”*

10) *‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “On that day it shall come to pass that thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan:*

11) *You will say, ‘I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates’—*

12) *to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land. (NKJV)*

Now notice this was a people who dwelled safely without walls, without gates. They’re not used to defending themselves against war. This is obviously a future time when they’ve been used to living in peace. They don’t have a national defense system set up to defend themselves and to guard against war. They’re used to living in a world where there hasn’t been war. This has been a peace and safety situation and now things are radically changing as a result of this happening.

Now, pick up again in verse 13.

**Ezekiel 38:13.** *Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions will say to you, ‘Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?’ ” ’*

14) *“Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “On that day when My people Israel dwell safely, will you not know it?*

15) *then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army.*

16) *You will come up against my people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes.*"

17) *Thus says the Lord GOD: "Are you he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them?"*

18) *"And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," says the Lord GOD, "that My fury will show in My face.*

19) *For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: 'Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel,*

20) *so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.'*

21) *I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains," says the Lord GOD. "Every man's sword will be against his brother.*

22) *And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.*

23) *Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.'*"

Now, first of all notice the Bible doesn't really give us a time frame of exactly how long it takes Satan to create this environment. So again, all we can do is speculate about it. But if we just look at the basic pattern of what we've witnessed and look at the principle "The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior," what does Satan typically do? He typically doesn't come straight at you right off the bat and say, "Hey, let's just rebel against God and do everything the opposite way." That's not normally how that happens.

If you just look at the apostasy that took place in the Church of God, after the death of Herbert Armstrong, as we all know for over a number of years, doctrines got slowly changed to the point that it became completely the opposite of what the Church had always believed before. But those who were introducing that they didn't start just right after Mr. Armstrong's death and say, "You know what guys? Let's just throw out everything we've ever taught. Let's start keeping Sunday. Do away with the holy days. You can eat unclean meats. You don't have to tithe anymore." And just start adding to the list. "Let's believe in the trinity. We'll start wearing crosses and change everything."

They didn't do it that way because I'm willing to bet if that had happened in that kind of an upfront fashion, a much larger number of people than eventually did resist that, would have stood up and said, "Wait a minute! That's crazy! I'm not doing that. I'm not throwing away everything I ever believed." Because that's not how Satan did it.

He came out and he slowly introduced things very gradually over a period of time and kind of baby-stepped people in that direction. And over the course of a decade, we



reached the point where “Hey, we’re in the New Covenant. The law is done away with. We don’t have to keep those holy days anymore. You can keep Sunday. You can eat unclean meats. That’s no big deal.” And what happened? Thousands of people bought it because it was done very slowly over many years, over a period of time. Again, the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior.

So, if we look at that, Satan will most likely do the same type of thing in this case. In other words, it will probably take a number of years for this to play out and for Satan to deceive that many people. Because, again, if he just comes straight at them and says, “Let’s just cause mayhem and war,” that’s going to be shocking to people. “We like this peaceful environment.” But if you slowly interject lust and greed and slowly incrementally step people in that direction, you have much more success. So, that’s much more likely how this scenario is going to play out is he’s going to slowly go after it.

But again, notice the size of this event that’s taking place here. As we now mentioned before, Revelation told us that the number of those that come down to create this battle is “*as the sands of the sea.*” And, again, we can’t exactly quantify that, but again, if we just use the Bible’s frame of reference, we’re probably talking millions if not hundreds of millions of people. And again I’m just wildly speculating here, but that’s how the Bible tends to use that phrase. So, this is a very large thing here.

What the Bible also tells us in chapter 39, which I’ll just summarize for time’s sake, is that after God intervenes and wipes out those that are invading, basically the weapons that they were using are collected because these are very primitive weapons because they develop these in a time when there were no AKA 47s and M 16s and all sorts of other weapons. They were using spears and clubs and more primitive weapons that they developed. But the Bible tells us that those are collected and an entire nation utilizes them for firewood for a seven-year period. This is a huge number of weapons that were collected from this!

It also tells us that in burying the bodies, that the entire nation is involved in burying all the corpses that are left. And not only is the entire nation involved, there are people literally employed fulltime for a seven-month period to bury all the bodies. Again, this isn’t a small band of rebels that Satan gets to. This is a huge number of people that are brought about to do all this.

Now, let’s just step back for a moment and look at the contrast between the two environments that we’ve just described because we had a utopian environment where everything was peaceful. Everyone got along. No one was afraid. There wasn’t a reason to be afraid. Everything was wonderful. And all of a sudden we’ve got war. We’ve got envy and strife. We’ve got armies basically arming themselves and going to invade and conquer and steal and rape and pillage. Quite a contrast! Isn’t it?

So how do we make sense of this, of how this came about? As I mentioned, for us as physical human beings, we can look at this and that’s a real head scratcher. We say, “Okay, I totally understand the idea of why you want to get rid of this. Why would you

want to bring him back? That's doesn't make a lot of sense," at least if we look at it through physical eyes. So how do we understand this?

Well, to understand this, first of all we're going to have to look at this subject through spiritual eyes because if we look at it as just physical human beings, it's a real head scratcher. It's contrary to our typical logic that we use in situations like this. Why would you mess up something so wonderful? How would that make sense? Well, again, first of all we have to look at this through spiritual eyes. And for starters I think we need to clear up what in my observations about my life growing up in the Church of God is sometimes a subtle confusion.

Now, I grew up in the Church of God from birth. I have attended Church my entire life. And I have to say throughout my life I've heard things similar to what I'm about to mention a number of times. It's especially around this time of the year when you're looking at the Feast of Tabernacles and looking at prophetic events in the future. People will be kind of reminiscing and going, "Man in the kingdom, it's going to be wonderful. Why the kingdom is going to be like..." And listen to what you hear next because they're using the term "kingdom" but what do they describe? "Well the animals are going to be tame and the world's going to be a Garden of Eden. And everyone is going to have their vine and their fig tree. And there are going to be abundant crops." They're describing a physical utopia of a physical planet with physical human beings on it.

That's not the Kingdom of God. That's the Millennium. Those terms are not synonymous.

Yes, you can say that the Kingdom of God is ruling over the earth in that time frame. Because, remember? The Kingdom of God is the spirit-born family of God composed of God-beings. And, yes, that family of God is ruling over the earth, the firstfruits with Christ, during the Millennium but that's not the Kingdom of God. Because the Kingdom of God is not physical; it is spiritual.

And let me back that statement up. Turn with me over to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. We're going to start in verse 58.

**1 Corinthians 15:50.** *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. (NKJV)*

In other words, flesh and blood, physical human beings cannot be a part of the Kingdom of God. Why? Because it's a spiritual thing. So, how do we become a part of the Kingdom of God? Let's keep reading.

*51) Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed—*

*52) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

*53) for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

*54) So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (NKJV)*

Because it's important for us to understand the Kingdom of God is, again, a completely spiritual concept. It is the family of God composed of spirit-born God beings. That is the Kingdom of God.

The Millennium, the thousand year period that we have on the earth that is a utopian physical environment, is the Millennium. It's not the Kingdom of God. Yes, you can say it's reigned over by the Kingdom of God because, yes, Christ and the firstfruits, who are the Kingdom of God, are in charge over it, but they are not synonymous terms.

And the reason I make a big point of that is we know the entire plan of God is focused around what? The Kingdom of God.

That's the good news that Christ came with. Wasn't it? The gospel, the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. That's the reason for the existence of mankind. That's the reason for the entire holy day plan. That's the end result that is focused on everything that we know in the Bible and everything we know about the human race. We know that that is the overall purpose.

If we subtly confuse those two, here's the logic that leads us to. Then you kind of get the idea: "Well, the main purpose of why Christ is coming back to this earth and setting all this up is to create this perfect physical environment. Right? It's to create a utopian world with no pain and everything is wonderful and we have abundance and everything's comfortable. That's the purpose. Right? Okay, if that's the purpose, why does He mess it up? Why does He turn around and do something that's going to completely sabotage that?"

Because think about that. If that is the main purpose—now don't get me wrong. We know absolutely for sure for a thousand years the earth is a fantastic wonderful environment. There is no Satan. We could do an entire sermon on all the details of that. It is a fabulous environment. That is absolutely true and the Bible tells us that in great detail.

But think about this. If this was the ultimate objective that God was trying to accomplish in all of this, then we have to logically assume, by just sheer logic, that the releasing of Satan, then, has to be the most illogical, counter-productive, self-sabotaging, completely insane course of action that one could do. Because what results? We just saw. We started off from a perfect physical environment where no one makes them afraid. Everything is wonderful. It's all peaceful. And then what do we have? We have war and strife and lust and greed. And people wanting to rape and pillage. And we have violence. Why would you do that? If your purpose is to solely accomplish this perfect

physical universe, why sabotage it? Why throw a grenade in the middle of it and mess it all up? It doesn't make a lot of sense because you've got to look at this and say, "Wait a minute. Maybe that's not the exact objective that God's trying to accomplish."

Remember when we talked about that Satan must be released? It was a necessity to obtain the outcome desired. Well, what was the outcome desired? Remember the whole plan is about the Kingdom of God, the spirit-born family of God. That's the ultimate objective of what we're trying to get to. It's not just a perfect physical world because, again, otherwise this wouldn't make any sense.

So, to understand this picture, what we need to utilize is a basic principle I love to call "Biblical Interpretation 101." It's a principle I learned as a teenager growing up in the Church of God. And I'm sure a lot of you remember the old Y.O.U. program. I grew up in those days and was a part of Y.O.U.

And one day I was struggling with a difficult scripture question—one of those you might say head scratchers. You're going, "How do I make sense of this? It just seems contradictory." So I went to the elder in our congregation who was over the Y.O.U. program. He was a good friend of my family and I posed my question to him. "How do I make sense of this?" And he taught me a lesson that day that has helped me for the rest of my life. Because he looked at me and he said: "James, you've got to remember this one thing. You've got to always look to your simple straight-forward, easy to understand scriptures to help you understand the difficult, the head scratchers, the speculative, the not so clear things. Because there is one thing you know for sure whatever the difficult scriptures are telling you, you know for sure they're not directly contradicting the foundational principles," he said. "So, you can use those as a guide that will always help you go in the right direction." He said, "You never want to go the other way around."

Here's my favorite example of that. Look at how the protestant world develops their theology of the New Testament. What they will typically do is they go straight to the writings of the apostle Paul. And what did Peter tell us about Paul's writings? He wrote the things that are difficult, the things that are hard to understand. He wrote the head scratchers.

So what do they do? They typically go straight to those. They develop hard opinions. And they're very strong dogmatic opinions about what they think Paul is saying. And then what do they do? They look at the Gospels, the General Epistles, the Acts and other parts of the Bible and they try to interpret them to match their understanding of Paul. And what does that result in? Mental gymnastics because then you have to start massaging scripture. You have to start twisting it or just completely disregarding it to get it to match.

Because what kind of conclusions do you come up with? Well, if the law's done away with, you don't need to keep that law anymore. That's burdensome. That's rough, even though James called it the law of liberty, the law of freedom. John tells us His

commandments are not burdensome. They're a great blessing to us. But if you start with Paul and you try to twist everything to match that, those are the kinds of conclusions you come up.

If you go to all the other areas and then take the head scratchers like Paul and interpret them knowing that he doesn't contradict Christ—he doesn't contradict James and John and Peter and Jude and all the other writers and you can use those as a guide, you come out with much more solid conclusions.

So to look at this we have to use the same kind of idea. Again, we look at the releasing of Satan and that's a real head scratcher, but what does the foundation of the Bible tell us as to a logic as to why God might do something so puzzling as this? Let's look at it through those spiritual eyes and we'll see a clear logic as to why God might do something of this nature.

Let's start by just looking at the subject of blessings. Now, when you and I as physical human beings talk about blessings, I'm willing to bet the majority of the time we think, "Man! I've really been blessed. Life is great and wasn't this a great blessing!" What we're normally referring to are things that take away pain and discomfort out of our lives and give us pleasure and enjoyment. I mean isn't that really what we're oftentimes referring to? When things go really good and we get a promotion, we get a raise, the money comes through right at the time we need to pay a certain bill, we think, "Wow, this is great!"

When we get sick and life is going hard and the money's not there, we don't think, "Wow, I'm blessed. I get to go through this adversity." We don't tend to think of it that way. We think of "I wish God would bless me and take this away!" That's normally how we think of it.

Well, let's notice how God tends to look at some of this through spiritual eyes. Don't get me wrong. Those things are blessings, but let's look at what He also tends to call blessings through His point of view. Turn with me over to Matthew chapter 5 and we'll start reading in verse 10.

***Matthew 5:10.*** *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*11) "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.*

*12) Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (NKJV)*

Now how many of us are generally inclined, if we're being slandered and our name is being drug through the mud, to think "Oh wow! What a blessing. I'm being attacked and my name is being drug through the mud."? We don't tend to think of it that way. Do we? We think, "Man! I'm being cursed. I wish God would bless me and make this go away." I mean isn't that how we tend to look at it?

But notice that's God's point of view is this can be a blessing. And what we're going to find is this is a concept all throughout the New Testament. It's stated again and again. Turn with me over to Luke 6 and verse 21.

**Luke 6:21.** *Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.*

22) *Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for [My name's] sake.*

23) *Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! ... indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers [also] did to the prophets. (NKJV)*

How many of us say, "Oh, joy! Great! Somebody posted a letter on the internet saying what a dirty dog I am and just running my name through the mud." We don't tend to say that. We tend to say, "Man, why am I being persecuted? Why am I being treated like this?" We don't tend to look at it as blessings.

But notice from God's spiritual point of view, He tends to look at these things as blessings. We're going to understand why as we go through this. Turn with me again over to 1 Peter 3. I just want to show you this is a theme all throughout the New Testament, a very foundational concept. 1 Peter 3:13.

**1 Peter 3:13.** *And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?*

14) *But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed ... (NKJV)*

Notice once again, it's referring to suffering and things we don't like as being blessed.

14b) *... "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.*

15) *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense [for] everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*

16) *having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.*

17) *For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. (NKJV)*

Now notice again over in James chapter 5. We'll see once again a very similar idea being expressed. James 5:10.

**James 5:10.** *My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.*

11) *Indeed we count them blessed who endure.... (NKJV)*

In other words, it's saying what a blessing it can be to endure a hard trial. But notice the chief example mentioned after this statement.

*11b) ... You have heard of the perseverance of Job and [have] seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. (NKJV)*

How many of us would naturally think, "You know what? I want to be blessed like Job was. I want to lose everything I've got, all my family, most of all my friends, all my possessions and go from billionaire to penniless in one day. Then I want to have lots of boils all over my body so that I'm miserable all the time. And I have sleep deprivation for months. And then to just add insult to injury I want a few people that call themselves my friends to show up and then to condemn me and condemn me back and forth in speeches for an unknown period of time. I want to be kicked in every way possible. Wow! Isn't that a great blessing?"

We don't tend to look at it that way. Do we? We tend to look at that book and say, "Do you know what? I would much prefer to read the book and learn the lessons that he went through, through his experience, because I'd really prefer not to live it myself. That's doesn't sound like any fun to me." Because that's how we, as physical human beings, look at it and, again, it's just natural. I'm not condemning us for that. I'm saying that's how we're wired as physical human beings. We don't look at those things as blessings. We don't look at that as positive.

But God, through His spiritual perspective, can look at that and say, "I did this for the ultimate good." Kind of like what Rick was mentioning earlier in the Feast this year: Nothing for our harm. God tends to look at these things and orchestrate things so that it's for our ultimate good.

Now, when we're going through it, we could say, "Feels like harm for me from my perspective because I'm not really enjoying the pain." But God's looking at it from a totally different point of view. And, again, to understand His actions and His motivations for why He would do it, we've got to get in His head and see things through His point of view as to why He would be motivated to do the things that He does based on how He thinks. That's going to help us with these head scratching type of areas to think, "Okay, how does He see it through His point of view and the ultimate objective He's trying to accomplish?" because that gives us a totally different viewpoint. He tells us in the Book of Isaiah that His thoughts are not our thoughts and we don't think the same way. We don't have the same point of view. We don't have the same perspectives. Well, to understand His actions, again we've got to get in His head and think the way He does. And He tends to look at things like this, oftentimes trial and adversity, as a blessing because of the outcome that it creates.

Notice not only does it tell us these things oftentimes can be blessings it also describes them as fundamental requirements for salvation. Turn with me over to Romans 8. We're going to start reading in verse 16.

**Romans 8:16.** *The Spirit [itself] bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*

17) *And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, ... (NKJV)*

And notice the condition stated next for that happening.

17b) *... if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*  
(NKJV)

In other words, be glorified with Him on what condition? On the condition that we suffer as He suffered. That's directly stated here. Okay, so how is that defined? What do we mean by "suffering as Christ suffered"? Well the Book of 1 Peter, chapter 2 tells us in great detail exactly what that means. Turn with me over to 1 Peter 2 and verse 19.

**1 Peter 2:19.** *For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.*

20) *For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.*

21) *For to this you were called, ... (NKJV)*

Notice that. We've just described about having to suffer even when you've done good. And now we're told, "You were called for this purpose."

21b) *...because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that [we] should follow His steps. (NKJV)*

Notice how did Christ suffer? Well, think about it logically. He didn't suffer because of any of His own mistakes. He didn't suffer because of His own sins and He made bad decisions and He just reaped the consequences of it. He lived the perfect life. He never sinned. He was suffering even when He didn't deserve it because He didn't do anything to inherently deserve it. That's why suffering as Christ suffered is suffering even when you've done good. And that's what this is saying. We were called for that purpose and we're glorified with Him if we suffer as He suffered.

Turn over to 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 and we'll start in verse 3.

**2 Thessalonians 1:3.** *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,*

4) *so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,*  
(NKJV)

Now notice the next verse.



*5) which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be [accounted] worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; (NKJV)*

So you endure these persecutions and tribulations. Why? That you may be accounted worthy of the Kingdom of God. That's why you're going through this. Notice we've been told you go through this for the Kingdom of God. You're required to suffer as Christ suffered. And that's defined as suffering even when you've done good. It's not just the result of your own bad decisions.

Now, turn over to 1 Peter chapter 4 and we'll see it directly stated. This is a normal expectation for a Christian. This is par for the course. 1 Peter 4:12.

***1 Peter 4:12.** Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; (NKJV)*

In other words, "Don't think this is odd or unusual." This is a normal expectation is what he's saying.

*13) but rejoice to the extent [in which] you partake of Christ's sufferings, [and] when His glory is revealed, you may ... be glad with exceeding joy.*

*14) If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.*

*15) But let none of you suffer as a murderer, [as] a thief, [as] an evildoer, or as a busybody in [other's] matters.*

*16) Yet if anyone [suffers he] is a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. (NKJV)*

Now notice. It's telling us it's a normal expectation that we're going to suffer adversity and we're going to suffer even when we've done what's right, even when we've been righteous. It's not just the normal repercussions or punishment for our sins. It's something we have to endure. The Bible is telling us that's a normal expectation for a Christian.

Turn to 2 Timothy chapter 3. We find a very interesting statement here. 2 Timothy 3:12.

***2 Timothy 3:12.** Yes, ... all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (NKJV)*

Notice what an all-encompassing statement that is. Did you ever notice that there's not an asterisk next to it that says "Oh, we're just referring to the prophets in the Old Testament. We're just referring to John the Baptist, just the original apostles, just a small group, nobody else."? That's not what it says. If we read the words on the page and just believe them for what they say, it says, "All will do this. All who want to follow Christ will face this." It's an all-encompassing statement. That's what it says.

Why is that? Why is it that we're told to go through persecution, that we're going to suffer, that we have to face adversity? What's the purpose in all that? Why would God require that of us?

Turn with me over to James chapter 1 and we'll find the answer to this. It's James 1:2.

**James 1:2.** *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, (NKJV)*

This is the New King James. The Old King James says, "diverse temptations."

And why is that? Why should we count this as joy? Let's just read the next two verses.

3) *knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.*

4) *But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (NKJV)*

Because that's what develops character in us. It's kind of like Terry was saying in his sermonette. How are we refined? Through trials, through adversity, through having to overcome that difficulty, that's what refines and develops God's character in us.

Jump over to verse 12. I want to notice another statement James makes here, backing this up. It's James 1:12.

**James 1:12.** *Blessed is the man who endures temptation: for when he has been [proved], he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (NKJV)*

Notice when is it we receive the crown of life? After we have been proved, through enduring temptation and trial because that develops the character of God in us.

Because think about it. If you want to develop—just to use a physical analogy of this—if you want to be strong and be a strong athlete and have a healthy life, do you do that more effectively by sitting on the couch in the air conditioning and propping up with a cold beer and some bonbons and watching the football game and just relaxing all the time? It's a relaxing enjoyable time. Does that create a strong healthy person? Not over time, it doesn't. No. It's getting out to the gym and sweating and toiling and overcoming and working hard. Doesn't that tend to build more strength and endurance in us when we have to overcome an adversity? That's just how that works. That's how we develop those things.

Well look back over in verse 2 in James chapter 1 here. Notice I mentioned it refers in the New King James here to "various trials." In the Old King James, it says "diverse temptations." Now the Greek word there that is translated either "trials" or "temptations" (depending upon which version of the Bible that you're looking at) is the Greek word "peirasmós." It's "p-e-i-r-a-s-m-ó-s." It's Strong's number 3986 and according to The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiro Zodhiates, here's how

it's defined: *Generally, trial of one's character.... By implication, trial of one's virtue, temptation, solicitation to sin, especially from Satan....*

So it's saying especially the trials and the temptations that we endure from Satan, we should consider those blessings because what do those do? That only causes us to have to strive against it and to build godly character. In fact, if we look at how the very nature of God's character is defined, it's defined in terms that we have to endure this to develop it.

Because think about it. What does the Book of 1 John tell us? God is love. God is agape. As we know, that's the Greek word there. Agape love sums up the very character and mind of God.

Now, the chapter of 1 Corinthians 13 probably gives us the most extensive definition for what agape love is. So, let's turn over there and notice the first definition it gives us for agape love—again, the very mind of God. It's 1 Corinthians 13 and we're going to read the first part of verse 4 here. Now, understand that there is a much more extensive definition to agape love than we're going to focus on here. And I'm not by any means suggesting it's summed up in this simple phrase, but I just want you to notice the first definition it gives us for what agape love is.

***1 Corinthians 13:4. Love suffers long and is kind ... (NKJV)***

Let me ask you a logical question. How do you develop the ability to suffer long and be kind if you're not first required to suffer long? How would that work? How would you be tested on the ability to suffer long and be kind if you didn't have to first suffer long? Doesn't, by definition, it require that? You can see the logic of how this works.

So you can see basically what we're getting at here is there's an important role Satan plays in this whole picture. Turn with me to Ephesians chapter 6. We'll look at a very familiar scripture that tells us a fundamental principle of the role that he plays. Ephesians 6:12.

***Ephesians 6:12. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (NKJV)***

In other words, it's saying that: The primary thing that we strive against in the persecutions and the temptations and the adversities we have to overcome, it isn't just the physical forces. It's Satan and his demons and the influence that they have on us.

It's the trials that they bring upon us because think about it. If you're suffering even when you've done righteously, that's not the consequences of your own bad decisions coming back at you. That's being persecuted.

Because if you think about it, one of the things Paul said in Timothy was all who follow Christ Jesus would be persecuted. Well, obviously he's not referring to just the persecution that we would say the apostle Paul faced. What I mean by that is the government throwing him in jail, the lynch mobs wanting to stone him or beat him or whatever for what he believed and taught.

Because if that were the case, we've all known Christians who have lived out their entire lives and died and everything and they never faced anything of that nature. He's not referring to just that type of persecution. He's referring to having to overcome the trials, the temptations, the adversities we go through that Satan provides us. That's what he's talking about, because again otherwise, obviously it—well, it wouldn't fit the definition otherwise.

But if we turn over to Job chapter 41, we can see that God has had a role for Satan and He utilizes him as a servant. Now, I'm going to summarize the beginning of this book because we went over this book in great detail a few years ago.

But I'm sure you're familiar, many of you, with the first couple of chapters of this book. And God basically initiates, you might say, kind of a showdown with Satan. He says, "Have you noticed my servant Job? Have you noticed how righteous this man is?"

Ultimately this negotiation between them results in a very severe trial that Job has to go through. But if you notice, God basically initiates it from the beginning and then He puts parameters on him [Satan] as he's playing it out, saying "You can go this far and you can't go any further. I'm setting a limit right here." So, He's in control the entire time this is taking place.

And Job goes through a very, very nasty ordeal. And, as we saw in the Book of James, this is ultimately to develop him. That was basically for God's purpose. In the long run, he's being developed.

But my point in all of this is that God was in control of the situation the entire time.

God wasn't sitting back on His hands going, "I wish I could do something about this evil Satan. He's beating up on my servant Job." No, God was in control. He was hands on the entire time this was taking place.

Because, as we see here in chapter 41, God is basically correcting Job because Job gets to the point he's questioning God's judgment. He's telling God He's not fair; God isn't just. God is putting him back in his place, but He asks him a number of questions as He's going through this basically to show Job who God really is and who Job is.

But notice the questions, He asks him here. In chapter 41 and verse 1, the leviathan who He's referring to here, this is a picture of Satan.

**Job 41:1.** *"Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook, or snare his tongue with a line which you lower?*

2) *Can you put a reed through his nose, or pierce his jaw with a hook?*

3) *[And will he] make many supplications to you? [And will he] speak softly to you?*

4) *[And will he] make a covenant with you? [And will you] take him as a servant forever?*

5) *[And will you] play with him as a bird, or will you leash him for your maidens?*

6) *Will your companions make a banquet of him? Will they apportion him among the merchants?*

7) *Can you fill his skin with harpoons, or his head with fishing spears?*

8) *Lay your hand on him; remember the battle—never do it again!*

9) *Indeed, any hope of overcoming him is [vain]; shall one not be overwhelmed [by] the sight of him?*

10) *No one is so fierce that he would dare stir him up. Who then is able to stand against [him]?*

11) *Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is Mine. (NKJV)*

He's asking Job, "Can you put a hook in his nose? Can you take him as a servant?" Well the obvious implication of what He's saying is, "I have. I did put a hook in his nose. I have taken him for a servant. I'm in control of him. He's way more powerful than you. You'd stand no chance against him at all but I'm in control of him. I've leashed him and I'm using him for My purposes."

Because if we understand this picture, we're not dealing with a situation now of this Satan that's on the loose and God's sitting there with His hands tied just looking forward to the day when He can finally get rid of this guy and give the world a break; when He'll finally have His hands free and He can go put Satan away. No, He's had a hook in his nose since the Garden of Eden. He's been utilizing him as a servant this entire time because He's God. He's in control. He's had a very methodical plan through the whole thing and He's tolerating this evil being because he has a useful purpose. Because we can tell here He's basically utilized him as a servant because of the role he plays and it causes us to overcome in having to deal with it.

So, when you understand that logic, then you understand "Why would God re-introduce this individual again?" Because he serves a useful purpose. Because, if it was just about creating our physical comfort, it wouldn't make any sense. Would it? If it was just a matter of "I want to get him out of the way so mankind's never bothered again," why re-introduce him? Why sabotage all of that?

Well, obviously, God is looking at this through spiritual eyes. Because we take a look at it from the perspective of pain because, let's face it, we're physical human beings. We don't enjoy pain. We don't enjoy adversity. It's not any fun. We like comfort, but we look at this and say "Okay, if we just look at it from the perspective of comfort, this seems insane." If we look at this from a perspective of God's eyes, okay now we can

see a logic as to why God would do this because He has a purpose and a function that this individual can play. And that's how He can utilize him.

Now we see a spiritual purpose of why this would take place. This isn't just a crazy God that lost His mind and decided to mess up all the good things that He did. This is a God with a specific purpose in mind. Because, as we mentioned before, when it says "He must be released again," as Thayer's told us "*necessity in reference to what is required to attain some end.*"

Well, what is the end? The end is the Kingdom of God. The end is a spiritual perspective of a spirit family composed of spirit beings with God's mind and God's character. That's the ultimate objective. Not just a physical planet where everyone is comfortable and everything is great physically because, again, it's not about a physical picture. It's about a spiritual end because we do get to a world that's pain free. We get to a wonderful environment forever that lasts without problems and without pain but that's not on a physical planet. That's in the Kingdom of God, which is a very spiritual picture.

So, to wrap this up let's take a look at that end that God has in mind. It's in Revelation chapter 21. It's Revelation 21:1.

***Revelation 21:1.*** *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. (NKJV)*

Notice we don't need oceans anymore. We don't need the oceans to produce fifty percent of the oxygen supply of the planet anymore. We don't have physical human beings who need oxygen to survive. We're talking about a spiritual world now. This is a picture of the Kingdom of God, the spirit-born family of God.

***Revelation 21:2.*** *Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.  
3) And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. (NKJV)*

And notice verse 4 here. Here is our pain-free world that lasts forever.

***Revelation 21:4.*** *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (NKJV)*

So that's when we get to a world that's wonderful forever and never gets messed up. There's never anymore pain and suffering. And there is no more Satan at that point. As we know, he and his demons get thrown in the lake of fire, but they do after there is no more useful purpose for them to fill because after everyone else is perfected, there's no reason to tolerate this evil being anymore. Because now, he's just an evil thorn in

the side; he's a problem. He doesn't serve a meaningful purpose. Let's get him out of the picture now because there's no reason to tolerate this anymore.

What we have to understand is we're not dealing with a God who is sitting here with His hands tied going, "Man! I just can't wait for the day I can finally do something about this." We're dealing with a God who is in charge, who has put a hook in this individual's nose from the time that Adam and Eve were on the earth all throughout time. Because He's God, He's planned this out for methodical, logical reasons and He's playing out a big plan here. He's looking to obtain an ultimate end. That ultimate end is the Kingdom of God, a world that lasts forever, that is pain-free, but it's a spiritual one.